



The Learning Center! Charter School

**945 Conaheeta Street
Murphy, North Carolina 28906
(828)835.7240**

**School Improvement/Title I Plan
2012-13**

Mary Jo Dyre, Director
maryjo@naturallygrownkids.org

The Learning Center! School Improvement Plan

State board of Education Goals

- Goal 1-** North Carolina public schools will produce globally competitive students.
- Goal 2-** North Carolina public schools will be led by 21st Century professionals.
- Goal 3-** North Carolina public school students will be healthy and responsible.
- Goal 4-** Leadership will guide innovation in North Carolina public schools.
- Goal 5-** North Carolina public schools will be governed and supported by 21st Century systems.

The Learning Center! 2012-13 Goals

- TLC! Goal 1-** The school will improve student achievement on end-of-grade assessments and insure all students demonstrate a minimum of one-year growth gains. (Supports SB Goal 1)
- TLC! Goal 2.1-** The school will employ and retain highly qualified teachers, administrators and personnel to insure each student is prepared to compete in a global society. (Supports SB Goal 2)
- TLC! Goal 2.2-** The school will provide continued and focused professional development for all teachers on the project-based learning. (Supports SB Goal 2)
- TLC! Goal 3-** The school will maintain learning environments that are safe, inviting, respectful, inclusive, and flexible for the success of all students. (Supports SB Goal 3)
- TLC! Goal 4-** The school will provide and support opportunities for community partnerships, parent engagement and volunteer programs during the 2015-2016 school year. (Supports SB Goal 4)
- TLC! Goal 5-** The school will use technology to effectively and efficiently improve student outcomes and to prepare its students for the technological world in which they will live. (Supports SB Goal 5)

The Learning Center! Mission Statement

- To **provide** each student in our care with a multi-learning style approach to instruction which takes into account his/her developmental level and learning style.
- To **promote** healthy self-esteem based on real academic progress and responsible membership in a community of learners.
- To **produce** independent, healthy learners and problem solvers who are well prepared to succeed in the other academic settings they will enter.

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1. COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

School Demographics

TLC! is a school wide Title I program that served approximately 175 students in Kindergarten through 8th Grade during the 2014-15 school year. 71.6 % of the students qualified for free or reduced price meals.

Our population of Exceptional Children continues to increase. 47 students were identified as Exceptional Children as of the April 1, 2015 headcount.

The school employed 25 full-time and part-time instructional and instructional support staff. Speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling and psychological evaluation were provided by fully certified contracted service providers.

The school operated a highly successful Child Nutrition program serving breakfast and lunch daily.

Our parent outreach included the following: annual parent fair, school website, school blog, student planners, bi-annual individual parent conferences, Bright Arrow telephone system, and regular parent/teacher communication via online messenger programs, phone calls, email and face-to-face meetings.

Parent involvement was approximately 90% at the school. Administrators and teachers worked diligently to involve all parents in a variety of different ways.

SCHOOL DATA PROFILE

The 2014-15 data included in this report was collected from the following sources and will be analyzed to determine areas of greatest need and to set goals for the coming year. Goals chosen will align with the State Board of Education Goals.

- Teacher Licensure
- End-of-Grade Test Results
- NC School Report Card
- Powerschool (discipline, dropout, attendance, etc.)
- NC Teacher Working Conditions Survey
- Local Data
- CIPP
- EVAAS
- MAP Test Results

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2014-15 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	
Enrollment	175
Ethnicity	Asian- 3; Hispanic- 4; Black-2; Two or more races- 8; White- 150
Discipline Data	Out-of-School Suspensions- 15
Reportable Offenses	0
Students With Disabilities	December Headcount- 39- 22.3%; April Headcount- 47- 26.8% (increase of 17%)
Attendance	94.6%
Promotion/Retention	Promoted- 171; Retained- 4
Economically Disadvantaged Students	71.6%
<p>Strength- Enrollment is increasing. Daily attendance is in line with state averages and meets required annual goal. Ethnicity is comparable to, or slightly higher than, county demographics.</p> <p>Weakness- Number of out-of-school suspensions</p> <p>Issues to address- Reduce the number of OSS. Develop a plan to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing numbers of SWD.</p>	

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADE*	
Growth Status	Met
Achievement	52
Growth	74.1
School Performance	56- C
EOG Reading	64- C
EOG Math	47- D
<p>Issues to address- How to improve both proficiency and growth for all students. Closely examine and restructure how math is taught.</p>	

*School Performance Grade is calculated at 80% Proficiency and 20% Growth

ANNUAL MEASURABLE OBJECTIVE		
	Subgroup	% Proficient
Overall Proficiency (all tests)	All	51.7%
	Female	56.4%
	Male	48.4%
	Hispanic	42.9%
	Two or more races	33.3%
	White	52.3%
	EDS	42.2%
	SWD	24.3%
Reading- Proficiency	All	60.7%
	Female	67.3%
	Male	55.9%
	Two or more races	16.7%
	White	62.3%

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	EDS	50%
	SWD	25%
Math- Proficiency	All	40.2%
	Female	44.9%
	Male	36.8%
	Two or more races	16.7%
	White	40.6%
	EDS	30.8%
	SWD	21.9%
Science- Proficiency- Grade 5	All	47.6%
	Female	50%
	Male	46.2%
	White	47.4%
	EDS	35.7%
	SWD	20%
Science- Proficiency- Grade 8	All	83.3%
	Male	87.5%
	White	80%
	EDS	80%

* Participation was 100% for Reading and Math tests.

A minimum of 5 students is required to denote a subgroup

TEACHER WORKING CONDITIONS
<i>Based upon 2014 Teacher Working Conditions Survey</i>
Use of Time Strength- Adequate time for collaboration Weakness- Insufficient non-instructional time
Facilities and Resources Strengths- Access to communication technology; Internet reliability Weaknesses- Lack of professional support; workspace; facility maintenance
Community Support and Involvement Strengths- Communication with parents and parental involvement Weakness- Parents involved in decision making
Managing Student Conduct Strengths- School environment is safe; Most students follow code of conduct Weaknesses- Inconsistent enforcement of rules by administration and teachers
Teacher Leadership Strengths- Teacher leadership; Decision making about instruction Weakness- Process for group decision making to solve problems
School Leadership Strengths- Teacher performance assessed objectively and consistently; Feedback from observations helps improve teaching; Community support and involvement

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Weaknesses- Facilities and resources; New teacher support; Teachers uncomfortable raising issues and concerns
Professional Development Strength- Sufficient resources and time for PD Weakness- Insufficient IT training
Instructional Practices and Support Strengths- Local assessment data available and used to inform instruction; Teachers encouraged to try new things to be successful Weaknesses- Available state assessment data does not accurately gauge students' understanding of standards
Overall- 71% of the teachers consider the school a good place to work.

Data Summary Analysis

Strengths-

The following are areas of strength:

- School met student attendance goals
- Students have access to three times more books than the state average
- Students have access to twice as many internet connected digital learning devices as the state average
- All classrooms have internet connectivity
- School had no acts of violence
- Students with Disabilities exceeded state averages for proficiency
- Eighth grade science scores are strong
- Good parental and community support and involvement
- School environment is safe
- Teachers encouraged to take leadership roles
- Adequate time and resources for professional development
- Local data available and used to drive instruction

Gaps or opportunities for improvement

The following are identified needs or opportunities for improvement:

- Decrease the number of out-of-school suspensions
- Increase EC services to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population of SWD
- Improve reading proficiency at all grade levels
- Improve math proficiency at all grade levels
- Increase student growth
- Better access to teacher IT training

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- Inadequate facility and space to work
- Inadequate new teacher support

2. SCHOOL REFORM STRATEGIES

Priority Goal 1 Improvement Strategies

TLC! Goal 1

The school will improve student achievement on end-of-grade assessments and insure all students demonstrate a minimum of one-year growth gains. (Supports SB Goal 1)

Implementation Team- Director, Assistant Director, Curriculum Coordinator, Intervention Coordinator, Teachers, EC Coordinator

Strategy/Action Steps	Timeline	Documentation	Progress
1. Provide opportunities for peer observations of <i>The Four Blocks Literacy Model</i> .	August, 2015-ongoing	Time provided for peer observation and training	Ongoing
2. Insure that lesson plans include four blocks of literacy daily in grades K-5 and at least three blocks in grades 6-8.	August, 2015-ongoing	Lesson plans submitted online weekly	Ongoing
3. Differentiate classroom instruction as needed to meet the needs of all learners including students with disabilities	August, 2015-ongoing	Lesson plans submitted; EC support provided in effectively differentiating reading instruction; administrative walk-throughs	Ongoing
4. Reduce the number of students not meeting growth goals in reading by 50% using the following strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide teacher access to <i>Four Blocks Literacy Model</i> training; • Provide ongoing assistance and support in <i>Four Blocks</i> implementation; • Provide teacher access to professional development in best practices for teaching literacy skills; and • Involve students in setting personal reading goals on MAP assessments. 	August, 2015-ongoing	Sign-in logs Certificates of completion Goal setting sheets	In progress
5. Scheduled focused intervention for struggling readers.	August, 2015-ongoing	Scheduled sessions, student rosters	Ongoing

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6. Reduce the number of students not meeting growth goals in math using the following strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Math Team will research and begin to implement best practices to provide students with real-world reasons to learn math; Involve students in setting personal math goals on MAP assessments. 	July, 2015-ongoing	Sign-in logs Goals set and progress toward meeting goals Goal setting sheets	In progress/ Ongoing
7. Better utilize The Outdoor Learning Center to enhance science knowledge	August, 2015-ongoing	Lesson plans	Ongoing
8. Teachers will provide more project-based learning opportunities for the students.	August, 2015-ongoing	Lesson plans	Ongoing

Priority Goal 2 Improvement Strategies

TLC! Goal 2.1

The school will employ and retain highly qualified teachers, administrators and personnel to insure each student is prepared to compete in a global society.

Implementation Team- TLC! Board, Recruitment of Professional Educators (ROPE) Team, Administrators, Staff

Strategy/Action Steps	Timeline	Documentation	Progress
1. Interview Team, consisting of the Director, Assistant Director, Teacher Licensure and Support Coordinator, will conduct all interviews of potential new teaching staff and recommend candidates to TLC! Board for approval. Additional support personnel will participate when appropriate.	As needed to fill vacancies	Interview dates and recommendations	Ongoing
2. Staff will use scheduled PLC time to share best practices including curriculum integration, cooperative learning and differentiated instruction.	August, 2015-ongoing	PLC minutes	Ongoing
3. Administrators will better inform staff of budget issues.	August, 2015-ongoing	NA	In progress

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TLC! Goal 2.2

The school will provide continued and focused professional development for all teachers. (Supports SB Goal 2)

Implementation Team- Administrators, Teachers

Strategy/Action Steps	Timeline	Documentation	Progress
1. Specific topic webinars, workshops, etc. will be available to interested staff.	August, 2015-ongoing	Sign-in sheets or certificates of completion	Ongoing
2. Individualize professional development based upon teachers' needs indicated in PDP goals.	August, 2015-ongoing	Sign-in sheets or certificates of completion	Ongoing
3. Provide all ELA teachers with Four Blocks Literacy Model training and support.	September, 2015-ongoing	Sign-in sheets	Complete
4. Increase the number of ELA teachers and intervention staff who are trained in methods of differentiating reading instruction and in instructional tools to utilize with students with disabilities and other struggling readers.	August, 2015-ongoing	Sign-in sheets	Ongoing
5. Professional development in effective math teaching practices will be available to staff.	August, 2015	Sign-in sheets or certificates of completion	Ongoing
6. Math Team will meet to continue the development of a Balanced Math Program	July, 2015-ongoing	Sign-in sheets	Ongoing

TLC! Goal 3

The school will maintain learning environments that are safe, inviting, respectful, inclusive, and flexible for the success of all students.

Implementation Team- TLC! Board, Administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, students, volunteers

Strategy/Action Steps	Timeline	Documentation	Progress
1. The board and administrators will continue to pursue all avenues to meet the urgent facility needs.	August, 2015-ongoing	Project completion	Ongoing
2. Visitor passes will be used by all visitors while on campus.	August, 2015-ongoing	Visitor passes worn by all visitors	Complete
3. Facilities and grounds will be clean and maintained.	August, 2015-ongoing	Visible proof	Ongoing
4. Expectations for student behavior will	August, 2015-	School website, hard	Ongoing

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be clearly communicated to all students and their parents through the Student Code of Conduct posted on the school's website.	ongoing	copies in office, sign-in sheets for parent meetings	
5. Ensure that discipline strategies are consistently used by all teachers and administration.	August, 2015-ongoing	DR forms used in middle school for minor offenses	Ongoing

TLC! Goal 4

The school will provide and support opportunities for community partnerships, parent engagement and volunteer programs during the 2015-2016 school year. (Supports SB Goal 4)

Implementation Team- Administrators, teachers, support staff

Strategy/Action Steps	Timeline	Documentation	Progress
1. Schedule annual beginning of the year Parent Fair to offer training and Q & A opportunities for parents in all school programs	August, 2015	Sign-in sheets	Complete
2. Parents of new students (and others at their request) meet with MAP coordinator to discuss MAP data and academic progress. Meetings flexibly scheduled to accommodate parent schedules.	October, 2015 and as needed	Attendance logs	Ongoing
3. Actively recruit community volunteers to provide additional support for high needs students.	August, 2015-ongoing	Volunteer sign-in in office	Ongoing
4. Open House event scheduled to allow parents of potential new Kindergarten students to meet individually with the teacher.	April/May, 2016	Meeting announcements, sign-in logs	Ongoing
5. Maintain a dynamic presence through the school's website and the use of social media.	August, 2015-ongoing	Website/social media information is regularly updated	Ongoing

TLC! Goal 5

The school will use technology to effectively and efficiently improve student outcomes and to prepare its students for the technological world in which they will live. (Supports SB Goal 5)

Implementation Team- Administrators, IT personnel, teachers, support staff

Strategy/Action Steps	Timeline	Documentation	Progress
1. Scheduled use of mobile lab in all	August, 2015	Log	Ongoing

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classrooms weekly.			
2. Teachers will assign individualized homework using online resources. Afterschool use of the media center will be available for students who do not have computer/internet access at home.	November, 2015	Lesson Plans	Ongoing
3. <i>Parents as Partners</i> program training will be scheduled to explain the benefits of individualized homework, Internet Safety, etc.	January, 2016	Announcements	January, 2012

3. HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF

All teachers are highly qualified. All teaching assistants meet qualification requirements set by the state.

4. HIGH QUALITY AND ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers understand the general licensure renewal requirements of the State of North Carolina and how that aligns with the State Board of Education's mission that all students be taught by highly qualified 21st century professionals. On-site staff development opportunities are offered throughout the year and funding for off-campus professional development is budgeted annually through federal (PRC 091) and state funding sources.

5. TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT

The school uses a variety of avenues to advertise for, recruit and hire highly qualified teachers including local media, teachers-teachers.com and the school's website. The school's innovative programs, emphasis on health and wellness and a team approach to educating children attracts many well qualified candidates. The Board of Directors has charged the school Director to seek out the "best of the best" highly qualified teachers and authorized the use of signing bonuses and/or salary supplements to attract candidates who, through experience or advanced education, meet this expectation.

6. PARENT INVOLVEMENT

School administrators work closely with the school's *Parents Involved* organization to meet the needs of the classroom teachers and general needs of the school. The Parent-Teacher-Administration compact is included in the Student-Parent Handbook which is available on the school's website and in hard copy for those who request it. Classroom teachers maintain close communication with their parents via Class Messenger, planners, email and text. The school communicates regularly with parents using a digital voice dialer program. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in the education of their children.

7. TRANSITION PLANS (PRE K-K, ELEMENTARY-MIDDLE, MIDDLE-HIGH)

The following strategies are in place to ensure smooth transitions at all grade levels:

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Kindergarten- Detailed information about the school is provided on the school's website. Parents of rising Kindergarten students are encouraged to attend an Open-Classroom event held annually in the spring. Those requesting more information are encouraged to schedule appointments to observe the Kindergarten classroom "in action."

Elementary-Middle- The population of the school is not large and provides opportunities for students to know other students and teachers well. However, the school hosts an annual back-to-school family picnic prior to the beginning of school to provide an opportunity for new families to the school to get acquainted with others in a relaxed, social setting.

Middle-High- Local high schools (including the Early College program) visit the school annually to present students with high school options and provide opportunities for parents and students to ask questions. Brochures are distributed with contact information are provided.

8. TEACHER INVOLVEMENT IN ASSESSMENT USE

Assessment is an ongoing process and teachers are full partners in determining how assessment data is used to drive instructional programs and curriculum choices to maximize the learning potential of all students. MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) assessments are administered three times per year. Students are involved in goal setting annual growth goals. All of the online programs assigned provide additional individualized assessment data.

9. INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Regular Classroom Programs- The school uses an approach to education that addresses the individual needs of students using programs that multi-leveled, address multiple learning styles, provide ongoing spiraling review, are hands-on and encourage students to problem solve and include independent study, as well as time for collaboration with others. To this end, we have adopted the Four Blocks Literacy Model and a Balanced Math Approach across the grades.

Intervention Strategies- Identified students are taught in regular classroom settings with pull-outs as needed by the Intervention Team either individually or in small groups.

Afterschool Intervention- An afterschool program is available, by invitation, to students who are identified as needing intervention services. The program is free of charge.

Individualized Homework- Individualized online homework is assigned to students based upon assessment data that targets specific standards/skills in which the student is weak. It also provides challenges to students who are accelerated learners.

10. COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL SERVICES

The school coordinates with the following programs and services to provide a balanced program, academically, physically and emotionally for all students.

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Federal

- Title I (PRC 050)- Full salary/benefits of Intervention Teacher; partial salary of Afterschool Intervention teacher
- IDEA VI-B Handicapped (PRC 060)- Full salary/benefits EC Coordinator; partial salary EC teacher
- SRSA (PRC 091)- Professional development/workshop expenses and computer software and supplies
- Department of Education Rural Education Achievement Program- partial salary of teacher/curriculum support personnel
- Child Nutrition Program- USDA reimbursement for meals served

State

- Cherokee County Early College- student volunteers; participation in TLC! Annual Maker Faire
- NC Cooperative Extension Service- various student programs
- Tri-County Community College- Mini/Middle R.E.A.L. program training
- Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center- grade specific hands-on science programs
- NC State University Science House- science materials on-loan program

Parent/Community

- Jackie Ward Foundation- support of academic and arts programs
- TLC! Montessori Preschool
- Parent/Community Volunteers- Odyssey of the Mind coaches, classroom volunteers, fundraising, Green and Clean volunteers, reading mentors
- Lowe's- volunteer labor/supplies for terraced gardens
- Nehemiah's Neighbors- building repair and beautification
- Snap-on Tools- tools and equipment for Odyssey of the Mind teams

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