

HAMILTON COUNTY JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

PLANNED IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT

Based on your school's improvement plan, your school and district are providing information on areas of success and areas for planned improvement below and/or on a separate sheet.

As of October 31, 2003, the Hamilton County Junior/Senior High School has been in operation for two years. During this time frame as a 7-12 facility, many exciting and successful things have taken place. We merged two separate schools together, both students and staff, and fairly smoothly began a new era of educating junior and senior high students in Hamilton County. We worked through various challenges of adjusting to several physical changes from the old buildings. Many new innovations, such as modern science labs and media center, a multi-purpose commons area and music room and various computer labs have helped make the new school an excellent learning institution. Moving from an open campus at lunch for high school students to closed campus has been challenging. Students and staff alike have demonstrated flexibility and patience throughout the transition period. With the 2003-04 school year well underway, it has proven to be the best start that we have had to date.

As noted on the *school report card*, students at the Hamilton County Junior/Senior High School demonstrated both strengths and weaknesses on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test and the Prairie State Achievement Exam. The ISAT is given to students in grade seven in the areas of science, social science, physical development and health, and fine arts; at grade eight students are tested in the areas of reading, math, and writing. The PSAE is given to students in grade eleven covering the areas of mathematics, reading, science, social studies and writing.

Our seventh graders did very well, relative to other students in the state, in both science and social science. In science, there were only 2.0 % of our students at the *academic warning* level compared to 9.7 % at the state level. 86.8 % of our seventh graders either *met or exceeded standards* compared to 73.7 % at the state level. In Social Science, we didn't have a student who scored at the *academic warning* level; 81.8 % of the students either *met or exceeded standards* compared to 60.4 % at the state level.

Also at the seventh grade level, our students did quite well in the areas of physical development & health and fine arts. In physical development and health, 75.0 % of our students either met or exceeded standards compared to the state average of 64.0 %. In fine arts 78.0 % of our students either *met or exceeded standards* compared to 66.0 % at the state level.

Hamilton County eighth graders did well in the areas of reading and mathematics. In reading, none of our students fell in the *academic warning* category, and 74.0 % of our students either *met or exceeded standards* compared to 63.7 % at the state level. In

mathematics, we had 65.0 % of our students that either *met or exceeded standards* compared to 53.1 % at the state level.

Writing continues to be an area of concern at the elementary, junior high and secondary level in our school system. Percentage wise, fewer of our eighth grade students fell in the *academic warning* category than other students across the state; however, we had more of our students who scored in the *below standards* level and fewer students in the *meets standards* and *exceeds standards* categories.

On the PSAE, Hamilton County eleventh graders performed better in the areas of reading, science and social studies, than in math and writing. In reading, 53% of the students scored in the *below standards* and *academic warning* categories, while 47% *met or exceeded standards*. At the state level for reading, 44 % were *below standards* or *academic warning*, while 56% of students *met or exceeded standards*. In science, 57% of our students were *below standards* or at the *academic warning* level, while 43 percent *met or exceeded standards*. That compares to state totals of 51.3% who *met or exceeded standards* and 48.7% in the *below standards* and *academic warning* categories.

In social studies, 54% of our students *met or exceeded standards*, compared to 56.2% at the state level; 45% of our students scored in the *below standards* and *academic warning* levels, compared to 43% in those categories statewide.

In math and writing, students showed a greater difference between the *meets* and *exceeds standards* categories and the *academic warning* and *below standards* categories than in reading, science, and social studies. In math, 61% of our students were *below standards* or at *academic warning*, while 39% *met or exceeded standards*. That compares to state averages of 46.7 % who were *below standards* or at *academic warning* and 53.3% who *met or exceeded standards*. In writing, 62% of our eleventh graders were *below standards* or at *academic warning*, while 37% *met or exceeded standards*. At the state level, 46.6% scored in the *below standards* and *academic warning* categories and 58.9 *met or exceeded standards*.

For the 2003-04 school year, school improvement strategies include beginning a new five-year cycle of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The faculty has developed and agreed upon the following two goals that will be our focus for school improvement over the next several years: 1. All students will improve their ability to apply math skills across the curriculum. 2. All students will increase their reading comprehension skills across the curriculum. Also, we will continue to work of improving student-writing skills.

In addition, we will have several staff meetings devoted to more closely aligning our curriculum to the *Illinois Learning Standards*. Teachers will spend time examining and choosing outside resources that will better prepare students in taking the various standardized tests.