

**Merriam School  
School Improvement Plan for  
2016-17 School Year**

School Council Membership:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Year of Term</b>
Ed Kaufman	Principal	
Juliana Schneider	Assistant Principal	
Christy Nealon	Teacher	3rd of 3-year-term
Michele Pruett	Teacher	3rd of 3-year-term
Karen Sonner	Teacher	2nd of 3-year-term
Chuck Pollack	Parent	3rd of 3-year-term
Tushar Katarki	Parent	2nd of 3-year-term
Chris Brown	Parent	2nd of 3-year-term
Lara Plaskon	Parent	2nd of 3-year-term

**GOALS for 2016-2017**

**Goal 1:**

Continue developing projects and aligning our curriculum maps at each grade level in order to integrate both reading and writing instruction.

*Background and Rationale:*

As a project based learning school which emphasizes the integration of all subject areas, careful planning of instruction is necessary. Teachers have been working on developing common projects for each grade level, as well as creating curriculum maps. Such careful planning contributes to creative opportunities for children and collaboration for teachers- both during the planning process and throughout the execution of projects in classrooms.

*Strategies:*

1. Teachers will continue to use grade level time and protocols to develop curriculum maps that will reflect literacy instruction (reading and writing), as well as projects.
2. Classroom teachers, specialists and special educators will continue to collaborate in order to provide similar instruction to both general and special education students.
3. Teachers will continue to provide content area texts at different levels in order to support students at their reading level.

4. Classroom teachers and specialist teachers will continue to work on integrating projects.
5. Literacy coaches will continue to support teachers in finding texts that support projects, and in supporting the teaching of reading strategies through these texts.
6. Teachers will work on choosing mentor texts for grade-level writing units specific to project work.
7. Administrators will allot money to grade levels in order to support the purchasing of texts.
8. Teachers will participate in book clubs, reading titles that support project work. Titles include Innovator's Mindset, Book Whisperer, and A Place for Wonder.
9. Literacy consultant Kathy Collins will work with grade levels providing support around the integration of literacy into the project work.

*Outcomes:*

1. Grade levels will have completed curriculum maps in June 2017, incorporating all content area as well as reading and writing instruction.
2. Grade levels will have three completed projects in January 2017. Projects will begin to be implemented during the 2016-2017 school year.
3. Each project will incorporate one of the three types of writing outlined by the CCSS. Additionally, each project will embed reading strategies and content area texts.

**Goal 2:**

Provide opportunities to promote wellness at Merriam School.

*Background and Rationale:*

With a district emphasis on the health and wellbeing of children in combination with our Merriam School philosophy, our school council will take on multiple opportunities to explore wellness at the elementary level. During the first year of this goal, we will be focusing on the role of homework in our school. Our hope is that over an extended period of time, we will be able to make informed recommendations about policies that affect the wellbeing of our students.

*Strategies:*

1. School Council will embark upon researching the benefits and challenges of homework at the elementary level. They will conclude their research with recommendations to the administration on homework policies for each grade level moving forward.
2. School Council will solicit feedback from Merriam staff in order to identify concerns, issues, and benefits of homework.

3. School Council will sponsor a PTO meeting, requesting feedback around homework.
4. School Council will survey nearby communities who have previously embarked upon similar research.
5. School Council will collect and analyze research on this topic.
6. School Council will invite feedback from School Psychologists regarding the developmental appropriateness of homework at each grade level.

*Outcomes (year 1):*

School Council will make a recommendation to school administration on homework policies moving forward.

**Goal 3:**

Bring a sense of gratitude into our school in a way that fosters a love of learning, sense of community, and deepening of relationships.

*Background and Rationale:*

The idea of growing gratitude practices in communities of children as well as adults is that it is a malleable character strength that can positively impact people's outlooks on their work. As a way to mitigate stress and anxiety and mental health concerns among our entire community, we will institute multiple avenues to grow gratitude. Merriam has been working with the Greater Good Science Center and this year we will continue our work through a grant with Pamela Seigle (co-founder of Open Circle) as well as with Leading Together and The Center for Courage and Renewal.

*Strategies:*

1. Continue gratitude practices at the beginning of staff meetings.
2. Implement gratitude strategies at our theme day and community days throughout the year.
3. Look to extend gratitude to other organizations when we can.
4. Plan to have a parent outreach evening or day (funded by the grant) with an opportunity for classes to share their gratitude practices with parents.
5. Each class will embark upon service learning connected to showing a community group gratitude (i.e. nursing home, park development).
6. Continuing conversations with consultant Pamela Seigle.
7. Continue our Committee Work with Skipping Stones Committee, which uses gratitude practices and other work to build a sense of community among staff.
8. Infuse an increased amount of gratitude work into the morning announcements as well as in All School Meeting.

9. Institute a gratitude survey for students and staff at the beginning and end of the school year.

*Outcomes:*

Staff and students will demonstrate an increased awareness of gratitude practices.

## **Assessment of 2015-2016 School Improvement Plan**

### **Goal 1:**

Implement a new math program(s) for all grade levels.

*Outcomes/evidence and means by which they were assessed:*

During the 2015- 2016 Merriam School implemented TERC Investigations grades K-5 and GoMath for grade 6. Teachers were provided with Professional Learning support, both from outside consultants as well as by our District Math Specialist. As teachers loop with their classes next year, and teach a new grade level, these math supports will remain in place. Additionally, some teachers will participate in the lab classroom and receive coaching in a math workshop model.

### **Goal 2:**

Continue to work on linking literacy assessment to our instruction. Teachers will adopt a new assessment tool, the Fountas and Pinnell BAS and use the information in order to develop comprehensive literacy instruction.

*Outcomes/evidence and means by which they were assessed:*

Teachers from grade 1- grade 6 implemented the Fountas and Pinnell BAS. Teachers assessed students between two and three times throughout the school year. Teachers received training in both administering the assessment, as well as interpreting the results from the assessment. Merriam School will continue to use this assessment as a roadmap for individualized literacy instruction for all students.

**Goal 3:** Merriam will continue to develop projects that integrate narrative, persuasive and informational writing and will begin working on integrating content area reading material at individual student levels in order to support project work

*Outcomes/evidence and means by which they were assessed:*

Teachers worked this year at integrating three types of writing into project work. The projects, as well as the literacy are reflected on curriculum maps at each grade level. Teachers will work on completing projects by January 2017 and curriculum maps by June 2017. This work will continue to be supported by literacy coaching and by consultants, as well as collaboration time.

**Goal 4:** Implement the school theme “Building Group Skills Across the Community.”

*Outcomes/evidence and means by which they were assessed:*

This theme was implemented throughout the school in a variety of ways. Faculty meetings had a group skills focus, this year working mostly at “listening”. Committee work supported group skills within grade level structures. Grade level facilitators met monthly to build capacity in guiding their teams forward in their ability to collaborate and in order to increase efficiency of time and build capacity among all team members. Theme Days and Community Days incorporated activities that supported group skills with students.