

**In June 2013, the Members of the Madison School Board contracted with Michael Lancor to conduct this study.**

**This study was undertaken for the purposes of:**

- 1) Identifying schedule formats and educational programs that are strongly supported by staff and students and appear to be having a positive impact on learning and the learning environment.
- 2) Maximizing the use of all teachers and paraprofessionals in delivering educational programs in grades K to 6.
- 3) Making recommendations and/or presenting options that could potentially modify and/or improve educational programming and scheduling.
- 4) Highlighting assessment data that administration and teaching staff should further analyze and review.

**As part of the study:**

- 1) Review all current 2012-2013 student, teacher and paraprofessional schedules.
- 2) Become familiar with educational programs (e.g. curriculum, time spent learning various subjects, special education programs, Title I and Title II) in place for students.
- 3) Conduct a preliminary review of available assessment data (e.g. NECAP, Free and Reduced Lunch, Effective Schools Surveys).
- 4) Meet with administration (Principal, SPED Director, Superintendent) and teaching staff (case managers, grade level teachers, special area teachers, paraeducators).

**This report includes:**

- 1) A list of strengths regarding the current use of staff and current educational programs in place.
- 2) Recommendations as to how the current use of staff and/or current educational programs could be modified or adjusted for the purpose of improving instruction and learning.
- 3) A rationale for each recommendation presented.

**Note:** It is important to note that this study is in no way designed to evaluate individual staff members. The sole purposes are to analyze the most effective uses of educational staff and educational programming.

## Organization of Summary Report

As noted in the Table of Contents, there are three appendices included in this report. Each of these three reports includes identification of strengths and concerns as identified or noted by the Association for Effective Schools (AES) Survey Results, a preliminary analysis of assessment data, and interviews with Madison Elementary School (MES) staff members.

In this Summary Report, strengths and concerns noted in all three appendices will be highlighted. All of the information in this Summary Report regarding AES Surveys, Free/Reduced Lunch Eligibility, NECAP scores is taken from the three appendices, however, it is important to note that much more detail can be found in the appendices for all three of these types of data.

In addition, recommendations will be made for seven different areas:

- Existing Student and Staff Schedules
- Language Arts Curriculums
- Mathematics Curriculums
- Amount of Time for Science and Social Studies
- Use of Assessment Information to Make Decisions Regarding Educational Programs (e.g. Curriculum, Instruction)
- Improving Instructional Efforts Through Building Wide Leadership
- Use of Technology by Students

### Association for Effective Schools (AES) Survey Results Madison Elementary School

The Effective Schools Surveys are designed to determine the perspectives of parents, students and staff in regards to the **seven correlates of effective schools** as determined by research conducted and analyzed by the Association for Effective Schools. **The correlates are defined as the means to achieving high and equitable levels of student learning.** For more information on these seven correlates, please visit the Association for Effective Schools website ([www.mes.org](http://www.mes.org)).

Appendix A of this report provides a very detailed analysis of the AES results for Madison Elementary School (MES). Below is a brief summary of the strengths and areas of possible concern as determined by a review of the survey results. **It is very important to note that the AES surveys completed by students, parents and staff members were very positive in general.** The AES survey results identify far more strengths than areas of possible concern for the seven correlates of Effective Schools as in place at Madison Elementary School. The term “areas of possible concern” is being used because in most cases the areas of possible concern listed below did not meet the AES definition for “concern”. The AES definitions for each of the correlates of Effective Schools appear below.

## **Summary of Strengths of Madison Elementary School as per the AES Surveys**

The **five correlates below were deemed to be strengths** of Madison Elementary School by two or all three of the groups surveyed (parents, staff and students). Listed under each correlate are questions that were deemed to be a strength by each subgroup (parents, students and staff) with a matching question.

- **Frequent Monitoring (Deemed a strength by all three groups.)**

- Student academic progress is measured frequently. A variety of assessment measures are used. The results of the assessments are used to improve individual student performance and also to improve the instructional program.

**Specific Strengths for Frequent Monitoring:**

- Teachers place emphasis on learning content.
- Teachers place an emphasis on students learning skills and strategies.
- Standardized tests that match the learning objectives with what has been taught are used.
- Careful frequent monitoring practices keep teachers aware of students having academic difficulty; problems are noted and help is provided.

- **High Expectations (Deemed a strength by all three groups.)**

- There is a climate of expectation in which the staff believe and demonstrate that all students can attain mastery of the essential content and school skills, and the staff also believe that they have the capability to help all students achieve that mastery.

**Specific Strengths for High Expectations:**

- All students are encouraged to develop responsibility for completing assigned work in a timely manner.
- Emphasis is placed on learning as a result of instruction.
- Teachers make certain that high expectations are communicated to ALL students.
- The faculty is committed to the task of helping ALL students master important learning objectives.
- The school provides enriching and stimulating activities in which ALL students participate.
- Hallways and classrooms are decorated with student academic work, posters and seasonal artwork.
- This school promotes an academic learning climate by establishing high expectations for ALL students.
- Each year ALL students are expected to learn what is needed in order to be successful at the next level of education.

- **Safe & Orderly Environment (Deemed a strength by all three groups.)**

- There is an orderly, purposeful, businesslike atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning.

**Specific Strengths for Safe & Orderly Environment:**

- Most discipline issues are handled by classroom teachers.
- There are clearly stated school rules defining expectations of student behavior.
- Student behavior contributes to a safe and orderly environment.
- Physical facilities are kept clean.
- This school is a safe and secure place to work and learn.
- Students demonstrate respect for each other.

• **Opportunity to Learn/Time on Task (Deemed a strength by staff and students.)**

- Teachers allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential content and skills. For a high percentage of this time students are engaged in whole class or large group, teacher-directed, planned learning activities.

**Specific Strengths for Opportunity to Learn/Time on Task:**

- Students are given the time, help and encouragement necessary to achieve desired performance levels.
- Teachers appropriately praise students for adequate and outstanding performance.
- Students work together to help each other learn.
- The school seeks and provides multiple methods to ensure learning success for ALL students.

• **Clear School Mission (Deemed a strength by parents and staff.)**

- There is a clearly articulated school mission through which the staff shares an understanding of and commitment to instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures and accountability. Staff members accept responsibility for students' learning of the school's essential curricular goals.

**Specific Strengths for Clear School Mission:**

- The focus of the school is "Learning By All."
- Mission statements slogans, mottoes, and displays promote the school's academic goals.
- One goal of this school is to provide an education that emphasizes basic skills.

**Summary of Possible Concerns as per the AES Surveys**

The two correlates below were both in effect deemed strengths by students. Neither of the two correlates was deemed a strength by parents or staff. **However, neither of these two correlates was deemed a concern as defined by AES.** Specific strengths and possible concerns for these two correlates appear in Appendix A of this report.

- **Instructional Leadership (Deemed a strength by students, but not by parents and staff.)**

- The principal acts as an instructional leader and effectively and persistently communicates that mission to the staff, parents and students. The principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program.

- **Home-School Relations (In effect, deemed a strength by students, but not by parents and staff.)**

- Parents understand and support the school’s basic mission and are given the opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve that mission.

### **Free/Reduced School Lunch Eligibility for Grades 1 to 6**

While examining NECAP results for Madison Elementary School (MES) students, it became apparent that it was important to compare the percent of students eligible for free/reduced lunch at MES to the percent of students throughout the State.

**Over the Past Three Years**

| <b>School Year</b> | <b>% F/R State</b> | <b>% MES</b> | <b>% Higher for MES</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 2010-2011          | 27.65%             | 38.31%       | +10.66%                 |
| 2011-2012          | 28.71%             | 36.50%       | + 7.79                  |
| 2012-2013          | 29.28%             | 38.97%       | + 9.69                  |

During each of the past three school years the percent of MES students who are eligible for free/reduced lunches is significantly higher than the percent of students statewide. In 2010-2011 the difference was significant at the 99% confidence interval and in both 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 the difference was significant at the 95% confidence level.

This very important information has been included in this report because it must be carefully considered when comparing NECAP scores for MES students to statewide NECAP scores. In 2012-2013, 38.97% of the students attending MES lived in a household that meets the eligibility requirement for free or reduced lunch.

### **Summary of Analysis of NECAP Results**

**All Students Over the Past Three Years:**

- The percent of MES students who scored proficient in **reading** is significantly higher at the .99 confidence interval than the percent of students statewide.
- The percent of MES students who scored proficient in **mathematics** is significantly higher at the .68 confidence interval than the percent of students statewide.

- The percent of MES students who scored proficient in **writing** is significantly lower at the .68 confidence level than the percent of students statewide.
- The percent of MES students who scored proficient in **science** is significantly higher at the .68 confidence interval than the percent of students statewide.

**Economically Disadvantaged Students (EDS):** This cohort includes all MES students who access free/reduced lunch.

- Over the past seven years, MES EDS students have scored significantly above the statewide average at the .99 confidence level in both **mathematics and reading**.

**Students Without Economic Disadvantage (SWED):** This cohort includes all MES students who do not access free/reduced lunch.

- **Mathematics:** From 2006 through 2009, the percent of SWED students who scored proficient was significantly lower than students statewide at the .99 confidence level.

- **Mathematics:** From 2010 through 2012, the percent of SWED students who scored proficient was significantly higher than students statewide at the .95 confidence level.

- **Mathematics Difference:** The difference in the percent of SWED scoring proficient in **math** during 2010 to 2012 (84.0%) compared to the percent scoring proficient in math during 2006-2009 (61.4%) in my opinion is not only statistically significant, but the gain of +22.6% is rather astounding.

- **Reading:** From 2006 through 2008, the percent of SWED students who scored proficient was not significantly different than the percent of students statewide.

- **Reading:** From 2009 through 2012, the percent of SWED students who scored proficient was significantly higher at the .99 confidence level than the percent of students statewide.

- **Reading Difference:** The difference in the percent of SWED scoring proficient in during 2009 to 2012 (90.8%) compared to the percent scoring proficient during 2006-2008 (77.4%) in my opinion is not only statistically significant, but the gain of +13.4% is also rather astounding.

• **Gender Over the Past Three Years:**

- **Mathematics:** MES male and female students both scored significantly above the statewide average at the .68 confidence level.

- **Reading:** MES male and female students both scored significantly above the statewide average at the .99 confidence level.

- **Opinion Statement:** Over the past three to four school years, there has been a dramatic increase in the percent of MES students proficient in both reading and mathematics in comparison to the previous three to four school years. This indicates to me that there have been curricular and instructional changes over the past three to four years that have had a positive impact on MES students' ability to score at the proficient level on reading and mathematics NECAP tests. Two changes that have occurred in the past four years include extensive differentiated instruction training for teachers and implementation of a three-tier Response to Intervention (RtI) program. It would take another extensive study to directly relate these program changes at MES to the increase in MES students' NECAP scores; however, I suspect that these two changes have had a direct impact on NECAP scores in both reading and mathematics.

### **Interviews with Staff at Madison Elementary School June 2013**

Appendix C of this report includes an in-depth description of the strengths and concerns noted during the fourteen interviews conducted with staff members. A series of questions were prepared in advance for each group or individual interviewed.

#### **The following questions were asked during all interviews:**

- What do you feel are the strengths of your existing schedules and/or educational programs?
- Do you have any recommendations for ways your schedules and/or educational programs can be modified or improved?
- If you play a role in implementing RtI, then do you have any specific recommendations regarding future implementation of this program?
- What programs and/or approaches are used during Language Arts (reading and writing) time? What Mathematics program do you use? How much time daily is dedicated to LA and mathematics?
- Do you feel that adequate time is dedicated to social studies and science instruction?
- How do you use assessment information (e.g. NECAP, NWEA, Dibels) to make decisions regarding educational programs (e.g. curriculum, instruction)?
- Have you begun the process of matching Common Core State Standards for your grade level to your literacy (reading and writing) and mathematics curriculums?
- Do you have any suggestions as to how staff and administration at MES can improve instructional efforts regarding topics such as building wide leadership, identifying priorities for professional development, determining curriculum areas that need to be modified or improved, evaluating successful school practices, and facilitating change?
- In what ways do you anticipate using Kuno tablets with your students as part of the SAU's 1-to-1 initiative in 2013-2014.

## **Recommendations to Be Considered by Madison School Board, SAU #13 Superintendent of Schools, MES Principal, SAU #13 Special Education Director, and MES Teaching Staff**

All recommendations made in this report are based on consideration of the Effective Schools Survey Results, NECAP scores analyses over time, and strengths and concerns noted during interviews with MES staff members and administration.

Strengths and concerns noted during interviews with MES staff members and administration are summarized when needed during this section of the report. Appendix C includes complete lists of perceived strengths and concerns brought forward during the MES staff interviews.

The recommendations made in this report will be categorized under the following seven educational staff and programming topics:

- A) Existing Student and Staff Schedules**
- B) Language Arts Curriculums**
- C) Mathematics Curriculums**
- D) Amount of Time for Science and Social Studies**
- E) Use of Assessment Information to Make Decisions Regarding Educational Programs (e.g. Curriculum, Instruction)**
- F) Suggestions as to How Staff and Administration Can Improve Instructional Efforts**
- G) Anticipated Ways to Use Kuno Tablets to Support the SAU's 1-to1 Initiative**

Note: It is important to note at this time that there are current strengths associated with each of these seven areas. Some of the recommendations in this report support current ongoing staff patterns and programs. When recommendations for change are made, current strengths that should remain in place are also noted.

### **A) Existing Student and Staff Schedules (Strengths)**

A summary of the strengths and/or concerns regarding existing student and staff schedules is included in this main study report. More detailed lists of strengths and concerns are included in Appendix C.

The recommendations below regarding existing student and staff schedules were discussed with the MES Principal after school ended in June 2013. The recommendations were discussed again in August with the MES Principal and also with the SAU #13 Special Education Director. Following each recommendation is a note from the MES Principal and/or SPED Director providing an update regarding the recommendation.

**Note:** It is important for me to state that the MES Principal and SAU #13 Special Education Director have worked together in an effort to address scheduling concerns brought forward by staff or me. In my opinion, they have done so in a collaborative manner in an

effort to help “fine-tune” schedule changes that may positively impact educational programs in place (e.g. RtI, language arts, math) that already have a positive impact on student learning. In other words, they are fine-tuning a schedule that was already focused on providing a tiered model of instruction that serves all students (both special and regular education) who need support very well. Special education, regular education, and reading teachers are all actively engaged in providing student support in a collaborative manner.

As an outside observer, I was extremely impressed with the RtI and special education services that are being provided by the regular education, special education, and reading teachers at MES. In my opinion, the Madison School Board, administration and MES staff can be very proud of the extensive manner in which the RtI model has been implemented.

### **Special Area Teacher Schedules:**

- PE, art, music and library media schedules work well and are supported by both special area teachers and classroom teachers.
- Splitting larger classes into A and B for special area subjects; allows for more individual attention.

**Recommendation #A1:** Continue to maintain current scheduling format for special area classes.

**MES Principal's Note:** *We are able to meet this recommendation and maintain the same level of service for all special area classes. We did change the schedule to have art and music on Wednesdays and Thursdays. PE will be on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.*

### **Core and RtI Schedules for Reading and Math:**

- There is very strong support for the way core and intervention (RtI reading and math) blocks of 90 minutes are currently scheduled. The current schedule is considered to be much more beneficial than schedules used in the past.
- Students are not pulled out of intervention times for other services.
- In 2012-2013, there was more consistency of adequate staffing and in grades K, 1 and 2.
- Teachers are able to combine students from two primary grade classrooms because intervention times are the same.
- Core time for reading in a.m. and math in p.m. works very well.
- Great to have math core and intervention in the morning; math is a hard subject and students are fresher in the a.m.; 4; RtI was tremendous this year with adequate support.

**Recommendation #A2:** Continue to schedule blocks of 90 minutes for core and intervention math and reading in grades K to 4.

**MES Principal's Note:** *In place again for 2013-2014.*

**Recommendation #A3:** Whenever possible, continue to avoid pulling students out of intervention time for other services.

**MES Principal's Note:** *Efforts in progress to implement this recommendation.*

**Recommendation #A4:** When there are two classes at a given grade level, continue to schedule the same core and intervention math and reading times for both classes. This allows teachers to combine students from the two classes for instruction and intervention.

**MES Principal's Note:** *Core instruction in math and reading are consistent at each grade level.*

**Scheduling of Data, School Support and SPED Teams:**

- There is very strong support in grades K to 6 for the format of having the Data Team meet one time every 7 weeks for each grade level and to have both reading and math data discussed during these meetings.
- Student Support Team (school nurse, primary and secondary teacher, guidance counselor, SLT and SPED teachers) meetings are held on Fridays and are very valuable.

**Recommendation #A5:** Continue to schedule rotating Data Team meetings once a week with each grade having a meeting every 7 weeks.

**MES Principal's Note:** *In place again for 2013-2014.*

**Other Scheduling Strengths:**

- Morning and afternoon K classes are both heterogeneous.
- Special education teachers are able to take some students out of core time for 15 minutes (primary grades) or 30 minutes (upper grades) for SPED support.
- There is a set guidance curriculum with flexibility for current relevancy and the guidance counselor rotates into grade K to 5 classrooms to provide instruction.

**Recommendation #A6:** Continue to have heterogeneous sections of kindergarten.

**MES Principal's Note:** *In place again for 2013-2014.*

**Recommendation #A7:** Continue to allow students to be pulled out of scheduled intervention times for direct services by a special education teacher or paraeducator.

**MES Principal's Note:** *This is done on an as needed basis with special education services as the priority. We make every effort not to pull students from intervention time.*

**Recommendation #A8:** Continue to schedule time for the guidance counselor to provide support and/or instruction to students in grades K to 5 with classroom teachers remaining in the classrooms.

**MES Principal's Note:** *In place again for 2013-2014.*

## **A) Existing Student and Staff Schedules (Concerns)**

### **Staffing needs and uses:**

- Two paraeducator positions were eliminated in the past. We were previously able to service all three RtI tiers, but now only able to service Tiers 2 and 3, sometimes only Tier 3.
- Concerns about usefulness of reading teachers' time when they are providing support in the classroom rather than meeting with students in small groups.

**Notes:** In June 2013, the Madison School Board authorized the principal to hire two part-time (3 hours per day each) paraeducators for 2013-2014. In addition, in August 2013 the Madison School Board authorized the hiring of one additional SPED paraeducator: (.5) 1-to-1 and (.5) resource room. This should allow for more paraeducator support in the classrooms during RtI times.

**Recommendation #A9:** Reading teachers' time should only be used to support RtI and/or core reading centers time in the classroom, or to provide supplemental reading support to students individually or in small groups.

**MES Principal's Note:** *Currently the reading teachers are scheduled to support core and/or intervention in reading for all grades based on student needs. Schedules will be modified based on student progress and data review throughout the school year. Opportunities will be maximized based on staff schedules and student need. Times should be set aside for observation/mentoring and collaboration with classroom teachers.*

### **Concerns regarding RtI and Reading Scheduling:**

- Title I/RtI teacher covers grades K to 6; would be much better if she taught math or reading rather than both; does both but does not have time to meet with all the teachers.
- RtI coordinator spends approximately three hours daily providing support instruction to special education students.
- Reading specialist spends one hour each day providing support instruction to special education students.
- We do a good job with K students in reading, but not enough time to provide adequate interventions in math.

**Recommendation #A10:** Reevaluate the roles and schedules for the reading specialist and reading teacher. If possible, avoid having the Title I teacher teaching both math and reading to students in all grade levels (K to 6).

**MES Principal's Note:** *The RtI/Title 1 teachers are scheduled based on student need and may be utilized to provide small group interventions in math, reading and writing. This is a work in progress due to some staffing changes. One teacher will be teaching Kindergarten in the afternoon and a second will be teaching Kindergarten in the a.m. The roles will be reversed and each teacher will provide small group interventions when they are not with the K group. We will make every effort to have our new reading specialist provide reading support for all grades.*

**Recommendation #A11:** The RtI coordinator position could become more managerial in nature with coordinator also serving as Title 1 and II Project Manager, thus allowing reading specialist to spend more time instructing students.

**MES Principal's Note:** *The RTI Coordinator has assumed responsibilities (under my supervision) to manage Title 1 and Title II responsibilities. We will determine the effectiveness of this transition for future assignments. This will provide the incoming reading specialist time to get acclimated to MES and her new role.*

**Concerns regarding RtI and Reading Scheduling:**

- Find a way if possible to increase number of staff available during RtI times.
- RtI coordinator is in charge of scheduling regular education paraeducators and teachers for RtI, but not SPED paraeducators or teachers; may better be able to meet RtI staffing needs if scheduling included SPED staff.
- Fully support RtI, but feel we could use existing staff more effectively.
- We need more consistency in staffing throughout the year, rather than fewer paraeducators when some are transferred to primary grades for RtI.
- In the past, were able to schedule RtI and special education services more effectively when paraeducators were assigned to grade levels.

**Recommendation #A12:** Develop a scheduling format that coordinates the scheduling of all regular education and special education paraeducators who are in classrooms during RtI intervention time periods; involve RtI coordinator, principal, SPED director, and two special education teachers in scheduling intervention times.

**MES Principal's and SPED Director's Note:** *We met together in August and a complete schedule for all special education students was developed, along with a realignment of case manager duties for all staff. Paraprofessionals were assigned to grade level duties and/or 1:1 assignments. Administration recommended, and the school board approved, the hiring of an additional special education paraeducator to round out the assignments and provide some flexibility for small group special education support at each grade level.*

**Recommendation #A13:** Continue to schedule paraeducators in a limited number of grade levels in an effort to help with scheduling.

**MES Principal's and SPED Director's Note:** *Complete. Paraprofessionals have been assigned grade level responsibilities as well as 1:1 assignments based on IEP requirements.*

- Scheduling intervention time right after recess or at the end of the day is not effective.
- RtI time should not be scheduled during the first or last half hour of the day; difficult to involve special education staff during these time periods.
- Scheduling RtI time 4 times per week would be ideal.
- Great to have math core and intervention in the morning; math is a hard subject and students are fresher in the a.m.

**Recommendation #A14:** Whenever possible, avoid scheduling RtI intervention time at the end of the school day or immediately following lunch/recess. If this cannot be avoided, then adjust schedules quarterly or mid-year so intervention times for a given classroom occur during these time slots for half of the year only.

**MES Principal's Note:** *We have readjusted intervention times for all grade levels. We made sure that each grade has at least 4 days of intervention. Some schedule changes include math and reading alternating between a.m. and p.m. based on the most effective use of time within the schedule. End of the day intervention times have been adjusted to end no later than 3:15 p.m.*

- At the upper grade levels, a decrease in number of paraeducators has resulted in fewer individuals available during RtI time, therefore groups are larger (e.g. 2 groups instead of 4) with focus primarily on Tier 3. In the past, we were able to carefully look at what students in all three tiers needed and were able to cater better to their needs.
- Cannot implement RtI effectively with only one paraeducator working with one teacher.

**Recommendation #A15:** After implementing Recommendation #11, identify any intervention time blocks that are understaffed (not enough staff members to provide support for both Tier 2 and 3 students).

**MES Principal's and SPED Director's Note:** *In progress. We will evaluate this process and staff as necessary. The addition of the full time special education paraprofessional will help provide needed support for several grade levels.*

**Note:** The MES Principal and SAU #13 SPED Director will consult with one another if there is a need to make any staffing reassignments during the course of the school year.

**Concerns regarding scheduling for Special Ed Services:**

- SPED teachers do not have enough time to provide all required services; sometimes paraeducators provide instruction; for Tier 3 students there is a blending of core and intervention times.
- Once the schedule is set, it is difficult to schedule time for new students.
- When new students with special needs were identified it was necessary for the reading teacher and RtI teacher/coordinator to provide direct instruction to meet the students IEP needs.
- Both reading teachers involved in teaching reading to SPED students due to a lack of SPED staffing.
- If students have instructional needs identified in IEPs, then services should be provided by SPED staff members.

**Recommendation #A16:** The SAU #13 SPED director, MES principal and two MES special education teachers should meet during July 2013 to determine SPED staffing needs to implement the IEPs for MES students with special needs. Staffing recommendations, if any, should then be made to the Superintendent and the MES School Board.

**MES Principal's and SPED Director's Note:** *Complete. We received School Board approval to hire one additional paraprofessional for special education.*

- Amount of planning time not the same for all paraeducators. One paraeducator has only one planning time (30 minutes) each week.
- Paraeducators do not have adequate time to meet and plan with case manager (teacher). One paraeducator has only two meetings (30 minutes each) with case manager.

**Recommendation #A17:** Schedules for paraeducators must include adequate time to meet weekly with supervising teachers to allow communication of instructional expectations of paraeducators.

**MES Principal's and SPED Director's Note:** *Complete. The new schedule changes provide opportunities for paraeducators to meet with supervising teachers.*

**Concerns regarding scheduling of SPED Teams Meetings:**

- It would be very helpful to have SPED team (SPED director and teachers, OT, PT, School Psychologist, SLT) meetings every two weeks; if SPED director cannot make all meetings, then have another person serve as the team leader.

**Recommendation #A18:** The SPED Director for SAU #13 should schedule regular meetings with the special education team (e.g. teachers, school psychologist, OT, PT). These meeting should be held at least monthly or twice a month if possible.

**MES Principal's and SPED Director's Note:** *Complete. A 2013-2014 calendar for special educators, including training dates, has been developed by the SPED Director. The SPED Director will meet with the MES special education teachers and schedule regular meetings.*

**Concerns regarding Kindergarten:**

- An effort has been made the past four years to implement a full-day kindergarten program, but it has not passed at the polls. A full day K program would allow teacher and staff to better meet the needs of K students in both reading and math.

**Recommendation #A19:** The Madison School Board, SAU #13 Superintendent of Schools and Madison School Principal should continue efforts to gain voter approval to implement a full day kindergarten program in 2014-2015.

**MES Principal's Note:** *This has failed the past 4 years. I will support the superintendent and school board as we move forward.*

**Other scheduling suggestions to consider:** Appendix C includes other scheduling suggestions that should be considered by administration when time allows.

## **B) Language Arts (LA) Curriculum**

### **Current Curriculum:**

- LA is covered through Treasures and supplemental materials (e.g. Triumphs, 6 Plus 1 Trait Writing, Write Source, Foundations).
- Schedules include 1 hour for reading core and 1 hour for math core, and 30 minutes each for reading and math interventions.
- Treasures is aligned with CCSS and time has been provided for teachers to align curriculum with CCSS.

### **Strengths:**

- There is general support for the Treasures reading program following the first year of school wide implementation.
- The Treasures program is very rich; much richer than Trophies.
- Integrates some science and social studies into reading program.
- Lots of writing with Treasures with integrated writing lessons.
- Members of the LA task force have matched CCSS to our Treasures curriculum and teachers have worked to make sure the standards are reflected accurately. At the end of the year we will look at what was really taught and how accurate the alignment was.

### **Concerns:**

- 2012-13 was a learning year with the newly adopted Treasures series. As noted under strengths, Treasures is a very extensive program and several teachers expressed concern about not being able to cover all of the Treasures lessons for each unit (e.g. able to do one story in a unit, but not time to do second).
- Use Treasures for core time; does not include reading books or novels.
- Some concern that phonics is weak, but believe it can be reinforced.

**Recommendation #B1:** Teaching staff should continue to refine implementation of Treasures in an effort to identify the core lessons that need to be covered in each unit at each grade level so that all units at each grade level can be covered during the school year. Administration should make sure that the core lessons are covered at each grade level.

**Rationale #B1:** The Treasures program was selected by the teaching staff, has good support despite some expected first-year implementation challenges, and is a very good match to the RtI model in place at MES.

### **Concerns:**

- There is general consensus that there is no school wide writing curriculum; writing is part of Treasures but not being fully implemented (time may be a factor).
- Writing skills as a whole are very weak.
- Students write and read all day long, but need to be more specific about purposeful writing (writing within Treasures does use 6 Plus 1 Trait).
- Piloted Writing Without Tears in grades K and 1, but budget lines were not approved for K to 3 then 4 to 5.

- The percent of MES students who scored proficient in **writing** over the past three years is significantly lower at the .68 confidence level than the percent of students statewide.

**Recommendation #B2:** Implement the revised writing curriculum developed during summer 2013 by members of the MES teaching staff. The writing curriculum has been revised to link with the Common Core State Standards and frameworks were developed for each grade level. Guides for teachers will be developed identifying content, assessments, and uses of technology for each grade level.

**Rationale #B2:** The need to strengthen the writing curriculum was already on the radar for the MES teaching staff and the work done this past summer should have a positive impact on student learning.

## C) Mathematics Curriculums

### Current Curriculums:

- Math program is Everyday Math.
- Schedules include 1 hour for reading core and 1 hour for math core, and 30 minutes each for reading and math interventions.

### Strengths:

- In general, there is strong support for the Everyday Math curriculum, it is already aligned with the CCSS, and for the most part teachers are able to complete math units in one hour (may be some holes).
- Training was provided in 2011-2012 to decide what needs to be taught to meet the core curriculum.
- The difference in the percent of SWED scoring proficient in **math** on NECAP tests during 2010 to 2012 (84.0%) compared to the percent scoring proficient in math during 2006-2009 (61.4%) in my opinion is not only statistically significant, but the gain of +22.6% is rather astounding.

### Concerns:

- Number World and Do The Math programs don't dovetail with Everyday Math.
- Everyday Math has some holes in curriculum and at some grade levels it is difficult to complete within 60 minutes allotted per day.

**Recommendation #C1:** Teachers should continue to refine implementation of the Everyday Math program in an effort to further identify the core lessons in each unit that need to be taught each school year. As with any sequential program, it is important that teachers cover all units for each grade level each year.

**Rationale #C1:** As noted in the assessment review of this report, MES students have demonstrated exceptional gains on NECAP tests over the past three years. The Everyday Math program, in conjunction with the RtI model, seems to be working.

## D) Amount of Time for Science and Social Studies

### Strengths:

- Treasures is aligned with Florida's standards for science and social studies; science and social studies units can be driven by content of Treasures.
- Treasures at least links some social studies to reading.
- Served on committee that selected Treasures; looked like the best, but we knew we would need to supplement for science and social studies.
- Over the past three years, the percent of MES students who scored proficient on NECAP tests in **science** is significantly higher at the .68 confidence interval than the percent of students statewide.

### Concerns:

- There was general consensus among the teaching staff that there is not enough time in the week devoted to teaching social studies and science.
- Treasures covers some science and a little social studies, but barely touches the surface.
- Some grade level schedules only allot 30 minutes per day for both subjects together; teach one unit of science then one unit of social studies.
- Hands on activities for science very limited.
- In past years in grades 5 and 6 there were four one hour or 40 minute blocks daily (M-SS-Sci-LA).
- Grade 5 currently has 3 hours/week (average of 36 minutes daily) combined for SS and Science (alternates by half year).
- Grade 6 has 50 minutes for writing, social studies or science daily; alternate during different parts of the year; there is a formulated science curriculum but it needs to be focused on; no time for depth.

**Recommendation #D1:** During summer 2014 allow time for a committee of teachers to explore ways to more closely align science and social studies with the Treasures program, and/or make modifications to the daily/weekly schedules to allot more time over the course of the week to science and social studies, especially in grades 4, 5 and 6.

**Rationale D#1:** This is an important issue, but one that is rather challenging to solve. There are only so many minutes in a day or a week. A decision was made in the past to increase the amount of time allocated to both mathematics and reading and to implement the RtI model. As for student learning in math and reading, these decisions have paid big dividends. On the other hand, the time allotted for social studies and science was diminished significantly. Despite this decrease, MES grade 4 students have performed well on the science NECAP tests over the past three years. However, I think that in order for MES students to continue to keep up with national standards for science and social studies, in particular science, a way will need to be found to increase the amount of time allotted for science and social studies.

## **E) Use of Assessment Information to Make Decisions Regarding Educational Programs (e.g. Curriculum, Instruction)**

### **Strengths:**

- Current schedule and format for Data Team meetings is strongly supported by teachers at all grade levels.
- Data meetings are on a rotating schedule, therefore a data meeting for each given grade is held every 7 weeks.
- Data team meetings are very productive; reading specialists involved every week.
- Data meetings have been streamlined, are well organized and positive with 7 weeks rotation. SPED teachers attend appropriate grade level data meetings.
- Data meetings are great resources (every 7 weeks) where we talk about data and students then rearrange curriculum and instruction; focus skills on weak areas; cannot speak highly enough about these meetings.
- Like data team meetings; works better because no longer losing planning or RtI time to attend data team meetings.

### **Concerns:**

- Coordination of communication between regular and SPED teaching staff needs to be improved.
- Ideally Data Team would meet more than once every seven weeks.
- Data meetings are good, but support changes during the year due to needs at other grade levels (e.g. centers for grades K – 3 creates demand for extra persons).

**Recommendation #E1:** Continue to schedule data meetings on a rotating schedule allowing each grade to meet every 7 weeks. Continue to use the same format for identifying areas of focus during RtI times and making decisions to rearrange curriculum and instruction regularly during the school year.

**Rationale #E1:** In my opinion, the teaching staff and administration at MES have put into place exceptional procedures and practices that allow teachers to use assessment information to make decisions regarding educational programs. The fact that teachers at each grade level revisit student data and classroom instruction every seven weeks is undoubtedly one of the main reasons the RtI program is so successful. In summary, “keep up the good work.”

## **F) Suggestions as to How Staff and Administration Can Improve Instructional Efforts**

### **Building Wide Leadership:**

#### **Strengths:**

- Principal is 110% behind RtI and technology initiatives.

**Concerns/Suggestions:**

- Instructional leadership efforts need to be improved; communication needs to improve; reduce the number of committees.
- A mentoring program for new teachers would be an excellent advancement. New staff members who come into MES have to figure out everything for themselves.
- Only able to have one staff meeting monthly due to other monthly meetings (e.g. committees and PLC).
- School-wide communications important; definitely need more time for all-school communication and collaboration; use to have 30 minute meetings weekly with principal for grades K-3 and 4-6.
- We never have enough time to collaborate vertically.
- We have too many things to focus on at one time; difficult to do any one thing well; need time to meet across grade levels.

**Recommendation #F1:** The Madison School principal was aware of concerns regarding amount of time allotted to teaching staff meetings on a monthly basis. As a result, all professional staff will meet together three times per month. One of the meetings will be a general professional staff meeting, the second will focus on the newly written writing curriculum, and the third will focus on implementing the 1-to-1 technology initiative. In addition, one general staff meeting will be held monthly and will include both teachers and paraeducators.

**Rationale #F1:** The principal's revised plan for teaching staff meetings should provide much more frequent opportunities for the principal and teachers to address some of the concerns noted above (e.g. time to collaborate vertically, focusing on one issue at a time, more frequent communication).

**Recommendation #F2:** The NH Department of Education recommended that the Madison Elementary School become one of the first NH public schools to participate in the SWIFT (School Wide Integrated Framework to Transformation) process. SWIFT is a national K-8 center that provides academic and behavioral support to promote the learning and academic achievement of all students, including those with the most extensive needs. The Madison principal and RtI coordinator attended a week-long SWIFT implementation training session this past summer.

**Rationale #F2:** When the Madison principal and Madison School Board accepted the invitation to become part of the SWIFT initiative, they were accepting an opportunity that is designed to lead to further school improvement. In addition, they were also taking on the responsibility of overseeing the successful implementation of the SWIFT process. The burden of this responsibility and exciting challenge will fall on the shoulders of the MES principal and will require effective building wide leadership skills.

**Identifying Priorities for Professional Development:****Strengths:**

- Summer curriculum time in 2013 will be devoted to writing and Kuno tablets.

**Concerns/Suggestions:**

- Writing needs to be an important area of focus; often have to let go of writing lessons due to time constraints.
- Early Release days need to be used more effectively; need specific topics; could be used for vertical alignment collaboration.
- More effective use of staff on ski days.
- We need to provide more PD for teachers so they are able to teach math using best practices and current research.

**Recommendation #F3:** The new schedule for staff meetings will allow inclusion of professional development activities that focus on writing and technology on a monthly basis. I recommend that staff members leading the writing curriculum and technology initiatives be involved in planning these monthly meetings with the principal.

**Rationale #F3:** The new schedule for staff meetings provides an opportunity to integrate professional development and curriculum implementation. There are numerous MES teachers who can provide in-house leadership when it comes to both of these initiatives.

**Determining curriculum areas that need to be modified or improved:****Suggestions:**

- If we look at our data, we can determine what we need to work on. For example, our math scores are lower than our reading scores. We should “drill down” to find out what we need to work on at each grade level to improve these scores. We have done some of that with STAR math.
- Data discussed during Data Team meetings should be used to plan our professional development. Our PD committee should create a multi-year plan with goals and use data to make sure we are improving and making changes as needed.

**Recommendation #F4:** Decisions regarding annual emphases for professional development should continue to be driven by training needs identified collaboratively by teachers and administration.

**Rationale #F4:** The SWIFT process will undoubtedly incorporate identification of future professional development priorities. As has been the past practice at MES, the careful analysis of student assessment data should continue to be one of the primary factors considered when setting professional development priorities.

## **G) Anticipated Ways to Use Kuno Tablets to Support the SAU 1-to-1 Initiative**

**Consultant’s Note:** A great deal has happened since I discussed the SAU 1-to-1 technology initiative with the MES staff members. A number of MES teachers participated in the two day training session held in July and all MES teachers participated in the additional two

days of orientation and training held in August. All teachers in SAU 13 have been issued a Kuno tablet and all students at MES will be issued Kuno tablets by the end of October. The comments below under “anticipated use” and “concerns” were made in June prior to any of the SAU training sessions. I am including them because they most likely still reflect ongoing thoughts as the MES staff members venture into this exciting 1-to-1 initiative.

### **Anticipated Use:**

- We could go on line for various videos (e.g. jumping rope); may be able to keep activity log and Fitness Gram (program for grades 4 to 6 has student part) on tablets.
- There are tons of applications available for Speech Language Therapy.
- You Tube videos for demos; close up view of artwork.
- Can be uses for math and reading groups, instructional tools for centers, demos for directions.
- There is an online component to Treasures; can have students use Kunos for extending phonics, spelling, vocabulary and comprehension. Everyday Math has online practice components.
- Could use at home to support writing and editing (push down homework); will allow more group work; note taking; use with animated sections of Treasures; skill development during RtI.
- I can do an online center for Treasures; consider Kahn Academy.
- I am excited about the opportunity. Hoping to find ways to use Kunos with Treasures and Everyday Math. Novels can be shared in the SAU and pushed back to the Cloud.
- Google docs (e.g. word, Powerpoint, publishing) is ready to go; need specific plan in place to transition in each quarter.

### **Concerns:**

- I am concerned about receiving an adequate amount of training.
- Excited, but not sure how to use with students; would be useful to have someone identify appropriate software, etc.
- Exciting, but need training and support; interested in on line components; can integrate through all subject areas.

**Recommendation #G1:** The MES principal needs to identify a core team of MES staff who will work collaboratively with him to develop plans for the monthly professional staff meetings dedicated to implementing the 1-to-1 initiative.

**Rationale #G1:** Dedicating one staff meeting a month to this initiative is an excellent way to provide teachers with regular opportunities to share ideas with one another for the purpose of moving this initiative forward successfully. Planning each session carefully in advance will be a critical component when it comes to the overall effectiveness of the staff meetings.

## **Where to Go From Here: Possible Next Steps**

This report is primarily a “critical analysis” of the strengths and concerns of Madison Elementary School as determined by analyzing AES Survey Results and NECAP Results, and most importantly, compiling the concerns and recommendations made by staff members.

It is the strong opinion of this consultant that the staff members and administration at Madison Elementary, as well as the SAU #13 administrators and Madison School Board members, are dedicated to the ongoing success of MES students. I also feel strongly that the teachers and paraeducators need to be the driving force behind implementing action plans to address the concerns and recommendations in this report. They are the frontline when it comes to directly working with MES students and need to be a part of identifying and implementing changes if those changes are to be successfully embedded in the MES School culture.

This report includes a total of twenty-nine (29) recommendations that are categorized under seven headings. Nineteen (19) of the recommendations are under the heading Existing Student and Staff Schedules. Of these nineteen, eight (8) of the recommendations reinforce maintaining in place certain schedule aspects that are strongly supported by staff and appear to contribute to the overall success of MES students. In addition, recommendation #E1 supports continuation of the very successful data team meetings schedule that allows teachers at each grade level to meet once every seven weeks.

As noted on pages 8 and 9 of this report, the remaining eleven (11) recommendations made under the heading Existing Student and Staff Schedules were made in an effort to help “fine-tune” schedule changes that may positively impact educational programs in place (e.g. RtI, language arts, math) that already have a positive impact on student learning. In other words, they were designed to fine-tune a schedule that was already focused on providing a tiered model of instruction that serves all students (both special and regular education) who need support very well. Special education, regular education, and reading teachers are all actively engaged in providing student support in a collaborative manner.

It is important for me to state that the MES Principal and SAU #13 Special Education Director have worked together over the summer months in an effort to address scheduling concerns brought forward by staff or me. As a result, the majority of schedule recommendations made in this report will be in place at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year.

I feel it is also important for me to repeat a paragraph that appeared earlier in this report. “As an outside observer, I was extremely impressed with the RtI and special education services that are being provided by the regular education, special education, and reading teachers at MES. In my opinion, the Madison School Board, administration and MES staff can be very proud of the extensive manner in which the RtI model has been implemented.”

## **Implementing the Remaining 9 Recommendations: SWIFT Provides The Umbrella**

As noted on page 19 of this study, when the Madison principal and Madison School Board accepted the invitation to become part of the SWIFT initiative, they were accepting an opportunity that is designed to lead to further school improvement. In addition, they were also taking on the responsibility of overseeing the successful implementation of the SWIFT process. The burden of this responsibility and exciting challenge will fall on the shoulders of the MES principal and will require effective building wide leadership skills.

SWIFT is a national K-8 center that provides academic and behavioral support to promote the learning and academic achievement of all students, including those with the most extensive needs. The SWIFT Center is funded by a five year \$24.5 million grant from the Special Education Program of the US Department of Education.

The primary purpose of SWIFT is to assure equity and excellence for all students. The national SWIFT Center will provide ongoing technical assistance that will be targeted to the needs of Madison Elementary School. As per the SWIFT website ([www.swiftschools.org](http://www.swiftschools.org)), “In a SWIFT classroom, ALL students are learning together and have the supports they need to fully participate in the general education curriculum. General educators, specialized educators, support staff, and family and community members work in tandem to differentiate instruction.

The Madison principal and RtI coordinator attended a SWIFT implementation training session this past summer. The members of the MES RtI Team are slated to become the core members of the MES SWIFT Team. They will work with the individuals assigned by the SWIFT Center to provide technical assistance to MES.

### **The goals of SWIFT are to:**

- Structure collaboration among all educators to create a comprehensive continuum of supports and services designed to maximize successful learning for all students.
- Implement a three-tiered model of increasing intensity of instruction for all students that shapes and sustains positive behaviors and academic gains that are key to the learning progress.
- Capitalize on the strengths of the whole school community including security guards, paraprofessionals, support staff, etc. by engaging them in the system-wide community of educational practice.

## The SWIFT Umbrella

It is my opinion that the curricular and instructional programs already in place at MES will provide an exceptional base for the SWIFT process. I feel it is very important that the SWIFT technical advisors become very familiar with the programs already in place at MES and the positive impacts they have had on student learning over the past three to four years. The SWIFT process at MES should be focused on improving a system that already has strong programs and processes in place.

### **2013-2014 School Year:**

Using the SWIFT process as an umbrella, I recommend that the following recommendations be incorporated into plans for the upcoming school year.

The new staff meeting schedule developed by the MES principal includes four meetings each month: one teachers' staff meeting, one teacher and paraeducators' staff meeting, one meeting focusing on the new writing curriculum, and one meeting focusing on the 1-to-1 technology initiative. This meeting format is designed to provide time to implement the following recommendations:

**Recommendation #B2:** Implement the revised writing curriculum developed during summer 2013 by members of the MES teaching staff. Guides for teachers will be developed identifying content, assessments, and uses of technology for each grade level.

**Recommendation #G1:** The MES principal needs to identify a core team of MES staff who will work collaboratively with him to develop plans for the monthly professional staff meetings dedicated to implementing the 1-to-1 initiative.

**Recommendation #F3:** Inclusion of professional development activities that focus on writing and technology on a monthly basis. I recommend that staff members leading the writing curriculum and technology initiatives be involved in planning these monthly meetings with the principal.

The following two recommendations focus on the current language arts and mathematics programs. Time will need to be identified (e.g. early release days) to allow teachers to implement these recommendations. Even though they are not new initiatives, time still needs to be allotted for teachers to continue refining existing programs.

**Recommendation #B1:** Teaching staff should continue to refine implementation of Treasures in an effort to identify the core lessons that need to be covered in each unit at each grade level so that all units at each grade level can be covered during the school year. Administration should make sure that the core lessons are covered at each grade level.

**Recommendation #C1:** Teachers should continue to refine implementation of the Everyday Math program in an effort to further identify the core lessons in each unit that need to be taught each school year. As with any sequential program, it is important that teachers cover all units for each grade level each year.

**2014-2015 School Year:**

I suggest that the following two recommendations be delayed until 2014-2015. With all the other initiatives in place, it would seem very difficult for either of these recommendations to be undertaken in 2013-2014.

**Recommendation #D1:** During summer 2014 allow time for a committee of teachers to explore ways to more closely align science and social studies with the Treasures program, and/or make modifications to the daily/weekly schedules to allot more time over the course of the week to science and social studies, especially in grades 4, 5 and 6.

**Recommendation #F4:** Decisions regarding annual emphases for professional development should continue to be driven by training needs identified collaboratively by teachers and administration.