

West Terrace Elementary School  
School Improvement Plan  
Prepared in Compliance with Indiana Public Law 221  
Reviewed and revised Spring 2008

This school improvement plan is submitted on behalf of the West Terrace Elementary School. It was prepared under the leadership of the building principal working in cooperation with the school improvement committee appointed in compliance with Indiana Public Law 221. The plan is structured using the guidelines provided in rules approved by the Indiana State Board of Education. It covers a three-year timeline. It has always been the goal of West Terrace to provide for continuous improvement in student achievement. This plan is a statement to the community as to how we expect to fulfill that commitment in the coming years.

School Improvement Committee

Mr. Todd Slagle, Principal and Chair  
Dr. Michael Slavkin, Community Partner USI  
Mr. Ben Russell, Business Partner 5/3 Bank  
Mrs. Mary Anne Simmons, West Terrace Parent  
Mrs. Leslie Harris, West Terrace Parent  
Mrs. Anne Woodruff, Teacher and Assistant Chair  
Mrs. Peggy Belanger, Teacher  
Mrs. Liz Chang, Teacher  
Mrs. Anne Woodruff, Teacher

## I. Introduction

### ***A. Narrative Description of the School, Community, and Educational Program***

West Terrace Elementary School is one of 20 elementary schools in the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation. The school is located in a suburban setting located on twenty-seven acres approximately four miles west of the Evansville city limits. The school is near the University of Southern Indiana and it works closely with the university in numerous programs. The building is used by several groups and has become the major focal point of the community.

The enrollment at West Terrace is 500 students in kindergarten through grade five. There are four sections of kindergarten and one section of kindergarten-age mildly mentally handicapped children. There are thirteen sections in grades one through three, resulting from participation in Indiana's Prime Time Program, and seven sections in grades four and five. A day care is operated daily from 6:30 a.m. to 7:45 a.m. and from 2:16 p.m. to

6:00 p.m. A staff of nine serves on average 130 students, with about 65% of those registered using the service on a daily basis.

The school has a minority population of 10 percent. Most of the minority students are bused from the central part of the city. The Free and Reduced Lunch Program serves 19 percent of the student body. This percent has nearly doubled in the past six years.

The curriculum is well organized and directed by teachers who use curriculum guides, programs, and policies of the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation. Curriculum alignment is taking place to comply with the guidelines provided in the Indiana State Standards.

This school facility is the working place for twenty-eight certified teachers, including specialists in art, vocal music, and physical education, three special education assistants, a part-time registered nurse, one full-time school secretary, a guidance counselor, a speech clinician, and three full-time special education teachers (licensed for mild and moderate mentally handicapped and emotional handicapped).

The school has an active PTA membership which averages 400 annually. They have raised funds for playground equipment, technology, and classroom supplies. Many parents and grandparents volunteer time for instruction in academic areas and computer skills. The tutoring support that the PTA organizes reaches 39 students.

Our community is apprised of West Terrace activities through the PTA, school web site and school newsletters. New parent orientation, kindergarten and grade one roundup, open house, grade level programs, and musical programs.

West Terrace School has been named an Indiana Four Star School eleven times. The four stars are achieved when the school scores in the top 25% of all schools in the state in the areas of Attendance, Total Language ISTEP Scores, Total Math ISTEP Scores, and Total ISTEP Composite Scores.

Formal progress reports are sent home with students each nine weeks. In grades four and five interim reports go home, covering both positive and areas of concern, to all students. Annual parent-teacher conferences are held in October.

Incentive programs are funded by Box Tops for Education, Campbell's Soup labels, and several merchants' awards to students with high grades or good attendance. Financial assistance is given by the West Side Nut Club and the Optimist Club on an annual basis.

In addition to the exceptional staff and many innovative programs, West Terrace is an outstanding school because of the genuine interest in student excellence. Dedicated staff, parents, and community leaders working together strive for excellence in education.

## ***B. Curriculum - - Description and Location***

The West Terrace Elementary curriculum is closely tied to the curriculum of the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation. It is based on and aligned with the Indiana State Board of Education Academic Standards. Teachers at West Terrace, under the direction of the building principal, provide enrichment of the curriculum with the assistance of Central Office Supervisors and Curriculum Specialists.

The English Language Arts Curriculum was developed and aligned with Indiana State Academic Standards during the 2006-07 school year and a pacing guide was created for each grade level. The Mathematics Curriculum will be revised and aligned with Indiana State Academic Standards during the summer of 2008. The curriculum for Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies are accessible in an electronic format on the EVSC website, Educational Services. <http://www.evscschools.com>

## ***C. Assessments - - Used in Addition to ISTEP+***

Formal progress reports are sent home with students each nine weeks. In grades 4 and 5, Interim Reports (covering both positive and areas of concern) are sent to all students. Annual parent-teacher conferences are held at the building in October.

The Indiana Statewide Test for Educational Progress Plus (ISTEP+) tests is administered to grades 3, 4 and 5. Grade 6 testing is done at Perry Heights Middle School. West Terrace teachers utilize data in order to assess needs in the development of plans.

DIBELS assessment in the area of Language Arts is utilized in kindergarten and first grades currently. Kindergarten, first and second grades begin will be doing DIBELS assessments in the areas of Language Arts and Mathematics starting fall of 08'.

On-line assessments using Acuity will be conducted in Language Arts and Mathematics in third, fourth and fifth grades.

## **II. Statement of Mission, Vision, and Beliefs**

The following Mission Statement and School Belief Statements were reviewed and remain the same as established in the 2001-2002 school year.

### ***A. West Terrace Elementary School Mission Statement***

Our mission at West Terrace Elementary School is to educate all students to the best of their abilities and to encourage their academic, social, emotional, and physical development in a safe nurturing environment.

## ***B. West Terrace Elementary School Belief Statements***

- Every person is unique and important and is entitled to respect, appreciation and understanding.
- Every person is entitled to a safe, caring and learning environment.
- The core business of schools is to ensure that every student is provided challenging, engaging and satisfying work daily.
- Education of our students is the shared responsibility of everyone - - the student, the home, the school and the community.

## **III. Summary of Data - - Derived from an Assessment of the Current Status of Educational Programming**

### ***A. Graphs of Data from the Annual Performance Report***

Students at West Terrace Elementary School perform above average compared to other schools in the state and score very well when compared to other schools that have student bodies that are deemed by the state as comparable to our student body and school community.

West Terrace is pleased that we have consistently strong scores produced at the school over this period of time. The implementation of the 90 minute reading block, Write Traits, and Math Their Way methodology and additional emphasis on Indiana State Standards are given credit for increases in scores and increased understanding in Language Arts and Mathematics areas.

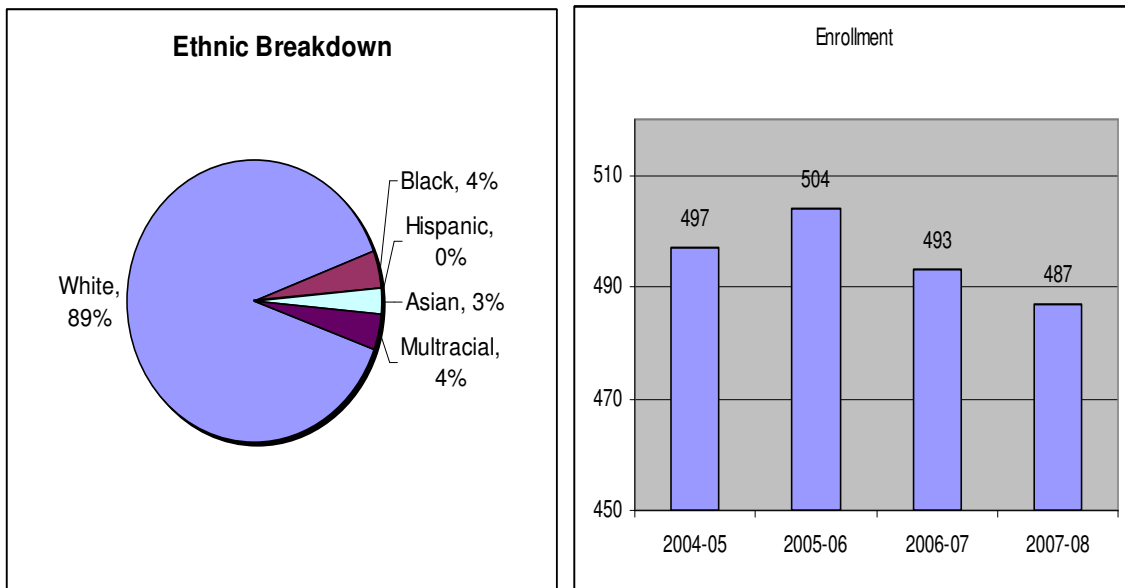
## ***B. Data Related to other Performance Indicators***

The teaching staff is, of course, closely involved with student performance. West Terrace Elementary School is fortunate to have a knowledgeable and energetic teaching staff that blends youth and experience. The number of staff members, average age, and average experience has remained relatively stable in the period since 1994-1995.

## ***C. Other Information about Educational Programming and the Learning Environment***

The student enrollment at West Terrace has been relatively stable until the change from full day kindergarten to half day. The school experienced a decline in enrollment as families enrolled children in full day programs. If they have been satisfied with that program, they remain there for grades 1-5. Our projected enrollment for the 2005-2006 school year was 466, a drop of another 31 students. This trend will most likely continue until the 2008-2009 school year when the last “full day kindergarten class” moves from fifth grade into middle school. At that point, the school enrollment could be roughly 6 grade levels of approximately 75 students each - - or about 510 students total. If full day kindergarten is reintroduced to this school, it is anticipated that the enrollment would rebound to 600.

The ethnic breakdown of the student population shows a fairly homogeneous student group comprised mostly of Caucasian pupils.



## **IV. Conclusions about Educational Programming Derived from an Assessment of the Current Status of Educational Programming**

### ***A. Curriculum - - Indiana Academic Standards***

A district curriculum under which West Terrace Elementary School functions is based on Indiana's Academic State Standards. This has been true since the standards have been published. With the recent revision of the standards, realignment has become a major focus for curriculum leaders, principals, and teachers. The following actions have been taken:

- Acknowledgement that an alignment of the English/Language Arts curriculum is needed to make best use of the adopted series.
- The alignment of the math curriculum to Standards is complete. Teachers are using EVSC created checklists to ensure coverage of all required State Standards.

### ***B. Instruction that Supports the Achievement of the Indiana Academic Standards***

The alignment of the curriculum to the standards is the initial step in providing instruction that addresses every standard in each subject area. Teachers have each received copies of each of the completed subject area (reading/language arts, math, science and social studies) standards booklet and are directed to continue to become more knowledgeable in the area of state requirements. The staff is fully aware that the Standards are the foundation for ISTEP+ testing and that this began in 2002.

### ***C. Assessments of Student Achievement - - ISTEP+ and Other Assessment Strategies***

The state and local assessment programs in place at West Terrace Elementary School are described earlier in this plan. The school is committed to the concept of tracking student progress as essential to the focus on improving student achievement. This commitment leads us to use assessment data in the effort to compare each student's individual progress.

In the past, schools have typically compared scores in a particular grade from year to year (i.e., grade 3 scores over the course of several consecutive years), however, it is now clearly evident that it is more important to ascertain individual progress. The state's move to test at each grade level positively impacts our ability to assess and interpret test data in order to refine strategies.

It is the commitment of West Terrace Elementary School to use assessment data in the improvement of student instruction. A heavy emphasis is placed on the use of tests for diagnostic purposes. The identification of student strengths and areas of need is viewed as necessary to provide appropriate instruction for students. The effort already underway at West Terrace will be strengthened once the state is able to put into place an assessment program that will support the goal of Public Law 221.

### ***D. Parental Participation in the School***

The Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation is currently planning a Parent Engagement Center as a part of the Superintendent's Strategic Agenda (initially released in December of 2007). We recognize parent involvement and engagement as critical to the success of our students and of our school.

West Terrace Elementary School welcomes parent involvement and participation and encourages this bridge between school and home. Local agencies and resources are integrated into the school programs. A wide variety of activities are in place that involves parent guidance and cooperation. The school's PTA is extremely active and is one of the reasons the school is considered such a good place for our children. Its role is to plan activities that will both benefit children directly as well as to bring parents into active involvement which benefits all children. The school calendar reflects numerous such opportunities:

- Campus Beautification
- Back to School Open House
- BOOST Tutoring program
- Support for technology efforts - - computer lab aides
- Santa Clothes Club sponsors
- Subject specific grade level events
- Indiana State Legislature Visits
- PTA Clothing Bank
- Student Recognition Week
- Candy Scramble
- Meet Me at the Pole sponsor
- Field Day Celebration Day
- Sponsor of Student Ambassadors program for new students
- Winter Angel Fund to support needy families
- Kindergarten/First Grade Round Up Spring Programs
- Staff appreciation days.

The Parent Teacher Association acts as an ongoing support group, serving as sponsor of events in and outside the school. Their activities often result in immediate social/community spirit bonding as well as efforts that involve procurement of materials, equipment and items that benefit the children of our school. Specific activities include:

- Sponsorship of fundraising activities

- School pictures - - coordination
- Weekly Popcorn Day
- Community Give Back programs coordination
- Sponsorship of study trips of whole school
- Donation of specified funds for every teacher at West Terrace
- Volunteering to assist teachers with clubs such as Spell Bowl, Math Bowl, Athletic teams, Booster Club intramural activities
- Back to School Open House and Picnic
- Parents obtaining substitute teacher licenses to assist with coverage during teacher professional development days
- Card Party
- Classroom Helpers - - volunteering clerical assistance for teachers and Office

The PTA is an integral part of this school. The tireless efforts have a positive impact on the school atmosphere, staff and student attitudes. The group works to ensure the availability of materials and equipment and other resources, as well as providing support for the school as a whole. Plans for the future include:

- Continued emphasis on parent-friendly topics for PTA meetings
- Parent Ambassadors Program for families new to West Terrace

Overall, the plan is soft on using parents as a real resource for academic achievement. When reviewing the role of parents in the plan, it calls for better communication between teachers and parents and it calls for PTA tutors. Surely parents can and should be more involved than this - - I don't mean as fundraisers and cheerleaders. Parents can be partners. How does the plan engage parents? Can parents be involved in supporting teachers as experts in their own right? Can parents and students team together? Should we develop models and tools where parents can easily reinforce or add value to the lessons taught at school?

Ideas:

- PTA developed "expert" pool for potential guest speakers or helpers
- ISTEP primer for parents (not one night, but offered on a few nights for convenience)
- Encouragement/insistence that teachers use the web or weekly newsletters
- More homework for parents – bring parents into the lesson

## ***E. Technology as a Learning Tool***

Technology was named as one of the core components of the Superintendent's Strategic Agenda (announced in December 2007). The district has made the commitment to provide the school with technology resources and professional development to use those resources in order to maximize the learning of all students.

There is a district technology plan in place that includes a major effort in staff development. The school's district plan is updated annually. Areas of the plan address Needs Assessment, Professional Development, and Evaluation of Plan. Benchmarks have been set for each grade level to obtain. A copy of our benchmarks is attached to this document.

## ***F. Safe and Disciplined Learning Environment***

West Terrace School operates under the EVSC Emergency Management Plan adopted in 1999. Elements of this program stress preparation for problems as well as appropriate actions in the event of the occurrence of emergency situations. The plan directs schools to create and maintain a Crisis Emergency Team as listed in the manual. Included are contingency plans for the following:

- Evacuation Plan and Procedures
- Chemical Spill
- Death/Suicide
- Gun/Weapon on Campus
- Kidnapping
- Shooting/Stabbing
- Weather
- Bomb Threat
- Airplane Crash
- Fire/Explosion
- Hostage
- Sexual Battery
- Student Disruption

Limited access to the school is maintained daily. The staff practices a Code Red drill twice annually in the event of the necessity of a lock down. Parents must sign in at the office before proceeding to parts of the building. The staff is directed to stop any person not wearing a badge in the school and ask that they go to the office to sign in and state their purpose.

Conflict resolution is addressed by the counselor in all grade levels.

## ***G. Professional Development***

Staff members have available educational inservice workshops throughout the year that are sponsored by the EVSC. These are planned by directors and curriculum supervisors and are organized around teacher interests and input. The program for West Terrace is conducted within district goals and objectives and include the following:

- Bimonthly staff meetings or grade level meetings focus on the opportunity for sharing of best practices
- Professional Leave days and funds are provided by the EVSC and PL 221 and are allocated to staff members who apply
- PTA funds staff development in addition to provided days

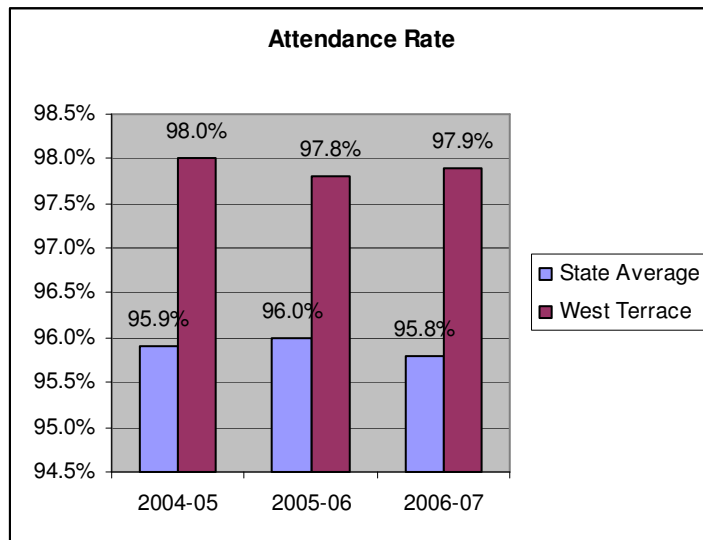
The school has utilized state provided professional development funds to facilitate the implementation of PL 221. A main emphasis for 2002-05 has been Writing Skills Development and Hands On Math.

Presently we are focusing on Differentiated Instruction to ensure lessons meet the need of all students.

## **V. Student Achievement Objectives, Derived from an Assessment of the Current Status of Educational Programming**

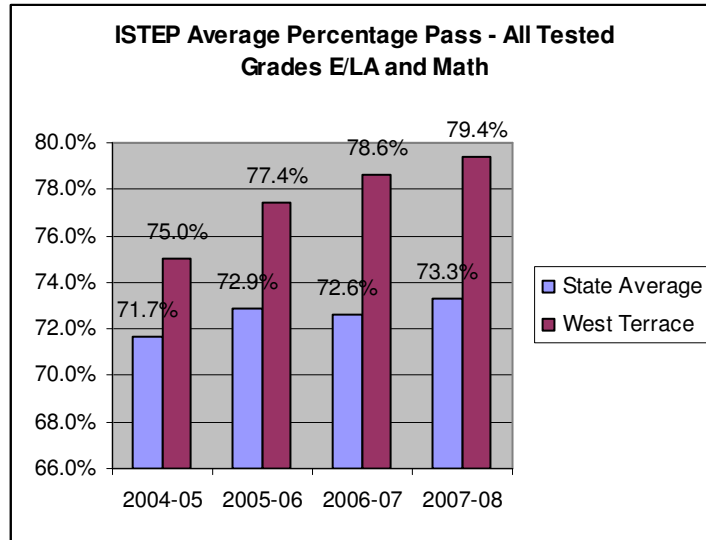
### ***A. Attendance Rate***

West Terrace Elementary plans to continue what has been a successful focus on student attendance. Evidence of this success is as follows:



## **B. Percentage of students Meeting Indiana Academic Standards**

The trend line for West Terrace Elementary School in terms of percentage of students meeting state standards in the ISTEP+ testing is as follows:



It is the intent of West Terrace School to meet the challenge of No Child Left Behind and have 100% of our students proficient by the year 2012.

### **Specific Areas Where Improvement is Most Needed**

West Terrace will strengthen the commitment to fulfill the stated school mission (. . . to educate all students to the best of their abilities and to encourage their academic, social, emotional and physical development . . .) as evidenced by improvement in the area of standardized test scores.

In addition to meeting the needs of all of our students, we will add additional focus to students receiving special education services.

## **VI. Benchmarks for Progress**

In determining growth and progress, West Terrace School will use the same formula as the Indiana Department of Education:

$$\frac{\text{Number of students scoring above cutoff in L.A.} + \text{Number above in math}}{\text{Divided by the total number taking L.A. and total taking math}}$$

The goal at West Terrace School is to increase the percentage of students achieving PASS and PASS+ in English/Language Arts, Mathematics and Science to meet the goal

of 100% passing by the year 2012. Currently that requires an increase of 3% of students passing the ISTEP+ yearly.

## **VII. Academic Honors Diploma and Core 40**

- - Not applicable to elementary schools - -

## **VIII. Proposed Interventions based on School Improvement**

- Multiple days per year will be utilized for teachers to observe in other buildings at the appropriate grade level or in appropriate subject areas with the purpose of bringing back strategies and best practices from high achieving school/classes.
- PL 221 requires a type of staff interaction that would cross the boundaries of grade levels to facilitate regularly scheduled planning toward a common focus. This planning may include consistent tracking of student progress, coordinated assessment practices, and scoring guides.
- The school will continue its parent volunteer tutor and substitute program to aide in coverage for professional development.
- We will continue the effective interaction with university students and supervisors to better utilize the pre-service teacher's time spent in the classroom. We will continue to utilize both Language Arts and Math pre-service USI students.
- We propose to provide further instruction for teachers, students, and volunteers in the area of technology utilizing technology personnel and additional software support.
- One classroom set of Alpha-Smart computers will be utilized mainly by first grade to begin/enhance word processing. Funds will be sought to purchase a second set of Alpha-Smart computers or a starter set of wireless lap top computers in order to further students' abilities using the internet and word processing.
- Continuous professional development opportunities need to be provided in order to better allow teachers to differentiate instruction in the classroom. This may include workshops, teacher modeling, classroom visitations, and utilization of volunteers.
- Grade level meetings will be held for curriculum development and planning. Cross grade level meetings will be encouraged to foster collaboration.

- To increase the practice of problem solving and checking strategies in math, teachers are encouraged to:
  - Use teacher modeling of checking strategies (inverse operations)
  - Encourage use of Daily Word Problems (by Evan Moor Publisher) grades 1-5
  - Use math journals to reinforce and illustrate math terminology
  - Utilize visual aids to promote consistency in teaching checking strategies
    - these will be devised by an in-house committee of math teachers.
  
- In order to improve reading comprehension, teachers will select appropriate strategies from the following:
  - Guided reading activities
  - Book clubs to read and discuss grade level appropriate publications (i.e. “I Read It, But I Don’t Get It” by Cris Tovani, “Teaching Comprehension Strategies All Readers Need” by Nicole Outsen and Stephanie Yulga)
  - Emphasis will be placed on locating and obtaining additional materials in the areas of phonics, word origins, and instructional analysis
  - Consultants/guest speakers to model comprehension strategies will be scheduled
  
- In continuing to support writing development, teachers will strive to:
  - Direct student writing 15-20 minutes for a minimum of three times per week
  - Model what good writers do
  - Conference with students
  - Utilize Word Wall/word banks
  - Involve parents (sharing rubric information and other)
  - Share writing within the classroom
  - Administer informal assessments (reading, writing, and math) and use the data to plan instruction
  - Increase writing across the curriculum (science, social studies, math)
  - Administer writing prompts and writing assessments two times during the school year by grades 1-5
  
- Guided reading and self-selected reading will be tied in with nonfiction topics addressing state standards.
  
- West Terrace is moving towards a 90-minute reading block in kindergarten, first, second and third grades. The focus of the 90-minute block is vocabulary, comprehension, phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency.
  
- Cluster grouping of gifted and talented students in grades 2 – 5 will allow us to focus on challenging our gifted and talented population.

## **IX. Professional Development**

### ***A. Improvement and student Learning and Performance***

Professional development must be tied in with the data analysis of test scores and address the needs of the school staff to meet the educational needs of the student population. The principal, in collaboration with the certified staff, will pinpoint necessary areas for professional development and locate sources for consultation, instruction, materials, and in-services.

### ***B. Research-based Sustainable School Improvement Efforts***

Each proposal for professional development is based on needs identified by the staff. Research-based sustainable school improvement efforts are reached through strategies and methodology as determined by teacher input. Areas of need of professional development are identified and sources for information/in-service are determined. The principal uses the EVSC Professional Development Proposal form to list the following:

- Description of the proposed professional development activity including what, where, when, and who
- Explanation of how the activity addresses the West Terrace PL 221 goals
- Description of how knowledge will be transferred into practice including a timeline
- Narrative of how the professional development will be sustained
- Listing of how we will know it is working and what data will be collected to support that knowledge
- Proposed budget including substitute days, registration fees, lodging, meals, travel, other

This exercise is utilized each time professional development is considered. It is through this process that all English/language arts teachers at this school received two years of ongoing training in the field of Write Traits, Four Blocks Instruction, Hands On Math, to name the most successful of these professional development activities.

### ***C. Core Principles of Professional Development***

The professional development model for West Terrace Elementary has been constructed within the goals and professional development model of the EVSC. Our school corporation is improving through three district goals: Character Education, Improving the Achievement Gap, and Building Leadership.

Teachers analyze their lessons and what they are directing children to do to ensure that the work is standards based and is engaging. All lessons should contain the Indiana State Academic Standards and incorporated into these should be the Schlecty Ten Design Qualities. Teachers meet at grade level meetings to discuss curriculum, standards, and assessments.

Teachers who attend professional development meetings and workshops share newly learned ideas (such as “Strategies to Teach Comprehension Strategies to Grades 3-5) with other staff members.

West Terrace has enjoyed the benefit of professional development funds available through implementation of Public Law 221. The staff and administration believe that targeted professional development activities will be the key to tracking student achievement and focusing effective instruction more specifically on the needs of students.

All professional development relates to improving the quality of students’ work. Specifically, there are four areas within this framework to ensure good professional development:

- Accountability: Adequate Yearly Progress, Monitoring Performance Assessments, Rubrics, Standardized tests
- Policy and Procedures: No Child Left Behind, Article 7, Child Abuse and Neglect, School Board Policy and Procedures, Section 504, Special Education Laws and Public Law 221
- Curriculum and Instruction: Curriculum Alignment, Instructional Techniques, National State and Local Standards, Research-based best practices, four Block Instruction, Write Traits, and Curriculum Guide based areas
- Diversity: Character education, classroom management, community and parent involvement, Gifted and Talented and At-Risk children

Staff meetings focus on the above as well as other areas of concern.

### ***D. Cultural Competency***

The principal and staff have attended meetings and workshops on Ruby Payne and Children of Poverty, William Jenkins “Educating African-American Children,” Joe Cornelius on appreciating cultural differences at the EVSC Back to School meeting, Dr. Lorraine Monroe’s “Tools and Techniques for Closing the Achievement Gap,” and Dr. Roger Cleveland will present “Cultural Competency.

## **X. Statutes and Rules to be Waived**

No waivers to Indiana State Statutes or Rules proposed.

## **XI. Annual Review and Three-year Timeline**

### Annual Review:

- The achievement of students will be reviewed annually by the principal, the school improvement committee, teachers and other stakeholders at West Terrace School.
- The achievement review will include data provided by the Indiana Department of Education, ISTEP+ data, results of local assessments, portfolio exhibits, and other broad indicators of student achievement.

### Three-year Timeline:

The three-year timeline is established and outlined in the Public Law 221 School Improvement Plan Part VII (Benchmarks) and is delineated in PL 221 Professional Development Plan, Form D (two pages Action Plan).

West Terrace School staff will work on the following Schedule:

#### 2008 – 2009

Provide days for teachers to observe master teachers in other buildings in the EVSC  
Continue Write Traits Assessment Model as well as Four Blocks, Hands On Math, and technology training and implementation  
Host guest speakers/teachers to model comprehension strategies  
Continue methodology of Hands On Math for grades 4 and 5  
Review test data and informal assessments  
Further develop staff understanding of Differentiated Instruction and 90 minute reading block  
Add to the current DIBELS testing to include grade K – 2 in both the areas of Language Arts and Mathematics  
Utilize ACUITY assessment in grade 3 – 5 in both the areas of Language Arts and Mathematics  
Revise PL 221 School Improvement Plan

#### 2009 - 2010

Continue to provide observation days for staff visits  
Continue Write Traits, Hands On Math, and use of technology  
Review test data and informal assessments  
Revise PL 221 School Improvement Plan  
Implement revisions to PL 221 Plan as needed

#### 2010 – 2011

Continue to provide observation days for staff visits  
Teacher observations in other schools continue

Continue Write Traits  
Continue Hands on Math  
Review test data and informal assessments  
Revise PL 221 School Improvement Plan

(These processes will continue throughout the three-year timeline.)

Desegregation of test Data - - meetings to determine how to use  
information gleaned from data  
Best Practices study and implementation  
Cross Grade Level meetings to encourage collaboration  
Inservice Opportunities/EVSC, SIEC, outside agencies  
Modeling mathematics and reading strategies  
Book Clubs  
Technology Training  
Guided Reading Activities  
Phonics Instruction  
Teachers observing other teachers, in house, within and outside EVSC