

# **ROTHSCHILD MIDDLE** **SCHOOL**

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

**2008-2009**

**August, 2008**

**Mr. Chris Cox - Principal**

## **Part D**

# **School Improvement Annual Evaluation Template**

***(Implementing the School Improvement Plan and Documenting Results – Part 6 of the 1997 NSSE School Improvement Handbook, pages 6-1 through pages 6-13)***

**(This evaluation summary must be submitted, annually, to the appropriate director on the last day of post-planning week.)**

**Muscogee County School District**  
**Annual Evaluation of NSSE School Improvement Plan**  
**Template**

*Place your cursor in the grayed areas and begin typing. Refer to the focus questions to develop the narrative.*

**School: Rothschild Middle School**

**School Year: 2007-2008**

**Principal: Chris Cox**

**School Improvement/Leadership Team Chairperson: Kathy Smith**

## **I. Progress Report**

The school improvement plan for Rothschild Middle School for 2007-2008 revolved around five major components. These components included language arts, math, reading, student participation on the CRCT, and student attendance. In analyzing the progress made in attaining these school goals, it is necessary to examine the applicable data.

In language arts, students have consistently improved on the CRCT. The official results for 2007-2008 indicate that scores were at or above the previous year in all areas.

Math continues to be an area of concern at Rothschild Middle School. Several instructional strategies as well as computer assisted programs have been utilized in an effort to increase student achievement. The data indicates that scores improved in the sixth and seventh grades while CRCT scores declined in the eighth grade. However, it is important to note that the GPS curriculum was implemented for the first year in the eighth grade; an achievement dip was predicted by most curriculum experts.

Reading is another primary focus of the Rothschild plan. During the past several years, scores have remained relatively consistent in this area. Again, an analysis of the CRCT test data suggests that scores have remained stable in this area.

In addition to the aforementioned academic areas, Rothschild Middle School has focused on students' test participation on the CRCT. This is obviously a critical area as it is designated as one of the primary components of the AYP process. Schools are required to have at least 95% of their students participate on the CRCT; that includes all subgroups of at least 40 students. In this important area, Rothschild has improved considerably over the past several years. The final data for 2007-2008 indicates that participation would once again meet the established criteria in regards to AYP.

Finally, Rothschild Middle School is concerned about student attendance. This is also a major component of the AYP criteria and is an area that is of major concern as Rothschild has sometimes struggled in this category in the past. During the 2005-2006 year, Rothschild made AYP in this particular area. However, the margin of success was slight and dictated that this continue to be a focus of the improvement plan. In examining attendance figures for 2006-2007, the observation is that the trends from previous years continue – that is, many Rothschild

students have attendance issues and the margin for AYP success is extremely close. The attendance concern was again a focus in 2007-2008. Rothschild made AYP; however, the percent rose to 14.7%.

## **II. Evaluation of Action Plan Goals**

In evaluating the various action steps in the school improvement plan, it is obvious that several have been successful. This narrative will examine steps that have been deemed as the most successful at this time.

In the eighth grade, one strategy of intervention was aimed at reducing class size; this was accomplished by hiring one additional language arts teacher. This teacher was utilized in the eighth grade due to the importance of the CRCT at this grade level. This strategy was successful as scores continue to remain steady or improve at this grade level.

In the area of language arts, one action step called for employing additional paraprofessionals to assist and support teachers of students with disabilities in an effort to improve student achievement. In previous years, scores in this area increased significantly; an analysis of this year's data indicates a significant increase.

Another strategy that is considered a success is the employment of an academic coach in the area of math. Math scores have continued to remain constant; improvements this year were noted in the sixth and seventh grades.

In an effort to increase math achievement, Rothschild implemented several interventions which are designed to offer students additional instructional time as well as support in this critical area. Rothschild utilized the Pearson Learning software in a class which was taught by a highly qualified special education teacher; this class was designed for students with disabilities and met for 45 minutes each day for a semester. All students were provided an additional hour of computer assisted math instruction each week through the Compass Learning Program. Another strategy was to establish a connections class which was taught by a highly qualified math teacher and was designed for students who scored below 800 on the CRCT in math and/or failed math the previous year. In addition, the school employed three additional math teachers in an effort to reduce class size and to offer increased individualized instruction for students.

Rothschild has continued to focus on reading achievement and several actions are included in the school improvement plan in this area. The Accelerated Reader Program continues to be successful at Rothschild as students are consistently reading books and participating in computer assessments which provide immediate feedback. A skills class is also utilized where students read independently and work in small groups and/or receive individual instruction to address weaknesses as identified by AR reports and/or last year's CRCT scores. These interventions have continued to be successful as CRCT scores have remained consistently positive during the past several years.

In regards to students' participation on the CRCT, Rothschild utilizes several strategies which can certainly be designated as successful. One strategy involves contacting parents by mail and informing them of the testing dates, times, and other important concerns. Also, the school begins testing each day at 9:00 to reduce the number of students who would otherwise miss the testing session due to tardies. The testing coordinator also organized and implemented a make-up testing plan to ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate.

An examination of the school improvement plan also reveals that some action steps that originally appeared to be promising did not totally fulfill expectations. These strategies may or may not be included in a revised plan; however, the action steps can certainly be appropriately modified without compromising the major goals of the school improvement plan.

One action step that was not clearly successful is the Saturday instruction program which was established to target at-risk students in core curricula. Attendance at this program has been inconsistent and dwindles as the year progresses. One method of evaluation in regards to this intervention is students' grades. When examining this data, it is apparent that grades have not been significantly impacted in a positive manner.

Rothschild was also not successful in fulfilling the action step that involved hiring an academic coach in the area of language arts/ reading. This was not an action step that failed to fulfill expectations; it was actually a step which was not incorporated due to Title I funding concerns.

In the area of math, students with disabilities continue to struggle on the CRCT. Several strategies have been implemented; however, the success of these strategies must be termed as questionable at this stage. One step was to provide extended day tutoring for students with disabilities; this certainly appeared to be a strategy which would increase instructional time for these students. At this point, achievement levels remain stagnant despite the intervention. One difficulty in implementing this action step is the fact that some students fail to attend the sessions.

The school improvement plan also focused on student attendance. This area is now considered as the second indicator in regards to the AYP process. In the past several years, Rothschild has managed to meet the criteria in this area; however, the numbers are still a cause for concern. In an effort to improve on these numbers, the leadership team included strategies to identify students with attendance problems and to intervene in these situations. Parents were also notified in an effort to explain the importance of the attendance policies. In addition, the administration revised the discipline plan in regards to consequences to reduce the number of days lost to suspensions. Despite these interventions, attendance continues to be a concern.

In analyzing these unfulfilled or unsuccessful action steps, it is important to note that there still exists optimism that these interventions will be successful in the future. The strategies were basically well-designed and were aligned with actual weaknesses at the school. It is apparent in some situations that better and more efficient methods of communication must be established in an effort to inform parents of these strategies. Several of the steps require a student/parent commitment if success is to be realized. In an effort to achieve this, the school must formulate a plan to effectively stimulate the interest of all concerned parties.

### **III. Reflections (Lessons Learned)**

In examining the success of various steps and the failure of others, it is surprising that many students and/or parents do not take full advantage of programs and strategies which are intended to assist struggling learners. It is often a concern that schools are not focused on supporting this type of student; however, the Rothschild School Improvement Plan heavily focuses on struggling learners as well as students with disabilities. Extended day programs and Saturday academic sessions have not been well supported in some cases. These are excellent and well-developed plans which are designed to increase instructional time for at-risk students. The

attendance is certainly a cause for concern and remains an obstacle to the success of these interventions.

In analyzing this improvement process, it is important to note that support of the plan is essential if real and sustained growth is to be realized. This has been a notion which is certainly reinforced when change is required in an organization. The various action steps may be well-designed and formulated for success; however, the staff must support the plan if the capacity to improve is to become a reality. In contemplating this concept, it should perhaps be noted in the future that all aspects of the plan be accompanied with a well-designed professional learning and/or system support plan. This plan would enable all staff members to totally comprehend the action steps of the overall plan and to refine and/or develop the necessary skills for real success.

#### **IV. Next Steps**

Rothschild Middle School has consistently maintained a commitment to improvement. However, this commitment has at times lacked a focused and concentrated approach. During early leadership meetings this year, it was discussed that a vital ingredient to continuous improvement was to sustain the action steps included in the plan and that the hard work invested in developing the school improvement plan will not yield any significant benefits to the school unless the plan is actually implemented. As a result of these conversations and discussions, the improvement team worked to ensure that all action steps were designed with a focus on improving student achievement, and to build and strengthen the instructional and organizational capacity of the school to the achievement of the identified goals. It was also a major objective of the group to emphasize principles and practices that are simplistic and supported by research.

At this point, the school has included several new strategies/ interventions in the plan for 2008-2009. A major focus in all areas involves curriculum mapping in an effort to ensure that curriculums are sequenced, organized, and fully aligned to the GPS. The school will also begin early implementation stages in regards to the Working on the Work (WOW) framework; this strategy will obviously focus on producing engaging work for students. As the school moves forward with the improvement plan, meaningful teamwork, combined with setting clear, measurable goals and consistently collecting and analyzing performance data will constitute a solid foundation for continuous improvement and positive results.