

# Onalaska Middle School

Cultivating and Harvesting  
High Expectations and Excellence



## Increasing Achievement for All Students

*Joint Select Committee on Education Accountability*

Scott Fenter, Superintendent

CJ Gray, Principal

Meg Matheson, Data and Instructional Coach

# Presentation Objective



- The work of developing a School Improvement Plan in a small rural district.
- Progress we have made so far.
- Successes and challenges in our efforts.
- What the state could do to provide additional assistance.

# RAD Announcement



- ❧ RAD Christmas Card After 1.5 years of school district and community trauma, and this increased the RAD announcement trauma
- ❧ Public is informed via the news media in mid-January
- ❧ Impact on a Small Rural Community: Anger and Anxiety by a multitude for people in the school and in the community
- ❧ See Video Clip of Community Reaction

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Friday,  
Jan. 14, 2011

# The Chronicle

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## Bearcat Girls Win at Centralia

Chehalis Earns Bragging Rights After Explosive Second Half Against Tigers / **Sports 1**

# Onalaska, Morton Two of State's Four Worst-Performing Schools

### INSIDE:

• Morton Holds Community Meeting About 'Required Action' Designation

• Fifty Schools Are Low-Achieving

*see back page*

By **Christopher Brewer**

[cbrewer@chronline.com](mailto:cbrewer@chronline.com)

Two public schools in Lewis County have been designated by the state's education authority to take immediate action on not meeting federal standards,

but will be guaranteed federal money to make improvements if they adhere to a strict plan, the state said Thursday.

The Morton and Onalaska school districts were included in the state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's

list of "required action" for failing schools, ensuring funding will be available to improve Morton Junior/Senior High School and Onalaska Middle School, which are two of 50 included on the state's persistently lowest-achieving schools list. Oakville

High School in Grays Harbor County is the only other local school included on the persistently lowest-achieving list, but is not designated for "required action."

*please see **SCHOOLS**, back page*

# Onalaska Hopes Changes Will Help Troubled School



Brandon Swanson / bswanson@chronline.com

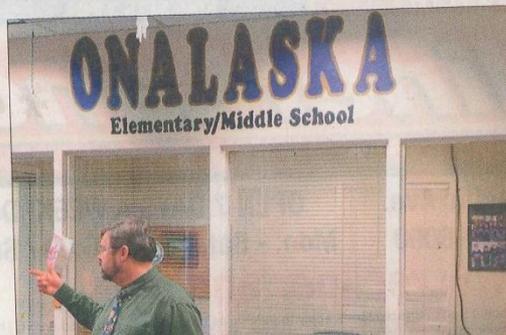
Vocabulary words sit on a cabinet door during a math class at Onalaska Middle School Tuesday. Principal Glen Dickason will soon be forced from his position after the school placed at the bottom of statewide testing. Poor math scores played a large part in the low score. To see more local photographs, go to [www.chronline.com/gallery/](http://www.chronline.com/gallery/).

## *Told It Must Improve, District Will Replace Principal, Look for Federal Aid*

By Chris Brewer  
[cbrewer@chronline.com](mailto:cbrewer@chronline.com)

ONALASKA — Scott Fenter says he literally couldn't sleep when he heard the news that the Onalaska School District had been included in the list of the state's lowest-achieving schools and had to take immediate action.

"I couldn't rest for two weeks," Onalaska's top educator said Tuesday. "Knowing we were going to have to make some radical changes and seeing that it would affect people I've been working closely with since I've been here really hurt when I heard it then



Onalaska Middle School principal Glen Dickason talks to faculty Tuesday. This will be his last year as principal because of changes required to

# Commencing the Work



- ❧ Told to chose 1 of 4 federal models: Turnaround, Transformation, Closure, Charter. In reality, Turnaround is the only viable model in an isolated rural school
- ❧ BERC Report indicated severe deficiencies with instruction and the school learning environment
- ❧ Replacing the Principal with a turnaround leader
- ❧ Developed a 65 page grant for Transformation Model in 22 days with 20 people

# The Old Way of Doing Business

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## Low Performance was student's fault due to:

- ✓ They just are not trying
- ✓ Poverty and low income is cause failure
- ✓ Poor Parenting causes the learning deficiencies

Many staff members lived by:

“They don't care, so why should we?”

# The Academic Challenge We Faced



Math and Reading baseline assessments  
conducted May 2011

## Data indicated:

- Math: 83% of our students had severe deficits  
We lacked an endorsed math teacher at middle school
  
- Reading:
  - (a) 40% of our students had significant struggles in either decoding or comprehension,
  - (b) 60% needed focused skill support in core curriculum

# Establishing the Work

- A School-Community Vision Statement.
- Leadership Team(s) for continual improvement.
- Research-based instruction & intervention materials in deficit areas.
- All as **Intervention Teachers** in math or reading
- Intense PD in CEL 5D+ in instruction and evaluation
- Frequent student assessments to monitor progress.
- Several key staffing transfers to promote rapid change.

# Scheduling for Improvement



- ∞ Dramatic schedule changes and all teachers as intervention providers in math or reading
  - ✓ Flexible Intervention groups are blocked in the morning time
  - ✓ 8<sup>th</sup> Period added for college readiness and tracking for afterschool homework or tutoring needs
  - ✓ Extended student school day by 20 minutes to increase learning time

# Creating a New Learning Culture and Environment



- ∞ Fully Implemented Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS)
- ∞ Teachers fully enlisted as participants to change culture and climate
- ∞ Students assume key roles in changing culture
- ∞ Parents and community joined in changing culture
  - ✓ Volunteers in the school
  - ✓ Family/Community Dinners around Student Learning and School Culture

*Students and parents attest to the positive changes.*

# Professional Learning Community Teams around DATA (PLC)



- ❖ Purpose and Norms established
- ❖ Protocols and Expectations established
  - ❧ Meet Every Tuesday – Dedicated and NO EXCUSES
  - ❧ 30 Minutes
  - ❧ Notes and data on every student reviewed and adjustments for interventions continuous
  - ❧ Teachers operate as Leaders (Not just administrators)

# Framing Instruction and Evaluation



- Based on U of W CEL 5D+ intensive training
  - ✓ Focus for the year based on BERCC Report and staff selection of greatest impact value
  - ✓ Peer observation implemented
  - ✓ Scripting and analyzing instruction
  - ✓ Rapid changes with instructional practice are occurring

# Ongoing Reflections, Self-Evaluations and OSPI Supports

- OSPI Quarterly Reviews identified improvements
- 2<sup>nd</sup> BERC Audit shows 100-300% gains in many areas
- School Climate and Culture Data near 100% implementation
- MSP and EOC data for MS shows large gains
- Student Data to Action Plans for subsequent years
- Comparing work to 9 Characteristics of Effective Schools
- Staff look ahead to where we should be in 180 days
- Great support from OSPI, but state could reduce repetitive reporting on monitored progress
- Thinking outside of the box for rapid change pushes against the Federal “Highly Qualified” Requirements

# MSP READING DATA

GRADE LEVEL	2010-11	2011-12	% FROM LAST YEAR	COHORT DATA
5TH	63.9%	66.7%	4%	12%
6TH	62.7%	53.2%	(15%)	(17%)
7TH	37.3%	75.0%	101%	20%
8TH	50.0%	60.0%	20%	61%

# MSP MATH DATA

GRADE LEVEL	2010-11	2011-12	% FROM LAST YEAR	COHORT DATA
5TH	62.3%	45.0%	(28%)	(4%)
6TH	35.3%	51.6%	46%	(17%)
7TH	32.2%	56.3%	75%	59%
8TH	14.3%	34.5%	141%	7%

# MSP SCIENCE DATA

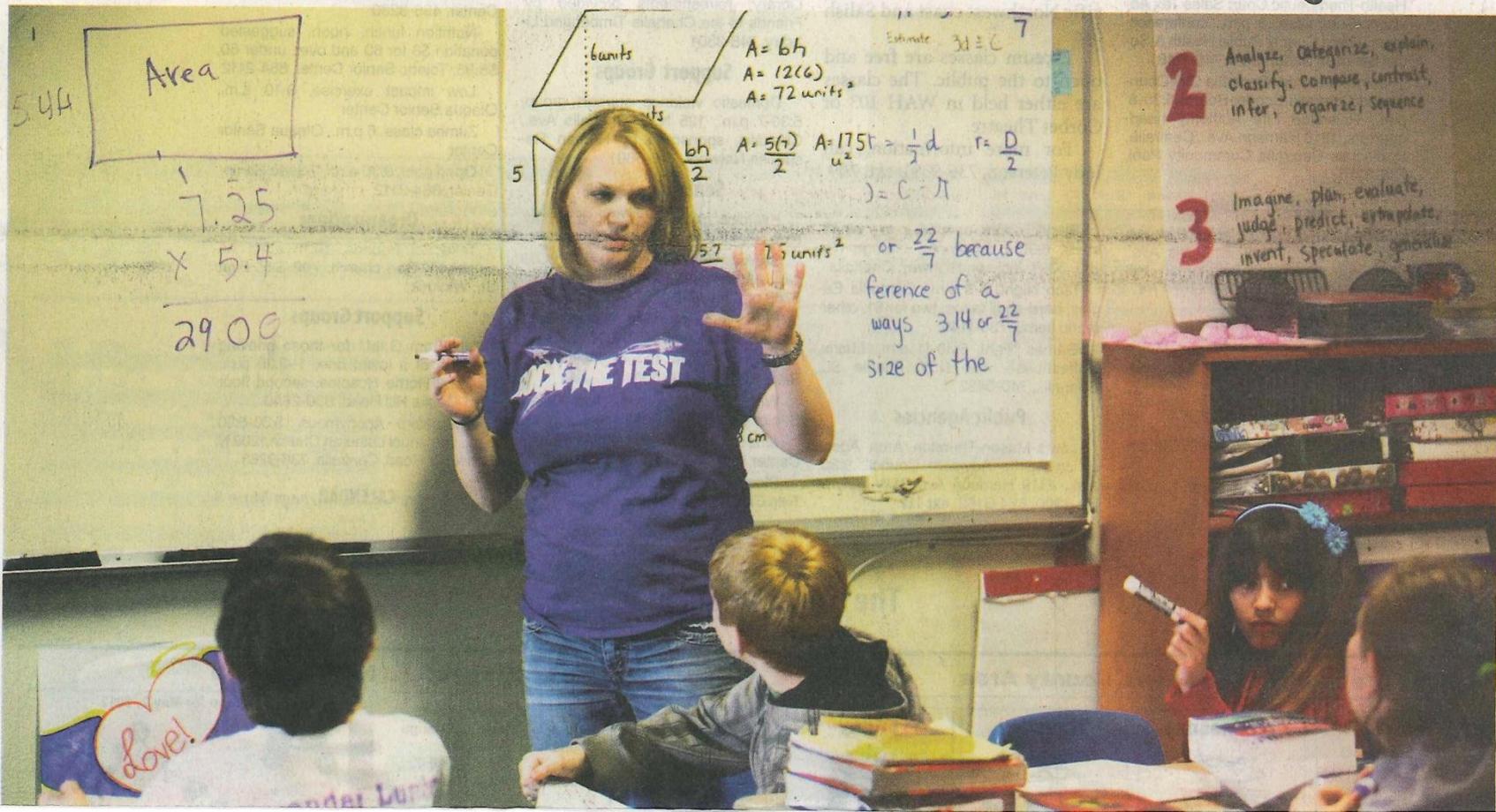
GRADE LEVEL	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	% FROM LAST YEAR	% FROM LAST 2 YEARS
5 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	15.8%	54.1%	65.0%	20%	311%

# MSP WRITING DATA

GRADE LEVEL	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	% FROM LAST YEAR	% FROM LAST 2 YEARS
4 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	53.8%	54.7%	50.0%	(9%)	(7.0%)
7 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	61.3%	55.9%	79.2%	42%	29%

# Learning a Better Way

Onalaska Educators  
Work to Improve  
School



# In Closing



❖ What questions do you have for us?