



## **Tolland Intermediate School**

Annual Report  
2010-2011

### **Introduction**

As a learning community, we are very proud of the work that our students, parents, teachers, and staff do on a daily basis. Our school is a place where students are encouraged to develop all of their individual talents, skills, and abilities in a safe and caring environment.

At Tolland Intermediate School, we foster independence, responsibility, and strength of character by promoting respect for self, respect for others, and respect for the environment. At Tolland Intermediate School, we provide a broad spectrum of integrated programs in fine arts, health sciences, and technology to nurture and cultivate the creativity of the whole child. At Tolland Intermediate School, we create a family atmosphere, where parental and community involvement enriches the educational opportunities for every learner.”

Individual commitment to a group goal is an essential ingredient for creating a dynamic and successful school environment. It is with great passion that we dedicate ourselves to these high standards to give our students the best possible education.

Tolland Intermediate School began a three year process of implementing a standards-based report card. Standards are the core of what we want our students to learn. Standards have been an important part of our curriculum - our textbooks are standards-based and our state tests are standards-based. Our new report card is based on these same grade level content standards

This year we began the implementation process for Positive Behavioral Support. PBiS is a framework for creating and sustaining effective school-wide behavior system. Unlike a behavior plan or program, the emphasis of a behavior *system* is on preventing problems and providing a comprehensive, consistent model of appropriate behavior. Teams use data to evaluate their efforts. Shifting the focus to *prevention* minimizes behavioral problems and increases academic time for students.

In an attempt to conserve the amount of paper used at T.I.S., this year we again used our Digital Backpack as a means of communication between the school and home. Announcements are emailed out to a list of subscribers each week. Information about subscribing to the Digital Backpack is available on our school website.

Tolland Intermediate School continued to offer several after school activities for our students. Homework Club was offered to provide students with a structured setting to complete assignments. Math Olympiad

was established to provide students with the opportunity for some math enrichment. The Green Team provided an opportunity for students interested in preserving the environment to learn about environmentally conscious ideas and work on projects. The Tolland Intermediate School Store Club consisted of 50 students organized into separate teams learning about finance, marketing, advertising and accounting. The school store was a hugely successful endeavor and created a tremendous amount of excitement throughout the school.

Our student council works together as a team to support our community and our school. The purpose of this group is to develop a positive school climate by involving students in making TIS the best it can be. Through student council, we strive to foster good citizenship and respect for all individuals. Some highlights of last year's student council are, the Helping Hands fundraiser, which raised nearly \$500.00 for local families in need, the T.I.S. Relay for Life, raising nearly \$600.00, for cancer research. Additionally, for the second year in a row, our student council organized a paint decorating event. During this morning long activity, each fifth grader was given the opportunity to dip their hand in paint and stamp their handprint on the wall in the science wing. This year brought in year two of the Snow Creature Feature contest. Each classroom created a paper snow creature that was displayed outside their classroom. To culminate the event, each student was given the opportunity to vote for their favorite snow creature.

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

Tolland Intermediate School is well represented on district and building level committees. Our teachers use many integrated units in their teaching which combine skills and content across disciplines.

As indicated in our mission statement, this school provides a balanced program to meet the needs of the whole child. The students' six and one-half hour school day is divided this way:

- Four and one-half hours in subjects of language arts, math, social studies and science.
- Students attended unified arts (art, music, physical education, health, guidance and library) classes in 43 minute blocks. Fourth and fifth grade students were also provided with a keyboarding class once every six days.
- This year we implemented a daily block in our schedule called learning lab. Learning lab gives teachers the opportunity to work with students on areas of need or to provide extension opportunities for students to be challenged within the curriculum.
- Students received a daily sixty minute lunch/recess period.

### **Language Arts**

The main components of the language arts curriculum are the Houghton Mifflin Reading Program 3-5, tradebooks, and leveled readers, Empowering Writers, Houghton Mifflin, Harcourt, Scott Foresman. Pacing guides were created in the fall and revised mid-year as a result of snow days. The Houghton Mifflin Integrated Theme Tests were administered at the completion of each theme. Students answered the multiple choice questions on scantron sheets allowing for an item analysis after each theme. Rubrics and anchor sets were utilized for scoring the open-ended responses. Points were entered in MM enabling teachers to compare students' comprehension through both multiple choice and open-ended questions. HM skills tests were administered in grade 3 after theme 1, 3, and 5. This tool provided teachers with progress monitoring. Integrated Theme Tests were administered after Themes 2, 4, and 6.

### **Mathematics**

We continue to use Everyday Math as the major resource in delivering the mathematics curriculum at Tolland Intermediate School. Our successful student performance on benchmark data and CMT results validate the rigorous work done throughout the year. Teachers are working hard to provide good Tier 1 instruction in our math classrooms. This includes strong instructional lessons with good modeling, guided practice and opportunities for small group instruction to support the diverse needs of the classroom. Staff-meeting and/or PLC time was devoted to SRBI and how we identify students and then provide support in three ways; within the classroom (Tier 1), Learning Lab, or through the Intervention teacher and paraprofessional who provide Tier II and Tier III support.

Our Math Intervention Program provides additional support for students identified by teachers as behind in numeracy grade level content. This includes skills such as place value, addition and subtraction, multiplication and division, fractions. The chart below provides overall information about our intervention program and its impact on providing services to our children.

### **Recommendations**

- Revise benchmarks to align with new standards (CCSS).
- Review Special Education material/resources for identified students to align with curriculum and meet student goals

### **Science**

During the summer of 2010, there were no curricular revisions. For the previous three summers the curriculum was reviewed and revised, this year teachers worked together during the school year to refine the curriculum.

A K-12 science initiative has been to review the science process standards for each grade level as to where each standard is being taught. During the 2009-10 school year, the K-12 science committee collected information about the frequency and kind of science process activities conducted at each grade level. During this school year all grade levels continued to work to include more hands-on learning activities in lessons. Science Coordinator, Carolyn Tyl continues to work with teachers designing and implementing inquiry-based lessons. The summary of her model lessons during the 2010-11 school year is shown in the table below.

### **Recommendations**

- Meet in grade level teams/PLC groups to review curriculum and instructional practices. Work on Tier I instructional practices with all teachers.
- Meet with Gr. 3-5 science representatives to continue to review curricular issues. Discuss how changes are being implemented.
- Regularly meet with science teachers to discuss safety practices and concerns.
- Continue to equip the science labs at the Tolland Intermediate School for use by students in grades 3-5.
- Return lab room 233 to third grade for use in implementing science lessons.
- Work toward purchasing enough supplies so that all students can participate in inquiry activities. We are limited presently by materials/supplies availability.
- Review and revise the Grades 3-5 pacing guides.
- Include science education as one of the core subjects for grades 3-5. Time/schedule limitations are preventing science instruction from being fully implemented.

### **Social Studies**

During the 2010-11 school year, third grade students learned about the history and geography of Connecticut and Tolland. Their first unit is Connecticut Geography to help students understand how the

geography of our state influenced the settlement of the state and Tolland. The second unit is Colonial Connecticut and Tolland, and the third unit is Connecticut and Tolland in the 1800's. The objectives of these units are for students to understand the changes in Connecticut and Tolland from the colonial period to the end of the 1800's and compare these periods to current-day Connecticut and Tolland.

Fourth grade students learned about the regions of the United States, focusing on the Northeast, Central, and Southwest. The theme for the Northeast region is how the geography of the Northeast region of the United States affects the population patterns and the growth of cities. The theme for the Central region is how the geography of the Central region of the United States affects its success as an agricultural region. The theme for the Southwest region is how the people of the Southwest region of the United States must adapt to a region with very little water.

Fifth grade students learned about the history of the United States from the early days of the Native Americans to the establishment of the United States as an independent country. Their four units are as follows: Two Cultures Meet, The English Colonies, The American Revolution, and The United States Constitution. I worked with two fifth grade teachers to create scoring rubrics and anchor sets for the Two Cultures Meet benchmark. Additionally, I created scoring rubrics and anchor sets for the English Colonies and American Revolution benchmarks. Fifth grade teachers are planning to meet at the end of June to discuss the rubrics and add more examples to the anchor sets.

#### Unified Arts

Our music program works diligently to integrate content with all the other curricula areas. Specific examples of this integration are the units on Hawaii, Food Chains, and The Continents of the World. The Music Department has again made composing a focus of instruction this year. Students have composed in band and all their general music classes as well. The work that students have produced in music class coordinates well with school goals. This year our 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade choral groups serviced nearly 300 students. Our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade bands consisted of nearly 200 students.

Our art program continuously strives to make obvious the connections between art and the world around us. For young students, this involves connecting to what they may experience in the regular classroom, the community, and home environments. Art lessons frequently reinforce skills being developed in math, science, music, and language arts as each class provides thought-provoking initiatives, discussion, production, and closure. Art teachers exhibit select pieces of art to be included in this K-12 statewide appreciation of art education. T.I.S student work is regularly exhibited at the Board of Education offices.

The fourth grade again participated in the BAT program (basic aid training), as part of our fourth grade health class. During this class, every student earns the opportunity to become American Red Cross certified in basic first aid. Other highlights of the health program include units on nutrition, drug awareness, germ control, understanding the workings of the human body as well as other safety issues.

Technology education at Tolland Intermediate School is integrated and imbedded within the general curriculum. Our technology integration specialist meets with classroom teachers on a weekly basis to plan lessons, which infuse technology into the curriculum. Most often, a team teaching approach occurs within the lab between the classroom teacher and the technology specialist. Besides working directly with students, our technology integration teacher, creates additional infrastructure capacity, researches internet sites, finds new and useful software for student and staff use.

Our daily specials schedules, allow specialists to integrate units of instruction with other curricular areas, it also enables classroom teachers to have a common planning time to work in collaboration with colleagues takes place. This common planning time is used for teachers to meet in "Professional

Learning Communities”. During PLC meeting time teachers look at student work and collaborate to meet the educational needs of all students.

In September, 2005 our teachers were organized into “Professional Learning Communities” and were asked to meet at least one hour per week to answer the following questions about their students: 1. What is it that we want students to know? 2. How will we know that they have learned it? 3. What do we do if they haven’t learned? 4. What do we do for those who know the material already? This organizational change has empowered teachers to look at and use student data to help them get better at meeting the individual needs of their students. It also allowed teachers, time to share teaching and learning strategies with each other and add to the number of tools that they had in their teaching “tool box”. Our school as a whole continues to make progress with our work in our PLC groups and we are ready to build on our accomplishments for next year.

## **Student Assessment**

Results of this year’s CMT tests will not be available until mid summer. Teachers use CMT data in conjunction with benchmark assessments and curriculum based assessments to adjust programming to meet the needs of all students. Teachers work within their PLC teams to continuously review student performance. At the beginning

of the year, teachers will thoroughly analyze CMT data and begin planning their instruction based on this data. Every third grader took a cognitive ability test called the CogAT. The CogaAT consists of three 30 minute tests, a verbal battery, a quantitative battery, and a non verbal battery. This information will be used to help teachers adapt instructional methods, learning materials, and the pace of instruction to the individual needs of the student so that students can learn more effectively. It will also be used to help identify academically gifted students, which is mandated by state statute.

### **Language Arts**

There are approximately 46 language arts assessments administered in grades 3-5. This includes the Integrated Theme Tests, DRA, and writing prompts. All assessments are based on the standards, and reflect current research in literacy instruction.

Mastery Manager serves as the database for collecting and sorting the data from these assessments. Various reports are accessible for data analysis. Rubrics and anchor sets are used for scoring. Alternate benchmark assessments are used in grades 3-5. The DRA serves as the alternate assessment for any student who is unable to read the HM alternate assessment. Specific guidelines have been established to help teachers decide if a student qualifies for an alternate benchmark.

### **Mathematics**

Based on the districts pacing guides in Grades 3-5, data is collected every 20-30 days from each unit assessment. Every student at TIS takes a Beginning of the Year (BOY), Middle of the Year (MOY), and End of Year (EOY) assessment. In addition, 31 common formative assessments (Gr. 3 -10, Gr.4 -11, Gr. 5 -11) are given to assess student learning and monitor their progress. These assessments are aligned with the CT State Frameworks for Mathematics and provide teachers with specific data regarding student learning. The data from these benchmarks are used to differentiate instruction, establish centers to support individual student needs, and identify students for intervention. Also, another 31 common formative “Open Response” activities are done in grades 3-5 which ask students to use and apply a variety of content skills to solve problems and communicate mathematically.

### **Science**

Teachers are continuing to administer benchmark tests at appropriate times throughout the school year. Our web-based “data warehouse” program called Mastery Manager, allows questions to be linked directly to Connecticut State Science Standards, so teachers can get immediate feedback regarding individual student progress with any individual standard. Although benchmarks are being administered, teachers report that once the benchmark is given, there is still little use of the data to guide instruction, mainly due to lack of instructional time.

### Social Studies

Revisions to benchmark tests have taken place, and teachers report they are much more manageable with regard to the time it takes to administer. This is an ongoing process and will continue over the next few years. A goal is to align benchmark tests with the format & content of the CMT as well as to use the results of the benchmark results to guide instruction. This will include adding more science process assessment questions to each unit benchmark test. Teachers will be encouraged to formatively assess those skills as the school year progresses.

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### Staffing

The Tolland Intermediate School faculty and staff is what makes this school such a special learning community. Our teaching team is child centered, dedicated, and highly motivated to serve the students and parents of Tolland. Teachers spend countless hours after school, on weekends, and over the summer working to get the school and their classroom ready for our students.

This year Tolland Intermediate School was staffed with (2) administrators, (3) secretaries, (1.6) nurses, (33) classroom teachers, (7.6) unified arts teachers, (1) school psychologist, (1) guidance counselor, (1.5) SLPs, (8) special education teachers, (25) special education paraprofessionals, (3) general education paraprofessionals and (4.5) custodians. Our average class size is 22 students per classroom.

The Reading Department employs one Reading Consultant, one Reading Specialist, and one reading paraprofessionals. These people all provide support to struggling readers through a Push-In model and a Pull-Out model which targets fluency. The Before School program is offered to students who need extra support in oral reading fluency and comprehension.

With the addition of a fulltime Math Support teacher in 2009 and a math paraprofessional in 2010, we have been able to offer Tier I and Tier II targeted math support, the development of a library of targeted math support materials and the alignment of these materials to state standards. The math support teacher

also acts as a resource within the building for classroom teachers. This year, math support was offered to all grades. Students received support in the classroom, as well as additional small group instruction throughout the day.

## **School Facilities**

As of May 1, 2011 there were 705 students enrolled at Tolland Intermediate School. In addition to classroom teaching space, there are three dedicated science labs, one lecture hall and three computer labs at T.I.S.

## **Student Support Services**

The special education program at Tolland Intermediate School consists of resource rooms, a multi-needs learning center, and an inclusion program. Many students in the special education program receive additional student support services in the form of occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, and psychological counseling. Instruction in all of the special education resource rooms is characterized by one-to-one and small group instruction. In keeping with one of our school wide goals, the use of computers continues to be widespread in all special education classrooms. Our program has been at the forefront in demonstrating the effectiveness of computers in the classroom, as very powerful tools for student productivity. Our commitment to technology is a way of meeting the very diverse needs of our learners in special education.

Developmental guidance lessons are taught to each classroom and focus on building social skills and the development of character in each student and group.

Our before school reading program continued this year for third and fourth graders. Students in the program receive reading support for 40 minutes two or three times a week. Reading support was administered in a pull-out as well as a push-in model. During "push-in" reading support a reading specialist or a paraprofessional went into classrooms and joined classroom teachers in leading small guided reading groups. Groups met to read, discuss, and respond to literature. Students enjoyed the varied instruction and small group setting. There were additional students who received pullout services because of their various individual needs. Our reading department offered reading support to third, fourth and fifth grade students before school.

The Tolland Intermediate School math support program was implemented last year. The program provided targeted remedial math instruction. Students were served both in and out of the classroom setting. The math support teacher collaborates with teachers to develop math intervention plans for students, differentiating instruction to meet the needs of a wide-range of students and analyzes and interprets student assessment data.

## **Student Activities**

We have a school wide end-of-year Physical Education Day organized this year by Music teacher Mrs. Baker and our physical education teachers Mr. Ken Downing and Mrs. Jennifer Logsdon. Various fitness and cooperative activities occur involving the entire school. These activities are directed by staff and parent volunteers.

In an effort to raise money for the American Heart Association and to encourage physical fitness, our physical education teachers again organized Jump Rope for Heart. The Jump Rope for Heart was again a big success this year.

This year was the sixth year for our “Read Across Tolland” program. In celebration of “Read Across America”, students from our school traveled to Birch Grove and were given the opportunity to read to a buddy. TEPTO provided funds to cover the cost of bus transportation for students and staff. It was a great collaborative effort between the teaching staffs at Birch Grove and Tolland Intermediate School and we look forward to continuing this tradition next year.

Our Reading At Home (RAH) program continued this year with the support of TEPTO members. The “Read At Home” program strives to encourage children to practice reading outside of the school day. We promote the summer reading programs at both the Tolland Public Library. Throughout the school year, reading is rewarded with prizes provided by the PTO and the community. These prizes include Six Flag tickets and free books. We were pleased to have Author Suzie Kline give presentations to students about their lives as readers and writers.

This year we held our second CMT pep rally. Once again the Tolland High School Cheerleading Team came over to TIS and performed some original CMT cheers, much to the delight of the TIS student body. We’d like to extend a big TIS thank you, to the cheerleaders as well as their coach, our very own Tricia Bottaro, for putting together such an enjoyable show.

The second TIS promotion ceremony was held for our departing fifth grade class. The ceremony was held one morning during the last week of school. The ceremony gave parents an opportunity to come and celebrate the culmination of their children’s Elementary school years. The ceremony was successful and plans for next year’s ceremony are already underway.

There were several special activities that students were involved in this year in the area of science.

### **Grade 3:**

- Several classes produced *Animal Research Reports* in PowerPoint. Students find all the required information and graphics on the web.
- Students completed the embedded lab “Go with the Flow” (electric circuits lab) a requirement for CM Testing. This lab experience is part of the Electricity & Magnetism unit.
- The third grade science lab was re-assigned for physical therapy. This resulted in lack of sufficient space to do lab full activities.
- Ms. Deliman was the first 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher to have a SMARTBoard installed in her room.

### **Grade 4**

- All fourth grade students participated in *Wind over Wings*, a birds of prey program that ties in with the “Food Webs & Adaptations” unit.
- Fourth grade classes visited Crandall Park looking for plant and animal adaptations.
- Students completed the embedded lab “Soggy Paper” (absorbency of paper) a requirement for CM Testing. The lab is related to the recycling and use of paper in our society.
- Teachers and students had access to a science lab to perform various experiments. The lab room is used extensively during the Soils and Food Webs & Adaptations Units.
- SMARTBoards were installed in four fourth grade rooms, Mrs. Lemelin, Mrs. Zirolli, Mrs. Boire, and Mr. Slayton.

### **Grade 5:**

- **Sun/Moon/Earth Unit:** Students attended a field trip to the ECSU Planetarium to reinforce the concepts taught.



- Many videos are available for all units that reinforce the concepts and give visual learners another avenue to learn the concept.
- The state embedded lab “Catch It” was completed in conjunction with the Human Body unit. The lab is part of the CMT administered in March. We added digital “Reaction Timers” to the experiment this year, which was highly engaging to the students.
- Fifth grade teachers also implemented another inquiry lab experience during the Sun, Moon & Earth unit called “Craters” Students were asked to discover the factors that affect crater formation on the moon.
- Teachers and students had access to a science lab to perform various experiments, although because the science teaching time was reduced this year, teachers are finding it difficult to go to the lab, perform the experiment, clean up and wrap up in the 35 minute time allotment.

## **Parent and Community**

Our award winning PTO continues to support our school, by providing services and support. They sponsored numerous programs throughout the school year. Parents contribute Box Tops to help support the funding for Just Right Books at Tolland Public Library. Parent volunteers assist with culminating activities for the Reading at Home program. The PTO continues to support students, by providing services and support. They sponsored *Mad Science*, an assembly program that was held during school. The group also budgeted funds to supplement curricular areas at TIS. This year, monies were used to pay for many different assemblies throughout the year.

The group also budgeted funds to purchase a SMARTBoard, guided reading books, library books, recess equipment; a new curtain for our stage, guest author’s visits, seventy-five dollars for each teacher to spend on classroom supplies and the list goes on and on..

We have many parent volunteers who work in the classrooms. Classroom teachers and the principal solicit volunteers; parents can sign up at Curriculum Night or in the front office at any time.

Through community efforts, outreach of our staff, the Tolland Elementary PTO, Tolland Human Services, Tolland Historical Society, Senior Center and Tolland Fire Department, students participate in a variety of special assemblies, programs and local field-trips.

Exemplary teacher-parent communication practices exist here at Tolland Intermediate School. They include: the Digital Backpack, our school website, school newsletters, the agenda, voice mail, phone and personal throughout the school year, parent conferences, teacher websites, and monthly PTO Newsletters.

The Tolland Historical Society and the Hicks-Stearns Museum directors are a valuable resource for the students of Tolland Intermediate School, most notably for third grade. Tolland Green Day was an extraordinary undertaking by third grade teachers, members of the Tolland Historical Society, and directors of the Hicks-Stearns Museum. Students dressed as children from the 1800’s and travelled through five stations on the Tolland Green: the Hicks-Stearns Museum, the Jail Museum, Drawing on the Green, Music and Movement, and the Old Schoolhouse (held in the Fellowship Hall at the Congregational Church). In meetings with both the third grade teachers and the directors of the museums, everyone involved saw great educational value to the day.

The Tolland Junior Women once again hosted a Geography Bee at Tolland Intermediate School. Students in grades 4 and 5 competed. Fourth grader Calvin Beck, won the school geography bee.

This year four administrators from the Foundation Public Schools in Karachi, Pakistan visited Tolland for four weeks. They arrived on September 20 and we toured the district, visiting each of the four schools. Sameena Abdullah primarily spent time at Birch Grove and Faiza Arshad primarily worked with TIS

teachers. Asma Zuberi and Sadaf Kuram split their time between TMS and THS. During their visit, the administrators observed teachers' classes, met with administrators, attended after-school functions, and toured Connecticut. Faiza shared a presentation about the music and culture of Pakistan with students in fourth and fifth grades.

## **Tolland Intermediate School Goals for 2011-2012**

- During the 2011-2012 school year, we will continue our partnership with SERC, as we enter year three of the implementation of a school-wide model to improve our school culture. The program called PBIS, Positive Behavior Supports, PBIS, focuses on recognizing positive student behaviors while utilizing data tracking software to pinpoint areas of concern.
- During the 2011 -2012 school year we will also be expanding our school-wide model aimed at remediating student academic needs as well as providing opportunities for students to be exposed to enrichment or extension activities. This model called Scientific Research Based Interventions (SRBI) will require teachers to track student progress, monitor their performance, focus on areas of concern and make recommendations based on performance. For the 2011 – 2012 school year we will continue to refine SRBI model and establish specific guidelines for including and exiting students from supports. Ensure intervention resources are available to meet a variety of students' needs.
- Expand our special education service delivery model expand our remedial programs as we attempt to provide our learning disabled students with more small group targeted instruction.
- Increase internal professional development offerings language arts

### **Social Studies**

- Develop new lessons/units as needed to align with new state standards.
- Increase teachers' instructional focus on inquiry and essential questions.
- Infuse content area literacy skills and strategies into social studies by focusing on content area reading strategies and vocabulary development.

### **Language Arts**

- Review the Language Arts Program Evaluation conducted by Dr. Susan Deffenbaugh to gauge progress towards meeting the Evaluation's recommendations.
- Continue to refine SRBI model and establish specific guidelines for including and exiting students from reading support. Ensure intervention resources are available to meet a variety of students' needs.
- Continue to create anchor sets for common assessments.
- Write a language arts curriculum for grades 3-5 based on CCSS.
- Review units of study completed by CSDE (soon to be released) and their relevance to current curriculum in Tolland.
- Revise and maintain common assessments from one year to next.
- Use data from language arts benchmarks to inform instruction.
- Pursue professional development in the area of writing workshop.
- Maintain fidelity to pacing guides.
- Investigate reason for large numbers of students receiving reading support services.

### **Math**

- Work on alignment to CCSS across the grades (3-5).

- Provide PD/support for small group instruction in math
- Develop mathematics website to support teachers and community

### **Science**

- Science teachers will continue to develop lessons utilizing science process.
- The science coordinator will continue to work with teachers to develop and model more inquiry based lab experiences for students.
- Benchmark tests will be reviewed and adjusted as recommended.
- Address content vocabulary instructional strategies