



School Improvement Annual Report 2008-09

The mission of the Robert G. Lutz School for Work Experience is to provide experiences and training to promote each student's transition from school to community.

Lutz School provides service to students, ages 18 to 26, who have mild to moderate cognitive impairments. As of May 2009, our enrollment was 243. Our average daily attendance rate last year was 88%.

Status of School Improvement

School improvement efforts focus on improving both student behavior and work performance. The entire staff prioritizes areas and develops goals for our students, with parents invited to participate. For the 2008-09 school year our improvement goals were:

Improve pre-vocational skills.

Staff developed and implemented a new work skills checklist, covering 30 pre-vocational, as well as vocational skills. In February we assessed students using the checklist in order to produce baseline data related to current abilities. We found that students, on average, had learned an average of 18.7 out of the 30 skills. This data will help us determine which skills we need to focus on in order to reach this goal.

Increase student achievement and success in the community.

Our curriculum is aligned with the Addressing Unique Educational Needs (AUEN) curriculum. Last year, our staff prioritized the Michigan Extended Grade Level Content Expectations (EGLCE) as they apply to Lutz students. Our next step will be to pilot the use of EGLCEs in writing goals and objectives that address functional academics.

Students in our work study transition program are assessed after each work-site placement. These evaluations enable staff to target skills, improving the student's ability to become employed.

Improve positive student behavior.

The slogan for our schoolwide program to improve behavior is PAWS (*Practice responsibility, Act kindly and respectfully, Work hard, and Stay safe*). This year, staff worked behavioral expectations into lesson plans and developed a reward program for positive behavior. Students who demonstrated three out of four of the PAWS skills earned reward tickets. Monthly assemblies at which 70 students were recognized and won prizes promoted the program. The fact that ***all*** of our students earned PAWS rewards suggests the program has been successful; however, we will formally evaluate its effectiveness during the 2009-10 school year.

Curriculum

The basic goal of our work-based curriculum is to teach students to be contributing members of the community. Our unique curriculum is a compilation of AUEN's Supported Independence performance expectations, and annual goals and short-term instructional objectives created by staff. We have been participating in the Macomb County Moderately Cognitively Impaired curriculum development committee, involved in incorporating the Extended Grade Level Content Expectations into writing goals and objectives.

Work is an essential part of our curriculum and Lutz students travel to a variety of community job-training sites, such as hospitals, nursing homes, businesses and nonprofit organizations. A grant between the MISD and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth – Rehabilitation Services (MDLEG-RS) enabled 108 students to participate in short-term job exposures, vocational assessments and job placements. Others remain at school to learn the skills needed to work competitively. Contract jobs brought into Lutz provide students with work-related opportunities.

Student Achievement

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team determines the scope of each student's curriculum. Each student's progress is assessed individually and reported to parents. The Lutz Work Skills Checklist, along with structured observations, are used annually to determine present level of performance. We are also piloting an assessment related to transition.

In addition, students who have participated in Transition I and II programs travel with a job coach to a work environment where an evaluator from an adult service agency tests the students on factors related to their ability to work. Then the evaluator provides a recommendation regarding future employment possibilities. Eighteen students took part in this type of assessment last year. Of those, 10 were recommended for competitive employment, 5 for supported employment and 3 for work center programs.

Use of Technology

Technology is an important tool which we use in a variety of ways—for functional academics, for resume writing and for filling out job applications. Visual aids, computers, digital cameras and adaptive devices further help us meet students' individual needs by increasing their independence and communication skills. These devices help students understand schedules and routines, provide a way to strengthen their recall of events, and give them an outlet for leisure time.

Use of Community Resources

Each day at least half of our students receive part of their instruction in the community. Besides job training, students learn to take part in leisure activities, eat at area restaurants, and travel around the county using the public transit system. A satellite classroom housed at the Macomb Mall takes advantage of all the resources in the area.

Each week a counselor from MDLEG-RS is at Lutz to discuss job openings and potential placements. Through our joint efforts, 9 students were placed in competitive jobs. Currently, 11 students are in job development, working with agencies for competitive employment. Our Transition I and II programs involved 110 students and 12 community work sites. Other students toured several programs they will use once they leave school, including Comprehensive Services for Developmentally Disabled (CSDD), Creative Employment Opportunities (CEO), ARC of Macomb, Social Resources, Inc. (SRI) and the respite home. Completers and their families participated in a seminar on Social Security sponsored by United Cerebral Palsy.

Staff Development

Lutz staff participate in a wide range of staff development activities that support our school improvement goals. Last year staff attended various conferences or received training in transition, positive behavior support, school improvement frameworks, curriculum, strategies for working with students who are aggressive, and special education laws. Teacher consultants from the MISD's Autistic Impaired (AI) program presented an overview of autism and the various teaching approaches that enhance learning for all students. Our staff is certified by the Crisis Prevention Institute in non-violent crisis intervention techniques.

All of our teachers meet the "highly qualified" standards of the federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) act and IDEA.

Parent Participation

Last year, approximately 84% of parents attended IEP team meetings and 90% came to parent conferences. We have an active parent group that meets monthly to discuss current issues. Their fundraising efforts provide our students with special activities and events. They also sponsor informational meetings for parents in the evening when Lutz students are enjoying a dance. Transition planning provides another opportunity for parental involvement.

Points of Pride!

- Lutz students contribute to the community by volunteering at places such as Martha T. Berry and Henry Ford hospitals, Church of Christ Assisted Living and Care Center, Second Hand Rose, area restaurants, shops, churches and fraternal organizations.
- Our Student Council sponsored several charitable events. During the holidays, they adopted a family, providing them with gifts and food. They also collected "Coins for Caring" each week and used the money to help families in Macomb County.
- Construction is complete on four classrooms, new cafeteria, and student commons. Our expanded gym and "Wildcat workout room" are fully operational with new bleachers and equipment, and visitors now enter Lutz at a renovated new main office.
- One of our teachers was named MISD "Teacher of the Year" at the secondary level.
- We are working on becoming a "green" school. As part of the process, each class painted a birdhouse.
- Every student received a T-shirt in support of our positive behavior support program.



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