

II. School-Level Plan- White Mountain Elementary (WME) – “SOAR TO FOUR”

A. Assessing the needs of the school systems, structures, policies and students

- i. WME is currently arranged as the district’s elementary school containing all 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. Currently there are 477 total students attending WME, 219 or 45.9% of the students are Hispanic, 169 or 35.4% are Caucasian, 100 or 21% are Native and 5 or less than 2% are identified as “other”. 100% of the students are eligible for free/reduced lunch.

Grade level breakdown indicates that 174 students are 3rd graders, with a demographic breakdown of 71 or 40.8% Hispanic, 62 or 35.6% Caucasian, 38 or 21.8% Native, and 2 or less than 2% identified as “other”. These 3rd graders were 2nd graders last year, and do not have PARCC reading or math data associated with them.

There are a total of 157 students enrolled in the 4th grade. Of these, 66 or 42% are Hispanic, 57 or 36.3% are Caucasian, 31 or 19.5% are Native, and 2 or less than 2% are identified as “other.” As 3rd graders in 2016, these students took the PARCC ELA and MATH assessments. Data from the PARCC ELA03 shows that nationwide, 39.7% of students scored proficient (Level 4 or 5), while in New Mexico only 24.1% of students scored at the same level, and unfortunately at WME, only 18.5 % scored proficient. Demographic breakdown further shows that 22% of Caucasian students, 17.4% of Hispanic students, and 5% of Native students scored proficient. Data from the PARCC MAT03 shows that nationwide, 44% of students scored proficient (Level 4 or 5), while in New Mexico only 29.9% of students scored at the same level, and unfortunately at

WME, only 26.2% scored proficient. Demographic breakdown further shows that 28% of Caucasian students, 29.2% of Hispanic students, and 5% of Native students scored proficient.

There are a total of 146 students enrolled in the 5th grade. Of these, 62 or 42.5% are Hispanic, 50 or 34.2% are Caucasian, 31 or 21.2% are Native, and 1 or less than 2% are identified as “other.” As 4th graders in 2016, these students took the PARCC ELA and MATH assessments. Data from the PARCC ELA04 shows that nationwide, 43.1% of students scored proficient (Level 4 or 5), while in New Mexico only 25% of students scored at the same level, and at WME, 23.1 % scored proficient. Demographic breakdown further shows that 35.4% of Caucasian students, 15.5% of Hispanic students, and 16% of Native students scored proficient. Data from the PARCC MAT04 shows that nationwide, 37.1% of students scored proficient (Level 4 or 5), while in New Mexico only 23.1% of students scored at the same level, while at WME, 24.3% scored proficient.

Demographic breakdown further shows that 37.5% of Caucasian students, 18.3% of Hispanic students, and 12% of Native students scored proficient.

Even though the 2016 5th graders have moved on to Ruidoso Middle School, they too, took the PARCC assessments, setting a baseline measure for “5th grade.”

Data from the PARCC ELA05 shows that nationwide, 42.4% of students scored proficient (Level 4 or 5), while in New Mexico only 24.7% of students scored at the same level, and at WME, 25.8% scored proficient. Demographic breakdown further shows that 40.8% of Caucasian students, 20% of Hispanic students, and 13.6% of Native students scored proficient. Data from the PARCC MAT05

shows that nationwide, 37.6% of students scored proficient (Level 4 or 5), while in New Mexico only 25.2% of students scored at the same level, while at WME, 35.5% scored proficient. Demographic breakdown further shows that 49% of Caucasian students, 28.9% of Hispanic students, and 18.2% of Native students scored proficient.

SIG school-level baseline data is included in Appendix E, while the same data, by grade-level is included in Appendix E-3 and E-4 and E-5 respectively.

Additionally, school demographic data and disaggregated student achievement data, including demographic achievement gap information is included in Appendix E-WME.

- ii. A systemic review of school data and processes indicates that WME has significant student achievement performance issues in both reading and math, as measured by the PARCC assessments. Additionally, substantial achievement gaps exist among demographic groups (see Appendix E-WME). With only one of the six assessments showing a proficient rate above 30% (5th grade math at 35.5%), it is safe to conclude that WME must make substantial/transformational change, as we “soar to four” (Level 4 being the proficiency level on PARCC assessments).

Another finding from our systemic review of school data and processes is that WME students and their families are facing greater economic and overall life demands. This “life-stress”, for lack of a better-encompassing word/phrase, presents families with incredible burdens and most have an overall lack of knowledge involving the gamut of resources and services available within the

community. As stated previously, 100% of WME's student population is eligible for free breakfast and lunch at school. In addition to this alarming statistic, significant numbers of students live in single parent homes, while many are being raised by grandparents. Additionally, behavioral issues at school are on the rise, as well as referrals and involvement by the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), Juvenile Court, and other social services.

A final finding from our systemic review came from our parent/stakeholder surveys. Our parent/stakeholder group, while strongly supporting WME's efforts at significant academic reform and improvement, made clear that a more comprehensive after school program/experience is needed for students. Research is clear (Harvard Family Research Project, Feb. 2008; Educational Leadership, May 2011) that quality afterschool programming that includes appropriate supervision and structure, intentional programming with opportunities for autonomy and choice, and strong family/community partnerships can help increase student achievement scores AND social development.

To summarize, WME's three major needs, as identified through a systemic review process are: to increase reading AND math performance/achievement, to address social/emotional needs labeled as "life-stress", and to complement the academic improvement efforts with a comprehensive after school enrichment program.

Existing identified strengths for addressing both achievement needs and providing a comprehensive after school program are to be found in the skill set, resources, and dedication of our professional staff. Our staff has the capacity and the desire to transform WME into a "school of excellence." To support the comprehensive

after school program, the school/district, because of its 100% free/reduced meals status, is eligible for healthy snacks for an after school program. This is also identified as a positive existing capacity to support the grant application.

- iii. To help each student strive for significant achievement gains in both reading and math, WME will implement a unique, student-centered data monitoring system. Similar to the federal requirement of each special education student having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), WME will develop an Individualized Educational Progress Plan (IEPP) for each student that will help teachers, interventionists, and parents monitor and track student progress in reading and math. Collaborative discussions involving all stakeholders (school/district leadership, school/district union leadership, and parents) also identified that both a bilingual and an English-only interventionist would be extremely beneficial to have on-site to help all our students. For both reading and math, WME will need to explore finding a Common-Core-aligned assessment for both reading and math for 2017-18, which would be used as the school's short-cycle assessment. In order to support school leadership in both academic and behavioral needs, the stakeholder group determined that a hybrid-administrator position, one that combines aspects of an Assistant Principal's duties, Dean of Students' duties and Instructional Coach's duties, would be extremely beneficial in a school that houses almost 500 students.

In order to address the identified need termed "life-stress" and to address components #9 and #11 under the Leadership Innovation model, we propose creating a school/community resource program to address our students/families

socio-emotional and other needs. This program will be modeled along the lines of a School Based Health Center. To combine all of the required services under this type of umbrella program, we are proposing hiring a Licensed Master of Social Work (LMSW). Additional priorities to help realize and implement the totality of the school improvement grant include: developing a comprehensive staff professional development plan, hiring of a new principal, key staff (including interventionists) and partnering with parents and the community to establish a comprehensive after school experience.

B. School Model and Rationale

- i. With flexibility and autonomy from the district, WME chose to select the Leadership Innovation model of school transformation because of the following reasons and conditions:
 - 1) Option of replacing a principal. WME will replace the principal and hire a new principal as soon as possible, with a start date of July 1, 2017, or sooner.
 - 2) Continuing participation in PPE. As district and school administrators have participated in PPE in the past, the new WME Principal will fully participate in PPE Cohort 5.
 - 3) Having discovered reading and math achievement gaps, the district and school believe that together, we can implement strategies that lead to systemic and dramatic positive change.
 - 4) The ability to reassess/re-evaluate the principal's performance yearly and the district's new model of administrative coaching.

- 5) The district will provide more guidance and support than oversight in allowing the school flexibility and autonomy.
 - 6) A strong relationship with the district-designated Systems Instructional Facilitator.
 - 7) In-house experts in curriculum-instruction-assessment alignment and data driven decision making and accountability (Dr. Bickert, Ms. Barsana, and Ms. Reeve).
 - 8) Clearly identifying what is wrong and very strong indicators of and for dramatic improvement, it is believed that WME can create a very specific professional development plan/program, focusing on curriculum and instructional delivery that will lead to more effective instructional strategies and ultimately, results.
 - 9) The ability to provide appropriate socio-emotional supports to both students and families through community partnerships and resources.
 - 10) Develop our own in-house leaders and possible next principal.
 - 11) The ability to create and develop unique parent and community engagement activities and events.
- ii. Once WME was notified that it was a candidate for SIG funding, district leadership met with the principal, district union leadership, school-site union leadership and leaders of the Parent Advisory Committee to review the entire RFA document and discuss all the options available. District leadership, from the beginning, allowed the school autonomy in the direction we wanted to pursue in SIG. The biggest and first decision was to replace the current principal, which

also led to analyzing and choosing the Leadership Innovation model, as our model of change. Finally, as we reviewed all the components of this model, we realized that we could implement these parameters faithfully and completely.

C. Determining Goals and Objectives

- i. Note: Individual school goals (combining all 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders) are captured in the school-level baseline data sheet and are attached as Appendix E. Each grade level has also completed grade-level goals and these may be found on Appendix E-3, E-4, and E-5 respectively.

Goal: By EOY 2018, 35% of WME students (previous was 25%, so goal is + 10) will achieve proficiency on a PARCC ELA assessment. Corresponding objective: When presented with a “Brave Reader CBM” (modeled after a PARCC reading comprehension passage), students will score proficient or higher. Assessed: Students will be assessed on their reading comprehension skills, with corresponding data entered into students’ IEPPs.

- ii. Goal: By EOY 2018, 40% of WME students (previous was 35%, so goal is +10) will achieve proficiency on a PARCC MATH assessment. Corresponding objective: When presented with a “Math Monster CBM” (modeled after a PARCC math open-ended problem) students will score proficient or higher. Assessed: Students will be assessed on their ability to solve and explain their math problem solving ability, with corresponding data entered into their IEPPs.
- iii. Individual grade level reading and math goals are captured on the school-level, baseline data sheets (see Appendix E-3, E-4, and E-5).

- iv. Appendix E, as well as grade-level baseline data (Appendix E-3, E-4, E-5, and E-WME) have been completed and are attached.

D. School Leadership

- i. WME has made the decision to replace the principal. Upon notice of PED's intent to award WME SIG funding, we will immediately post and advertise the principal position. The SIG planning committee consisting of district leadership, district union leadership, school-site union leadership, and parents will interview potential candidates and be charged with recommending their top two candidates for the position to the superintendent for final hiring.
- ii. With these grant funds, WME is proposing adding a quasi-administrative/leadership position, which would serve several purposes. The position would be a hybrid of an assistant principal, a dean of students, and an instructional coach. As the district and school identifies future leaders (consistent with Leadership Innovation requirement #10), one of these individuals would start immediately in August 2017 in this hybrid position. WME requests that this individual be allowed to participate in PPE Cohort 5 and the district would include this individual in all ELT trainings, meetings and administrative coaching sessions with the superintendent. Working directly with the WME staff on the reading and math goals and objectives would allow this up-and-coming leader invaluable instructional leadership insight and experience.

E. Instructional Staff

- i. Instructional staff consist of 20 classroom teachers and 3 special education teachers. Twenty-two of the current 23 teachers have 2016 Teacher Summative

ratings: Ineffective-0, Minimally Effective-3, Effective-8, Highly Effective-9, Exemplary-2. Seventeen of the current 23 had 2015 Teacher Summative ratings: Ineffective-0, Minimally Effective-1, Effective-11, Highly Effective-5, Exemplary-0.

- ii. WME has fully autonomy and flexibility to hire, retain, and assign instructional staff as needed. We convene a team of teachers to interview any and all potential applicants when a position is available. (Teacher interview questions have been included and are attached as Appendix U.) Teachers rated as either “ineffective” or “minimally effective” are provided the opportunity to improve by working the principal on a specialized professional development plan.

F. Partnerships

- i. WME will increase the number of external partners and one, or more, who will provide specific and comprehensive professional development services will be screened and identified as part of the implementation timeline (January-June 2017). [District processes related to the reviewing and selecting of external partners is included and attached as Appendix F-1.] Currently, WME does not have any external partner in terms of leadership and instructional support. With the hiring of a new principal, WME will re-join PSB/PPE in partnership. Another external and no-cost partner is the Backpack for Kids organization, which provides backpacks of food for kids to take home each weekend. As 100% of our students are eligible for free breakfast/lunch, we know that a poverty/hunger problem exists within our school and community. This organization sent home over 10,000 backpacks district-wide during the 2015-16

school year. Another external and no-cost provider is Building Communities that Support Children's Reading (BCSCR). This is a fully-federal funded grant organization, working out of the Three Rivers Educational Cooperative (Farmington, NM). BCSCR provides "Little Free Libraries" throughout the community, provides free books to parents and children at all school-related events (parent nights, literacy nights, etc.), free books that are included at least once a month in the food backpacks, and pays our teachers to provide after school reading tutoring to our students. As part of the budget aspect of this SIG grant and to help grow this partnership and extend our after school services to be both academic (tutoring) and enrichment, we will be requesting funds to be used for transportation. Currently, BCSCR is funded through September 2017 and is in the process of a renewal application cycle. The rationale for partnering with BCSCR was that it is a no-cost fully funded program that uses (and pays) our own teachers to work with our students. Initial results from spring semester (January-May 2016) showed that students who received the 32 hours of after school tutoring grew 1.5 grade levels in reading as measured by i-ready assessment.

Another current external and no-cost partner is the Sierra Blanca Boys & Girls Club. The Club provides after school care and activities for students, as well as a district-wide safe haven for younger students who don't have anyone waiting for them at the bus stop after school. A final external, no-cost partner is Mescalero Systems of Care. This organization supports our Native American students with behavioral and social issues.

- ii. The Evidence of Partner Effectiveness Chart has been completed and is attached as Appendix F, while the district's processes associated with the reviewing, selecting, and renewing of external providers is attached as Appendix F-1.
- iii. Should WME select and hire any other external partners and pay for those services with School Improvement Grant funds, a comprehensive assessment of services/results rubric will be developed to assure that the products/services are beneficial. This rubric would also provide necessary documentation for subsequent year decision and funding decisions regarding the external partner. The selection process would involve a committee consisting of representatives of those groups (district leadership, school leadership, district union leadership, school union representation, and parents) who have actively participated in the SIG process.

G. Organizational Plan

- i. The district leadership organizational chart has been attached as Appendix T and the WME site-based organizational chart is attached as Appendix T-1.
- ii. On a daily basis, high quality instruction occurs in each classroom (teacher responsible) with appropriate interventions (Response to Intervention model) also being provided by the teacher. As regular curriculum-based measures, called Brave Readers and Math Monsters, are given and scored, this data is sent to the Director of Support Services for compiling and analysis. Data is then returned to teachers, who meet as grade-level teams during dedicated PLC time to discuss next steps. Teacher teams have the flexibility and autonomy to develop their next step plans. When a need is identified requiring specific professional

development, the teachers make a request to the principal, who has budget authority to make it happen. Additionally, this data, as well as other progress monitoring data is used by the SAT team to help monitor the SAT plan for identified students. The Director of Support Services and the current (and future) WME Principal meet monthly with the superintendent and rest of the ELT to discuss school performance and issues. Finally, the current (and future) WME principal has a monthly one-on-one administrative coaching session with the superintendent.

- iii. WME is fully compliant in administering all aspects of the NMTEACH performance review. As per the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) all formal observations are scheduled at “mutually-agreeable times.” Presently, the WME administrator is supported by the Director of Special Education in teaming to complete observations for teachers who are required to have multiple observations. A systemic use of the NMTEACH Summative scores is a detailed analysis of the overall observation score to identify potential classroom and professional practices that may require additional professional development. One of the goals of adding the hybrid position (discussed previously) is to provide specific instructional coaching to meet individual teacher need. Another objective for the hybrid position is to receive the required administrative training to become a certified Teachscape evaluator.
- iv. The calendar of events for 2017-18 would be developed during the implementation period (January-June 2017) should WME receive the grant funds requested.

H. Educational Plan

i. In 2013, WME was required by a PED audit to purchase a “core” textbook curriculum to be used for core instruction in reading and math. It was a requirement that the curriculum selected be “Common Core State Standards” (CCSS) aligned. In evaluating publishers and materials, WME rated each publisher on the 6 major component shifts that the CCSS were demanding. In Reading/Literacy they were (are):

- 1) Balancing informational and literary text
- 2) Building knowledge in the disciplines
- 3) Demonstrating a “staircase” of complexity
- 4) Requiring text-based answers
- 5) Requiring writing from sources
- 6) Building academic vocabulary

In Mathematics, the 6 shifts were (are):

- 1) Narrow and deepen the focus and scope
- 2) Coherence/ vertical alignment and integration
- 3) Emphasis on fluency of basic operations
- 4) Develop a deep understanding of a concept
- 5) Ability to choose or apply a concept for application without being prompted
- 6) Dual intensity of focusing on practice and understanding

After rating each publisher, the committee determined that for Reading, McGraw-Hill’s WONDERS program and for math, INVESTIGATIONS, were the curricular programs most aligned to the CCSS.

- ii. WME has identified and focused on 7 primary instructional strategies to be used in all three grades and across subjects. These are: academic vocabulary and language, reading and writing across the curriculum, close reading, cooperative learning, supporting/defending answers, analysis of student work, and formative assessment process. Academic vocabulary and language focuses on building students non-conversational language and vocabulary. Reading and writing across the curriculum enables students to learn and comprehend subject matter more deeply. Close reading refers to a deep methodical examination of a text to uncover layers of meaning for deeper comprehension. Cooperative learning describes the practice of students working in groups and taking roles in the sharing of information and tasks. Supporting/defending answers refers to the process of using text explicitly to support comprehension answers and showing/justifying a math answer through explanation. Analysis of student work refers to a group or team of teachers looking at and analyzing student work. WME has a very detailed formative assessment process using weekly curriculum-based measures (CBMs) called Brave Readers and Math Monsters.
- iii. Not applicable as “required and elective courses” beyond reading and math are middle/high school components.
- iv. The base plan to accelerate learning in reading and math has been mentioned previously (goal and objective) and that is to increase students’ comprehension abilities and their ability solve math problems and explain their answers.

- v. Use of time...the district school calendar for 2017-18 is attached as Appendix W, while an example of an individual teacher's daily class schedule, including Tier II time is attached as Appendix W-1.
- vi. A logical and meaningful set of instructional strategies has been identified above. WME is constantly analyzing the daily use of instructional time to limit distractions and unnecessary gaps or losses of time. Daily time analysis will be part of the entire staff's role during the implementation period (January-June 2017). In short, saving or finding lost time within the day, naturally extends instructional/learning time on a daily basis. Finally, WME is in discussion with BCSCR about the possibility of a reading enrichment summer session for June 2017. WME will continue to participate in and invite every student to attend "Early Start" (local name for K-3 Plus) program and support rising 4th and 5th graders by providing a comparable summer program for them, at the same time as Early Start.
- vii. Data-Driven Instruction and Decision Making: WME will need to investigate and purchase a short-cycle assessment component for both reading and math for the 2017-18 school year. This is an extremely important decision and purchase because we need to be assured that the results of short cycle assessments are aligned with and predictive of PARCC performance. The Director of Support Services shares individual student, class and teacher data as soon as possible and the grade level teams meet at the next available Wednesday PLC to discuss the data and develop next step plans. The Director of Support Services is personally available to work with the teachers and shares other supports and resources that

teachers may be interested in. Additionally, on an every-other-week schedule, WME uses Brave Readers and Math Monsters curriculum-based measures to check and track student performance. This data is submitted weekly for summary and results are provided back to teachers very quickly.

I. Training, Support and Professional Development

- i. The current WME principal met with the superintendent to analyze NMTEACH Summative evaluations for all WME teachers. Individual need areas within the four major Domains were identified for targeted professional development for the rest of the 2016-17 school year. Next, the WME principal met with each individual teacher to review the Summative evaluation report to see what individual training/professional development needs each teacher might have. Finally, as the WME team continues to meet and focus on the instructional strategies being used to support reading and math instruction, more professional development needs will be identified for 2016-17 and beyond. The most important component of having and providing job-embedded professional development for the staff of WME is to use SIG funds to hire a person for the instructional coach/assistant principal hybrid position.
- ii. WME has not created a full professional development plan for the 2017-18 school year at this time. However, having an instructional coach will allow much more comprehensive instructional coaching connected to data-identified needs.
- iii. From a results standpoint, WME analyzes data regularly to evaluate and improve the curriculum-instruction-assessment dynamic. When data is positive, we know we are on the right track; however, when results are not as expected, clearly, a

responsive action plan is necessary. This usually implies changing our PD/PLC Wednesday time to accommodate the need for new information/training. From a long-term perspective, focusing primarily on school year 2017-18, we would emphasize professional development on the identified/chosen instructional strategies that will be used by all staff.

J. Communication and Stakeholder Involvement/Engagement

- i. WME will host/cohost with Sierra Vista Primary School (SVP) a monthly Parent Community Supper at which regular progress updates, including indicator data, will be shared with parents and stakeholders. These monthly meetings will consist of a meal (supper), an agenda, and a sign-in sheet for documentation purposes. These meeting meals will be funded from either SIG and/or Title I Family Engagement Funds. Additionally, the Parent Advisory Committee will have dedicated time on the agenda, as will any other community service group/organization that would like to communicate with parents/stakeholders. We also anticipate that our LMSW will be able to provide/share information regularly with families. Announcements about the date, time, and location of the meetings will be posted on the district's Facebook and webpage and will be sent to local media outlets similar to Board Meeting Notices. Further, a summary of the meeting will be written up and posted to Facebook and the webpage.

K. Project Plan Narrative/Timeline

- i. During year-one implementation, the most important strategy for WME, even prior to starting the school year, will be to hire the new principal and other required/new personnel. Current barriers include : 1) unless the next principal is

an in-district applicant, the individual may not be able to officially start prior to July 1, 2017, and 2) not having the new principal on board prior to July 1st limits the quantity and quality of pre-planning at the school-site/level that can transpire. The oversight associated with this objective will fall upon the Systems Instructional Facilitator (SIF), so identifying this individual is an equally important personnel objective. From both the reading and math standpoints, data/curriculum work in June stands out as extremely important and on par with the selection of the three-times per year short cycle assessments. After deciding on a short cycle assessment, assessment dates/windows will be determined, which will enable us to create a detailed informational “report out” calendar, which would allow WME to schedule Parent-teacher conferences and Parent Community Suppers [stakeholder involvement]. From an instructional standpoint, in addition to the short cycle assessments, WME will prioritize the assessment and collection of baseline speed data in both reading and math. Early principal observations will be focused on assessing classroom usage and implementation of the seven prime instructional strategies (listed previously). With appropriate work completed during the implementation period (January-June 2017) all key personnel (SIF, principal, hybrid position and LMSW) will be in place [staffing and job-embedded professional development] prior to August 1, 2017, as will a well-defined comprehensive after school program [partnerships].

- ii. The first and most important “early win” will be PED approval of this application. The district leadership (Board, Superintendent, and Directors), school leadership, union leadership, teachers and staff, and our parents, who have been part of this

planning and grant application process have all already “bought-in!”

Collectively, we see this SIG plan as the means of becoming a recognized “school of excellence.” The team who worked on this application/plan is excited to start the implementation planning work in January 2017. From a full-implementation perspective, an “early win” will be having curriculum pacing guides and early 2017 CBMs in place prior to the start of school. An interesting capacity-builder is the extended benefits to families who have students in other buildings in the district. For example, if a parent can be connected to a community resource via our LMSW, then that entire family benefits. During the length of this grant, we seek to build a solid educational and socially-supportive system that continues to thrive after SIG funds are no longer available.

- iii. It has already been mentioned that the leading indicator in reading and math is results from PARCC assessments. Other indicators are students’ short cycle assessment scores and results on CBMs. Regular student data will be collected and submitted to the Director of Support Services, who will analyze, graph, and share back with teachers. Parents will receive quarterly updates to their child’s IEPP and will receive school-updates monthly at Parent Community Suppers.
- iv. All of the school plan strategies and components will be regularly assessed and monitored by the Systems Instructional facilitator and at least monthly by the superintendent and ELT.