



Reaching Higher — Indicators of Excellence
successfully launched in 2007-2008 to increase
student achievement

It is our expectation in Utica Community Schools that every student will achieve academically to his/her potential and prepare for and pursue some level of higher education or career training following high school graduation.

Utica Community Schools is also required to meet by 2014 the federal No Child Left Behind requirement that 100 percent of our students and student subgroups achieve proficiency on the state MEAP assessments in grades 3 - 9 and the Michigan Merit Exam in high school. In addition, each of our 40 schools is required to annually achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on the state standards.

To meet these expectations, *Reaching Higher — Indicators of Excellence*, a data-driven school improvement initiative, was launched in 2007-2008 in Utica Community Schools. It is our guide for increasing student achievement in all academic areas by means of a series of clear, measurable Indicators that are to be met within a specified time.

Reaching Higher is based on three district-wide goals:

- **District Goal 1 —**
By 2014 all students in the Utica Community Schools will meet or exceed proficiency standards in English language arts (reading and writing), math, science, social studies, fine arts and career and technical education, as identified by national, state and UCS standards.
- **District Goal 2 —**
The school district will implement a world-class instructional program.
- **District Goal 3 —**
Parent, business and community partnerships will be an integral part of student learning.

Stemming from the district goals are three tiers of Indicators — I, II and III — that define how and when the established student achievement targets will be met:

- **Tier I Indicators** — These are the district-wide *Indicators of Excellence* (seven at the elementary level and eight each at the junior and senior high levels - 30 total) designed to assess whether federal, state and district academic requirements are being met within a given time frame.

Michigan Report Card for Malow JHS

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) —
2006-07: **Yes** 2007-2008: **Yes**

Education YES! Grade —
2006-07: **A** 2007-2008: **A**

All UCS schools are accredited by the Michigan Department of Education. In addition, the four UCS high schools are accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA).

A building report of student achievement on the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) is available on-line at www.uticak12.org. Under the Information heading, click on MEAP/MME scores to find our school. The on-line report also includes information on teacher qualifications, parent-teacher conference attendance and the district retention rate.

- **Tier II Indicators** — These are school-based indicators established during the 2007-2008 school year by each UCS school. Tier II Indicators are specific to the student needs in that building and designed as the basis for targeted improvement in support of the *Indicators of Excellence*. The Tier II Indicators are supported by SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely) for each grade level established by the building staff.
- **Tier III Indicators** — These are the schools' narrative reports on their progress in 2007-2008 toward meeting their Tier II Indicator(s). Our school's Tier II and Tier III Indicators are printed on the back of this page.

The district's Tier I Indicators for its seven junior high schools are as follows:

Indicator 1.8: All junior high students will meet or exceed standards and be identified as proficient on the MEAP tests in reading, writing, math, science and social studies.

Indicator 1.9: Seventh and eighth graders who receive special education services will show specified growth on the MI-Access test in reading, writing and mathematics.

Indicator 1.10: Seventh through ninth graders who receive English Language Learners (ELL) services will show

specified growth on the English Language Proficiency Assessment.

Indicator 1.11: All ninth graders will take the Pre-ACT test that will be used as a predictor of success for college-level work on the required ACT test.

Indicator 1.12: All seventh through ninth graders will demonstrate proficiency on the district writing test.

Indicator 1.13: All seventh through ninth graders will demonstrate proficiency on the district math, science and social studies tests.

Indicator 1.14: The number of seventh and eighth graders who take and pass Algebra I will increase annually.

Indicator 1.15: All secondary students enrolled in performance-based fine arts courses will present their work to a public audience.

Malow Junior High School's Tier II Indicator:

Increase the number of students who score proficient or higher on the eighth grade MEAP (Michigan Educational Assessment Program) writing test.

Tier II Smart Goal —

The percentage of eighth grade students scoring at proficiency or above in writing will increase from 78% to 83% by the end of the 2007-2008 school year as measured by the state-required MEAP assessment administered in October 2008.

Malow Junior High School's Tier III Indicator:

Malow Junior High shall increase the number of students who score proficient or higher on the MEAP eighth grade writing test.

As it relates to our Tier II Indicator, 2007-2008 represented a successful year for our students. Malow's eighth grade students demonstrated a 7% increase in their writing scores, as compared to last year's eighth grade group.

As a cohort group, Malow's eighth grade students demonstrated a 19.7% increase, as compared to their seventh grade scores.

January 2007 through September 2007 Interventions —

Malow attributes its students writing successes to several contributing factors. This fall, for the first time, Principal Robert Hock gathered our students by grade level, explained to them the importance of MEAP testing, defined proficiency for the students and offered an end-of-the-year incentive for students who maintained a level 1 score or increased their level of proficiency.

As an accompaniment to Mr. Hock's MEAP assembly, Malow's English teachers dedicated time in September to discussing and practicing various testing strategies,

including attacking and responding to writing prompts and implementing other strategies they learned during Reading Apprenticeship Training.

Further, removing students from subject area classes, which allowed them to test in smaller groups, and spreading testing out over a two-week period alleviated student anxiety associated with prolonged test-taking.

Plan for Continued Success —

To continue our success, Malow implemented a school-wide cross-curricular writing plan and added 13 co-taught courses across core-content subject areas.

Further, as support for struggling students who do not qualify for special services, Malow introduced seventh, eighth and ninth grade Literacy Support courses to augment the English Language Arts curriculum.

Challenges —

Increasing teacher and student participation and interest in and placing merit on a cross-curricular writing program present the greatest challenge.

Mr. Hock is working with his staff to find ways to support teachers in implementing writing and writing revision in all Malow classrooms.

Meeting Our Challenge —

Mr Hock believes that the revised writing plan created with increased staff involvement will address the challenge.

Our School's Points of Pride

- Malow was recognized this year as a Michigan Blue Ribbon Exemplary School.
- Malow students raised more than \$28,000 for the American Cancer Society at their annual Relay for Life event.
- Malow's ninth grade band and orchestra earned first place awards at the Music in the Parks Festival in Chicago, Illinois.
- Our freshman choir received a second division rating at the district choral festival.
- Ninth graders Lauren Hines and Ariel Pscheidl traveled abroad in cultural exchange programs this past summer.
- Malow's ninth grade girls basketball team won the Bemis (UCS) basketball tournament.
- Our ninth grade cheer team earned a first place rating at the district-wide cheer competition.
- Our eighth grade girls track team finished their season undefeated.