

# Armstrong Middle School Annual Report 2013-2014



**Armstrong Middle School maintains a safe environment, a flexible education program, and the support of community and family so that all students can strive for educational excellence.**

## School Annual Education Report Cover Letter

August 18, 2014

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2013-2014 educational progress for Armstrong Middle School. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Casey Killingbeck, principal, for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following web site [www.kearsleyschools.org](http://www.kearsleyschools.org) or you may review a copy available in the office at Armstrong Middle School.

The state has identified some schools with the statuses of Reward, Focus or Priority. A Reward school is one that is outperforming other schools in achievement, growth, or is performing better than other schools with a similar student population. A Focus school is one that has a large achievement gap in 30% of its student achievement scores. A Priority school is one whose achievement and growth is in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state.

Our school has not been given any of the designations. Key challenges facing Armstrong Middle School include enrollment, funding, and assuring achievement of all students in all subject areas. The Fiedler staff works diligently to differentiate instruction for all students, to provide interventions to accelerate learning for struggling students, and to deliver a challenging, aligned curriculum using research-based instructional practices.

- Multi-Tiered System of Support with a focus on good classroom instruction, Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention support for targeted students with specific focus on students with special needs.
- Frequent monitoring of student achievement through formative, interim and summative assessments
- Realignment of curriculum to meet the new Common Core State Standards

More specific data and initiatives to accelerate student achievement and close persistent gaps in achievement can be found below in the status of the 3-5 year school improvement plan.

State law requires that we also report additional information.

### **PROCESS FOR ASSIGNING PUPILS TO THE SCHOOL**

Fifth grade students who attended school at Fiedler Elementary, Kearsley's 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade building, are automatically enrolled at Armstrong Middle School. Kearsley Schools also participates in the State School of Choice Program.

### **THE STATUS OF THE 3-5 YEAR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

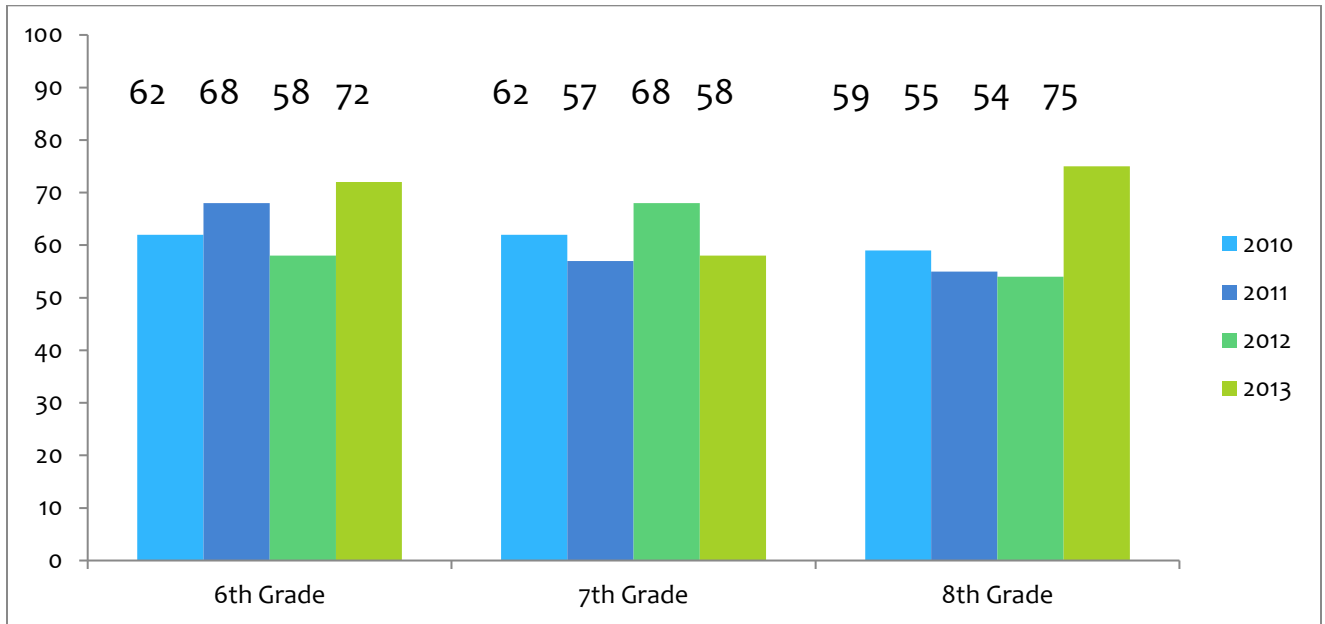
Goal teams met regularly during the 2013-2014 school year to explore relevant research and to identify interventions and activities that would be utilized by staff to increase student performance in those identified areas.

**Reading Goal:** All students will demonstrate an improved ability to construct meaning from written material.

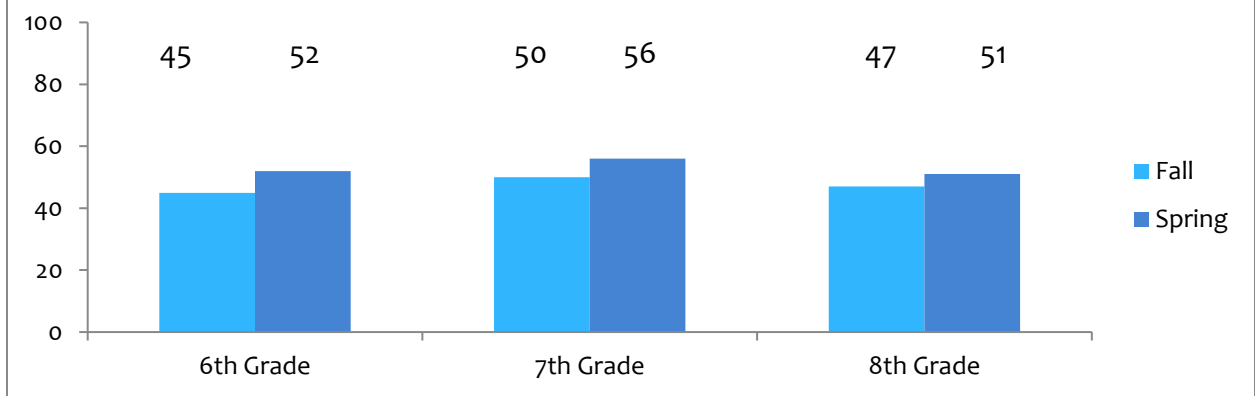
#### Reading Highlights:

- \*Independent reading focus emphasized school wide and at home
- \*Semester-long AARI focusing on navigating non-fiction with emphasis on text structures
- \*7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading teachers implementing Reader's Workshop
- \*L Arts staff meetings focusing on interventions, data and standardized grading in department
- \*Curriculum being developed with common assessments piloted at 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- \*Assessment Wall meeting to analyze data and guide instruction
- \*Tier 2 interventions in place for all grade levels focusing on accuracy, fluency and comprehension
- \*Lab host teachers continued training in Reading Workshop following Lake Orion model
- \*Reading Lab classrooms utilized by many AMS teachers
- \*7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers beginning to use DRA; 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers using kits
- \*Literacy Library and School Library continuing to grow
- \*Continued use by many of Literacy Coach, Lisa Oetting, for guidance and help
- \*Data Day for identification of Tier 2 students
- \*Participated in One Book, One School-Jon Gordon's Positive Dog
- \*Family night held with emphasis on reading
- \*March Madness held-students were given opportunity to vote on "best book"
- \*Implemented Summer Reading Plan for all students with emphasis on struggling readers

### Reading Meap Data 2010-2013



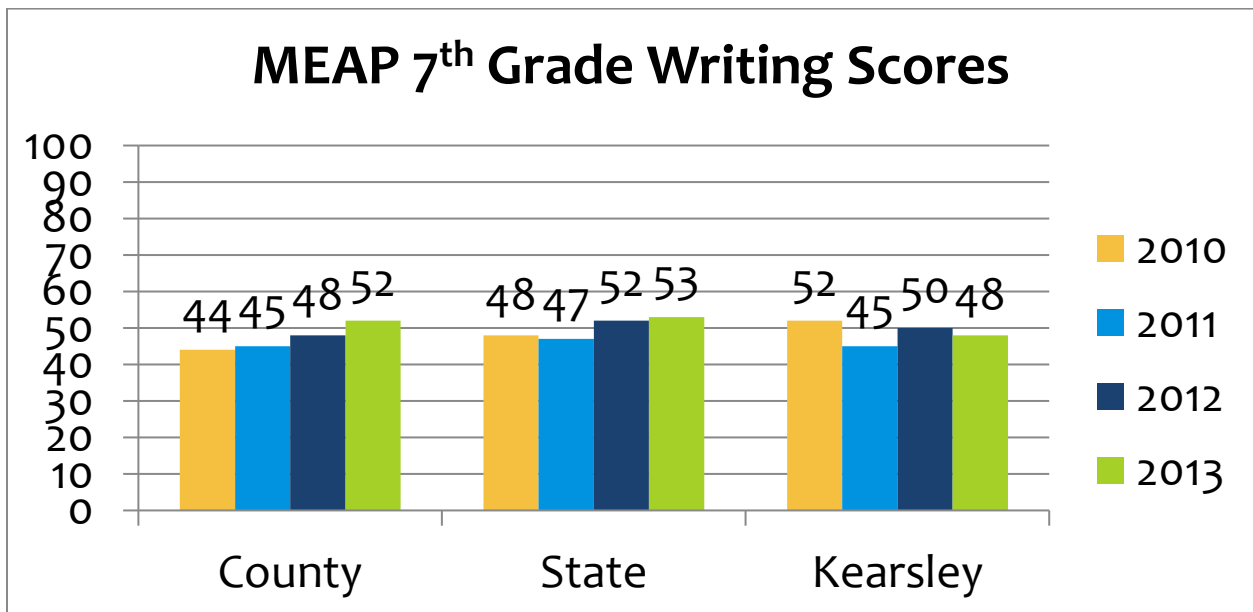
### STAR Data Growth From Fall to Spring Students AT Grade Level



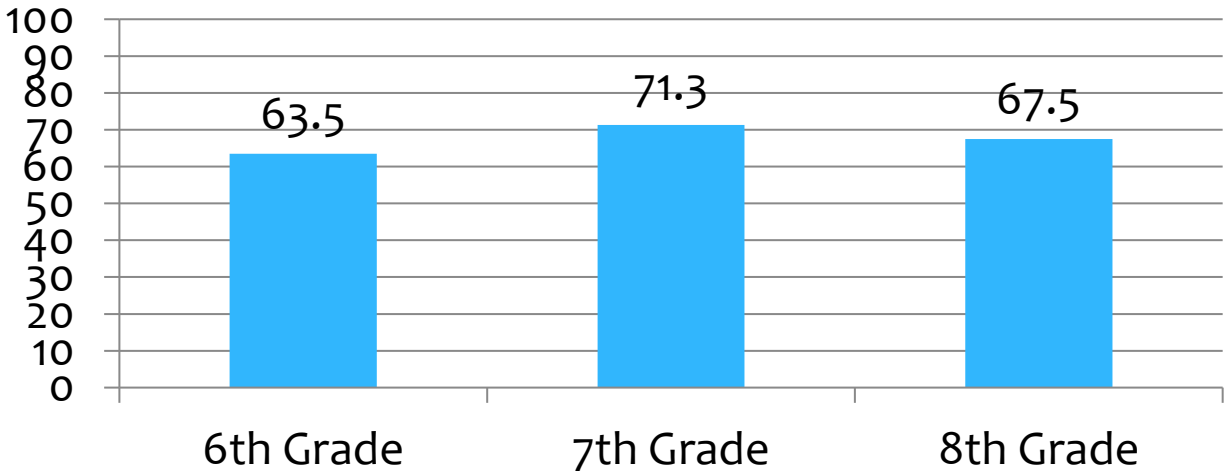
**Writing Goal:** All students will demonstrate an improved ability to communicate in writing.

### Writing Highlights

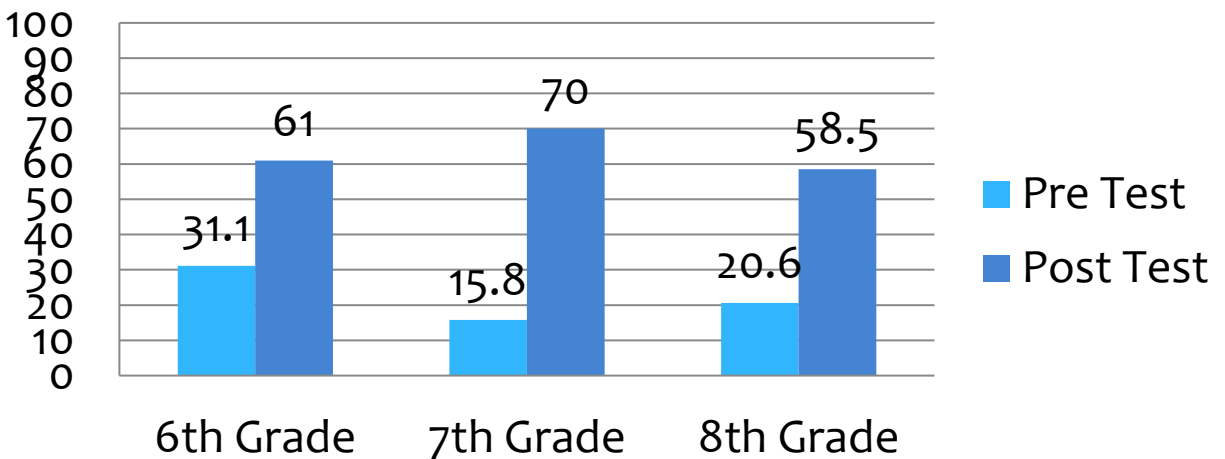
- \* Developed and aligned curriculum units
- \* Developed, administered, and scored Pre and Post Tests for Narrative, Opinion/Argumentative, and Informational writing
- \* Developed and identified rubrics to score writing
- \* Adjusted the ELA folder review to reflect changes to a workshop based approach.
- \* Clarified expectations for quantity of writing for all Non-ELA courses.
- \* Began creating department-wide common writing prompts to be used for assessment. (Social Studies is finished.)
- \* Adjusted Implementation folder review to help shift the focus from number of writings to how we are using student writing.



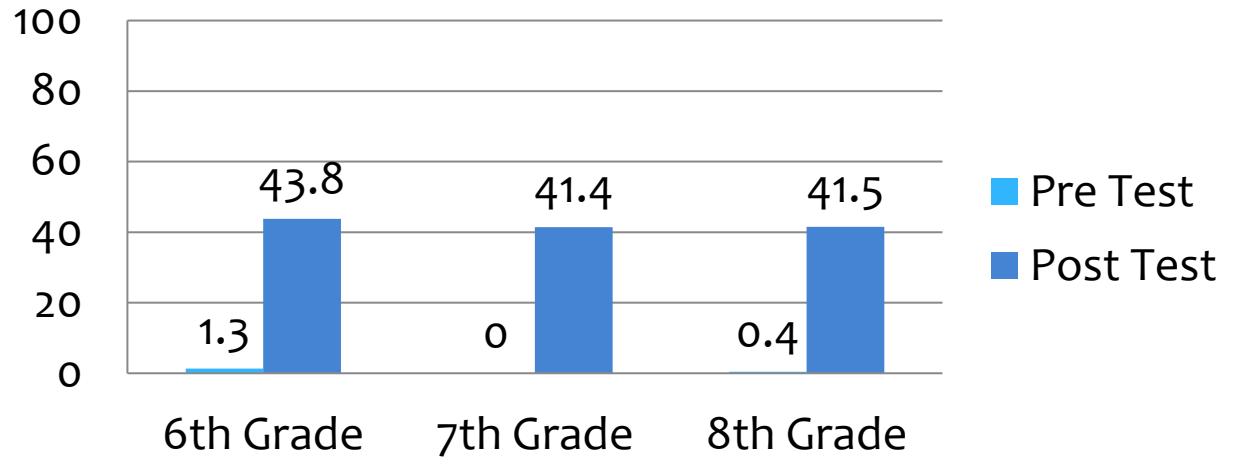
## District Narrative Writing Post Test Results January 2013



## District Narrative Writing Pre vs. Post Test Results September to December 2013



## District Opinion/Argumentative Writing Pre vs. Post Test Results January to April 2014

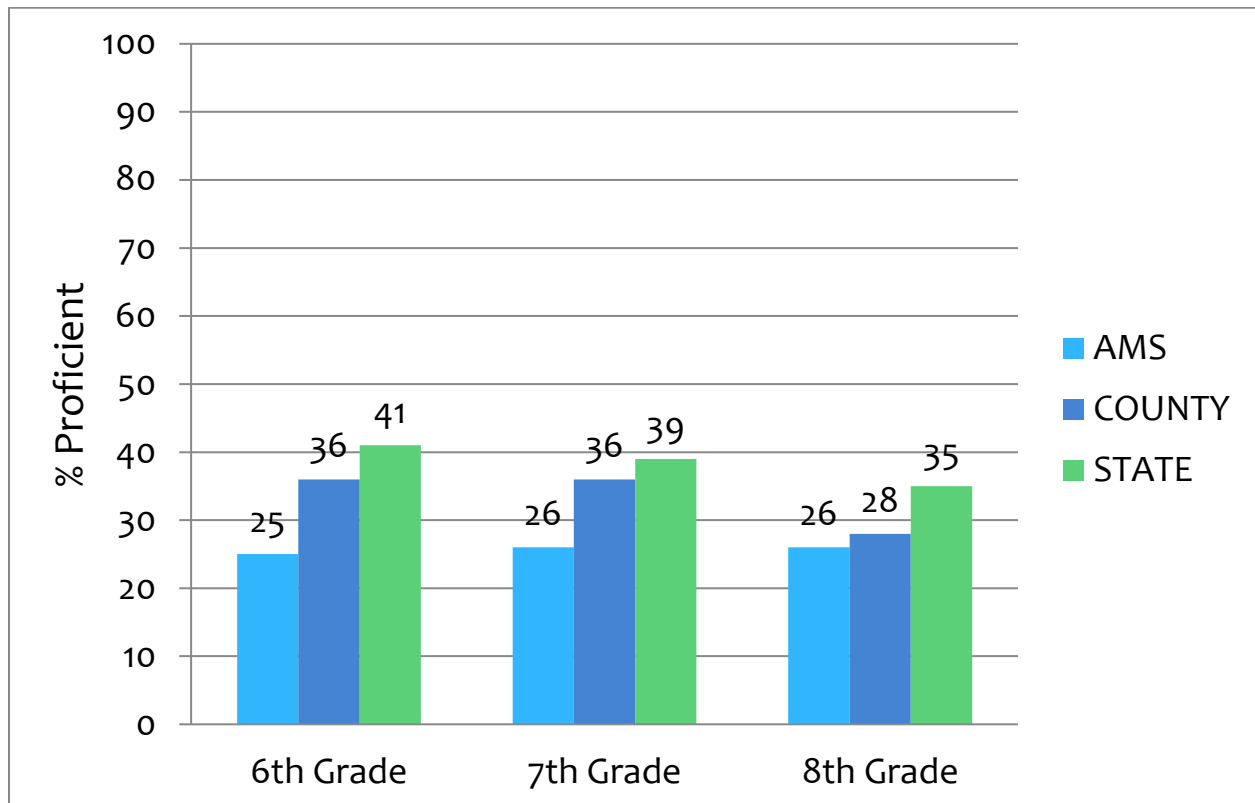


**Math Goal: All students will demonstrate proficiency in mathematics.**

Math Highlights

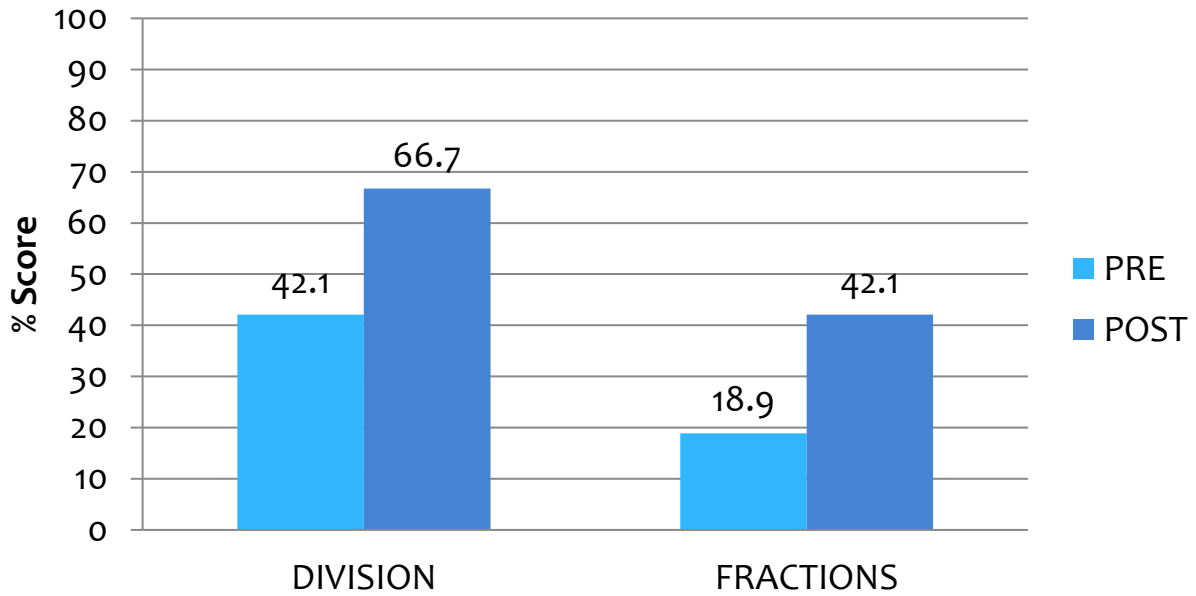
- CCSSM was implemented at all levels this year.
- Formalized curriculum documentation remains to be completed.
- Common grade-level assessments remain to be written for some grade-levels/units.
- Smarter Balanced Pilot Test completed; all current Math teachers participated for a hands-on experience in preparation for next year's full implementation.
- Significant growth shown in many basic skills areas throughout the year.
- Implementation of CCSSM (with fast-approaching testing beginning next year) took priority during the 2013-2014 school year.
- Individual teachers utilized various programs (Moby Math, IXL, etc.) for intervention purposes, contributing to overall growth seen in most indicators.
- Math-specific paraprofessionals hired in April; Tier 1 & 2 interventions begun with students identified as "Urgent Intervention" or "Intervention" according to STAR scores and teacher evaluation.

2013 Math Meap

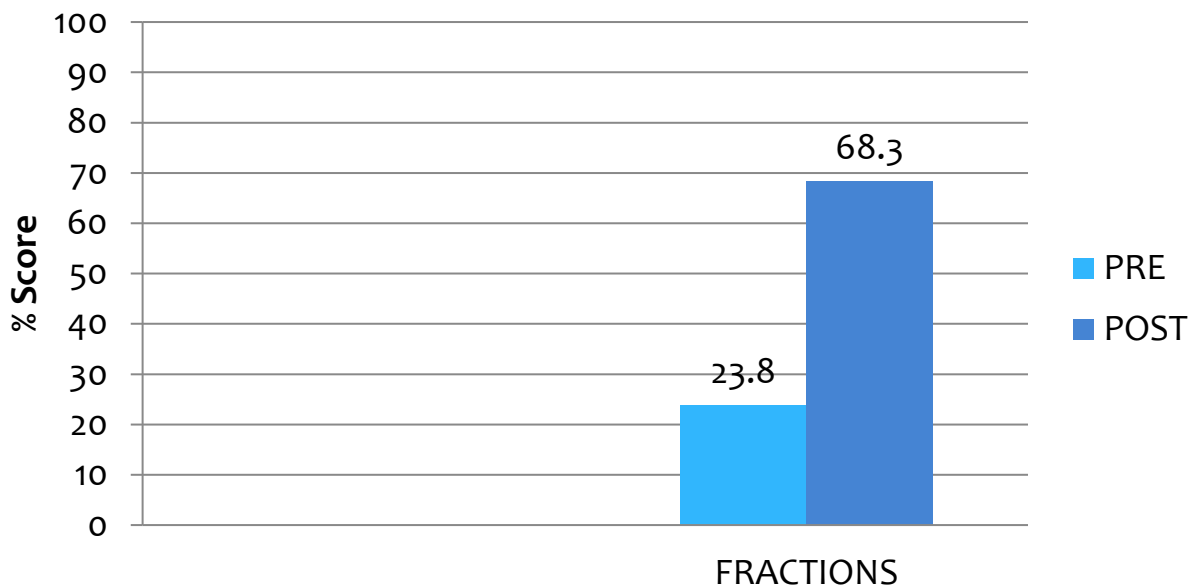




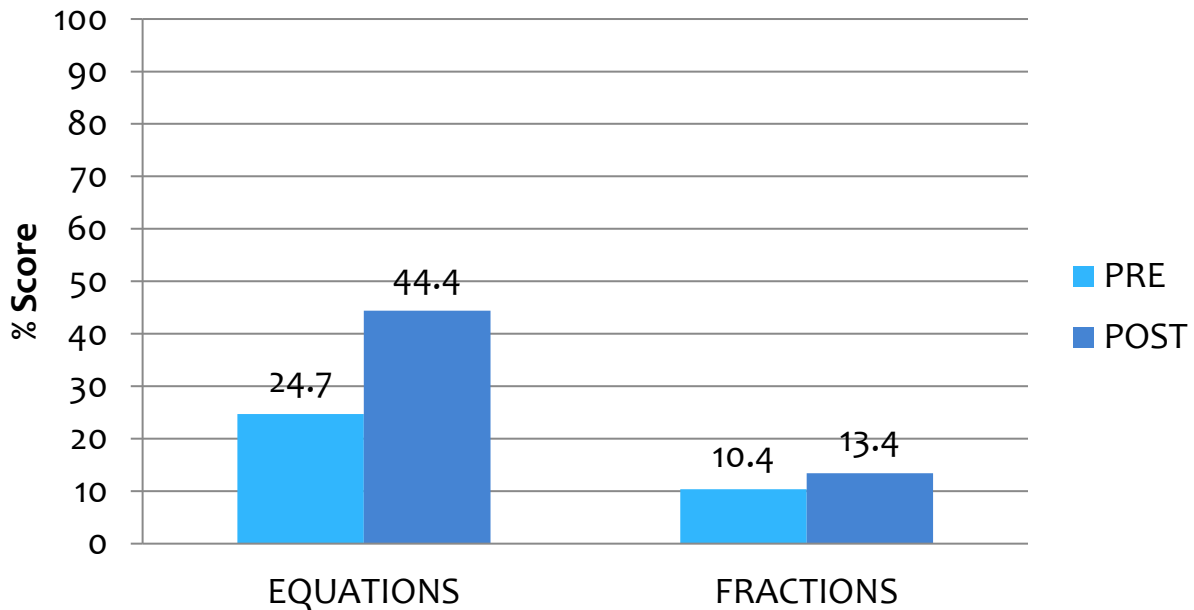
## 6th Grade Basic Skills Pre- and Post- Test



## 7th Grade Basic Skills Pre- and Post-Test



## 8th Grade Basic Skills Pre- and Post-Test



### **SPECIALIZED SCHOOLS**

The Genesee Intermediate School District and its 21 local school districts in Genesee County provide special education for nearly 10,000 students. Special services for students with special needs, age 0-25, are available to Kearsley students.

The goal of special education is to ensure that students learn skills needed for functional independence within our community. Students are placed in special education through the Individualized Educational Planning Committee process, where parents, local educators and special education staff analyze and develop programs for each student. Individualized programs are tailored to each child's needs. GISD's special education schools teach:

- Academic skills
- Independent living skills
- Communication skills

- Job training and prevocational education
- Social living habits and self-care

A Special Education Parent Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from each school district, advises the GISD Board of Education regarding operation and coordination of special education services within Genesee County.

### **Students Enrolled in Special Education**

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In 2012/2013, Kearsley Community Schools had students enrolled in the following GISD center-based and Project CHOICE classrooms:

15 students attend the Elmer A. Knopf Learning Center (for students with cognitive, autistic impairments and/or other impairments). Last year 13 students attended these programs.

20 students are in early childhood programs and services. Last year 20 students participated in these programs.

12 students are educated at the Marion Crouse Instructional Center and 5 students attend the Transition Center. Last year 14 students attended programs here.

405 students are enrolled in local special education programs at Kearsley. These include classes for learning disabled, cognitively impaired and speech and language impaired. Last year 443 students were enrolled in local special education programs.

1 student attended Michigan School for the Deaf. Last year, no students were enrolled in this program.

Upon leaving GISD's special education programs, follow-up data indicate that students are well prepared for adult life, within the limitation of their disabilities.

### **Kearsley Academically Talented Program**

Kearsley Schools offers an Academically Talented Program (KAT) for students whose abilities exceed those of most students. At Armstrong Middle School, students participate in a one-day, pull-out program where they participate in enrichment and extension activities coordinated with their regular core curriculum. During the 2013-2014 school year, thirty-two 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were enrolled in the program. Students participate in National Current Events League, Future Problem Solving and Flint River Green/Earth Force service learning. Nine teams of students qualified for Michigan Future Problem Solving State Bowl which was held in Clarkston.

Kearsley Schools also offers an accelerated math track for students beginning in sixth grade. Those students who successfully complete three years in accelerated math receive high school credit for Algebra 1. Students are screened in fifth grade using a variety of tools and invited to participate in KATS programs beginning in sixth grade.

## **CORE CURRICULUM**

### **Curriculum Development**

Michigan defines "core curriculum" as the essential curriculum content which all students must learn in order to progress through the various educational levels. There are also the areas which are tested through the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP). Michigan core areas include: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Kearsley Community Schools has continued to review, develop, and implement curriculum in the core areas as well as in the following departments: career technical education, fine arts, foreign language, physical education, and technology.

Curriculum writing is an ongoing process. The continuing development of curriculum is based upon the needs of students and society, recommendations from national educational studies, and state requirements. Ongoing alignment with state standards and trends continues to be a major goal in district curriculum efforts. Kearsley has developed the District Curriculum Council (DCC) to organize curriculum efforts and to provide communication across grade levels, buildings and departments.

Curriculum council committees have been established for each content area. Each committee studies current issues, reviews and updates district curriculum, and examines materials (current and new) needed to deliver this curriculum. After implementation of curriculum and materials, committees monitor progress and make adjustments before beginning the DCC cycle again.

Core committees are revisiting developed curriculums to ensure alignment with the new Core Curriculum State Standards that have been adopted by 46 states. In addition, these committees continue to develop curriculum and instructional materials to prepare our students to be successful on local assessments as well as on the challenges of state and national assessments. As the state implements testing changes, the Kearsley DCC committees continue to check this alignment.

For information regarding the curriculum at Kearsley Community Schools, please contact April Yorks, Curriculum Coordinator at 810-591-7618.

### ***Language Arts Curriculum***

An aligned language arts program has been implemented in grades K-12. Reading curriculum and instruction focuses on the development of reading skills and strategies as well as the ability to analyze, evaluate, and respond to literature. Students work with a variety of text materials, developing the tools necessary to access and create meaning from both narrative (story) and expository (informational) selections. Emphasis has been placed on being strategic readers, learning how to navigate different text formats and genres. The writing process is also a key focus of the language arts program, as well as writing for different purposes and audiences. Attention continues to be given to the importance of writing within all content areas.

During the 2013-2014 school year, teams of teachers in grade K-8 continued to work on aligning the curriculum and materials with the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS guide the focus of district study of story types/genres, writing forms, and grammar elements among other language arts components. State assessments also guide curriculum and instruction, with reading assessments of narrative and informational text. The MAISA (Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators) Language Arts materials have been adopted by the Kearsley district in grades K-8. Curriculum work focuses on unpacking the lessons, pacing the units of student, and developing common assessments. Emphasis continues on both reading and writing conferring to target student skill

development. All grade levels continue to look at common assessments to gather data to inform curriculum and instruction.

Kearsley Community School District teachers in grades K-8 continue to implement reading workshops in their classrooms. This method of instruction allows for students to receive instruction and select books at their own level. During the 2013-2014, teachers participated in Lab Classroom professional learning. This lesson study format allowed teachers to visit model classrooms within the district with a focus on reading workshop. Teachers then debriefed and made plans for implementation in their own classrooms.

Teachers in grade 6 began to develop a deeper understanding of the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2) and its impact on instruction. This assessment gives important reading data across classrooms, buildings and grade levels. More importantly, the assessment guides reading instruction as teachers are able to target small group reading lessons based upon information gathered through the DRA.

This year, the middle school began to shift to a balanced literacy approach for reading and writing. Sixth – eighth grade teachers worked with the Literacy Coach to build background knowledge and to implement new teaching strategies in their classrooms.

The Lab Classroom professional learning project was implemented during the 2013-2014 school year. Each grade level has a designated lab classroom that will provide opportunities for teachers of reading to visit and collaborate on classroom practices and strategies for reading workshop.

Grade level state assessments and results were also reviewed this year. Local assessments were revised, implemented, and reviewed to guide curriculum and instruction. Students will be assessed in writing using three common on demand writing assessments throughout all classrooms K-8 focusing on narrative, opinion and information/explanatory writing. The amount of writing increased across grades six through eight, through consistent grade level planning and review. Writing was emphasized across content areas, including elective classes. Use of the *Collins Writing Program* continued to help teachers to organize and analyze building writing curriculum. Middle school teachers across curriculum areas also focused on reading strategies and activities. These strategies help students to build understanding even as reading materials become more challenging and complex.

## ***Science Curriculum***

Curriculum is aligned for grades K-12. Further curriculum revision continues to be needed as we respond to state and federal changes in curriculum expectations and assessment. The K-8 Michigan Educational Assessments are administered in the fall, with science assessed at grades five and eight. High school juniors are assessed in science in the spring, as part of the Michigan Merit Exam. Science teachers have made many adjustments to curriculum and instruction in order to meet the expectations established by the No Child Left Behind federal legislation and State requirements.

Teachers reviewed the existing curriculum with its alignment to State Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE's). They also reviewed student performance on the MEAP. State's cut score changes for the Science MEAP have resulted in a tremendous drop in student science proficiency scores across the state. Curriculum and instructional targets were identified to address these revised assessment expectations.

During the 2007-2008 school year, Glencoe's middle school program for science was purchased to meet the new GLCE's in fifth through seventh grades. This program consists of fifteen modules with separate smaller texts for each module: five life science, five earth science, five physical science. A mix of life, earth, and physical science texts were placed in grades five, six, and seven. This program continues to be the core tool used to within grade level curriculums to meet current State standards. Work was done during the 2012-2013 school year to update and tighten curriculum focus and pacing in sixth through eighth grades.

The eighth grade curriculum is currently aligned to High School Content Expectations (HSCE's) for earth science and also some units from the life science expectations. Eighth grade teachers met throughout the year to align materials, set pacing units, and plan consistent instruction across the grade level.

All grade levels K-12 continued to examine the Core Curriculum Literacy Standards for Science during the 2012-2013 school year. Elementary teachers also reviewed the elementary Core Curriculum Standards for Reading and Writing to begin linking appropriate standards and related activities to the science curriculum. There has already been an emphasis across grade levels on building reading and writing skills and strategies within science text and content. Efforts will be tweaked and documented to meet these clarified expectations and to develop student science literacy.

In 2012-2013, representation from all science levels participated in county efforts to develop awareness of the Next Generation Science Standards and the related

Science and Engineering Practices. These tools were developed in a multi-state effort and are under consideration for adoption by the State of Michigan to replace the existing GLCE's and HSCE's. All grade levels are reviewing Next Generation documents as well as awareness and implementation timelines that will be put into place pending State adoption as well as proposed state assessment adjustments. Beginning this transition and expanding Science Literacy efforts are expected to be the major areas of focus for the Kearsley Science Department K-12 in 2013-2014 and in upcoming years as State curriculum and assessment expectations undergo major revisions.

### ***Math Curriculum***

A major focus of our mathematics department during the 2013-2014 school year was the revision and alignment of the math curriculum with the new CCSS (Core Curriculum State Standards). Professional development was provided at all grade levels to help staff become familiar with the shift of content and the change in standards. More professional development will be provided next year to support staff in the implementation of these new standards.

During the 2013-2014 school year, teams of teachers in grades K-8 met to continue working on developing and implementing units aligned to the Common Core State Standards. In addition, the teams focused this year on the development of common unit assessments. Training on Depth of Knowledge and creating a blueprint for assessment was provided. Math Intervention programs including Accelerated Math, Do The Math, Moby Math and IXL were purchased for implementation during the next school year. Tier 1, 2 and 3 intervention development and implementation continues to be a focus in all buildings.

Middle school continued use of their program Connected Mathematics and implemented the new materials that allowed for an aligned program to the Common Core State Standards. Throughout the implementation of this program our MEAP math results have continued to improve. Gaps with the existing materials were identified and supplementary resources were purchased to meet these needs. In addition, AMS math teachers met to analyze assessment data from district Basic Skills assessments. Data from these assessments allow teachers to monitor and adjust instructional practices, identify students for remediation, and identify curricular gaps to be addressed.

In response to the increased graduation requirements by the state of Michigan Kearsley schools has implemented a 90% mathematics goal. That goal states "Ninety percent of Kearsley Community Schools students will master course content expectations for Algebra 1 by the end of ninth grade." To help address this goal



teams of teachers have been meeting to identify major areas of focus, a new scope and sequence for curriculum, a calendar of instruction for each grade level, and assessments for each major area of focus. This project will continue during the 2014-2015 school year as we monitor our progress toward preparing our students to be successful in Algebra 1.

### ***Social Studies Curriculum***

Social Studies curriculum revision and development at all levels K-12 continues to be focused on the GLCEs (Grade Level Content Expectations) and the HSCEs (High School Content Expectations) and their impact on curriculum and instructional alignment. In addition, the new CCSS (Core Curriculum State Standards) have been adopted by the state. Although there are no specific CCSSs for social studies, there are standards focusing on literacy that have an impact in this area. Focus this year was placed on understanding the Literacy Standards and the impact on classroom instruction..

The Michigan Citizenship Consortium Curriculum has been used as a framework for curriculum at Kearsley. This framework allows for an aligned curriculum K-11 in social studies with each year building a foundation for students for the next year. During the 2013-14 school year, the instructional units and supplementary materials continued to be implemented in grades K-7 and used as a framework for 8<sup>th</sup> grade US history, 9<sup>th</sup> grade US History and Geography, 10<sup>th</sup> grade World History and Geography, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade Civics and Government and Economics.

Social studies work at Armstrong Middle School focused on continued implementation of new materials. TCI: History Alive World History for sixth grade and TCI: Geography Alive for seventh grade will be implemented. In eighth grade, teachers also implemented TCI: History Alive The United States Through Industrialism. In all three grades, social studies teachers will work on pacing the materials and aligning them to the GLCEs and CCSS literacy standards. Curriculum documents, common assessments and common writing prompts were completed in 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Armstrong.

### ***Non-Core Curriculum***

Students are fortunate at Kearsley to be offered a variety of opportunities outside of core academic content. Kearsley World Language teachers have revised district curriculums to balance the focus between written and spoken communication within a language other than English, listening and reading comprehension within the target language, and understanding of cultural elements related to these languages and the countries/regions that speak them. Focus has been on creating meaningful contexts for developing and using these student skills to prepare students for real-world application.

In recent years, Michigan world language requirements were adopted requiring that all students successfully complete two years of study in a selected world language, demonstrating proficiency at the "novice-high" range. This has been a curriculum and instructional transition for Kearsley. World languages have consistently been offered as elective courses, though changes have now been made to the expectations and course progressions in Spanish and French focusing on the new State performance targets and the broader student participation. Assessments have also been revised to meet these guidelines. A section of Spanish and a section of French has also been offered for qualifying eighth grade students.

**STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS FOR LOCAL COMPETENCY TESTS OR NATIONALLY NORMED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS**

Local Assessment data is included in the school improvement article above.

**Parent Teacher Conferences:**

	Overall	Male	Female
2012-2013	93%	93%	92%
2013-2014	92%	93%	91%

**PTO Officers:**

Kristen Clarambeau- President

Beth VanHamlin-Secretary

Donna Gohs-Treasurer

**Parental Involvement Opportunities:**

Armstrong has a very active PTO that supports many building initiatives. This group meets monthly. They have contributed to our programs financially and by volunteering to support events/activities. The PTO supports many on-going projects such as the incentives for grades and behavior noted earlier. PTO members also give of their time to facilitate special events at Armstrong. In addition, our PTO raised significant funding to bring in The Hero Round Table to support anti-bullying efforts. Parents have the opportunity to chaperone the 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip to Washington D.C. Parents volunteer in classrooms for special activities and have been speakers or presenters in some clusters. Parents are encouraged to attend 6<sup>th</sup> grade orientation, our Open House at the beginning of the year and parent/ teacher conferences. Attendance at these is high, as noted in the data. Parents also attend special events such as awards assemblies, Veteran’s Day

activities, concerts, etc. We offered a Summer Reading night and a Math night in the spring to help parents find summer activities for students.

### **Building Staff Development**

Armstrong staff members had many opportunities for staff development during the 2013-2014 school year. Professional development was provided during designated half days during the school year and in afterschool meetings. Topics included SI, Synergy computer training, Ipad Training, Differentiated instruction and tier one information, review of building data, and School Improvement Goal work. Under the leadership of the department chairs and curriculum coordinators, members of each core area have worked on refinement of curriculum and participated in scoring of district assessments. The actual process and substantive discussion during these activities provided professional development. Teachers have implemented the strategies in their classrooms. We had Jon Gordon speak to our staff regarding motivation and diversity.

### **Building Technology Report**

Armstrong currently houses 3 computer labs in the media center. These are used frequently by students and staff for research and word processing. We have two 8<sup>th</sup> grade computer courses all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students attend. Our clusters each contain a bank of computers for use by students and staff. All staff members are using Synergy to maintain grades. Many staff members have taken professional development classes in the area of technology. TeacherVue and ParentVue are being used. We do have a GenNET Lab installed on sight for use. The building now has CTX's in all cluster areas mounted on the ceiling for teacher use. We have added smartboards and document cameras to our building. We began using a computer based assessment tools for Math and Reading. All teaching staff received an Ipad for school use and participated in several training session throughout the school year.

SI Team Members (Teacher names and grade level, chairs):

Principal	Casey Killingbeck	
Assistant Principal	Jane Fonger	
Building Chair	Deb Trahey	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Goal Chairs	Sally George	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade
	Adrienne Griffith	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
	Mary Riley	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade

The staff of Armstrong Middle School is proud of the work accomplished during the 2013-2014 school year. We appreciate the continued support of parents, staff and our community. Together we can make a difference.

Sincerely,

Casey Killingbeck  
Principal, Armstrong Middle School