



Hillside Elementary
Loudoun County Public Schools
Comprehensive Needs Assessment - Executive Summary

[LCPS School Profile](#)
[Virginia School Quality Profile](#)
[LCPS Strategic Plan 2023-2027](#)

School Improvement Team:

(Your school improvement team should consist of a variety of stakeholders within your school community including parents)

Name	Position
Chris Mills	Principal
Kristen Luxton	Academic Dean
Deb Haynie	Instructional Facilitator
Carla Johnson	Kindergarten Teacher
Kate Stuekerjuergen	1st Grade Teacher
Megan Bartell	2nd Grade Teacher
Melissa Casler	3rd Grade Teacher
Lori Heisler	4th Grade Teacher
Joanna Carlson	5th Grade Teacher
Katie Vernon	Reading Specialist
Casey Lapp	Special Education Teacher
Jessica Butler	Librarian
Tatyana Acton	EL Teacher
Lily Lindquist	EL Teacher
Anna Michenko	EL Teacher



Instructional Overview

Provide descriptive information related to the curriculum, instructional programs, professional learning, and existing interventions utilizing a Response to Intervention approach to support the academic needs of students.

Provide explicit connections to your school's instructional overview and how it supports and aligns with GOAL 1: Empowered Students of the LCPS Strategic Plan and Goal 2.1 Offer high-quality Ongoing Growth and Development available to all staff; 2.2 Develop dedicated resources to improve Professional Collaboration across schools and the division.

Review of SIP Goals and Strategies:

EL students made growth and exceeded the 2024-2025 SIP goal of increasing the raw data pass rate from 52.5% to 63% proficient or advanced on the English SOL with a pass rate of 66.9%. While this accomplishment is excellent for growth, there is still a significant gap between EL achievement and non-EL students. We will continue to focus on EL student achievement for the 2025-2026 school year setting a new goal of growth from 66.9% to 78% proficient or advanced on the SOL.

To achieve this we will continue to focus on effective co-teaching strategies and on student engagement strategies. Staff will receive professional learning on Kagan cooperative learning and Brain-based learning.

We will also focus on the quality of lesson delivery for reading and math at the November 4 PD day with representatives from the reading and math department presenting to the staff on effective use of instructional time during reading lessons and math workshop to meet the differentiated needs of all students.

Similar to EL achievement, the Tier 1 students demonstrated growth on the MAP assessment, with the average conditional growth increasing from the 41st percentile to the 49.7th percentile last year. We will continue to focus on tier 1 growth on MAP this year with a new target of average conditional growth from Fall to Spring at the 55th percentile, with an overall goal of matching the average conditional growth on the MAP assessment to the district average for all Hillside students.

This year we added a school climate goal to the SIP based on review of our school climate data. An identified area of growth was student perception of "I help my class make decisions at school". To align the work at Hillside to the district vision of developing a stronger sense of belonging for all students and to support other SIP strategies to increase student engagement, we set a goal of increasing student perception of shared decision-making in the classroom from 69.1% to 80% by May of 2026.

Elementary Reading & Writing: Elementary Reading and Writing instruction is grounded in the science of reading and utilizes evidence-based literacy practices that reflect the five pillars of literacy: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics and Word Study, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension, in addition to Writing. Instruction across all areas of literacy should be explicit and systematic and align with the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs). All classrooms are provided with state-approved resources consistent with the expectations of the Virginia Literacy Act. Students are empowered by integrating Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's *Into Reading* as the core instructional resource that supports each of the five pillars of literacy. Teachers are provided with continuous professional development to support the implementation of best practices for literacy instruction. Each student's literacy progress is monitored through state-provided assessments (Virginia Language and Literacy Screener [VALLS]) or the use of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). Students who have identified areas of need are provided with differentiated classroom instruction and/or evidence-based intervention. Using the LCPS decision trees as guidance, tiered supports are provided to students that align with expectations outlined in the Virginia Literacy Act. All teachers are provided with professional learning on specific intervention strategies and

programs. To support this collective and ongoing effort of providing high-quality literacy instruction, and intervention, all teachers engage in Literacy CLT/PLCs with their grade-level teams. During these instances, teachers can collaborate and share student progress, strategize, and plan instruction for all students.

At Hillside Elementary teachers use the HMM Literacy resources and the LCPS Scope and Sequence to plan and implement high-quality literacy instruction aligned to the Science of Reading. Teachers routinely collaborate with EL staff, Reading Specialists, Administrators, and Special Education staff during CLT meetings to analyze literacy data to develop differentiated supports, plans for supplemental instruction during SOAR time, and to develop MTSS plans for Tier 3 students. All staff responsible for reading instruction have completed the preliminary VLA literacy training and are registered for upcoming training through Canva. Many staff have voluntarily participated in additional specialized reading professional learning to include LETRS 1 and 2 and OG. Teachers provide targeted instruction to engage students in differentiated learning experiences and conduct ongoing assessments. Hillside staff continually assess student progress in literacy using the FASTBridge screening and progress monitoring assessments.

The Hillside School Improvement team identified areas for growth in literacy: 1. The overall literacy achievement of EL students lags behind the general school population when reviewing the raw SOL data before growth factors are taken into account for accreditation. Our plan for SY2025 is to focus on the shared responsibility of EL students and collaboration among all instructional staff to implement highly effective strategies to promote language acquisition and access to the grade-level curriculum for our EL students. 2. The conditional growth of some of our Tier 1 students needs to catch up to the conditional growth of our Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. For several years, improvement measures, including Response to Intervention, Targeted Data Analysis, Targeted Instruction, and Literacy Interventions, have focused primarily on Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. Given our history of success with these students, it is time to operationalize these practices and focus on our students who are generally on or above grade level but are not making the anticipated growth as measured by the MAP assessment. To accomplish this, we will allocate CLT time to analyze Tier 1 student data, develop highly engaging learning activities, and raise the expectation of academic performance through higher-order questioning and opportunities to extend learning beyond the grade-level standards.

Math: LCPS Math Curriculum and Instruction uses a [math workshop structure](#) that focuses on student-centered learning activities, including daily number sense routines and reflection. Teachers plan small-group targeted instruction, varying the groups regularly. Instruction prioritizes hands-on, inquiry-based learning focusing on conceptual understanding using representations and models/manipulatives. Instruction also emphasizes the implementation of the Process Goals and the 5Cs through student collaboration, reasoning, communicating, making connections, and problem-solving. Students who have identified areas of need are provided with differentiated classroom instruction and/or explicitly taught, evidenced-based intervention.

At Hillside, math instruction is aligned with the grade-level SOLs and the LCPS pacing guides. A significant percentage of students at Hillside perform above grade level on standardized math assessments. To meet the needs of these students, teachers must differentiate instruction to include enrichment opportunities as well as remediation and reinforcement for struggling students. Teachers routinely provide targeted instruction within the Math Workshop model aligned needs identified through screening and grade-level summative assessments. Intervention is provided to students who qualify for MTSS Intervention plans using Bridges and Do The Math instructional resources.

Science: LCPS science programs are designed to actively engage students in the process of science and use reasoning processes that build scientific thinking. These programs teach students to know, use, and interpret scientific explanations of the natural world; generate and evaluate scientific evidence and explanations; understand scientific knowledge's nature and development; and participate productively in scientific practices and discourse.

At Hillside staff follow the LCPS Scope and Sequence to plan interactive, project-based science units aligned to the SOLs. Teachers routinely invite parents to participate in PBL projects actively or to attend as audience members to the students' final presentations. Our librarian and art teachers routinely collaborate with grade level teachers to enrich and enhance science content across disciplines.

Social Sciences & Global Studies: Social Science and Global Studies instruction in LCPS is grounded in a culturally responsive approach to the content that elevates multiple perspectives. Students are empowered through authentic, inquiry-based learning experiences that promote students' development of historical thinking skills and provide opportunities to make their thinking visible. Students demonstrate their understanding, knowledge, and skills through authentic performance tasks.

At Hillside, very similar to science content, staff follow the LCPS Scope and Sequence to plan interactive, project-based units aligned to the SOLs. Teachers routinely invite parents to participate actively in PBL projects or to attend as audience members to the students' final presentations. Our librarian and art teachers routinely collaborate with grade-level teachers to enrich and enhance science content across disciplines.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Academic Achievement

A summary providing evidence of analysis of trends, patterns, proficiency, and growth in student academic achievement data. Provide a clear connection between outcomes and contributing factors.

At Hillside, we are extremely proud of students' overall academic achievement. Recent SOL pass rates are as follows:

- Reading: 86.4%
- Mathematics: 89.1%
- Science: 86.5%
- History: 83%

Areas of Concern for Literacy at Hillside Include:

- EL SOL Pass Rates (before growth factors): 66.4%
- Tier 1 Student Average Conditional Growth on Reading MAP Assessment: 49.7th percentile.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Student Engagement

A summary of trends, patterns, strengths, and areas for growth in student engagement data, including attendance, discipline, perceptual data, and graduation data (HS only).

- Over 90% of respondents in the staff survey believe that teachers target instruction to address specific student needs and provide students opportunities to reflect on their learning.
- Over 90% felt the school encourages family involvement and the school provides opportunities to communicate with the school.
- The PTO created two fundraising opportunities and supported 5 parent engagement events. The fundraising events were more successful than were originally planned.
- The principal sends out weekly newsletters. Parents are invited to come into the school to volunteer.

Extended Learning and Engagement Opportunities

Provide information to describe extended learning and engagement opportunities for students, families, and community, including what events you have planned or are considering hosting.

Provide explicit connections to your school's extended learning and engagement opportunities and how they support and align with GOAL 4: Engaged Community of the LCPS Strategic Plan, especially GOAL 4.1 Deepen Family Engagement by offering inclusive opportunities for conversation across the division.

Extended Learning:

- Students have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities to include Drama Club, Lego Robotics, and Odyssey of the Mind.

Family and Community Engagement Opportunities:

- Staff collaborate with parents to plan STEAM Night, and a World Culture Fair.
- The PTO provides multiple opportunities for fun family engagement to include Bingo Night, Trunk or Treat, Glow Dance, Fun Run, Book Fair, PTO Auction, Dine and Donate, Read-a-thon, Welcome Back Week events, etc.

Climate and Culture

Describe strategies that address the needs of all children in the school, particularly those at risk of not meeting the challenging state academic standards, through activities such as counseling, social-emotional learning and mental health programs, and PBIS implementation.

Make explicit connections to the LCPS Strategic Plan goals of 1.3 Prioritize Care for Students by ensuring a safe and affirming learning environment for all;

School specific narrative

At the end of SY22-23, Hillside's chronic absenteeism rate was 17%, double from the previous school year. For the first time in the History of Hillside, we were Level 2 for state accreditation for attendance. During the 2023-2024 school year, parents of potentially chronically absent students quarterly received customized emails and participated in attendance conferences, resulting in a significant decrease in chronic absenteeism of 10.2% for 2023-2024. The chronic absenteeism rate for SY24-25 dropped to 9.3%.

Instructional staff and school administration respond to behavioral concerns through an instructive and restorative approach. Responses are aligned to VDOE Student Behavioral Administrative Response guidance. Administrators routinely consult with the Office of School Administration to utilize suspension as a last resort. Prior to suspension, students with behavior concerns are discussed through a kid-talk protocol at CLT, Unified Mental Health Team, and Admin team meetings. Behavior intervention plans are developed and documented in the MTSS module in Phoenix for accountability and progress monitoring.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): PBIS is a systemic approach for establishing a safe and supportive learning environment. Through the implementation of a consistent vision, language, and practices, school staff promote social, behavioral, and academic success for all students.

Successful implementation of PBIS can lead to a positive school climate, improved classroom management, increased understanding of schoolwide expectations, strengthened relationships, increased positive behaviors, academic achievement and equitable learning experiences, and decreased office referrals and suspensions. To support implementation, the PBIS

team meets regularly to evaluate behavioral data, provide behavioral lessons based on identified needs, and share resources.

At Hillside, our school-wide PBIS plan focuses on three essential character traits: Respect, Responsibility, and readiness. All students are taught these expectations in the classroom, through principal announcements on the Morning News show, and during behavior expectation assemblies. Expected behaviors are practiced and reinforced through the Golden Hawk initiative, where classes are recognized for consistently demonstrating the expected behaviors in all aspects of school culture, including the classroom, hallways, specials, lunch, and recess. Classes accumulate golden stars for each of the focus areas. When they have earned the complete set of stars for all areas, they receive the Golden Hawk award as a class, including a visit from the Hillside Hawk and class celebration opportunities.

In addition to the Golden Hawk program, individual students are recognized via positive behavior referrals announced over the Morning News show or sent to the principal's office for being good, where their parents receive a surprise phone call celebrating their child's behavior.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL): The social-emotional learning framework provides students with explicit SEL instruction, practice and reinforcement of skills through academic integration, and a supportive environment that cultivates relationships, belonging, safety and a student-centered approach. The framework is supported by the involvement of all community members, including staff, students, families and community partners.

Elementary/Middle: In our school we support and teach SEL through the Second Step curriculum during SOAR time.