

Ashland City Schools

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SUPERINTENDENT**

**ASHLAND CITY
SCHOOLS**

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THE ASHLAND QUALITY JOURNEY

On behalf of the Ashland City School district Board of Education I would like to personally thank the honorable Congressman Ralph Regula of the 16th district in Ohio and the members of the Subcommittee of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education for the opportunity to present testimony on "School Leadership" by presenting Ashland's Quality Journey.

After meeting only 9 of 18 categories on the State of Ohio Report Card, being placed in the category of "Academic Watch" and the denial of a State Systemic Improvement Grant in 1998, the Board of Education (BOE) made the decision to fund the district's first school improvement initiative called Educational Quality Improvement Process (EQUIP). That fall, the EQUIP team for grades (K-4) was trained, and the team began the implementation of quality processes and data driven decision making. Continuing their efforts, the team began the process of aligning Ashland City Schools' (ACS) curriculum with state and national standards. It was at this time that ACS started to use some of W. Edward Deming's principles in the school setting.

In May of 1999, the BOE approved funding to expand the EQUIP program to the 5th through the 8th grade. Additional EQUIP team members were trained and vertical alignment of state and national standards were expanded. In October of 1999, eleven EQUIP members attended the National Quality Education Conference. It was here that they discovered that Ohio was one of the nationally designated Baldrige in Education (BiE-IN) states. After confirming through Board resolution a request to be a Baldrige in Education pilot school district with the support of the support and certified staff, ACS was notified that they would be one of five districts chosen to pilot the BiE-IN quality initiative for the state of Ohio. During the remainder of the 1999-2000 school year, many Baldrige trainings were conducted for the administration, BOE, and the staff by representatives from Jim Shipley and Associates (JSA). In May of 2000, the entire

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staff at Lincoln Elementary was trained for three days in Performance Excellence, and Lincoln became a visitation site for future staff trainings. The process of creating an in-house training cadre had also been started by sending staff members for additional training with JSA. The Board of Education and District Administration worked together to develop three aims for the district - high student achievement, safe school environment, and efficient and effective operations. These aims are the foundation we used to begin the process of alignment throughout all of the levels of our organization.

Orientation to Performance Excellence (OPE)

Purpose: Introduction to Baldrige as a strategy for classroom improvement.

Expected Outcomes:

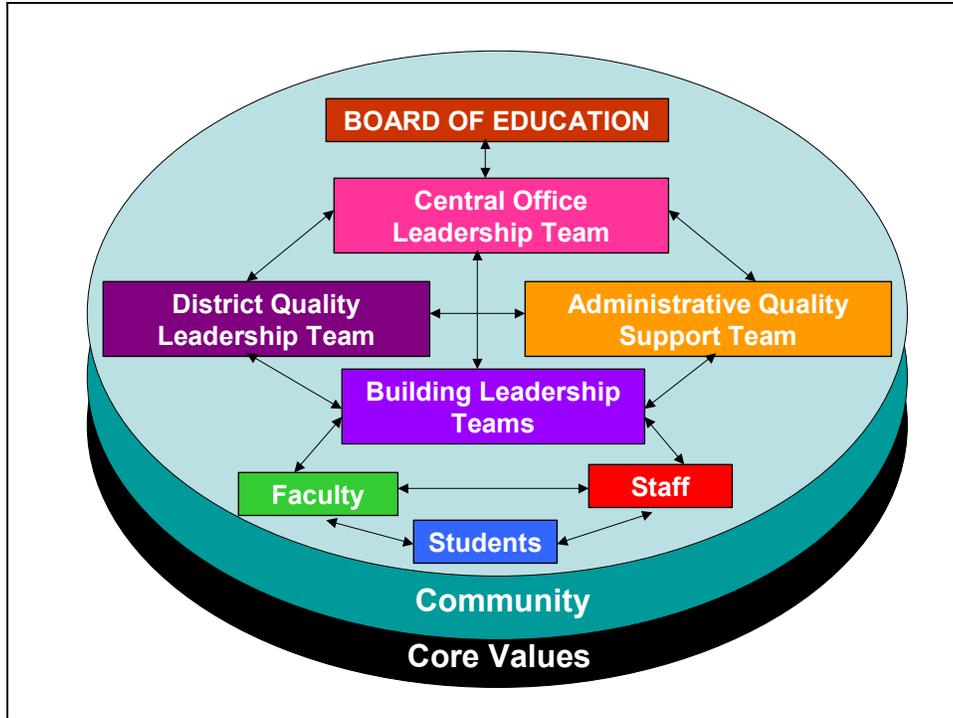
- Awareness of basic Baldrige components: categories, core values
- Rationale for use of Baldrige as a framework for classroom improvement
- Initial assessment of classroom learning system
- Tools for getting started

The summer of 2000 proved to be a busy time for the quality initiative. Three day orientation trainings on Orientation to Performance Excellence were provided by JSA and were offered in June and August. One hundred and twelve staff voluntarily attended these trainings.

September of 2000 saw the creation of district, building, central office and administrative teams designed to create a collaborative style of management. Three day trainings on Performance Excellence were extended to all staff who had not previously attended training. In-house trainers conducted 14 sessions of 20 to 25 staff members.

ACS started a change in its Leadership structure by making a move toward a team approach to Leadership. This team approach is from the Boardroom to the classroom.

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The District Quality Leadership Team (DQLT) began exploring the Ohio Award for Excellence which is the Baldrige criteria. In March of 2001, the district report card indicated that ACS had met 17 of 27 indicators showing improvement in 15 of the 27 categories.

Teacher/Student Partnership (TSP)

Purpose: In-depth orientation to Baldrige-based learning systems with specific focus on development of classroom goals and measures as a foundation for classroom implementation.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased understanding of Baldrige categories and core values as applied to the classroom.
- Level II assessment and analysis of the classroom as a learning system.
- Development of classroom goals, measures and an action plan of next steps.
- Strategies for using Baldrige as a blueprint for classroom improvement.

Additional staff training was offered during the summer of 2001. One hundred and fifteen staff voluntarily attended these trainings. Beginning in

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September of 2001, two day Student/Teacher Partnership trainings were conducted with a cross section of staff. The DQLT began and successfully completed the application for a Level II Ohio Award for Excellence application. In March, the state report card indicated that ACS had met 18 of 27 indicators showing improvement in 23 of the 27 categories. The culmination of the year was the news that ACS had received the Level II Ohio Award for Excellence, one of only three K-12 schools to ever receive the award.

Short Cycle Assessments based on State/National Content Standards I (SCA I)

Purpose: In-depth development of grade level/department and classroom goals and measures as a foundation for classroom implementation.

Expected Outcomes:

- Development of grade level/department and classroom goals, measures and an action plan of next steps.
- Strategies for classroom improvement.

Orientation (Support Staff) (OPE SS)

Purpose: Orientation to Baldrige as a strategy for improving district and school support services.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased understanding of Baldrige as an improvement strategy.
- Strategies for implementing Baldrige at the work site level.
- Strategies for using Plan-Do-Study-Act to improve processes at the lowest level possible.
- Resources to support additional practice and learning.
- Development of an action plan of next steps.

During the summer of 2002, additional trainings were offered and attended voluntarily by many of the ACS staff. The 2002-2003 school year focused on developing Short Cycle Assessments by grade level/department and support staff training conducted by our internal training staff.

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Short Cycle Assessments based on State/National Content Standards II (Sharing 'Best Practices') (SCA II)

Purpose: In-depth development of grade level/department and classroom goals and measures as a foundation for student performance.

Expected Outcomes:

- Development of grade level/department and classroom goals, measures and an action plan of next steps.
- Sharing of Promising Practices
- Strategies for classroom improvement

Developing Partnerships (Support Staff) (DP SS)

Purpose: Utilizing Baldrige as a strategy for improving district and school support services.

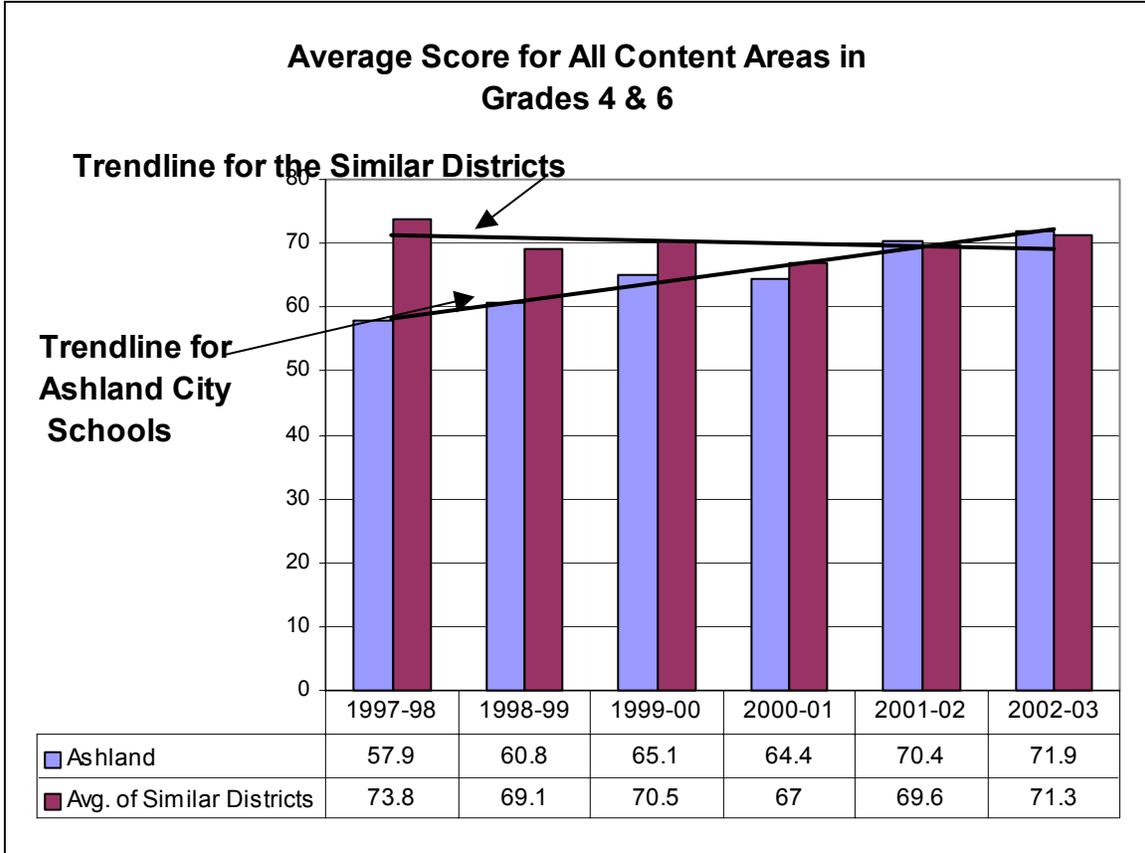
Expected Outcomes:

- Increased understanding of Baldrige as an improvement strategy.
- Strategies for implementing Baldrige at the work site level.
- Strategies for the development of highly effective adult teams throughout the district.
- Resources to support additional practice and learning.
- Personal assessment/Goal setting
- Development of an action plan of next steps.

The summer of 2003 once again proved to be a busy one as 130 staff attended voluntary trainings presented by JSA. As the 2003 -2004 year unfolds, the Short Cycle Assessment training and the support staff trainings continue. In October, the DQLT has completed an application to the Ohio Award of Excellence at level III-IV. In addition, ACS was requested to present several workshops at the national American Society of Quality Conference. Currently, ACS is actively looking for quality organizations that are willing to share best practices and quality processes that have proven to be beneficial to their organizations. To that end, ACS has joined a group of business, industry,

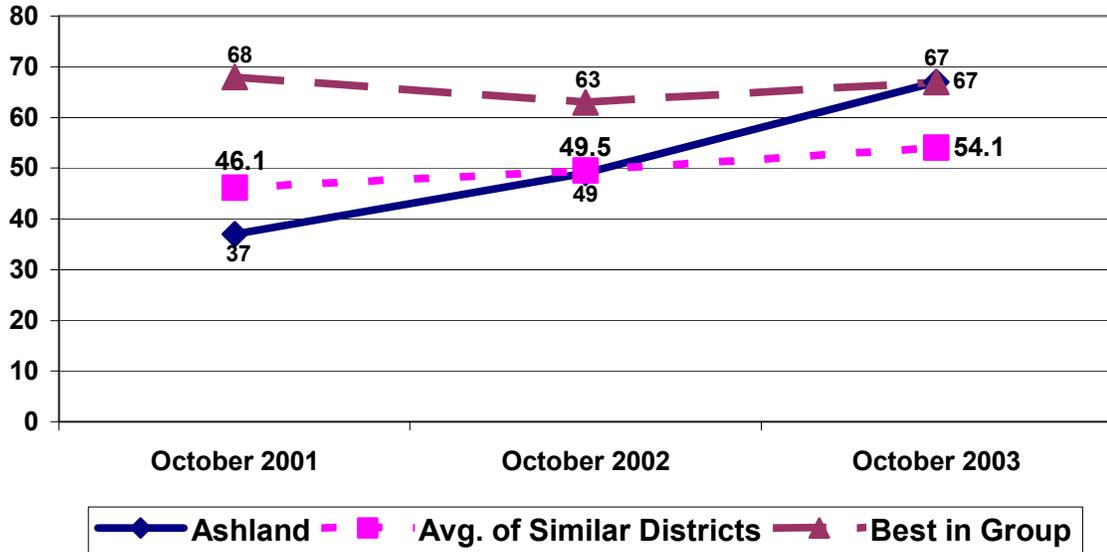
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government and health care institutions to help each other raise the level of quality through collaboration within our community – PARTNERS PURSUING QUALITY EXCELLENCE.



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October Reading Comparison Grade 4



**Graduation Rate
1999-2003**

