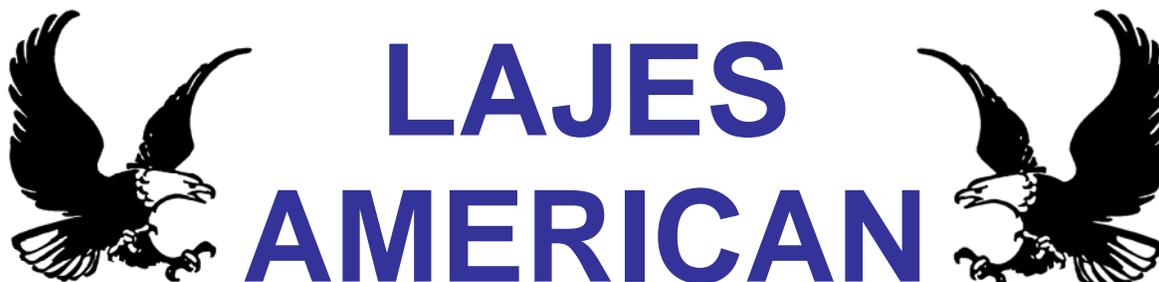


School Profile for 2006-2011



LAJES AMERICAN SCHOOL

Azores, Portugal

Co-Principals Ms. Ginny Briggs and Mr. John Allan

Unit 7725 APO AE 09720

LajesEHS.Principal@eu.dodea.edu

SCHOOL PROFILE DEVELOPMENT

The SILT team met in August 2006 to begin the process of looking at the unique needs of our school. Because we are committed to continuously improving our teaching and learning, our goal was to implement a data-driven improvement plan that would ensure success for all our students. This team was composed of our two administrators, Ms. Ginny Briggs and Mr. John Allan, and our SIP Co-chairs, Mrs. A. M. and Mrs. L. S. (replaced in October by Mrs. M. S.). The SILT team acted as a steering group during this entire process. They planned the objectives and set the SIP agenda for each staff meeting, prepared drafts of proposed ideas for presentation to the entire group, facilitated discussions and helped answer questions, and set goals and timelines for the committees as well as the whole group.

Shortly after the rest of the staff returned from summer vacation, we met as a school community to formulate a plan of action. We asked parents from elementary and secondary to be a part of our SILT team, as well as Student Council members, and the School/Military Liaison.

Everyone involved volunteered to serve on a Data Task Group according to his or her chosen interests and talents. Each Task Group met and chose leaders, who spoke for their group in the months following. We began by creating an “ideal” student on paper. We wanted to identify necessary attributes our students must possess to be successful in their adult lives. We shared a Power Point presentation on environmental trends and future job projections that helped all of us to better understand our students’ futures and focus in on what was vital in their life-long learning.

From there, we were able to clarify our educational objectives and define our mission as educators. That began the process of formulating and selecting our current mission statement, which is “to develop responsible students who possess the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and values to succeed in a changing world.” This statement was drafted and redrafted until it included all our salient points. As a community of learners, we were committed to writing a clear statement that included the mission of our district as well. Task groups met and came to consensus on three proposed statements, which were clarified by the SILT committee and the Task Group leaders, and then sent out electronically to the entire school community for their vote. Then we came back together for final refinement and approval of the statement selected.

During the subsequent SIP meetings we focused on that Mission Statement as each Data Task Group began to gather pertinent data from a variety of sources and present their findings to the staff and community to discuss as a whole. The information given was analyzed and prioritized. Focusing on how the students were performing, and why, enabled us to identify areas needing improvement. Several goals were crafted based on that research as well as our professional judgment. The final two goals selected were driven by data, gained school-wide consensus, and will help us in our pursuit of continuing excellence as we teach and learn here at Lajes American School.

DoDEA Vision

Communities investing in success for ALL students

DoDEA Mission

To provide an exemplary education that inspires and prepares all DoDEA students for success in a dynamic, global environment.

Mediterranean District Mission

To support schools for the success of *every* student

Lajes American School Mission Statement

(Lajes embraces the Vision and Mission Statements above.)

To develop responsible students who possess the skills, attitudes, knowledge, and values to succeed in a changing world

Core Commitments / Beliefs

At Lajes American School we are committed to doing the very best that can be done to ensure success for every student.

We believe:

- we must set high expectations for ourselves as educators, as well as for every student.
- that we have an obligation to search out and implement the most effective teaching methods available and that checking for student learning is critical to ascertaining whether our teaching methods are effective
- we must provide multiple opportunities for success for every student.
- that all students can be responsible and invested in their own learning.
- that we have a responsibility to teach our students a work ethic that promotes the values and attitudes necessary to succeed in life.
- that continuous improvement is an on-going process.
- that education is a shared responsibility between faculty, students, parents, and community.
- our students can and will be successful as DoDDS graduates.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

School Profile Development	ii
Table of Contents	1
Unique Local Insights	2
Information from Former Students	6
Existing School Data: Students	7
Existing School Data: Community	12
Interpretation and Triangulation of Data	16
Rationale for Student Performance Goals.....	17

UNIQUE LOCAL INSIGHTS

Data Collection Instruments

1. Parent Focus Groups
2. Teacher Demographics
3. Student Demographics
4. School Structure
5. Programs
6. Curriculum
7. Supports
8. Clubs
9. Parent Partnerships
10. Military Mission

Presentation / Analysis of Data

1. **Parent Focus Groups:** The SILT chair met with nine diverse parents to discuss our school effectiveness and the success of our students. Most parents felt that our students are very successful overall. However, they reported a concern with reading at different grade levels. In addition, they identified problem-solving skills in math as another area of concern. They also expressed concerns about class size, test-taking skills, and formal writing. A few parents also mentioned that they would like to have parenting classes offered by the school. They complimented LAS on the middle and high school science program, the number of people available to help our students, and the use of Student Led Conferences.

2. **Teacher Demographics:**

Gender: 70% female, 30% male;

Ethnic Group: 81% Non-Hispanic, 3% Hispanic, 16% declined;

Race: 80% White, 12% Mix, 2% Asian, 6% declined;

Age: 20-29, 5%;

30-39, 12%;

40-49, 19%;

50-59, 40%;

60+, 24%;

Education: Bachelors, 3%

Masters, 17%

Bach +15, 3%

Masters +15, 7%;

Bach +30, 15%;

Masters +30, 55%

	0-5	6-15	16-25	26-35	36-45	46+
Years Teaching:	9%	23%	28%	26%	12%	2%
With DoDDS:	26%	36%	24%	7%	7%	
At Lajes:	73%	23%	2%	2%		

3. Student Demographics:

Gender: 52% male, 48% female;

Ethnic Group: 86% Non-Hispanic, 13% Hispanic, 1% declined;

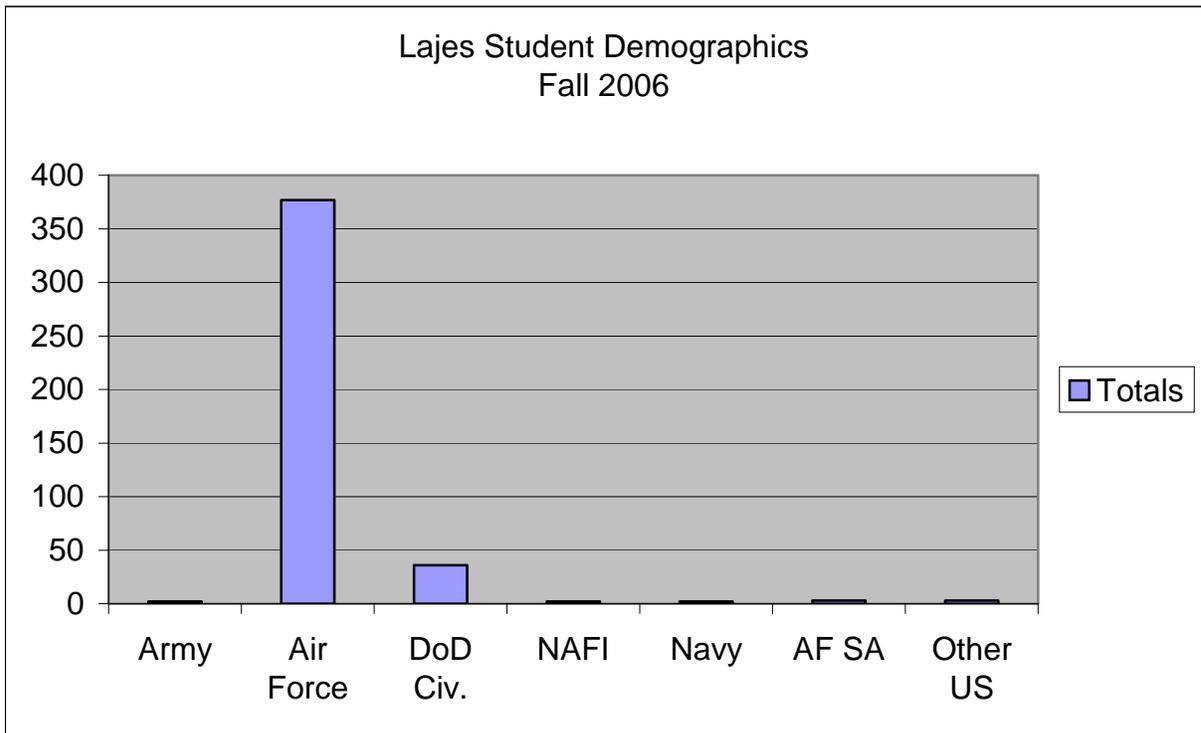
Race: 63% White, 14% Black, 12% Mix, 3% Am. Ind., 3% Asian, 1% Pac. Islander, 4% declined;

DEROS year: 2006, 14%;

2007, 49%;

2008, 35%;

2009, 1%.



This graph shows that most of our students are dependents of active duty Air Force personnel.

4. **School Structure:** Lajes American School serves approximately 430 students in grades Sure Start – 12th. In addition, we offer Pre-School for Children with Disabilities (PSCD).
5. **Programs:** Together with the extensive curriculum offered by DoDEA, LAS offers programs such as Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Differentiated Curriculum, Guided Reading Groups, Host Nation Education, Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE), and “Reading Counts!”
6. **Curriculum:** LAS follows the prescribed DoDEA standards-based curriculum.
7. **Supports:** We provide a variety of venues in place that support students at LAS. Some of these are a Guided Reading leveled book room, books leveled by lexiles in the library, tools and assessments provided by our Language Arts Reading Specialist (LARS) and our Compensatory Education specialists (Comp Ed), Reading Recovery, Student Support Team (SST), Literacy Coach, additional Physical Education classes, Early Childhood Home Visits, Math Support Labs, Athletic Council, Classes in Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Seminar, Re-teach/Retest Programs, Honors Courses, Advanced Placement Courses, Tardies Aren’t Permitted (TAP), Learning Excellence, Assistance Provided (LEAP), Reading Challenge, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Preparation, Adolescent Substance Abuse Counseling Services (ASACS), Student Activity Funds, Read 180, Educational and Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS), Speech and Language Services, Gifted Education, School Committees, Counseling and Nursing services.
8. **Clubs/Activities:** We offer a variety of extra-curricular opportunities for our students which include Student Council, Homework Club, Middle School Intramural Sports, Odyssey of the Mind, Eco Club, Internet Café, Military Munchkin Day, Build-It Festival, Outdoor Club, Future Educators of America (FEA), Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Model United States Senate, Creative Connections, National Honor Societies (Junior and High School), International Student Leadership Institute, College Night, Music Festivals, Junior Science/Humanities Symposium, Chorus, School-wide Spirit Days, Constitution Day, Community Days (Hispanic, African-American, etc.), Earth Day, and Varsity and Middle School sports programs.
9. **Parent Partnerships:** LAS has many different parent partnerships. Currently, we have School Advisory Committee (SAC); parent representatives on SILT; Parent Teacher Organization (PTO); Mentoring Volunteers; Military Career Day; Odyssey of the Mind, Military-Family-Community Volunteers and Guest Speakers.
10. **Military Mission:** *The mission of the 65th Air Base is to deliver sovereign options for the defense of the United States of America and its global interests -- to fly and fight in Air, Space, and Cyberspace.*

To achieve that mission, the Air Force has a vision of Global Vigilance, Reach and Power. That vision orbits around three core competencies: Developing Airmen, Technology-to-War fighting, and Integrating Operations.

The Air Force bases these core competencies and distinctive capabilities on a shared commitment to three core values -- Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in all we do.

Implications for Student Performance Goals

Areas identified by this data for student performance goals include:

- Reading
- Problem- solving
- Writing
- Test-taking skills

Identification of Sub-Groups: None

Other Actions Taken: None

INFORMATION FROM FORMER STUDENTS

Data Collection Instrument: Former Student Focus Group – October 2006

Presentation/Analysis of Data:

We contacted 9 of our former Lajes Students for the purpose of gathering information and insights about our school. We asked them how they felt their time here at our elementary, middle, or high school had prepared them to be successful in the different curricular areas. Most felt at least adequately prepared, if not well prepared, in most subject areas. Fine Arts was the lowest curricular area, with only 50% feeling prepared. Science was our next lowest score, with only 43% feeling well prepared, while 57% felt only adequately (28%) or minimally (29%) prepared. This is an area of concern. All other curricular areas tested as follows:

Technology: 76% Adequately to Well Prepared

Math: 88% Adequately to Well Prepared

Social Studies: 86% Adequately to Well Prepared

Writing Skills: 88% Adequately to Well Prepared

Language Arts: 88% Adequately to Well Prepared

Due to DoDEA directives that do not authorize DoDDS schools to conduct student surveys, we were unable to obtain additional information from more students. However, this small focus group still provides us with additional local insights into our school culture.

Implications for Student Performance Goals: None

Identification of Sub-Groups: None

Other Actions Needed: None

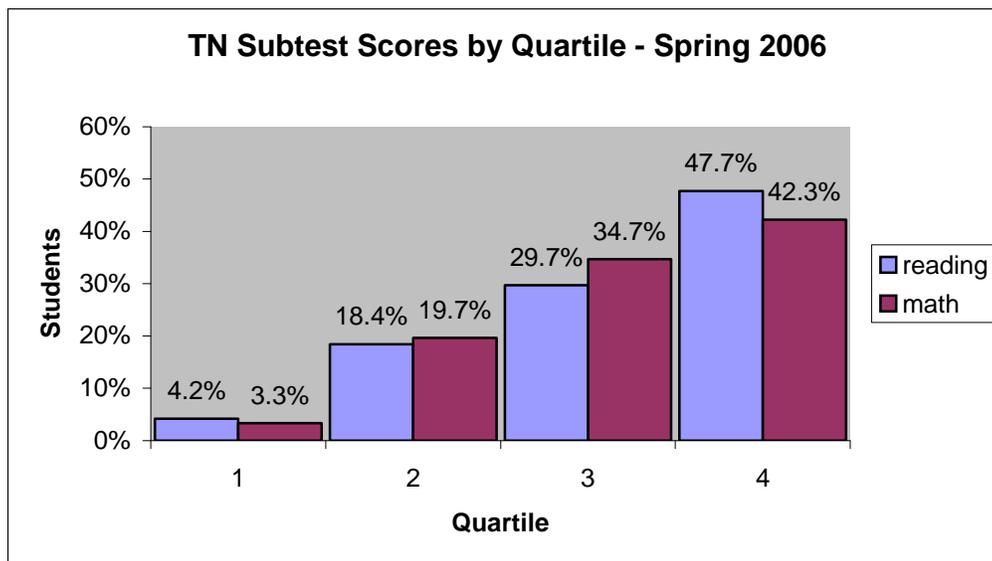
EXISTING SCHOOL DATA: STUDENTS

Data Collection Instruments

1. Terra Nova Multiple Assessments, 2nd Edition, is a system-wide norm referenced assessment given annually in the spring of each school year to all students in grades 3 – 11.
2. Communication Arts, 2nd Edition, is a system-wide criterion referenced assessment given annually in the spring of each school year to all our students in grades 4, 8, and 10. (This test has been eliminated as a future assessment tool, beginning this school year.)
3. Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) is a standardized assessment given several times a year to grades 2 – 8.
4. SAT/PSAT are standardized tests administered to high school students nationwide.
5. Teacher Perception Questionnaire is a local instrument that gathered information in all curricular areas. Areas that indicated student need as perceived by staff are presented in this document. This questionnaire was given to all teachers in the fall of 2006.

Presentation / Analysis of Data

1. Terra Nova Multiple Assessment, Reading and Math Subtests:



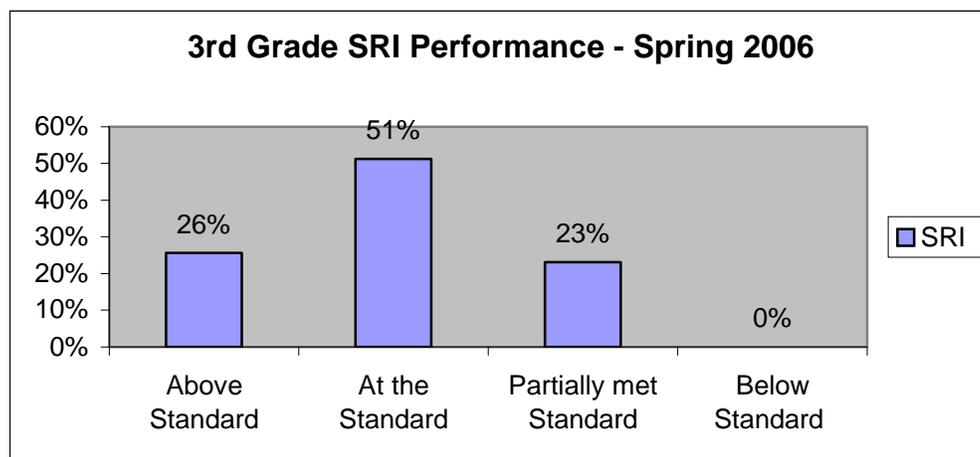
This graph shows Terra Nova Multiple Assessments 2006 data from subtests of reading and math disaggregated by quartiles. Those students scoring in the 1-25 percentile fall in quartile 1, the 26-50 percentile in quartile 2, the 51-75 percentile in quartile 3, and 76-99 percentile in quartile 4. 23% of Lajes students scored in the bottom 2 quartiles in math, and 22.6% scoring in the bottom 2 quartiles in reading.

2. **Communication Arts Performance Assessment** analyzed data for grades 4, 8, and 10. Several trends were noted:

- Lajes students consistently scored higher than their stateside counterparts.
- In the reading strand “Establishing Understanding,” scores went steadily but slightly down locally, but plummeted nationally.
- Girls consistently performed better than boys.
- Only 4th grade observed below standard scores, with a seven-tenths of one percent drop.

We need to reinforce “Establishing Understanding” in accordance with the high standards for excellence here at Lajes.

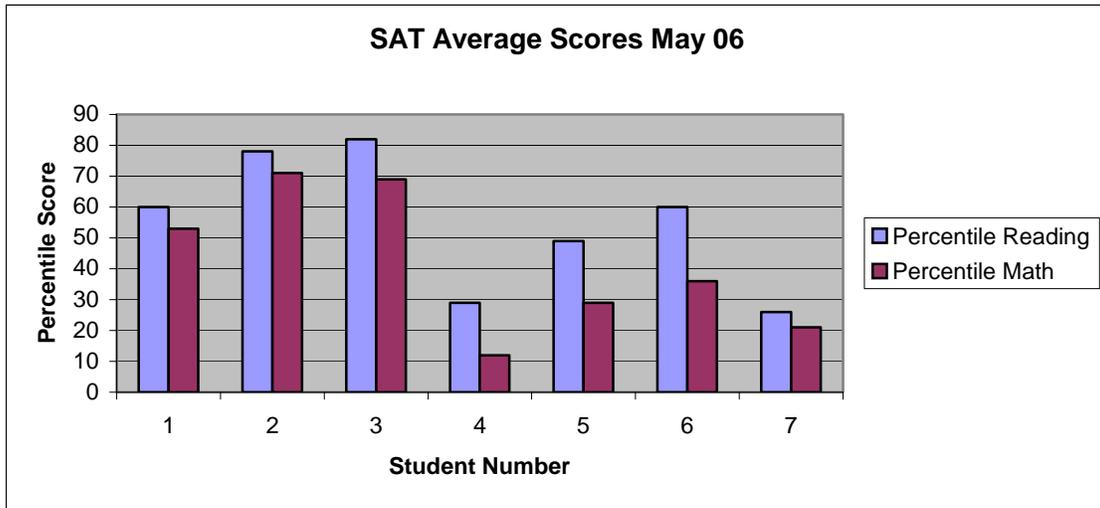
3. **Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI):** The value of the SRI information is that it is inclusive of students from each level (elementary, middle, and high), and that it measures a foundational skill set. The value of the secondary grades is that it may have implications about cumulative gains of education practices of prior grades. This information may also have relevance to graduates’ readiness for the demands of further education/vocational preparation.



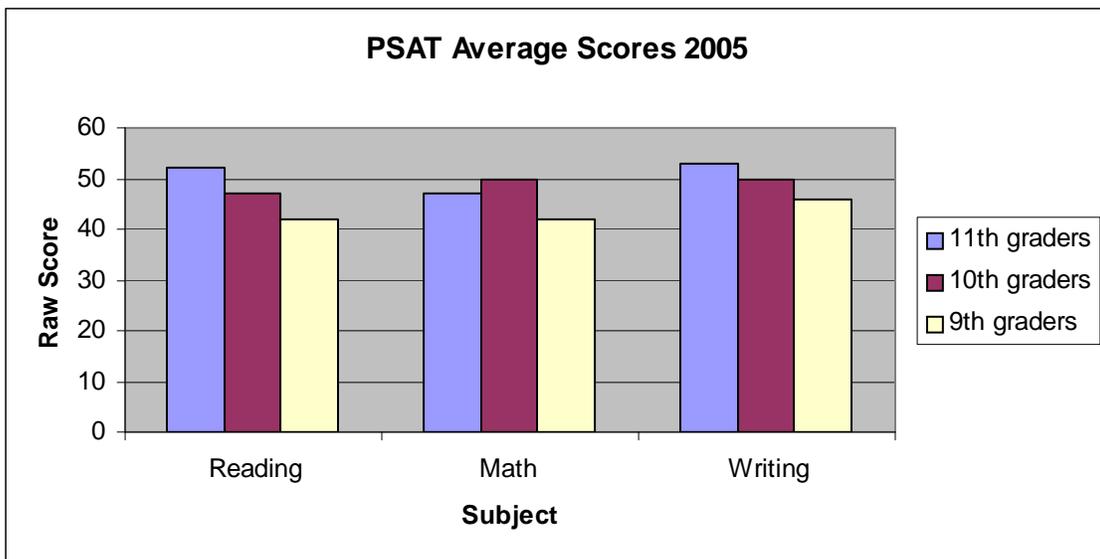
This graph shows 2006 SRI performance for 3rd grade students. At the 3rd grade level, 23% are not meeting the DoDEA standard on the SRI.

In addition to this data, a statistical review of middle and high school students taking the SRI show that 48% are not reading at grade level, and the lexile reading scores of 36% of Lajes 6th graders decreased from the Fall 2005 testing to the Spring 2006 testing.

4. SAT/PSAT scores:

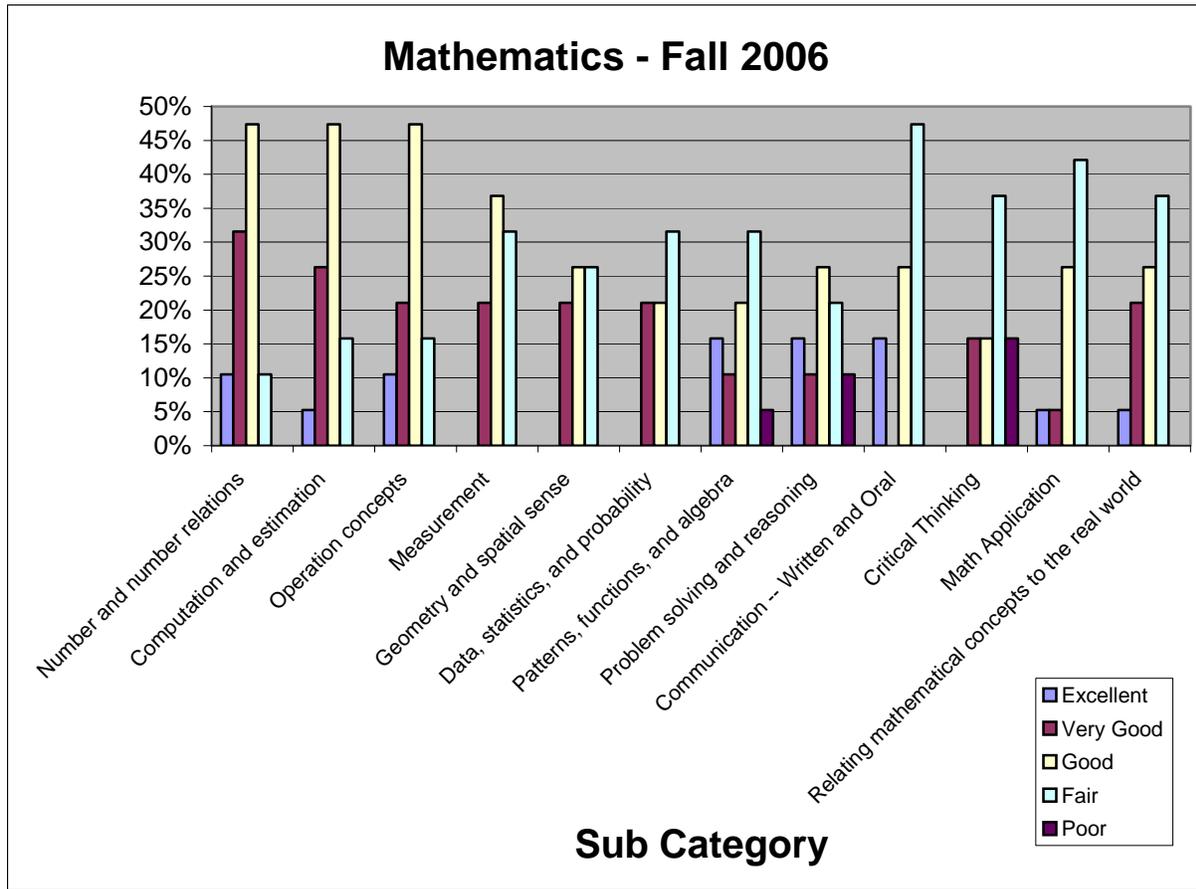


This graph shows SAT results for students on the May 2006 exam. Three of seven Lajes students scored below 50 percentile in reading, and four of seven Lajes students scored below 50 percentile in math.

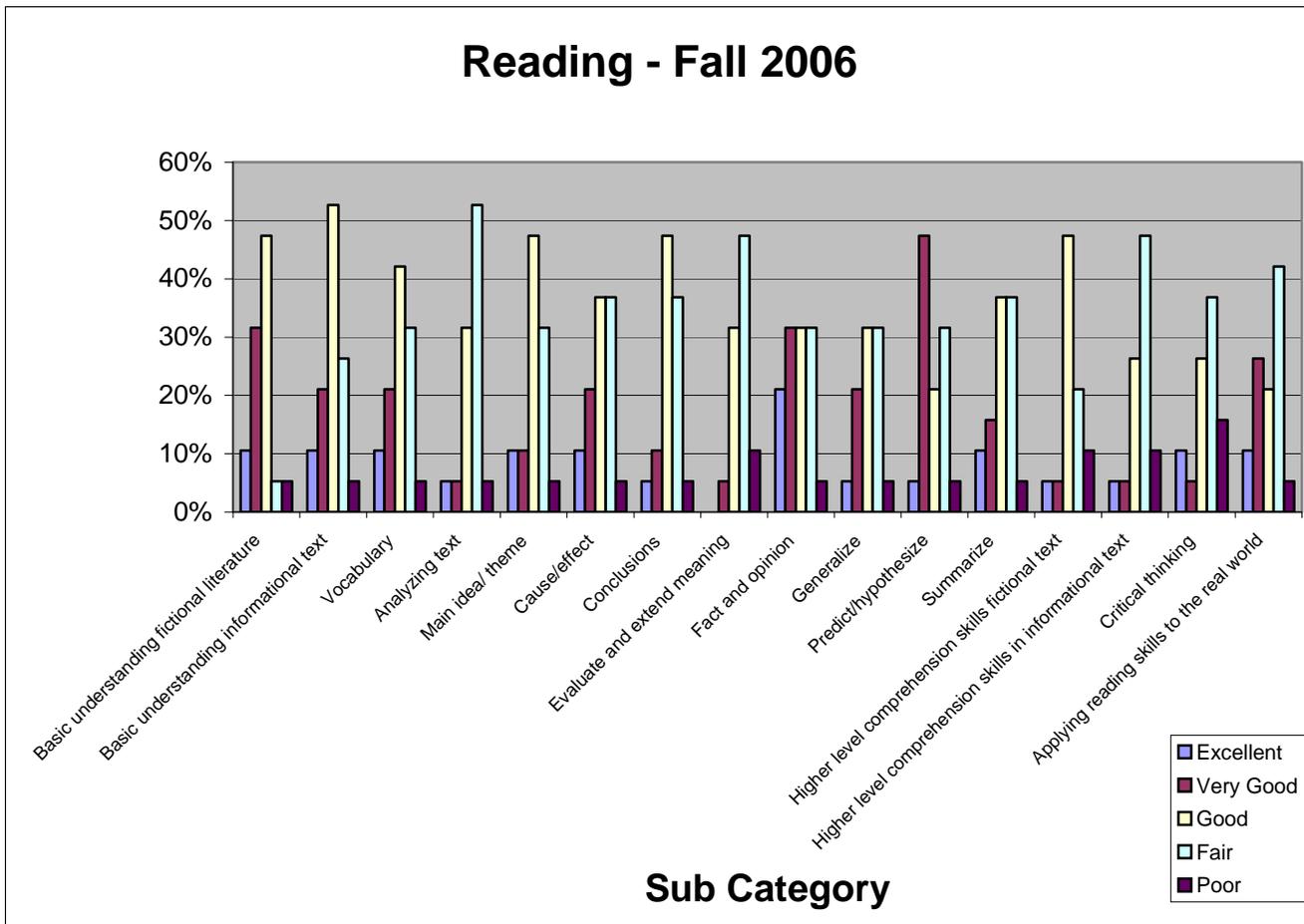


This graph shows the PSAT results for 2005-2006 school year. The PSAT was taken by 9th through 11th graders in the fall of 2005. Scores approximate future performance on the SAT in that adding a zero to the PSAT score will equate to an SAT score. For instance, a score of 50 on the PSAT predicts a score of 500 on the SAT. 11th graders are expected to score higher because they have completed more of their high school education prior to taking the PSAT or SAT. In the area of math, the average raw score for all three grade levels was below 50, and in the area of reading, the average raw score for 10th and 9th graders was below 50.

5. Teacher Perception Questionnaire:



This graph shows teacher responses to a questionnaire identifying areas of student weakness. In the category of math, critical thinking, math applications, and communication – written and oral are areas of weakness.



This graph shows teacher responses to a questionnaire identifying areas of student weakness. In the category of reading, analyzing text, evaluating and extending meaning, higher level comprehension skills in informational text, and critical thinking are areas of weakness.

Implications for Student Performance Goals

Areas identified by this data for student performance goals include:

- Problem solving
- Reading strategies

Identification of Sub-Groups: None

Other Actions Needed: None

EXISTING SCHOOL DATA: COMMUNITY

Data Collection Instruments

1. Environmental Scan
2. DoDEA Initiatives
3. Community/Parent Support
4. Local Demographics
5. School Culture/Climate Influences
6. DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey

Presentation / Analysis of Data

1. **Environmental Scan:** Analysis of this data showed the following characteristics are necessary for our students to be successful:
 - Teamwork
 - Problem solving
 - Communication
 - Technology
 - Continual learning
 - Real world experiences
2. **DoDEA Initiatives:** These include Math Matters, DoDEA Reads, and Early Childhood Initiatives.
3. **Community/Parent Support:** We are a community of learners. For a list of the various support programs, please refer to numbers 7, 8, and 9 under Unique Local Insights.
4. **Local Demographics:** Lajes American School is located on the Portuguese Air Force Base on the island of Terceira, one of the 9 Azorean islands located in the mid-Atlantic some 2,300 miles east of New York and 900 miles west of Lisbon, Portugal. The school is within walking distance of the local U.S. military housing areas. The majority of students are command sponsored U.S. Air Force families and civilian employees of the United States. Lajes Elementary School is fully accredited by the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges. The school continues to undergo structural renovations and configurations. In the school year 2006-2007, the two schools--Lajes Elementary School and Lajes Middle/High School, combined to form Lajes American School. The Lajes community is currently downsizing due to the reconfiguring of today's military, and this results in lower student enrollment and consequently, fewer teachers and staff. In addition, the number of sponsor deployments is increasing, placing more demands on the family members remaining here. This also has a direct correlation to increased student needs.

5. **School Culture/Climate Influences:** A high volume of students can be absent from school due to family vacations commonly taken during the months of November and December as well as May and June. The student population drops significantly during these time frames due to the high mobility of base personnel in our remote location. The limited number of available flights due to our remote location and extreme weather conditions encourages families to leave early for vacations and PCS. This has a direct impact on our school population. An additional challenge to the school improvement process is the high rate of turnover of students and staff alike. Lajes Field is a two-year military assignment for accompanied active duty, with single and unaccompanied military members on island for 15-month tours. Few military families extend their tour at Lajes beyond two years. This leads to an approximately 70% turnover of military individuals each year, with acceleration (for credit purposes) offered to high school students of transferring personnel. Teachers and support personnel also join or leave the staff each year. For example, in the past FIVE-YEAR SIP cycle, Lajes Elementary had 4 principals. Only three classroom teachers, three specialists, and the nurse were at Lajes School for the entire cycle. Several staff members arrived weeks, if not months, after the school year commenced, thereby missing the initial SIP in-service training and other SIP related activities held in the beginning weeks of each school year. We are constantly challenged to keep everyone abreast of all important issues and concerns.
6. **DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey:** The results of the DoDEA Customer Satisfaction Survey showed that most parents, teachers, and students give Lajes American School a better grade than the public schools in the United States. They agreed that the primary purpose of the DoDDS schools is to provide a balanced education in which the basics are only one factor. Results of this survey are available on our school website.

Implications for Student Performance Goals

Areas identified by this data/information for student performance goals are:

- Problem solving
- Communication
- Technology

Identification of Sub-Groups: None

Other Actions Needed: None

• EXISTING SCHOOL DATA: INSTRUCTIONAL

Data Collection Instruments

1. Military Partnerships
2. Parent Academic Partnerships
3. Teacher Survey Results
4. Instructional Techniques
5. DoDEA and Staff Development Opportunities

Presentation / Analysis of Data

1. **Military Partnerships:** LAS has a partnership with the military through our School/Military Liaison representative. She is a member of our SILT.
2. **Parent Academic Partnerships** consist of many Parent, Military and Community Volunteers, Mentor Program SAC (School Advisory Committee), Parent participation in SILT, PTO, Book Fair, and other school-year projects.
3. **Teacher Survey Results:** The Lajes American School staff completed a Teacher Instructional Survey in the fall of 2006 to determine where our strengths and weaknesses lie in the area of instruction. Overall, the results were positive and revealed the following information:
 - 100% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “teachers at our school have high expectations for all students and provide a rigorous and challenging standards-based curriculum for all students”.
 - Over 90% of the teachers surveyed felt our school has excellent personnel and programs to support instruction and high student achievement, has ample resources available to support instruction and high student achievement, and has excellent support programs and personnel for students with special needs.
 - Over 85% surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that our school is a safe and secure environment, teachers respect diversity, grade level teams meet regularly to discuss common concerns, collaborate effectively to plan instruction, and are respected and valued by their colleagues.
 - 48% of the staff surveyed felt more community involvement in the school was needed.
 - Over 28% of the staff surveyed felt that there were not enough meaningful opportunities for professional development that supports our adopted standards-based curriculum and that these opportunities do not relate directly to the subject area individuals teach.

4. **Instructional techniques** at LAS are utilized to address the needs of each student and to challenge and prepare them for continuous, life-long learning. These techniques include flexible groupings, guided reading groups, journal writing/logs, centers, differentiated instruction, literacy team, literacy coach, Comp Ed, LARS, Read 180, Reading Recovery, lecture, Individual Education Plans (IEP), modified instructional plans, cooperative learning activities, peer tutoring, Socratic seminar, student response forms, performance assessment, Web Quests, student portfolios, reading strategies, Buddy Readers, online courses, collaboration, integrated curriculum, interdisciplinary projects, problem solving, hands-on lab activities, micro-based lab experience, co-teaching.
5. **DoDEA and Staff Development Opportunities** are numerous and on going. Staff members have professional growth plans and are encouraged to participate in courses and training to support their professional growth and development. These opportunities include: SIP Training (School Improvement Plans), Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Special Education Initiative (SEI), “Scholastic Red” courses, Technology mini-sessions, Reading Counts, online classes, School Improvement Plan (SIP) in-services, Ottawa Technology Courses, subject area Department of Defense Education Association Training, Curricular Implementation Training, Local University courses that are teacher facilitated, Professional Organizations (Phi Delta Kappa, EMEA, ECD, National Teachers Math Science, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, European Physical Health Recreation and Dance, etc.), Student Management System (SMS)training, Ethics training, Educational and Developmental Intervention Services (EDIS) presentations, Occupational Therapist training, and Overseas Federation of Teachers/GIFT masters program.

Implications for Student Performance Goals: No implications for our student performance goals were noted. However, this information will prove helpful in writing our school improvement plan.

Identification of Sub-Groups: None

Other Actions Needed: None

INTERPRETATION AND TRIANGULATION OF DATA

Student Performance Goal 1 – *All students will improve their problem-solving skills across the curriculum.*

We chose this goal based on triangulating the following data sources:

- Data Point 1: Terra Nova Multiple Assessments, 2nd Edition, Math Subtest.
- Data Point 2: Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)
- Data Point 3: PSAT, SAT
- Data Point 4: Teacher Perception Questionnaire, Parent Focus Group

Essence: We define problem-solving as:

- identifying the problem
- gathering and analyzing relevant information
- selecting and explaining an appropriate strategy
- solving the problem
- evaluating the solution.

Student Performance Goal 2 – *All students will improve their reading strategies in all areas of the curriculum.*

We chose this goal based on triangulating the following data sources:

- Data Point 1: Terra Nova Multiple Assessments, 2nd Edition, Reading subtest.
- Data Point 2: Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)
- Data Point 3: PSAT, SAT
- Data Point 4: Teacher Perception Questionnaire, Parent Focus Group

Essence: We define reading strategies as:

- accessing prior knowledge
- summarizing and synthesizing the information
- using graphics and text structure
- developing vocabulary.

RATIONALE FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE GOALS

Goal 1: This goal was derived from several indicators. The first indicator was the Terra Nova Multiple Assessments 2006. Overall, in the subtest for Math, 23.0% of Lajes students scored in the bottom 2 quartiles, with 29.3% of Lajes students scoring in the bottom 2 quartiles in the TN Objective area of Problem Solving and Reasoning. Although this performance seems reasonable, it reflects one of the lowest areas for our students. Secondly, 22% of Lajes third grade students are not meeting the standard on the SRI. A statistical review of middle and high school students taking the SRI show that 48% are not reading at grade level, and the Lexile scores of 36% of Lajes 6th graders at Lajes decreased from the Fall 2005 test to the Spring 2006 test. We interpret reading comprehension as involving many aspects of problem solving and so consider these scores as indicators of a potential area of improvement in problem solving. The third triangulation point includes PSAT and SAT scores from 2006 in which our students showed potential for improvement in the Math category with the average score below 50 for all three grade levels on the PSAT, and 4 of 7 students scoring below 50 percentile on the SAT.

In addition to these triangulation points, in a questionnaire regarding student learning, teachers identified several areas related to problem solving as weaknesses. These areas include critical thinking, math applications, analyzing text, evaluating and extending meaning, and higher level comprehension skills in informational text. Finally, parents indicated the need for greater problem solving skills in a focus group.

Goal 2: This goal was derived from several indicators. The first indicator was the Terra Nova Multiple Assessments 2006. Overall, in the subtest for Reading, 22.6% of Lajes students scored in the bottom 2 quartiles, with 23.9% of Lajes students scoring in the bottom 2 quartiles in the TN Objective area of Identifying Reading Strategies. Although this performance seems reasonable, it reflects one of the lowest areas for our students. Secondly, standardized scores at the 3rd grade level that show 37 % of Lajes students are performing in the bottom 2 quartiles on the Terra Nova, and 22% are not meeting the standard on the SRI. A statistical review of middle and high school students taking the SRI show that 48% are not reading at grade level, and the Lexile scores of 36% of Lajes 6th graders at Lajes decreased from the Fall 2005 test to the Spring 2006 test. PSAT and SAT scores from 2006 indicate that our students showed potential for improvement in the Reading category with the average score below 50 for 9th and 10th graders on the PSAT, and 43% of students scoring below 50 percentile on the SAT.

In addition to these triangulation points, in a questionnaire regarding student learning, teachers identified several areas related to reading strategies as weaknesses. These areas include analyzing text, evaluating and extending meaning, higher-level comprehension skills in informational text, and critical thinking. Finally, parents indicated the need for improved reading skills in a focus group.