

WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2014-2015



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INTRODUCTION:

West Middle School, Doherty Middle School, and Wood Hill Middle School's Improvement Plan all begin with the same fundamental philosophy. The Middle School has established its own identity, serving as a bridge between elementary and high school. We recognize the uniqueness of students at this critical period in their lives and are responsible for nurturing them physically, emotionally, academically, and socially. Middle School students are exposed to a variety of disciplines offered through exploratory programs. Teaming and interdisciplinary teaching are used as vehicles for holistic learning. The staff is committed to serving the whole child, sharing in site-based decision making and providing opportunities to develop professionally and personally.

As you read through our school improvement plans you will see that we may differ on our approach, but we all stand firm on the final goals. Our goals are tied in directly to the Carnegie Report, "Turning Points 2000" and the Andover Public Schools' District Goals. This signals a new generation of thinking about middle level education by emphasizing that, in addition to structural changes in classrooms and schools, educators must also make substantial, far-reaching changes in curriculum, student assessment, and instruction in order to improve student learning in the 21st Century.

The three common areas in our school improvement plans that we see as vital to support include:

DIFFERENTIATION TRAINING: Inclusion and extension are important parts of middle school in encouraging students to reach their full academic potential. Teachers need the necessary training and tools to incorporate instruction that will meet the needs of all the learners. The district has provided training in Math and Science, which has proved to be valuable. We see the need to provide differentiation training for all teachers in varying disciplines.

SCHOOL CLIMATE: Research has shown students learn best when they are provided with a safe and caring environment. Our schools must be a place where students can focus on what is important. We must continue supporting the "whole child" and seek ways to improve a culture of learning.

TECHNOLOGY: Computers, Smart boards, online learning systems, etc... are valuable tools for teachers to improve instruction, but only if they know how to use these tools. We see a need to support our teachers in the instruction of technology use.

Although, we would like to create a school improvement plan that is more idealistic, we understand that the current economic situation forces us to become more realistic. With that in mind you will see that our school improvement plans strongly considers those realities, but the foundation is fueled with the belief that we cannot waiver today on meeting the needs of our adolescent learners in preparing them for their many tomorrows in the 21st Century.

WEST MIDDLE SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT

The vision of Andover West Middle School is of a child-centered school in which students are actively engaged in a team format. They are taught the processes and consequences of decision-making, and are encouraged to take risks in a safe and supportive environment. Students, teachers, administrators, and other professional staff are empowered to make decisions in an atmosphere of mutual respect and acceptance. Parents and other community members are given the opportunity to become involved.

At West Middle we encourage active learning by students and adults. Teachers are mentors and models for students, inspiring lifelong learning. Teachers and students work in a collegial atmosphere, fostering risk-taking in a supportive environment. Students learn to make connections through interdisciplinary content and processes.

The intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and moral development of 10-14 year-olds is the focus of our school's activities. West Middle School balances high expectations and self-esteem, inclusion and individual learning styles and abilities; with the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of all members of the school community.

We work so that students will emerge as responsible members of a community who treat other people, our environment, and themselves with respect and dignity.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CORE VALUES

Our middle school community operates with a set of core values that have proven to be both enduring and successful in helping our adolescents navigate the journey from childhood to becoming adults. The cornerstones of these values are the following:

- **Teamwork -**
To organize the schools around teams of both teachers and students to provide a nurturing environment in which students can grow both intellectually and emotionally
- **Inclusion -**
To ensure that students of all abilities participate in the team process and learn from each other the benefits of diversity
- **Achievement -**
To encourage students to achieve high levels of performance and to strive to reach their full potential, regardless of ability
- **Respect -**
To foster a culture of mutual respect throughout the middle school community
- **Engagement -**
To provide a learning climate that is challenging, rewarding, and engaging
- **Leadership -**
To challenge students with leadership opportunities that foster their growth as citizens and their ability to assume responsibility

West Middle School
 School Improvement Plan
 2014-2015

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| SIP Goal 1 | Support the Implementation of Project Based Learning |
| APS Strategic Plan – Goal 1 High Achievement for All Target strategies 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 | Students will develop the “habits of mind” that underlie critical and creative thinking, effective communication, collaborative problem solving, and responsible citizenship needed to thrive in an increasingly complex and evolving global society. |
| MERA Goals 1, 3, 8 | <p>~School’s Education Goals – School climate conducive to high expectations and performance in all academic areas.</p> <p>~Professional development plan and allocation of PD funds in schoolhouse budget.</p> <p>~Means for meeting diverse learning needs.</p> |
| Data Sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCAS test result data for Math, English Language Arts, and Science & Technology • Teacher-developed classroom assessments • Identified subgroups • Teacher evaluation and artifacts |

West Middle School

| Action Plan – Improvement Strategies | Person(s) Responsible for Implementation | Timeline | Outcomes & Measurement | Resources Needed |
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| Provide professional development and planning time focused on project-based learning | Administrators, Teachers, Specialists, Program Advisors | Ongoing | Administrators, Teachers, Support Staff, and Program Advisors participate in PBL staff development. Staff is able to use their knowledge of PBL to implement purposeful units for their students. | Instructional Guides, PBL Consultants, Teacher Leaders, Professional Development Council. |
| Examine and identify cross-curricular connections by grade level, aligned with Massachusetts State Frameworks | Administrators, Teachers, Specialists, Program Advisors | Initial: Spring of 2014 with continuing work through Summer 2014. | Comprehensive curriculum document showing alignment. | Common planning time*, MA State Curriculum Frameworks, Professional Development Days. *essential to middle school model |
| Identify connections within the community that provide real-life experiences that tie into the curriculum | Administrators, Teachers, Specialists, Program Advisors | Initial: Spring of 2014 with continuing work through Summer 2014. | Ongoing list of community resources. | Instructional Guide, Digital Media Specialist, Community Leaders |
| Provide opportunities to assess and critique quality of projects | Administrators, Teachers, Specialists, Program Advisors | Ongoing | Documentation of critiques & revisions of projects | Common Planning Time, Criteria and Procedure for Critiquing. |

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| Create a system to document projects, assessment tools, and student work across grade levels | Administrators, Teachers, Specialists, Program Advisors, Digital Learning Specialists | Ongoing | District-wide data-base of PBL projects for other teachers and administrators to use. | Common, Faculty Meeting, and Individual Planning Time Computer Resources (common user drive), Digital Media Specialist |
| Use available technology to support PBL | Administrators, Teachers, Specialists, Program Advisors | Ongoing | Administrators and staff are able to use technology to support PBL. | Strategic plan guidance, assistance from Technology Department and Learning Specialists. District grant writer. |
| Integration of PBL with the new Educator Evaluation System | Administrators, Teachers, Specialists, Program Advisors | Initial: 2013 School Year; Ongoing | Increased use of Project Based Learning | Ongoing training on the new Educator Evaluation System. |

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| SIP Goal 2 | Ensure a healthy emotional and physical environment for all students that emphasizes goal-setting and personal growth. |
| APS Strategic Plan – Goal 1 Emotional Well-Being Strategy 1.4 | Ensure that West Middle School has a strong and healthy school culture that promotes a sense of participation, wellness, safety, and security for all students so students develop the social, emotional, and wellness competencies that will enable them to be self-aware, have interpersonal skills to self-manage, and to make responsible decisions. |
| MERA Goal 1 | Health, safety, and discipline Welcoming school environment characterized by tolerance and respect. |
| Data Sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Surveys • Incident Reports • Attendance / Tardy Records • Adjustment Counselor logs |

| Action Plan – Improvement Strategies | Person(s) Responsible for Implementation | Timeline | Outcomes & Measurement | Resources Needed |
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| Establish clear expectations for student character and conduct in relation to social media and technology | Administrators, teachers, support staff, Digital Learning Specialist | Ongoing throughout the 2013-2014 school year. | Student review panel. Investigation of other Districts’ student handbooks and policies. Updated student handbook. | Personnel to update handbook |
| Provide directed mentoring experiences for students | Administrators, teachers, support staff, & students | Ongoing | A consistently growing number of students applying for and involved in leadership roles and volunteer or community service committees. | Faculty and staff to provide mentoring After school activity fee monies Continuation of a formalized student leadership application process. |

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| Develop a more comprehensive transition process for 8 th grade students going to AHS. | AHS Administrators and Guidance, WMS Administrators, Social Workers, and Teachers. | 2013-2015 | Develop a timeline of presentations, activities and meetings. | Time during Leadership Team meetings for AHS Administrators and Guidance, WMS Administrators, Social Workers, and Teachers to meet. |
| Review the WEB program to emphasize strengths and focus on areas that are not as strong. | WEB Leaders, Teachers, Administration, Parents, Students, and DLS. | Spring 2014 | Develop a student, teacher and parent survey | DLS to help with the survey. Focus groups to help analyze results. |
| Training for faculty and parents about cyber and bullying issues | Leadership Team, District Director of Social Work, Social Workers, PAC | Fall 2013- Summer 2014 | Presentations to Parents by WMS staff via PAC | Funding to attend conferences and trainings. |

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| SIP Goal 3 | Develop, improve, and maintain literacy and numeracy skills as a foundation to maximize student understanding of and participation in their world |
| APS Strategic Plan - Goal 1, 2 | ~APS students will develop the “habits of mind” that underlie critical and creative thinking, effective communication, collaborative problem solving, and responsible citizenship needed to thrive in an increasingly complex and evolving global society. ~APS students will be immersed in interactive, technology-rich classrooms that support instruction and student learning to prepare them for a society dominated by digital communication. |
| MERA Goal: 1, 3, 8 | ~School’s Education Goals – School climate conducive to high expectations and performance in all academic areas. ~Professional development plan and allocation of PD funds in schoolhouse budget. ~Means for meeting diverse learning needs. |
| Data Sources | District Writing Survey Curriculum based assessments Reading Level Indicator |

| Action Plan - Improvement Strategies | Person(s) Responsible for Implementation | Timeline | Outcomes & Measurement | Resources Needed |
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| Build common language between Everyday Math and Connected Math Programs to enhance student and family understanding of skills and concepts | Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum Council, Math teachers, Program Advisor, Digital Learning Specialist | 2014 | Online appendix of common terms | School Website |
| Develop, build on, and improve students’ ability to express ideas effectively through writing. | Administrators, Teachers, Curriculum Councils, Parents | Ongoing | Annual District writing survey Curriculum Based Assessments | District Writing Prompt |
| Develop, build on, and improve students’ overall writing skills across the curriculum and across a variety of genres. | Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum Councils, Teachers, Program Advisors | Ongoing | Curriculum Based Assessments Project Based Presentations | Department planning time |

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| Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to complete scope and sequence for their curriculum as it relates to the new common core standards. | Assistant Superintendent, Administrators, Teachers, Program Advisors, Curriculum Councils | Ongoing | Updated Scope and Sequence Curriculum Review Cycle | Department planning time Atlas Training |
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