DODGE CITY

M I D D L E S C H O O L

"Fostering a culture of independent learning where students can achieve their full potential in academics, personal, physical and moral development in the 21st Century."

LONG RANGE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2016 - 2017

Dodge City Middle School (DCMS) is located on the rolling plains of Southwest Kansas-- the county seat of Ford County with a population of 28,159. The primary industry in Dodge City is meatpacking, with Cargill Meat Solutions and National Beef being the community's top employers.

Our demographics are often seen as the primary challenge--representing a school with 87% on free and reduced lunch with 63% of students claiming English as a second language. The demographic shift has been a driving force in differentiating our instructional practices, and the basis for continual revisions to our intervention programs.

As our student population changes so does our curriculum planning, professional development, and instructional practices. We believe that our school reflects the needs of the students who attend.Dodge City Middle School is a learning community built on a caring culture designed to prepare every student to be ready for high school. Our vision statement has changed and our long term goals are being created to form a strategic plan centered around "Fostering a culture of independent learning where students can achieve their full potential in academics, personal, physical and moral development in the 21st Century."

Our focus for preparing students for 21st century learning includes high student engagement in academic conversations and the ability to think critically and creatively and evaluate the products of one's thinking. Students mastering these skills will be able to communicate effectively and collaborate with others, particularly in diverse and multicultural settings.

VISION STATEMENT

"Fostering a culture of independent learning where students can achieve their full potential in academics, personal, physical and moral development in the 21st Century."

Our vision statement was developed collectively by the entire staff during a grade level PLC late start and through the guidance of the school-wide planning team. The process to determine our vision statement included involvement of all teachers and members of the Site Council with student representation. Individually and collectively the school and community stakeholders reviewed belief statements generated through an all school survey. Our grade level PLCs met and structured a belief statement through a weighted voting process and open discussion about our future vision.

Our vision statement has not changed, and our long term goals are continuing to be created to form a strategic plan centered on "Fostering a culture of independent learning where students can achieve their full potential in academics, personal, physical and moral development in the 21st Century." To develop a deep understanding of our vision statement, every student at DCMS has memorized the school's vision, and this statement of progress is a common discourse among our students and teachers, recited at times in unison during assemblies. Our focus for preparing students for 21st century learning includes high student engagement in academic conversations, the ability to think critically and creatively and to evaluate the products of one's thinking. Students mastering these skills will be able to communicate effectively and collaborate with others, particularly in diverse and multicultural settings.

SCHOOL PROFILE

We believe academic goals should be clearly communicated and understood by all stakeholders. We strive to ensure that professional learning is directly related to staff and student needs. It is also our belief that quality planning involves all segments of the school community resulting in challenging, authentic work for students. An active relationship among school, parents and community is vital to school improvement. As a faculty, we must systematically evaluate all components of the school. Data is the basis for quality instruction. We believe the entire learning community is responsible for the academic success of all students.

Dodge City Middle School is part of USD 443 Dodge City Public Schools, which services 6,946 students. The district has twelve schools: nine elementary schools (PK-5); two middle schools (6-8); one alternative education center; one early childhood center and one high school (9-12). Dodge City Middle School began implementing the components of a targeted assisted Title I program in 2014 and applied Title I resources toward supporting a rich literacy framework through tiered programs and instruction, extended after school math assistance and additional technology resource programs for students to use at home.

These programs include renaissance math and electronic book checkout through our digital library. In addition, a variety of programs and services are provided for students that extend beyond the basic classroom instruction. These programs include the Read 180 program with two full time teachers, the math seminar with one full-time teacher and a Co-Teaching Program with 12 teachers. Additionally, students in the gifted program receive pullout services. Finally, Dodge City Middle School also has programs to support non-English speaking and migrant students.   Non-English speaking students are placed in the Newcomers program. They are enrolled in self contained classes for math, reading, science and social studies and are enrolled in elective classes with paraprofessional support for music, physical education, technology education, computer sciences and art. Dodge City Middle School also offers the Migrant Program. The Parent Liaison closely monitors migrant students' academic progress to insure their needs are being met, and students also have an opportunity for additional instruction after school.

- Dodge City Middle School (DCMS) is located on the rolling plains of Southwest Kansas-- the county seat of Ford County with a population of 27,340. The primary industry in Dodge City is meatpacking-- Cargill Meat Solutions and National Beef. Our district's demographics are often seen as the primary challenge of our one high school, two middle schools and nine elementary schools. We represent a district with nearly 86%% of students provided free and reduced lunches and 58% of students claiming English as a second language.

- There has been a gradual but continuous shift in the demographics of Dodge City Middle School in recent years. Our largest ethnic subgroup is Hispanic at 83.21%; our white student population is 13.16%, and the remaining populations, 3.63%, are African American and students of other nationalities. The demographic shift has been a driving force in differentiating our instructional practices and the basis for our intervention programs.

- DCMS supports 59 teachers, two part time academic coaches, one part time technology coach, one librarian, two counselors and three administrators serving 685 students in 61 classrooms. The school day begins with a 22 minute advisory period. Each of our 6- 8 grade levels includes two interdisciplinary teams. There are 64 minute blocks provided for math and ELA classes. Our daily schedule also includes 42 minutes for science, social studies, and a computer application class that alternates every other day with physical education. Finally, each student receives two, 42 minute periods a day of exploratory classes. Exploratory classes rotate every nine weeks.

- Dodge City Middle School strives to provide each student with an individual path to ensure a high quality education and leadership qualities that will carry each student as he/she ascertains individual achievement goals. This process is accomplished through our student advocacy program, the advisory period, being restructured under a new definition "as an attitude of caring which supports and defends the student personally and academically". The daily twenty- two minute advisory period--student groups of no more than fifteen--focuses on activities that assist in developing a caring relationship between students and a significant adult. The advisory periods offer support and direction as students face the daily tasks of making difficult and numerous decisions. We have also initiated relevance to the advisory time by individual student constructed portfolios for student-led conferences. As a school we are also placing a focus on career awareness by having in place a technology career education program promoting the value of a variety of post-graduation opportunities prior to high school enrollment.

- Our teams have a common planning time four days a week with one day devoted to Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Our teams focus on three different areas: student needs, integrating curriculum and professional development. Over the past three years, the school has continued its efforts in building strong parent and community involvement by offering Parent Academy Nights. The 2015 school climate survey provides evidence our school has made a difference in building community relationships. Ninety-seven percent of the 547 participants surveyed stated, "they would recommend DCMS to family and friends with children".

- The number of at-risk students in Dodge City Middle School is one of the highest in Kansas with 86% of our students on free or reduced price lunches. As our student population changes, so does our curriculum planning, professional development, and instructional practices. Furthermore, during the 2013 – 2014 school year, Dodge City Middle School reported 64.67% of the Limited English Proficiency students were ESOL. We believe that our school reflects the needs of the students who attend.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Dodge City Middle School is a building that houses grades 6 – 8 students. The Middle School offers a transitional environment geared toward preparing kids for high school and beyond while introducing students to a variety of extracurricular choices. Our teachers embrace cutting edge instructional practices and work hard to ready students for the competitive world of the future. Dodge City Middle School is a place filled with dedicated teachers, support staff and caring administration focused on meeting the needs of all learners. Our commitment to academic discourse and the development of critical thinking skills ensures students every opportunity to become independent learners.

DCMS supports fifty-nine teachers, two part time academic coaches, one part time technology coach, one librarian, two counselors, and three administrators serving 693 students in sixty-one classrooms. The school day begins with a twenty-three minute advisory period. Each of our 6-8 grade levels includes two interdisciplinary teams with sixty-four minute block for math and ELA classes. Our daily schedule also includes forty-two minutes for science, social studies, and a computer application classes that alternates every other day with a physical education. Each student receives two forty-two minute periods a day of exploratory classes rotating every nine weeks.Over the last few years our school has moved fully into the 21st century and dedicated itself to preparing learners to be College and Career Ready. We are proud of the learning and growth we've witnessed among our school community including staff, students, parents and community members. We continue to dedicate ourselves to staying on the cutting edge in regard to innovation including technology and our approach to teaching and learning.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

In 2015 we established a new vision and communicated it to all constituent groups. With this vision we continue to revise our goals yearly to meet the required changes we face to build a future ready school. To accomplish our mission we are striving to create a culture based on needs as we identify goals embedded in our action plans to focus on instructional effectiveness that all stakeholders can understand, contribute to and commit to. Our plan is designed to focus on and reflect instructional effectiveness and positive relationships that lead to a culture of inquiry and high expectations.

CULTIVATORS OF AUTONOMY

To build leadership capacity through an empowerment model. At the onset of the 2015 school year we developed a model to enhance organizational leadership by identifying lead positions within the school to include assistant principals, team leaders and professional learning community leaders and the building leadership team as cultivators to provide autonomy and ownership to organizational development and decision-making. We believe to empower others to lead around action items not only build the capacity to complete goals, but also build the capacity of others to lead and adapt to every changing need. We also recognize to create an empowered environment demands clear communication and collaboration at all levels, creating trust among the members of our school.

LEADERSHIP

SCHOOL VISION

Capacity Building

MENTAL MODELS

Systems Thinking

Essences

Principles

We are seeking definitions to drive our school improvement plan as related to the 5R's.

College Career Ready

Rose Standards

Critical Thinking Rubrics

Real Life Application

Dodge City Middle School will foster a culture with independent learning where students can achieve their full potential in academics, personal, physical and moral development in the 21st Century.

Relationships: We provide protective factors designed to bond community and school by fostering caring relationships between adults and children as well as between peers, setting high expectations, and providing the support needed to meet those expectations.

Relevance: We understand the importance of developing career ready students enabling them to thrive in school and life who have the ability to critically think, problem-solve, synthesize information, communicate effectively, and the capacity to work well on a team.

Responsive Culture: We believe there is a strong relationship between culture and motivation as our teachers create curriculum around current events, personal backgrounds, and historical realities while emphasizing competency in twenty-first-century skills.

Rigor: We employ a rigorous project-learning college & career ready curriculum that sets high expectations for everyone, by giving our students the skills to interpret and deepen their existing knowledge as a means to meet expectations through an enthusiasm for learning.

Results: We focus on the results of student learning using multiple indicators so our teachers can adjust their practices and our school can offer personalized support to students.

Decision Matrix Protocal

SHARED VISION

THREE HOUSE E-PORTFOLIO

Each grade level defines what student's will be able to do and be like at the end of that grade level.

GRADE 6

GRADE 7

GRADE 8

ACCEPTABLITY LEVEL

Building Leadership Team

Team Leaders

PLC Leaders

Site Council

Accountability Score Card

Practices

IMPROVED INSTRUCTION

PERSONAL MASTERY

TEAM AUTONOMY ACCOUNTABILITY

TEAM AUTONOMY ACCOUNTABILITY

TEAM AUTONOMY ACCOUNTABILITY

OWNERSHIP

TEAM LEARNING

Working for consistency within individual teams to create a uniform set of standards for communicating student expectations.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING	GROWTH MINDSET
CREATING A DIGITAL LEARNING CULTURE	21ST CENTURY SKILLS
PROVIDING MEANINGFUL FEEDBACK THROUGH ACADEMIC DISCOURSE	HIGH ENGAGING LESSONS

LEADERSHIP

CATEGORY I: LEADERSHIP

Goal One: To build leadership capacity through an empowerment model. At the onset of the 2015 school year, we developed a model to enhance organizational leadership by identifying lead positions within the school to include assistant principals, team leaders and professional learning community leaders and the building leadership team as cultivators to provide autonomy and ownership to organizational development and decision-making. We believe in empowering others to lead around action items not only build the capacity to complete goals, but also build the capacity of others to lead and adapt to every changing need. We also recognize to create an empowered environment demands clear communication and collaboration at all levels, creating trust among the members of our school.

INDICATOR 42

Indicator 42: A Leadership team consisting of the principal, teachers who lead the Instructional Teams, and other key professional staff meets regularly (twice a month for an hour each meeting)

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAMS

The school improvement team is made up of three separate councils all focusing on one school improvement plan. These three councils include Team/PLC leaders, Site council members, and the Building Leadership Team. All three councils were developed in accordance to meet the Kansas State Department accreditation requirements under factoids numbers (1 Building Leadership Team) and (5 Building Site Council). At the building level, each council serves as a representative voice for staff, students, parents and community in the decision-making process for continued school improvement.

The three councils meet once per month to review, assess and make recommendations for the school-wide comprehensive plan. To meet the goals of the school-wide comprehensive plan members of the improvement teams are oriented to an inclusive process identifying elements of a school-wide plan designed to meet both Title I and Kansas accreditation requirements. Too many times school-wide plans are separated by different factions either by the organization or by team selection. At Dodge City Middle School we believe in one plan where all stakeholders are engaged in the school improvement process. We do not look at the school improvement plan as a grid of progress set aside on a timeline but as an active plan meeting and achieving school goals through an ongoing assessment process.

The continued school improvement process requires eight distinct steps when defining growth. These eight steps include identifying needs, determining goals, developing plans, implementing plans and analyzing results. The three school improvement councils exercise specific responsibilities in the following areas.

EIGHT STEP PROCESS

1. To develop a school improvement plan, including appropriate instructional strategies, to address student and school performance goals that have been established for the school.

2. To monitor implementation of the school improvement plan, including instructional walkthrough data and analysis of test data, and to make such modifications as may be required to meet the needs of the school. (See School Score Card)

3. To identify team staff development needs, plan school-level staff development activities, and budget school-level staff development funds.

4. To develop a safe school plan, including procedures for identifying students who are at risk of academic failure, becoming disruptive, and disorderly. We will continue to look for mechanisms for assessing the needs of at risk students, and provide intervention strategies to assist them in achieving academically while modifying behaviors.

5. To develop with the cooperation and approval of the principal a framework for school and student schedules.

6. To work with the building principal to develop an academic calendar based on the approved district level calendar.

7. To work with the principal in developing a budget for expenditure of any unrestricted instructional funds allocated to the school.

8. To plan and implement a program to foster a positive school climate, including parental involvement, public relations, and positive discipline components.

INDICATOR 46

Indicator 46: Teachers are organized into grade-level clusters or subject-area instructional teams.

TEAMING

Dodge City Middle School is based upon a team approach where teams of teachers and students work together to achieve academic and personal goals. Teachers share responsibility for the same students and solve problems together, often before they reach the crisis stage. This community of learning nurtures bonds between teacher and student that are the building blocks of the education of the young adolescent.

Teaming provides an environment conducive to learning by reducing the stress of anonymity and isolation of students. Common planning by teachers of different subjects enables students to sense consistent expectations for them and to strive to meet clearly understood standards of achievement. Teaming creates the kind of learning environment that encourages students to grapple with ideas that may span several disciplines and to create solutions to problems that reflect understanding, not memorization. (See Team Leader Responsibilities Printable Document)

These goals of effective teams are accomplished through building and teacher leadership by accomplished by fulfilling six major roles of responsibilities. These roles include:

1. Select and refer students to intervention programs based on below grade level performances on required standards.
2. Providing Assistance to Team Members.
3. Developing Curriculum Integration within the Kansas College and Career Standards.
4. Helping Team Members Manage Student Centered Learning.
5. Meeting the Diverse Needs of Middle-Level Students.
6. Managing Technology Resources.
7. Organizing Effective School-Wide Communications.

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4. Helping Team Members Manage Student Centered Learning;
5. Meeting the Diverse Needs of Middle-Level Students;
6. Managing Technology Resources
7. Organizing Effective School-Wide Communications.

BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our Building Leadership Team (BLT) is a school-based group of individuals who work to provide a strong organizational process for school renewal and improvement. The BLT orchestrate the work of school professionals, building leaders, and students through the school improvement process. This process includes the examination of current, successful practices and also those areas that are of concern to those who work at Dodge City Middle School.

The responsibilities for Building Leadership Team are as follows:
- Provides leadership for accomplishing school targets goals.
- Establish a means for the development and implementation of a school-wide strategic plan that is aligned to district goals.
- Ensures that the building engages in a variety of evaluation tasks—those that help determine the goals, those that help inform progress and change, and those that benchmark success   (i.e., student achievement, school climate, etc.).
- Reviews and approves Title I Programs including evaluation strategies and budget.

SITE COUNCIL

The Site Council partnership at Dodge City Middle School involves shared decision making and is based on the premise that parents are considered full partners in the business of educating their children. When parents and educators are involved in collaborative endeavors, ranging from understanding the curriculum to the discussion of discipline policies, they will experience mutual trust and confidence, and will support each other's efforts to educate the youth of the community.

The purpose of the Middle School Site Council is to provide the most up-to-date information to the community about the school and its programs, to allow for procedural development, to provide communications about important projects, to focus on the school's purpose, and to establish goals for school improvement.

Because the site council provides their members with so many opportunities to influence the goals and direction of the school, participation is a serious responsibility. Prospective site council members should understand that they are given an opportunity to participate as partners with the school in making a variety of important, even crucial recommendations. It is the school's responsibility to provide training for staff, community members, and parents on how to implement the decision-making process during site council meetings. The application of an equitable process will signal the school's interest in addressing all concerns in a fair and constructive manner.

At Dodge City Middle School we believe that the site council's agenda is part of an ongoing process. Once the school improvement plan is established, it is important for the principal to analyze and communicate Site Council recommendations. By reviewing all the data gathered at each of the meetings, as well as the list of goals established, the principal will have an idea of how the council, and possibly even the community, perceives the school.

INDICATOR 45

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Indicator 45: The school's leadership team regularly looks at school performance data and aggregated classroom observation data and uses that data to make decisions about school improvement and professional development needs.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) at Dodge City Middle School utilize their instructional expertise to identify key summative indicators of success that can be used to measure student progress during the school year. They also use a data warehouse (FileMaker) to collect, organize, analyze, and report that data to students, parents, administrators, and other teachers. Other key skills of Professional Learning Communities include knowledge of relevant assessment literacy concepts (in order to appropriately interpret summative assessment data), the ability to engage in root cause analysis to identify appropriate instructional interventions, and the capacity and willingness to work effectively with other staff on shared instructional problems and solutions.

During grade level PLC meetings, teachers should regularly bring student sample assignments to lead case conferencing discussions on common trends in student learning, common errors therein and improving instructional practices. These case conferences are based on monitoring student progress on student work samples including summative assessments. Teachers can use the Kansas API conversion chart to determine student growth measures by subject and class.

Next year we hope to continue the process of administering end of unit summative assessments in all core subjects (Math, Reading, Science, Social Studies and English Language Arts) to check student progress on district level College and Career Standards. The use of frequent formative assessments is a benchmark of the progress students are making during the school year toward these year-end goals. Simply using baseline data to set measurable year-end goals, without also implementing a system that allows for frequent analysis and adjustment of instructional and organizational practice, is not likely to result in significant improvements in student learning.

To realize the instructional power of formative and summative assessment practices, teachers will use grade level PLC time to meet regularly and frequently to have collaborative, data-driven discussions about student progress. During these meetings, team leaders, instructional coaches, assistant principals, and other team members will identify emergent patterns from the data and discuss what the data provides about students' progress toward year-end learning goals. This will allow instructional teams to collaboratively identify appropriate instructional interventions that can be implemented during the next instructional cycle and collectively commit to implementing those interventions. These Tier Two interventions will occur by providing extended time for students to work on specific College and Career Standards in our Tier II after school program, or during the Tier III math and reading courses, ensuring all students are exposed to grade level standards.

The professional learning communities at Dodge City Middle School are central to the middle grades philosophy. The PLC is formed to look at student needs, learning styles, and grade level standards as parts of a whole and collaboratively improve teacher professional practices to achieve specific results in student learning. Our PLC approach includes decisions that all members of the team support about scheduling, staff development planning, and when and how to include interventions.

PLC RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities for grade level PLC's are as follows:

- Review assessments to drive instructional practices ensuring mastery and application of standards.

- Equally, discuss the rigor of content and how to apply learning concepts to real world problems as a part of the assessment process.

- Dialogue on curriculum, common formative assessments, instruction, and needed job-embedded professional development.

- On lesson study and effective instructional strategies.

- Challenge and question each other's practice In spirited but optimistic ways.

- Collectively problem solve and learn through applying new ideas and information that address student needs.

- Analyze current practices in relation to student results, experiment with new practices, and assess the relationship between practice and the effects of practice.

- Work together to question, search, analyze, develop, test, and evaluate new skills, strategies, awareness, attitudes, and beliefs that promote student learning.

CURRICULUM

INDICATOR 88

Indicator 88: Instructional Teams develop standards – aligned units of instruction for each subject and grade level.

GOAL ONE: Possess and continue to develop content area knowledge and make it relevant to the learner.

Teachers, with the support of the system, must stay current with the most effective pedagogy, the most contemporary content, and the most relevant experiences that connect back to the content. While teachers must have strong content expertise in the subjects they teach, effective instruction is more than just a transmittal of knowledge. It is equally the ability to make connections, show relevance, nurture engagement, and embed understanding. The Kansas College and Career Standards require this same rigorous-but-relevant approach to teaching and Next Generation Assessments require students to show their ability to apply higher order thinking, not just recall knowledge.

CURRICULUM CROSS WALKS

Goal one was accomplished in 2014 – 2015 as we developed a root cause model to support the understanding of how the state curriculum is organized in terms of rigor and relevance and how to use this information to build lessons supporting instructional practices at higher levels of rigor.

- Crosswalks were developed to support a deeper understanding of Mathematical/ELA practices as they relate to Kansas standards.
- A resource site was developed for teachers to use as it relates to both Math and ELA standards.
- PLC time was expanded from 30 minutes a month with PLC and team leaders to meet jointly from 30 minutes a month to two one-hour meetings per month for critical work to occur which includes:
  - District & teacher initiated professional development and PLC planning.
  - Brainstorming session on defining professional learning communities through essential questions.
  - The review of school data as it relates to student performance.
  - Establishing a culture of inquiry as it relates to professional practices and walkthrough data.
  - To review the impact of the state adaptive model on student performance and how it relates to increased rigor in the classroom.
  - Begin to identify the most pressing issues as drivers for future grade level teams and PLC's.

<u>GOAL TWO:</u> Plan and provide learning experiences using effective research-based strategies that are embedded in best practices, including the use of technology.

Every teacher needs a thorough understanding of pedagogy as well as a versatile and comprehensive repertoire of instructional strategies—classic and innovative—to draw from in planning and providing instruction so they can match teaching approaches with learning objectives, subject matter, and targeted learners. Teachers must plan and provide learning experiences at high levels of rigor and relevance. Lessons must be tightly aligned to appropriate standards. Effective strategies and the use of technology must be embedded in all learning experiences that give all students access to the material.

Teachers also need a clear understanding of today's students who are "wired differently"; who want to see a reason for learning something; who fascinate their elders with their technology skills—in fact, they take connectivity and instant access to information and to one another for granted; who multi-task; and, perhaps most significantly, who would rather "do to learn" instead of "learn to do." They collaborate naturally and seamlessly. Not surprisingly, they simply learn differently. The abundance of recent discoveries in neuropsychology and brain research can and should inform teachers' understanding of 21st-century learners.

<u>GOAL THREE:</u> To developed learning standards for each grade level that are concisely, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education.

We have developed learning standards for each grade level that are concisely, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage of their education. These learning standards describe educational objectives of what students should have learned by the end of a grade level, for both math and reading but they do not describe any particular teaching practice, curriculum, or assessment method.

GOAL FOUR: To establish assessment practices to tie grade level learning standards in math and reading to standards-based grading and assessment practices.

The goal for the 2016 – 2017 school year is to tie these standards of learning to standards-based grading and assessment practices. We also project that these sets of learning standards will be included as overarching, long-term educational goals for individual plans of study. These will be monitored plans to help parents and students understand what students should be able to do when they have completed their middle-level education. These overarching goals for individual plans of study will describe the knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that our school will teach and cultivating at individual grade levels.

GOAL FIVE: Establish a foundation for reporting student progress through individual plans of study and a means to communicate student progress to parents.

To accomplish this goal of standard based reporting we knew we needed to first establish the foundations of an individual plan of study as well as develop a method in which student progress is communicated. To date, we have completed all stages of foundational development in a means of communicating student progress by holding an academic conference with parents at the beginning of the year and a student-led conference at the end of the year. We have also completed the foundational preparations for helping a student complete an individual plan of study through the use of a digital portfolio and the ACR2 rubric.

INSTRUCTION

CATEGORY III: CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

To prepare for the transition into the Common Core all teachers will contribute to academic literacy by using the Five Kinds of Teacher Thinking for instructional planning. Starting the first semester of the 2012 -2013 school year teachers began incorporating five essential techniques when designing and delivering lessons: (1) provide explicit instruction and supported practice in effective comprehension techniques, (2) increase the amount and quality of reading content discussions, (3) maintain high standards for text, conversation, questions, and vocabulary, (4) increase student motivation and engagement with reading, writing, listening and speaking and (5) provide essential content knowledge to support student mastery of critical Common Core concepts. Additionally this year we will explore technology tools that can be incorporated into effective instructional practices that support the acquisition of digital literacy. (See Cardinal Spaces Instructional Practices)

GOAL ONE: Build effective instruction based on rigorous and relevant expectations.

Teachers must embrace the organizational vision that all students can and will learn and must strive to help every student reach his or her fullest potential. This is the attitude that effective teachers bring to class every day. Embracing high expectations is an offshoot of commitment and caring for individual students. The equivalent "success criteria" factors in Hattie's analysis, "Mastery Learning" and "Feedback", indicate effectiveness factors of +0.53 and +0.73, respectively. Teachers must also be able to translate content knowledge into effective instructional strategies that are relevant to the learner.

GOAL TWO: Support decision making with relevant data systems.

To support decision-making we will ensure that easy-to-use, relative data systems are built, and that training is provided for all levels on how to access and read relevant data. We will identify and construct a meaningful data system, which will be key to monitoring student improvement and progress toward goals, and informed instruction. It will be the responsibility of organizational leaders to monitor and ensure the system is used effectively at all levels, and that the data provides opportunities for deep conversations about student achievement, teacher growth, and goal attainment. '

GOAL THREE: Create and implement an effective learner environment that is engaging and aligned to learner needs.

Teachers must create a learning environment that addresses students' personal, social, and emotional needs. The environment must engage ALL learners; therefore, the environment plays a key role in student success. Teachers must also develop positive relationships with students that allow them to "know" each student on an individual level. The presence of strong relationships between students and teachers builds a trust that positively impacts learning and the learning environment—one of the findings of the International Center/ CCSSO research on characteristics of successful schools funded by the Gates Foundation. Hattie places Student-Teacher Relationships at +0.72, or approximately the impact of nearly a year and a half growth every school year.

GOAL FOUR: Integrate literacy and math across all disciplines.

We will establish means to address literacy and math as the essential skill sets needed for success in the Kansas College and Career standards with a special emphasis on the English Language Arts standards placed on text complexity and non-fiction transactional reading and writing. We will also seek ways to emphasize the practical applications of literacy as they are applied to all content areas. This means that all teachers at all grades and across all subjects will need to assume responsibility for a heightened emphasis on broad-based literacy development. Similarly, we will address the "Standards of Mathematical Practice," which consist of instructional methodologies to emphasize critical thinking standards (such as problem-solving, reasoning and proof) and "strands of mathematical proficiency" (including adaptive reasoning, strategic competence, conceptual understanding, procedural fluency and productive disposition). This approach to the integration of math and literacy will need to be supported by all grade level teams and supported in all disciplines to ensure the application of math and literacy standards are supported, implemented, and monitored by key members of the leadership team.

GOAL FIVE: Possess and continue to develop content area knowledge and make it relevant to the learner.

Teachers, with the support of the system, must stay current with the most effective pedagogy, the most contemporary content, and the most relevant experiences that connect back to the content. While teachers must have strong content expertise in the subjects they teach, effective instruction is more than just a transmittal of knowledge. It is equally the ability to make connections, show relevance, nurture engagement, and embed understanding. The Common Core State Standards require this same rigorous-but-relevant approach to teaching and Next Generation Assessments require students to show their ability to apply higher order thinking, not just recall knowledge.

Plan and provide learning experiences using effective research-based strategies that are embedded in best practices, including the use of technology.

Every teacher needs a thorough understanding of pedagogy as well as a versatile and comprehensive repertoire of instructional strategies—classic and innovative—to draw from in planning and providing instruction so they can match teaching approaches with learning objectives, subject matter, and targeted learners. Teachers must plan and provide learning experiences at high levels of rigor and relevance. Lessons must be tightly aligned to appropriate standards. Effective strategies and the use of technology must be embedded in all learning experiences that give all students access to the material.

GOAL SIX: Facilitate data-driven decision making to inform instruction.

To meet the needs of diverse learners, instructional leaders must ensure that relevant data is provided to educators. Educators, in turn, will access the information and use it to analyze trends toward district and school goals, monitor learner progress (growth toward proficiency), and differentiate instruction based on student needs.

Instructional leaders must have systems in place to provide teachers with a clearer understanding of student data and how to apply that understanding to actionable instruction and interventions. They must also have a system to monitor the effective use of data.

Teachers will monitor data by grade level departments every Wednesday during grade level PLC's by accessing and entering grade level reports on the PLC website. The data reports are easily accessible to include State Assessments in math and reading supported by SRI and SMI semester reports. Each of the grade level PLC information portal includes Student Individual Data is also available on FileMaker grade level department reports to include at least one of the following 4 standards for reporting:

1. Review of curriculum units as applied to instructional practices.
2. Review assessments to drive instructional practices ensuring mastery and application of standards.
3. Equally, discuss the rigor of content and how to apply learning concepts to real world problems as a part of the assessment process.
4. Completion of Google Form after each Grade Level PLC.

CATEGORY IV: PARENT, SCHOOL, AND COMMUNITY

INDICATOR 1570

Indicator 1570: The school regularly communicates with parents about its expectations of them and the importance of the curriculum of the home (what parents can do at home to support their children's learning)

At Dodge City Middle School we have identified a root cause in suggesting that family engagement matters for student success. To address this root cause we have developed a plan of action demonstrating that improved parent engagement will advance school readiness, student achievement, and the development of 21st Century skills.

GOAL ONE: It is our goal to increase the number of innovative approaches to education by leveraging and connecting the many settings and times in which children learn and grow to create seamless complementary learning systems that place families as core partners in the learning process.

A teacher in-service time will be held each year to share guidelines for teachers on how to structure conversations during parent–teacher conferences. Teachers will receive professional development providing information about best practices in conducting effective parent–teacher conferences. The in-service will focus on ways in discussing progress and growth by starting with the positive, letting a parent know about their child's ability level in different subjects. These conversations will help families understand student data to demonstrate progress against learning goals and to identify areas that need to be addressed. Teachers will also learn how to walk parents through assignments and assessments that are particularly demonstrative of the student's progress and abilities.

Various in-service scenarios will be created in helping teachers construct meaningful questions and listen actively. Teachers will learn the importance of soliciting parent input into student strengths and needs, learning styles, and non-school learning opportunities by focusing on a parent's hopes and dreams for their child. These scenarios will include;

- Providing suggestions for activities and strategies parents can use at home to help their child learn and grow.
- Avoiding judgments about what "they" should do and instead emphasize how "we" can work together to resolve any problems.
- Spending time in closure discussing how the teacher and the parent will support the student by being specific about the kinds of things the teacher will do and how the teacher will check in with the parent about student progress.
- Making a plan of action describing how the teacher will communicate with parents (i.e., through notes home, phone calls, email etc.) and ways parents can contact the teacher. Teachers will learn best practices in scheduling follow-ups after the on conference has occurred.

GOAL TWO: This year as a part of our Title I services we will be implementing a new parent involvement program entitled "Stepping Up." The "Stepping Up" program is designed to recognize parents who are supporting student learning in the home. As a part of the "Stepping Up" program, we will be asking parents to pledge a number of after school hours that they will commit to supporting both academics and school sponsored activities.

Home Reading Program

The fall Home Reading Program officially opens on Monday, September 12. Parents who have enrolled their child in the Home Reading Program have been provided an opportunity for their child to be eligible to earn non-uniform days. The Home Reading Program will run for 8 weeks and officially end on November 4. For your child to receive the non-uniform day award they must complete all five of the following requirements.

Parent Involvement Banquets and Curriculum Nights

Two recognition banquets have been scheduled this year to include parental involvement and to promote strategies to support literacy in the home. The "Stepping Up" awards banquets will be held on Tuesday, November 29, and on Tuesday, April 25. Dodge City Middle School will also be hosting a "Bring Your Parent to School Day" on February 9, and 10.

CATEGORY V: TIERED SUPPORT

INDICATOR 3410

INDICATOR 3410: The school implements a system-wide monitoring process (such as practiced in Kansas MTSS) that utilizes collaborative instructional teams who meet regularly to review student data from screening, progress monitoring, and outcome assessment to identify next steps for instruction for students across all tiers.

At Dodge City Middle School, interventions are designed for those students who may be one or two standard deviations below the mean (Tier III) according to the results of standardized testing or for those students who are a year below grade level (Tier II). Often the regular classroom teacher can address specific learning difficulties, but regular progress monitoring through a Student Intervention Team (SIT) is needed to keep track of the student's learning difficulties. Students usually participate in a grade-level program with additional support through Tier II and III extended learning time. Some students are assigned foundational programs in Tier II or Tier III reading or math, while Tier II students are assigned an additional class period through a before-or after-school program to master difficult content. Tutoring through the use of paraprofessionals and small-group work are also used in the classroom to address student needs.

The purpose of formative benchmark interventions is to increase, improve, and/or enhance the performance of students who have demonstrated low performance on College and Career Standards through a benchmark assessment. These interventions are designed to provide additional instruction or "re- teaching time" through Tier interventions to ensure core learning standards are being met. As a part of building a stronger foundation for post benchmark interventions, a student team time has been set aside every Monday devoted to intervention lesson planning which will provide enrichment lessons to ensure students are moving toward proficient and advanced performance on grade level standards. (SYSTEM NEEDS REVISION)

Tier I Interventions: Tier I is our core classroom curriculum. Using instructional strategies (such as Sheltered Instruction, flexible grouping, targeting specific skills through pacing guides, etc.), classroom teachers will be able to meet instructional goals. Ongoing formative and summative assessments in this tier are designed to meet the needs of the general student population. If teachers see that a student's needs are not being met within the first tier, a referral is made to the Student Intervention Team so the intervention process can begin. The first level of this process is an intervention that can be done within the framework of Tier I or the general curriculum, such as: modifying assignments, during team tutoring, before or after school team study, etc. If the student is not successful with Tier I instruction, the team will look at specific interventions to support student needs in the regular classroom or math seminar.

Tier Two (II) Interventions: Tier II interventions include classroom accommodations, math seminar and the after school program. The Tier II Math Seminar is an extended day program providing students the extra time during the day to further develop their foundational math skills and to learn grade level math concepts required by the Kansas College and Career standards. The After School Program provides students with immediate response to interventions. These interventions occur after each district level formative assessment in math or reading. Students are placed in the after school program for eight sessions, with one hour a day of small group instruction. Students are then given an opportunity to retake their formative assessment after the intervention has occurred.

Tier Three (III) Interventions: Tier III interventions include Renaissance Math, Grade 8 3D English, Grade 6 & 7 READ 180 and After School Programs. Tier III also includes co-teaching classes, which are made up of both regular education and special education students who are in the lowest 10% of the school population who are served for sixty-four minutes a day. These classes are for students who are 2-3 years below grade level. Students who are served in Tier III classes are also eligible for after school programs. The After School Programs are available Monday through Thursday from 3:15 to 4:15 p.m.

To meet the academic needs of our low socioeconomic students we will need to implement all three levels of MTSS through our district-wide Student Intervention Team process. Our district-wide (SIT) approach is a comprehensive systemic process that connects students, in all grade levels, with developmentally and educationally appropriate services to help them achieve their greatest academic, social, and personal well-being. The (SIT) process brings together different systems, organizations and resources to maximize youth academic performance and resiliency. The (SIT) process is designed to assist all students. It does not limit services to students who have been identified as "at-risk." While students who are referred may have shared or demonstrated certain risk indicators, the primary purpose for the referral is the observed behavior – not the fact that a student may or may not be considered "at-risk".

Students can access the SIT REFERRAL PROCESS in three different ways: (1) they can be referred by a teacher, staff person, parent, or community member; (2) they can refer themselves to the process; and/or (3) they can be referred by an administrator if they violate the student code of conduct and are referred as part of a disciplinary action. Parents access the process in two ways: (1) they can refer their child if they have concerns; and/or (2) they can be requested to provide the team with additional information and support in the intervention of their child. School staff accesses the process by making a request for assistance to the team, completing the Request for Information forms, providing any additional needed information regarding a student, and by communicating with the team. Community members and other concerned persons can access the process by completing a Request for Assistance form and submitting it to the team upon request from the team for additional

ROOT CAUSE

CATEGORY VI: ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

To further define rigor, we strategically review current instructional practices to identify those that yield evidence of effectiveness, addressing areas that are missing, and replacing ineffective or inefficient approaches with those that are supported by research and address an area of need. This year we based our instructional improvement goals on district initiatives to include posting objectives, increasing time devoted to academic feedback, deeply embed the use of technology into instructional practices and increasing the amount of time students are engaged in vocabulary development/academic conversations. Determine whether Key Findings are Strengths or Challenges (Root Cause Analysis) MTSS Action Plan can be used.

- The curriculum of Dodge City Middle School is based on the Kansas College and Career Standards of learning by grade level and subject. (Out of Alignment with State Rigors and Relevance)

- The District Performance Standards of learning are instructed by units. (Need Realignment)

- The teachers and staff hold high expectations for all students.

- Data is used to track and improve instruction. (As of 2015)

- Summative assessments are ongoing in all content areas and are shared among teachers using a data warehouse as a platform for sharing during grade level PLCs. (As of 2015)

- Additionally, teachers and administration meet on a regular basis to analyze data and develop plans to utilize the data to inform instruction. (As of 2015)

- Teachers are trained in the Marzano teaching methods to deliver high quality instruction in academic discourse.

- According to the climate survey, parents feel welcome at Dodge City Middle School with 75% percent of the parents reporting that they are always treated with respect in a caring environment. The staff embraces the culture of the families and students in this community.

- According to the 2015 climate survey, 95% of the families always have a good relationship with their child's teachers with 97% percent of the families recommending Dodge City Middle School to family and friends.

- The promotion of a student advocacy program, including student centered learning, was implemented in 2012 lowering the number of discipline referrals from 153 in 2012 to 70 in 2014. Over the past three years, we have reduced the amount of student conflicts from 6 in 2012 to 2 in 2014.

- The student advocacy program was restructured under a new definition as "Individual Plans of Study supporting purposeful education through the ARC2 rubric". The daily 23minute advisory period--student groups are no more than 15 in grades seven and eight, focusing on activities assisting in developing individual plans of study under four distinct categories.

- We have initiated relevance to the advisory time by including student-led conferences with a focus on the construction of individual student digital portfolios.

- We have initiated relevance to the advisory time by including student-led conferences with a focus on the construction of individual student digital portfolios.

- To build strong staff relationships the school also worked diligently to develop effective team practices that not only help the staff develop professionally but most importantly to benefit the students by creating a "family" atmosphere.

Based on the root cause analysis, identify the Gaps that exist between the school's current reality and where it wants to be when its vision is realized. What are the gaps? What does the school need to do or consider in order ensuring academic success for each student?

- We have based our plan on information about all students in the school and identified students and groups of students who are not yet achieving to the proficiencies in math and reading based on ongoing assessments on the SMI/SRI and local mastery assessments. (Gaps Still Exist)

- Economically disadvantaged students who may experience lack of opportunities or exposure to a variety of extended day learning opportunities.

- We have reflected upon our most current achievement data in order to understand what subjects and skills instruction and learning need to be improved. For example, in looking at the data from the Spring 2015 SRI Scholastic Reading Inventory and local designed formative assessment, we found that our areas for improvement were two fold within the Math and ELA classrooms. Math is showing the most need in basic number operations and addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of fractions, decimals, and integers. The areas of most need for the ELA classrooms centers around building writing skills and revision strategies. (Gap Still Exist)

ROOT CAUSE: INSTRUCTIONAL ALIGNMENT

The root cause(s) that we discovered for instructional alignment through the teacher needs assessment include the lack of consistent placement criteria into Tier classes for student support services, the lack of specific parent training including the use of the school's student information parent notification system (Skyward) and the need for home learning resources like Renaissance Math and our digital library to promote school aligned curriculum for home learning. We also recognized through our needs assessment the need to establish a way for students to earn achievement credentials for time spent in extended day activities, which are not directly related to grades. (See Needs Assessment Survey)

- How should we use data to properly place students in support programs and classes when transitioning from different classes and grade levels? We need definable criteria. (Rubrics, etc.)

- How do we provide effective training for parents to be directly involved in the instruction of their child?

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The root cause(s) that we discovered for parent and community involvement through the teacher needs assessment, included a need for parent involvement to ensure parents understand what is being taught and how standards are being tested to help their students at home.

- How can we effectively and efficiently use Title I Parent Night in a way that will involve and teachers?

- How do we regularly and effectively communicate what we're doing in the classroom to parents?

The root cause(s) that we discovered for professional development through the teacher needs assessment, included Improvement in curriculum alignment between curriculum standards, assessments, teaching and professional development. We use effective research based strategies as a district and as a school but it seems that we do not implement them long enough to see the effects. Additionally, we include paraprofessionals as a part of the professional development program.

1. What are ways we can involve paraprofessionals in professional development beyond what we currently do? (para training with teachers, content specific)

2. How can staff development be made more relevant so it can be extended into the classroom?