

Fairfield Public Schools
Tomlinson Middle School
Improvement Plan
2015 – 2016

As adopted in March of 2014, the District’s Mission is as follows:

The mission of the Fairfield Public Schools, in partnership with families and community, is to ensure that every student acquires the knowledge and skills needed to be a lifelong learner, responsible citizen, and successful participant in an ever changing global society through a comprehensive educational program.

Drawing from the District’s Theory of Action and District Improvement Plan, this School Improvement Plan focuses on four core areas: Instructional Program, Teams/School Improvement Plans, Leadership Capacity, and Resources. Under each Core Strategy, there are sample actions that the school is undertaking that support the Core Strategy. These actions are school priorities; some may be in the early stages of implementation.

Underlying this Improvement Plan is the expectation that all staff members, teams, departments, and schools engage regularly in reflective practice – examining data, taking action, reviewing the results of our actions, adjusting our practice to improve results, and evaluating our effectiveness in a cycle of continuous improvement.

Some action items in this plan will include special notation connecting them to the District Improvement Plan. This parenthetical notation is found at the end of an action item and includes “S.A.” followed by a number which refers to the “Specific Action” to which it is aligned in the District Improvement Plan.

1. Instructional Program

If we ensure that a rigorous, comprehensive instructional program is consistently delivered across all grade levels and departments, with alignment between the written, taught and assessed curriculum, then instruction will be of consistently high quality and student learning will improve.

1.1 Implement newly adopted World Language program. (S.A. 1-4)

- a. World Language teachers will meet periodically with the World Language Coordinator and administrator responsible for World Language so that successes, concerns and needed support in the implementation of the new World Language curriculum can be discussed and addressed.
- b. World Language teachers will meet at their weekly PLC meeting to discuss planning that is in sync with the new curriculum.
- c. World Language teachers will meet in their TMS data team each month to assess the effect of the implementation of the new curriculum revisions on student learning and to adjust the instruction as a result throughout the year.

1.2 Implement newly adopted Library/Media program. (S.A. 1-4)

- a. LMS will attend department meetings so they will be able to determine how to best support the needs of teachers in each content area and provide resources that support classroom assignments.
- b. The LMS will collaborate with each department on one project of rigor during the school year to improve student learning. LMS will gather baseline data on student successful completion of higher order thinking tasks on these projects.

1.3 Implement common assessments aligned to the curriculum in all content areas. (S.A. 1-12)

- a. Language Arts teachers in grades 6-8 will implement digital portfolios, allowing teachers to document student writing progress in the middle school years and adjust instruction based on this data to assist “student readiness” in the transition to grade 9.
- b. Science teachers in grades 6-8 will continue to utilize science skill assessments (3x per year) and performance tasks aligned to the curriculum in each grade level/course and use department meeting time to analyze results and make instructional decisions that increase student achievement in science.
- c. Language Arts teachers in grades 6-8 will analyze baseline data and will establish targets for the narrative writing performance task.
- d. Math teachers in grades 6-8 will implement performance assessments aligned to each course in order to document student math progress in the middle school years and adjust instruction based on this data to assist “student readiness” in the transition to grade 9.
- e. World Language teachers will create and implement performance assessments and use both PLC and data team time to analyze baseline data and establish targets for proficiency in the target language.
- f. Social Studies teachers will analyze baseline data during department and data team meetings and establish targets for performance tasks.
- g. All Unified Arts teachers will implement common assessments and analyze data and other school-related work to make instructional decisions and to improve student learning.
- h. In collaboration with 8th and 9th grade teachers, curriculum leaders will develop and administer an academic needs assessment regarding skills needed for incoming freshmen to successfully access the curriculum.

1.4 Hold staff accountable for consistent implementation of all approved curriculum. (S.A. 1-4)

- a. The LAS and administrator for ELA will collaborate with the ELA Curriculum Leader to ensure that curriculum is clearly articulated and that work across genres is diverse and engaging.
- b. The MRT and administrator for Math will collaborate with the Math Curriculum Leader to ensure that curriculum is clearly articulated and that classwork and instruction (teacher-student discourse) are rigorous and challenging.

- c. School administrators will perform informal observations/walk-throughs independently and with curriculum leaders in order to monitor implementation of approved curriculum.
- d. Curriculum leaders and school administrators will conduct walk-throughs to gather data about instructional models and curriculum in order to create plans for transition.
- e. School administrators and curriculum leaders will meet collaboratively with teachers in the goal setting process to establish consistent Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) and Indicators of Academic Growth and Development (IAGD's).
- f. School administrators, curriculum leaders, and teachers will meet mid-year to assess teacher progress in the goal plan.
- g. School administrators, departmental liaisons, and curriculum leaders will communicate throughout the year during their monthly meetings to identify both any inconsistencies in curriculum implementation and the reasons for those inconsistencies and to provide both the support and the accountability necessary to ensure consistent implementation.

1.5 Implement evidence-based instructional strategies in all content areas.

- a. Students will be organized in class to facilitate working on complex tasks, such as decision-making, problem solving, experimental inquiry, or investigation, which require them to generate a hypothesis, with the teacher acting as resource provider and facilitator, so that student learning will improve. (Marzano DQ 4)
- b. Teachers will create rigorous tasks and school administrators will monitor the level of rigor via observations, walk-throughs, rounds, etc. in order to improve instruction and student learning.
- c. Teachers will provide clear learning goals and scales (rubrics) specific to the unit of study to provide specific learning outcomes to students. (Marzano DQ 1)
- d. The secondary ELA Curriculum Leader, selected school administrators and 6-8 lead teachers will participate in a Tri-State Consortium follow-up visit to review the 6-8 writing program.

1.6 Ensure a positive school climate.

- a. Students, parents, and staff will participate in activities that foster a sense of connection, such as the TMS Walkathon, Open House, and school performances.
- b. Administration and staff representatives will meet on a monthly basis to share celebrations and to discuss issues.
- c. Students and staff will actively participate in a Positive Behavior Plan and advisory periods in order to become better informed about positive behavior and to experience an increase in the level of social and emotional safety.
- d. Administration and staff will communicate with parents via Infinite Campus, Peek-at-the-Week, e-mail, PTA meetings, and community events to increase both the level of inclusion and the level of satisfaction.

- e. Guidance will develop and administer a needs assessment given to parents regarding transition, with the resulting data used to incorporate the needs presented into current orientation processes, in order to have a solid understanding of parent expectations and to create smooth transitions from 5th to 6th grade and 8th to 9th grade.

1.7 Implement professional learning to strengthen instructional practices for students in need of early intervention, English Language Learning, and Special Education services.

- a. Research effective practices for progress monitoring of students receiving ELL support.
- b. Develop a structured ELL format for data collection, analysis and progress monitoring.
- c. Improve consistency in the implementation of the Early Intervention Process (EIP) and data collection in order to support student interventions and instructional practice in all classrooms, as evidenced by the data findings of the E.I.P. Team.
- d. Establish and utilize a standard means for communication with parents to keep them apprised of progress relevant to intervention, reading and ELL strategies.
- e. Implement Special Education Department approved evidence-based instructional strategies.

Indicators of Progress:

- Students will perform 5% above baseline on SBA.
- Individual student scores on district mandated reading and math assessments will improve by 5% over baseline.
- All 6th grade students will demonstrate proficiency in World Language as measured by teacher assessments.
- All students in WL classes will demonstrate an improvement in their level of proficiency by 5% over baseline as evidenced by newly created common World Language assessment data.
- LMS and teachers will create and administer at least one rigorous task/project per year in each grade level and core content area, gathering baseline data on student performance. Rigor will be based on at least 50% of learning tasks requiring higher-order thinking skills.
- All content area teachers will administer common assessments according to the timeline of the district assessment calendar.
- Administration will monitor teacher progress towards IAGD's as evidenced by data provided at mid-year and end-of-year conferences.
- The application of new learning will be evidenced in walk-throughs, observations and learning scales. (Marzano DQ1)

2. Teams/School Improvement Plans

If we work effectively in teams to examine school and individual student progress, create a culture where individuals regularly research and engage in developing and sharing effective practices, and regularly support and supervise teachers in implementing effective classroom practices, then teachers will improve instruction and student learning will improve.

- 2.1 Implement School Improvement Plans based on data and research-based practices that will improve student achievement (includes academic and school climate indicators). (S.A. 2-1)
- 2.2 Implement school-wide data teams in each school to review progress on the SIP, share effective practices, and adjust SIP as warranted. (S.A. 2-4, 2-5)
 - a. Data teams will analyze the results of student tasks using student results derived from common assessments and adjust instruction as indicated to improve student performance. This will be an ongoing process of data analysis, instruction adjustment, and student performance improvement.
 - b. Data teams will use time to score student tasks using the common rubrics, ensuring that calibration results in consistent scoring and feedback across classes.
- 2.3 Use data teams to develop department based problems of practice to be used for Instructional Rounds (focusing on at least two content areas per year). (S.A. 2-2, 2-8)
- 2.4 Provide support to newly departmentalized 6th grade via curriculum department meetings and TEVAL meetings.

Indicators of Progress:

- Adjustments to SIP will be made in accordance with evidence provided by data team/ liaison meeting minutes.
- Data teams will improve by one level on the district-wide data team rubric.
- Grade level/ departmental data teams will submit meeting minutes for all scheduled data team meetings.
- All 6th grade teachers will report they are comfortable with the support provided through community meeting minutes, concerns raised, liaison meeting feedback.

3. Leadership Capacity

If we strengthen the instructional leadership capacity of teachers and administrators, then we will be better able to identify and implement effective instructional practices and help teachers improve their practices through support and accountability. This improved instructional practice will lead to improved student learning.

- 3.1 Implement Instructional Rounds (at least 2 times per year) using vertical teams as necessary.
 - a. Curriculum Leader and Language Arts teachers will develop a problem of practice and conduct Instructional Rounds for grades 8-9. (S.A. 1-9)
 - b. Curriculum Leaders and Math teachers will develop a problem of practice and conduct Instructional Rounds for grades 5-6. (S.A. 1-9)
 - c. Teacher leaders will be utilized as Instructional Round facilitators to conduct Instructional Rounds in grades 6-8. (S.A. 3-3)

3.2 Align *all* Professional Growth and Evaluation Plans to the School Improvement Plan. (S.A. 3-4)

- a. All teachers will work on the effective implementation of Marzano DQ 4 - Helping students generate and test hypotheses – to increase the level of rigor in classroom instruction.
- b. Teachers will write Student Learning Outcomes based on individual student progress in their ability to perform complex learning tasks as measured by common assessments.
- c. The Science department will focus on professional development related to the Next Generation Science Standards from the National Research Council – *A Framework for K-12 Science Education: Practices, Crosscutting Concepts, And Core Ideas*.
- d. The Social Studies department will focus professional development on the inquiry Social Studies standards found in the Connecticut framework and the National C3 Framework.
- e. All teachers will align SLO's and annual goals to the School Improvement Plan.

3.3 Develop teacher leaders - PD, Growth Plan, Goals (SLO).

- a. Additional teachers will be trained to lead Instructional Rounds in the school. (S.A. 3-3)

Indicators of Progress:

- Successful implementation of Instructional Rounds as evidenced by TMS participation in a minimum of 2 rounds per year with at least 20% of the staff participating in the visitation (as visitors and visited) and 100% taking part in the dissemination of information-gleaned session.
- 100% of teachers will align SLO's with the SIP/DIP.
- Opportunities will be offered to increase leadership capacity throughout the year as evidenced by participation data of Instructional Rounds, liaison meetings, PD leadership roles and school-based and district committees.
- Successful implementation of department professional development, as evidenced by teacher implementation of the instructional strategies learned (monitored by walk-throughs, observations, etc.) and improved student performance (demonstrated by vertical team data).

4. Resources

If we provide our staff and students with appropriate levels of educational resources (human, time and material) and if they use these resources effectively, then student learning will improve.

- 4.1 Provide effective professional learning for all staff members on a continuous basis.
- 4.2 Align school resources to enact school priorities.
- 4.3 Partner with parents to achieve system priorities and goals. (S.A. 4-18, 4-20)

- a. Information about common assessments – STAR, i-Ready and SBA - will be shared with parents at PTA meetings to increase and engage parent support in student learning.

4.4 Improve intervention efforts for struggling students and high-achieving students.

- a. Monitor the implementation of the TMS Early Intervention Program with integrity from referral to data collection to dismissal, providing support, accountability, and resources as needed.
- b. Develop a systematic data driven approach to engage high-achieving students.
- c. Increase efforts to improve the instructional program for ELL students via data driven decisions made by ELL staff in collaboration with colleagues.
- d. School staff will participate with the Instructional Office (PK-12) to review Language Arts and Math intervention programs across the district to identify programs that address diverse learning needs. A stakeholder committee including building leaders, Special Education (including GT) will collaboratively implement programs based on student needs will be created.

4.5 Continue to provide professional development specific to educating students from various socio-economic backgrounds, English Language Learners and tiered intervention.

Indicators of Progress:

- Professional development will be monitored by teacher feedback from regularly scheduled building meetings as well as district professional development days, data team minutes, community meeting data as shared with administration by liaisons, and by teacher implementation of the instructional strategies learned (monitored by walk-throughs, observations, etc.).
- Increased partnership with parents will be evidenced by parent attendance at PTA meetings, increased electronic communication, and increased parent completion of the school climate survey.
- Increased successful implementation of the EIP process as evidenced by written data and EIP meeting minutes from referral to dismissal.
- Increased rigor within the classroom to “raise the bar” for students, as evidenced by administrator documentation of formal and informal observations and “drop-ins,” data collected during Instructional Rounds, and teachers’ own sharing of “best practice” at faculty meetings and professional development.