



A Community of Learners

Informational Memo: District Improvement Plan Mid-Year Update 2017-2018

TO: School Board
Superintendent Kocanda

FROM: Barry Rodgers
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Background

The Winnetka District 36 Improvement Plan focuses on math and reading for the 2017-18 school year. As described in the November 14 Board Memo, the District Improvement Plan provides clear **goals, action steps, and measures**. The format is designed to provide a comprehensive and user friendly format to serve as a driver for identified outcomes.

As part of the mid-year review of the District Improvement Plan, we gauge our efforts and results toward achieving our stated goals. This is accomplished by monitoring the progress in completing action steps and by utilizing data as defined by measures and targets. Winnetka utilizes a robust suite of assessments based on multiple measures to strengthen the improvement process. Assessments are administered throughout the year as indicated in the assessment calendar ([Link](#)).

For the past six years we have also utilized Freshman Perception Survey Data provided by New Trier. This year, there have been important changes made to this process to provide a more holistic and longitudinal picture of our student's preparedness. New Trier Township Superintendents and Middle School Principals collaborated to improve the Freshman Perception Survey. Township schools have a shared interest in developing a common tool to longitudinally review student

experiences and make use of actionable data for improvement efforts. A revised instrument has been developed, which is aligned with the current New Trier High School Senior and post-graduate survey.

The new survey has a focus on skill sets, attitudes, and behaviors that are research-based predictors for long-term success. Across New Trier Township, the survey will be administered to 8th graders this spring, again as Sophomores, Seniors and then as college Sophomores. Each student cohort will have four touch points, enabling us to examine perceptions over time, an invaluable benefit to effectively improve the student experience. While some questions will shift to align for age relevancy, the majority of the questions align and will allow for longitudinal data across several years.

In addition to administering the new survey, New Trier plans on hosting student focus groups to gain a more thorough insight into the student experience and preparedness within our districts. Collaboration with New Trier teachers and department leaders will remain a critical component to ensure on-going curriculum alignment.

All assessments are intended to be utilized to monitor growth, inform instruction, and personalize learning for every student. Summative assessments for the 2017-18 school year will be given this spring and reported as indicated in the District Improvement Plan.

A mid-year update reflecting the progress of our improvement processes including action steps is outlined in the 2017-18 District Improvement Plan Document. ([Link to Mid-Year Update](#))

Highlights: Math

The Mid-Year Math Update demonstrates the District's efforts to strengthen the goal areas of mathematical content, behavior, and disposition. The update demonstrates our commitment to facilitate appropriate rigor and challenge through the integration of complex problem solving tasks. Opportunities to provide challenge and enrichment have been further advanced through the creation of math clubs at each of our elementary schools.

Progress is being made in the area of "Reaching All Learners", as students in identified cohorts are demonstrating increases in growth as a result of sustained interventions and curricular improvements. At the elementary level, the first year of our K-2 intervention model is well underway. Interventionists and facilitators at each elementary school are helping to support students and to assist teachers in

developing more effective strategies to build success and confidence in our young math learners.

Highlights Include:

- Integrated SVMI MARS complex problem solving tasks in grades 2-8
- Expanded opportunities for Math Forum participation in Grades 4, 5, and 6
- Established math clubs at each elementary school
- Developed and implemented K-2 intervention model
- Continued support for 5th grade and 7th grade cohorts
- Implemented strategies to promote a positive math disposition including the creation and implementation of a new student disposition survey instrument
- Strengthened home school partnership through the sharing of digital resources and Winnetka Parent Institute with NCTM Math Forum faculty

Highlights: Reading

Much of our work in the area of reading is designed to help students master developmentally and challenging literary and informational texts. To further support our reading efforts, the District is continuing the implementation of new curriculum in the areas of word study, vocabulary acquisition, and grammar and mechanics. In addition, teachers and facilitators have been further utilizing *Readers and Writers Workshop* methods and materials.

The specific area of *Informational Reading* emphasized in common core state standards and assessments is being supported by implementing new learning plans with fidelity and the integration of literacy skills and inquiry based learning across disciplines.

Highlights Include:

- Implemented learning plans and reading instructional materials to accompany the three core reading strands at each grade level
- Conducted a summer Teachers College Advanced Home-Grown Reading Institute with eighty district teachers and administrators
- Adopted and implemented an updated Benchmark Reading Level (BRL) document used to measure growth and achievement for the Teachers College Reading Assessment
- Provided ongoing communication and feedback loop with teachers to implement, review, and reflect upon the unit learning plans
- Piloted resources “IXL” and “No Red Ink” for Vocabulary Acquisition and Use, and Grammar and Mechanics in grades 7-8

- Established new professional learning strand for using digital tools to support the area of informational/nonfiction reading
- Supported the rollout of resources *Words their Way* and *Wordly Wise* identified for teaching word study and vocabulary acquisition
- Updated Language Arts Website in the areas of curriculum, balanced literacy and scope and sequence, and parent resources

Alignment with the District 36 Shared Vision

Our Shared Vision holds that we support and challenge all learners to actively engage in their continual growth and achievement. The District Improvement Plan will serve to ensure that our students continue to grow and achieve in the areas of math and reading.

Next Steps

We will continue to execute the stated action steps, administer assessments and review relevant data. An end of year report on the District Improvement Plan will be shared at the June 2018 Board meeting.