

Seattle Excellence Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP)

Mercer International Middle School

Purpose

The Continuous School Improvement Plan provides an overview of the school, student outcome goals and a brief narrative description on how the school plans to collaboratively meet these goals over time. It is intended to offer families and community audiences an overview of improvement work aligned to the strategic plan and written in language that is accessible by a diverse audience.

Introduction

WHEN WE FOCUS on ensuring racial equity in our educational system, unapologetically address the needs of students of color who are furthest from educational justice, and work to undo the legacies of racism in our educational system by doing the following:

- Allocating resources strategically through a racial equity framework
- Delivering high-quality, standards-aligned instruction across all abilities and a continuum of services for learners
- Creating healthy, supportive, culturally responsive environments from the classroom to central office
- Directly and consistently working in partnership with families and communities who represent students of color who are furthest from educational justice; and
- Making clear commitments and delivering on them

THEN we will eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps and every student will receive a high-quality, world-class education.

Seattle Public Schools Foundational Beliefs for Supporting Student Learning

In Seattle Public Schools, we understand that a shared vision of practice is essential to fostering the learning communities that each of our students and adults needs to thrive. This shared vision enables educators to work in concert to build their practice with a focus on student learning.

As such, we believe:

- 1) **Teaching is intellectually complex**, difficult and demanding work, and the development of skillful teaching requires deep collaboration and non-defensive self-examination of practice in relation to student results.
- 2) **By collaborating with families in authentic partnerships**, we create a path for students to reach their highest potential, engaging with families as the first and lifelong teachers of students.
- 3) **"Intelligence" is not a fixed, inborn trait**. All children come to school with cultural capital and intelligence, and all have the raw material to learn rigorous academic material at high standards. Therefore, our work is to **build students' academic mindset**
- 4) **By recognizing and cultivating the gifts and strengths of every student**, we can get each student to believe in themselves and deconstruct any of their own internalized stereotypes.
- 5) **Racism in our society exerts a downward force on the experiences and achievement of students of color that must be met with active countermeasures.**

Our commitment to these beliefs is the route to institutionalizing racial equity and fostering a context where each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential, and we make educational equity and justice the cornerstone of our system.

School Profile

We are an international community of learners: opening a door to the world. At Mercer every student is a reader, writer, mathematician, scientist, and thinker. Our mission is to create and sustain the first high-performing, high poverty middle school in the state of Washington. We believe that all of our students will excel.

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Priorities and Measurable Goals

Middle School Focus Goal: 7th Grade Mathematics

Priority Goal:

For the 2020-21 school year, at least 50% of 7th grade students of color furthest from educational justice will meet standards or higher on the Math Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Safe and Welcoming Environment Goal

Priority Goal:

For the 2020-21 school year, as measured in the On-Line Platform Utilization Report, our average daily attendance % will be at or above district average. Additionally, we will work to align our average daily use %, as measured in Teams, to be within 5% of our average daily attendance rate.

High Quality Learning Experiences

Educate the whole child through high-quality instruction and learning experiences that accelerate growth for students of color who are furthest from educational justice, with an intentional focus on African American males.

To achieve educational justice, Seattle Public Schools (SPS) strives to provide safe learning environments, curriculum that incorporates a student's life experiences and culture, and instruction delivered by high-quality, culturally responsive educators. Unfortunately, many students from certain ethnicities have not historically experienced equitable opportunities for all or part of their educational journey (including African and African American, Asian Pacific Islander and Pacific Islander, LatinX, and Native American students). These students are our priority – with an intentional focus on African American males.

School-wide Systems and Structures (MTSS)

MTSS offers the potential to create the alignment of systems necessary for all students' academic, behavioral, and social success. In addition, MTSS promotes needed systematic change through intentional design and redesign of services and supports that quickly identify and match the needs of all students. MTSS is an integrated, comprehensive framework that focuses on CCSS, core instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs.

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Review and align our MTSS and tiers of support referral process across grade level teams. This includes attendance strategies, aligned interventions and systems of supports provided to all students.

Gap Closing Practices and Special Services

Seattle Public Schools is committed to eliminating opportunity gaps to ensure access and provide excellence in education for every student.

Delivering high-quality, standards-aligned instruction across all abilities and a continuum of services for learners is a core element of Seattle Excellence. Our Theory of Action is guided by the principles of “Targeted Universalism.” Our universal goal is every Seattle Public Schools’ student receives a high-quality, world-class education and graduates prepared for college, career, and community. Targeted Universalism holds that targeted and differentiated efforts are required to meet the needs of specific student populations, so every student meets the universal goal.

By focusing on students of color who are furthest from educational justice, especially African American males, we will make the greatest progress toward our collective vision. We believe that an intentional focus on African American males will ultimately benefit every student.

Programs for All Students:

- Continue to deliver thoughtful and effective MTSS Tier 1 practices that result in growth for students above, at, and below grade level standards, both academically and behaviorally.
- Utilize a 7-period day master schedule that maximizes student-learning time, especially in the core subjects of reading, writing, math, science and social studies.
- Reading and writing classes are blocked in order to provide more time for reading and writing instruction.
- In math, students who have not demonstrated grade level proficiency will be provided a math intervention support class.
- Utilize Standards Based Grading so students and families know current levels of performance relative to the content standard.
- Science classes for all students that align with Washington State Science Standards and practices with a focus on developing scientific thinking.

Programs for ELL and Special Education

- Provide access to the same high level of Tier 1 instruction and standards based learning through:
 - Continuum of services including inclusion and co-teaching to support differentiation and small group instruction.
 - Sheltered and modified ELA and Math classes, as appropriate, which provide smaller classroom environments for modified instruction.
 - Extended time after school enrichment opportunities in mathematics and reading.

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- ELL teachers and IEP teachers provide direct Tier 1 instruction and support general education teachers with differentiated strategies.
- Supplemental support in general education classrooms through bilingual assistance, special education instructional assistants, and university math tutors.

Programs for Tier 1 and 2 students (Students not meeting standard in math and/or reading):

- Second math class for students performing at L1 and L2 on the math SBA.
- Second reading class, Read 180, for students performing at L1 and L2 on the reading SBA.
- LAP funded math lead teacher to provide support for our LAP math students. This position also supports our math teachers with specific pedagogical strategies to support our students who are not meeting standard as well as for growth for all students.

Practices and Strategies

We will recognize and serve the academic, social, cultural, emotional, and behavioral strengths and needs of students, providing high-quality, culturally responsive instruction, curriculum, and social-emotional learning supports delivered by educators who set high expectations, so students graduate ready for college, career, and community.

Whole child education goes beyond a focus on academic achievement. When educators focus on educating the whole child, students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. In Seattle Public Schools, this means that we appreciate and serve the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral strengths and needs of students, which we believe comprise the needs of the "whole child."

High-quality instruction is focused on student-centered learning and achievement, intentional about student engagement, and aligned to standards with consistent and appropriate feedback.

At its foundation, culturally responsive education means that students are in an environment where they have the individual safety and comfort to learn within a classroom that has a common culture that is respectful of all backgrounds.

In order to increase student achievement and strengthen adult to student and student to student relationships, we will critically review Mercer Way structures and practices (i.e. Do Now, Threshold, Exit Tickets, POWER) by making them predictable, consistent in every classroom and practiced every day throughout our building and Mercer community. Additionally, we will implement key culturally responsive teaching techniques that support stronger relationships and engender trust between students and between students and adults.

Safe and Welcoming Environment

Students thrive in healthy, safe, engaging, supported, and challenging environments in which they can learn to their full potential. Instruction must be high-quality, culturally responsive, focused, and aligned to standards for students to develop as independent learners.

Student voice should be evident, and students must be seen and celebrated for their authentic selves. Significant increases in academic outcomes for students furthest from educational justice are possible when social, cultural, emotional, and behavioral needs of students are met by educators that share an unconditional belief in the potential of every student they serve.

1. Classroom Culture

- Mercer Way strategies, including, high and clear expectations
- Consistent classroom architecture with elements of bell to bell instruction, including, Do Now, clear learning objectives, I do, you do, and we do model of instruction and an Exit Ticket
- We utilize instructional strategies and techniques to engage students in learning and reflect the urgency of learning and student achievement
- Implementation of Culturally Responsive Teaching strategies designed to build a culturally responsive school and classrooms.
- We believe that once the CRT strategies are systemically implemented we will see a positive uptick in favorable responses. Specifically:
 - Building alliances with students and families
 - Increasing student agency
 - Restorative practices

2. Recognition of students:

- Strategies include, but are not limited to: Positive post cards, VIP lunch, POWER Assembly, Birthday Managers, Mercer Spotlight, Academic recognition, Inviting parents/guardians to celebrate small successes, POWER Cards/Mercer Money and other positive reinforcement
- Daily Attendance - *#Show up* Attendance Challenges, *We Missed You While You Were Gone* – the concept of this proposed strategy is for students to get positive feedback from school that demonstrates they were missed while they were gone (Belonging bullet 2).

3. Tier 1 all school guidance lessons, including:

- Organizational strategies
- Emotion management lessons- bully prevention, cognitive and behavioral strategies like belly breathing visualization, and positive self-talk to nurture growth mindset
- Restorative practices in re-building relationships amongst student-student
- College and career readiness and high school transition.

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Inclusive and Authentic Engagement

Partner with students, families, and communities who are furthest from educational justice by conducting inclusive and authentic engagement.

We will proactively and consistently work in partnership *with* students, families, and communities to identify needs, determine solutions, and support the implementation of the initiatives that will best meet the needs of students of color who are furthest from educational justice. We will use culturally responsive ways to engage so we build trusting relationships and empower the voices of those who can help us meet these needs.

Family and Community Goals

Priority Goal:

Mercer will continue to provide proactive approaches to support and increase parent/family involvement. We need and want to increase the level of our family involvement. We will partner our Race and Equity Team with our Family Engagement Action Team in order to meet our goal(s) around increasing family involvement.

Plans for Family Engagement

Mercer hosts a number of family and cultural events over the course of the school year. The purpose of these events are to celebrate our and listen to our families while sharing important school and community resources.

1. Affinity night a by Mercer staff including African-American family nights and specific events targeting our ELL families.
2. Regular partnership with the Mercer PTSA for community wide events and engagement meetings.
3. Monthly Principal Coffee's and Affinity Group Meetings with the Principal every semester.

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20-21 COVID-19 Addendum **Mercer International Middle School**

The global pandemic of Covid-19 has disrupted many aspects of teaching and learning in the 2019-20 and 20-21 school years across Seattle Public Schools, Washington State and the nation. In response to the global pandemic and to meet the specific needs of students and families, staff and school leaders will be implementing and monitoring the following practices for remote and distance learning which are aligned to our strategic plan, Seattle Excellence, and notes in the Seattle Public Schools Remote Learning Playbook and Seattle Education Association-Seattle Public Schools MOU around distance learning for the 2020-21 school year.

Engaging Families:

The District and Association agree that a rigorous and effective remote learning program requires additional supports for students and families to ensure their engagement and success. The supports will address the diverse needs and challenges families and students face in accessing remote instruction. As such, the District and the Association agree on the following:

Required Practices:

1. Buildings will create and implement a pick up and/or delivery system for the distribution of school supplies, curricular materials and the necessary technology, to include mailing if necessary, which will be coordinated by school buildings/programs, and the system communicated to all itinerant/building staff and students/families and will include volunteers willing to do deliveries. All extra time provisions outlined in the collective bargaining agreement will continued to be followed.
2. Student devices necessary to access remote instruction will be allocated by the district for each student K-12. Educators will confirm with each student on their ability to access district applications during the “strong start” in September.
3. Educators will work to create and implement a clear, consistent process for communication with families and staff.
4. The District will provide appropriate level of technology support to students and families. Interpretation support will be provided.
5. Each building will implement a clear, consistent process for communication, to include current school-based structures prioritizing communication working in conjunction with counselors, social workers, family support workers, and student family advocate workers, for students that need additional supports.
6. Empower families/caregivers to support their students' learning by sending comprehensive communication about the weekly learning plan for students in their grade level/classroom.

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7. The District/School will take reasonable steps to provide parents/guardians who are speakers of diverse languages with translation/interpretation of information about general programs, services, and activities.
8. Recommended School Specific Strategy as outlined in the Playbook:
Monthly public meetings with the PTSA. Quarterly meetings with Affinity groups including Spanish speaking families, Black families, Chinese speaking families, Somali speaking families and Special Education families.)

Social Emotional Learning:

The District and Association recognize social emotional learning strategies are an urgent and central need for students, families and staff in response to the shared collective trauma of a dual pandemic, and the guidelines below are meant as a first step in integrating these strategies into the instructional and social fabric of school communities. Social Emotional Learning skills will be explicitly taught, integrated with academic instruction, practiced by staff and demonstrated organizationally so that everyone feels welcome, safe, and known as valued members of SPS communities.

Required Practices:

1. Have a plan for checking in with staff to foster relationships and support their well-being.
2. All SEL/Digital Citizenship PD and supports will be trauma-informed and include culturally responsive/antiracist SEL instruction and support with input from DREA and CRE.
3. All SEL/ Digital Citizenship PD will be differentiated by content, grade levels (PK-21), and needs.
4. Recommended School Specific Strategy as outlined in the Playbook:
5. Advocacy Teams (Advisory) meets two times weekly with small groups of students for schoolwide SEL lessons. All teachers have a welcoming routine and an optimistic closure built into synchronous learning lessons;

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:

Required Practices:

1. Use CAI guidance on priority standards by grade level and content areas that consider unfinished learning and how to accelerate learning. CAI will provide pacing plans.
2. Use CAI guidance and curricular resources to teach culturally inclusive curriculum that reflects the diversity of our students' experiences and helps students meet content.
3. Use CAI guidance and professional learning on how to use adopted curriculum for in-person, digital synchronous, and digital asynchronous instruction on Schoology/Seesaw.

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4. Use CAI recommended high-leverage digital learning strategies aligned to the SPS Foundational Coursework (and CSIP Essential Practices) to promote culturally relevant, effective remote instruction.
5. Regularly assess student work and provide meaningful feedback to students and their families on the progress made toward standards.
6. Continue to provide 6-12 High School and Beyond Planning lessons and supports to ensure that students receive instruction on course planning for career and college future planning.
7. Implement a school-wide, multi-tiered system of support: Tier 1/2
 - A systemic plan to track and monitor learner experience data
 - (*e.g. determine level of engagement to inform supportive practices.*)
 - Collection and review of meaningful and purposeful data
 - (*e.g. aligns to SPS assessment plan for 2020-21 school year.*)
 - Adult collaboration between educators and families
 - (*e.g. review of data in collaborative PLCs*)
8. Implement a school-wide, multi-tiered system of support: Tier 2/2
 - Students receiving Tier 2 or 3 supports will experience 1 or 2 touch points per week totaling at least 30 minutes in 1:1 or small group live check-ins with an educator or other adult.
 - Families of students receiving Tier 2 or 3 supports will experience a personal phone or video check-in from educators at least 1x per month for at least 15 minutes with a teacher, counselor, or other designate adult.
 - McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Students the district will take reasonable steps to provide parent/guardians information about general programs and activities required by federal and state laws.
 - **Recommended School Specific Strategy as outlined in the Playbook:**
Encouraging student voice; designing inquiry based learning that empowers students, creating equitable classrooms, designing equitable access learning opportunities for all students, structured and differentiated small groups for students who need support and extension of their learning.