

Winthrop School
School Improvement Plan
2020-2022



Resilience

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School Council Members

2020/2021

Parent Representatives

Christopher Chapman*

Anne Carroll

Christina Donehew

Michele Hunton

Ana Laguarda

Jeffrey Poirier

Jen Rita

Melissa Sciola

Peter Zetlan

Staff Representatives

Melissa D'Andrea

Sheila McAdams*

Katie Norris

Robbyn Wile

Kerry Zagarella

Goals

Goal 1: Social Justice ~ We all have personal work to do.

Positive and inclusive ethics, values and actions of our community that define us are contingent on a deep and empathetic understanding of cultural differences; accurate historical events; social systems that serve to unite, and divide, us; and the global impact of individual and community actions. In our quest to foster critical thinkers, this knowledge is critical. To this end, we seek to:

Develop common understanding through the use of shared readings, deliberate discussions, and protocols meant to engage respectfully in productive and challenging conversations about social justice issues.

To do so, we will:

- Research models and systems for having discussions on social justice issues.
- Identify foundational readings and articles.
- Facilitate discussion with a variety of groups: Council members, parents, staff, community members.
- Coordinate with local community partners to explore Ipswich's immigration history and enhance history and social studies curriculum.
- Identify actions demonstrating good citizenship.
- Choose discussion models to pilot in the classroom and with staff/peers.
- Establish a set of vocabulary and working definitions (akin to social thinking).
- Display, post in classroom, actively publicized vocabulary.
- Connect parents to the social justice curriculum and provide talking points and guidance for difficult discussion at home.

Goal 2: Academic Impacts ~ Learning has been impacted by the changes in educational routines.

In recognition of the pandemic-caused disruption in learning, special attention may be required to address any learning gaps that have occurred as a result of the shift in instructional format and structure of education. Recent data is currently inconclusive, yet strongly suggests, vulnerable populations have been especially hurt by this disruption.

(<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/12/01/938048852/some-good-news-student-reading-gains-are-steady-while-math-slows-down>, retrieved October 2020)

To this end, we seek to:

Employ a variety of assessment methods to identify instructional weaknesses caused by disrupted learning.

To do so, we will:

- Scheduled data analysis sessions across grade levels in which an in-depth analysis of student performance will be conducted.
- Develop consistent Tier II supports for students identified with needs with clear progress monitoring tools for use.
- Explore structures through which Tier II supports can be implemented (during school, before/after school)
- Create a budget to support academic interventions.
- Educate parents as to the support resources and process that occurs as students are referred for Tier II and/or Tier III supports.

Goal 3: Social Emotional Health ~ Ensuring the social and emotional mental health of all.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs has taken on increased importance in these unprecedented times. Generally represented in a pyramid, this theory contends that humans must have their most basic needs met before they are able to address more complex life functions. In education, we see evidence of this daily. Students who feel hungry, thirsty or unsafe are not available for friendship development or finding their place in a social circle. Disengaged students struggle to feel accomplishment or pride in their learning.

By necessity, the global pandemic has distanced and minimized our social connections, while creating disruptions to daily life. Over time, these changes have taken a toll on students, families and our faculty. Many, if not all households have experienced school format change, altered job demands, and fiscal challenges. Now, more than ever, an emphasis on the social emotional health of all is required. To this end, we seek to:

Create a safe and supportive learning environment that fosters caring relationships between and among adults and peers, provides emotional check-ins and strengthens self-regulation strategies.

To do so, we will:

- Develop routines and structures that result in continuous communication between teachers and the mental health team to ensure a team approach to addressing needs.
- Provide social/emotional learning opportunities, such as healing interventions, in response to toxic stress or responsive negative behaviors. Provide opportunities and social coaching for positive interactions that extend beyond family and close friends.
- Embed the social emotional curriculum in the regular ed curriculum.
- Offer time for self-regulation strategies such as mindfulness, physical exercise, and reflection.
- Encourage open communication regarding needs and available services.
- Support initiatives that address basic needs such as food support, clothing swap, etc.
- Collaborate and coordinate, through FRIES, support for parents.
- Use communication platforms to post resources for parents.
- Explore family programming, such as a winter hike, family yoga, etc., to strengthen bonds.

Goal 4: Connections ~ Strong social connections are foundational.

The isolation and reduced interactions of today leave many students and families feeling disconnected. In a recent survey, 29% of adolescents reported not feeling connected at all to school adults, their classmates or their school community. (America's Promise. The State of Young People During COVID-19, June 2020). Since a sense of belonging is embedded in social emotional well-being, finding ways to connect within and among each other takes on greater importance.

Our ability to communicate with each other is critical when establishing a unified learning community. For non-English speaking families, deliberate efforts must be made to ensure inclusive communication and access to information. To date, our communication systems fail to take into account the challenges embedded within. To this end, we seek to:

Create, strengthen and extend ways in which students, families and faculty can connect within and among each other.

To do so, we will:

- Establish, broaden and strengthen communication methods and systems for sharing information.
- Explore various platforms that may allow for "one stop" communication (Brightwheel) or can be used as a specific application (pikmykid).
- Brainstorm and plan revised and/or alternative afterschool programming plans such as ACE which meet the safety requirements of today.