

**DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION  
Wilmette Public Schools**

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**INFORMATION ITEM**

**Date: February 25, 2019**

**To: Members, Board of Education**

**From: Building Principals  
Grade Level Administrators  
Assistant Principals**

**Ellen Crispino  
Business Manager/CSBO**

**Romy DeCristofaro, Ph.D.  
Administrator for Student Services**

**Angela DeMay  
Assistant Director for Student and Special Services**

**Tony DeMonte  
Administrator for Technology, Information & Safety**

**Heather Glowacki, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent and Administrator for Human Resources**

**Katie S. Lee  
Administrator for Curriculum & Instruction**

**Subject: 2018-2019 Strategic Plan Updates: Continuing Initiatives**

**BACKGROUND**

On September 24, 2018, the Board of Education approved the implementation of the 2018-2019 District 39 Strategic Plan. The yearly planning cycle includes Strategic Plan updates. This executive summary report will focus on mid-year updates of the action steps identified under Continuing Initiatives. The updates on the New Strategic Initiatives will be presented in March.

## **Kindergarten Enrichment**

As part of the phased implementation plan, Harper and Central elementary schools were identified as the first two schools for Kindergarten Enrichment. In order to have space, both schools require construction. The Harper construction project is larger than Central and will require a longer time to complete. The addition of the new space at Harper will start in June 2019 and be completed by December 2019. Interior renovations at Harper, connecting new classrooms to the current building and the renovation of the Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP) classroom will be done in the summer of 2020 as these spaces need to be used during the 2019-2020 school year. STR Partners architects have been working with staff on the design of the addition and the interior space. Design plans have been reviewed at the Facility Development Committee meetings throughout the year. Approval to go out to bid will be requested in March with the final bids going to the board for approval in April. In addition, STR Partners have started working with Central staff on the renovation designs and will begin spending more time on the Central design once the Harper plans are finalized.

In January, the Kindergarten Enrichment Program committee was established to begin developing the optional enrichment programming. During the first two meetings, representatives were presented with the District's plan for offering the optional Kindergarten Enrichment Program to District 39 families. After discussing the timeline for Fall 2020 implementation at Harper and Central, the representatives explored other districts such as Barrington 220 and Downers Grove 58 offering a similar type of program. This exploration inspired thoughts and ideas contributing to the first *draft* statement of the Kindergarten Enrichment Program goals:

*District 39's optional Kindergarten Enrichment Program will provide each child a safe, child-centered environment that fosters social emotional learning experiences to inspire kind, compassionate, lifelong learners. Through academic enrichment, socialization and play, the program offers opportunities for learners to become critical and creative thinkers as well as responsible and productive citizens.*

For the remainder of this year, the committee will focus on creating a framework for the program that will address logistics such as scheduling/time, staffing, registration, and transportation. In addition, a draft of the program goals and objectives will be further developed guided by the assumption that less than 100% of District 39 kindergarten students may register for the optional enrichment program. Families who do not choose to participate can be assured that their child will receive the same high quality, half-day kindergarten curriculum.

## **Personalized Learning**

Last year, the administrators learned about Personalized Learning through sharing and discussing research gathered through articles/books, visiting/interviewing districts and attending workshops/conferences. As a result, the administration has drafted this definition of Personalized Learning for District 39.

*Personalized Learning (PL) is a guided instructional approach where learning is student-initiated, student-driven, and teacher facilitated. It allows for learning experiences to address distinct learning needs. In a Personalized Learning environment, students take an active role in their learning by exercising their voice and choice in setting learning outcomes, establishing learning pace, and monitoring progress.*

This year, the administrators identified a framework for personalized learning, conducted an audit of current practices and reflected on how the district can strengthen the attribute.

<b>Personalized Learning Framework</b>			
<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Examples of Current Practice</b>	<b>Reflection</b>
Learner Profiles	Up-to-date records of students' individual strengths, needs, motivations, and goals.	eduCLIMBER MAP Reports IEPs/504s Class Performance Evidence	Focus professional development on use of records/reports for instructional planning.
Personal Learning Paths	Clear, high expectations allowing students to follow learning paths that responds and adapts based on his/her learning progress.	Varied Learning experiences Student Agency/Ownership Online Learning Platforms "What I Need" instruction	Investigate more ways to engage and empower students to lead learning.
Competency Based Progression	Continuous assessment of each student's progress toward clearly-defined goals.	System of District 39 Assessments Assessments aligned to learning standards - formal/informal Ongoing progress monitoring	Relative strength of D39: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established learning progressions and assessment system</li> </ul>
Flexible Learning Environments	Design of learning environments that responds and adapts to support students in achieving their goals.	Learning Commons in 5 of 6 schools Flexible furniture in some classrooms 1:1 device in grades 5-8 Access to devices in grades K-4	Relative strength of D39 as well as Area of improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase access to mobile learning devices in K-4</li> <li>Explore re-designs of classroom environments</li> </ul>

### **School Climate**

In a continued effort to create a culture of empathy and help students develop the social-emotional competencies needed for both school and lifelong success, District 39 has embarked on a mission of promoting and supporting skill development in the domains of healthy relationships, respect, and responsibility. This school year, District 39's Social Emotional Committee has identified current practices and programs in all buildings, collected baseline data related to current social-emotional proficiencies for our students, implemented *Facing History and Ourselves* at the 5-8 grade levels and examined possible districtwide curricula and programming which aligns with identified needs.

The Social Emotional Committee began by identifying instructional practices and positive behavioral supports currently utilized throughout the district. These practices were aligned with the skills outlined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) which "educate hearts, inspire minds, and help students navigate the world more effectively". Additionally, a curricular scope and sequence of social emotional learning skills spanning kindergarten through 8th grade was identified. The committee considered the appropriateness of current programs used in the district such as *Second Step* and *Facing History and Ourselves* in meeting our academic and social emotional curricular goals. That analysis led the committee to investigate alternative, research-based programs including *rethinkED*, *Ripple Effects*, and *Leader*

*in Me.* This work will continue to in order to determine which program best aligns with District 39's goal to help our students to continue demonstrating growth.

To further ascertain instructional needs related to social emotional proficiency for students in D39, two screeners were administered which gave insights into both areas of strength and areas of focus at specific grade levels. Second and fourth grade teachers assessed their students' skills using the Devereux Students Strengths Assessment (DESSA), while students in grades 5-8 took the Mindset, Essential Skills and Habits (MESH) assessment. Both the DESSA and MESH were administered in November and baseline results indicate that District 39 students have many strengths. Ninety-four percent of 2nd and 4th graders fell within the "Typical" or "Strength" category and six percent of 2nd and 4th graders fell in the "Needs Instruction" Category. Areas identified for needing instruction at the elementary level include personal responsibility and goal directed behavior. The MESH results indicate that District 39 students scored well-above the national average with every category but two. In the categories of student-teacher relationships and sense of belonging, students' scores in the above average and average ranges, respectively.

Currently, D39 teachers are using results from the screeners to increase conscientiousness regarding classroom or small group planning. At the elementary level, intervention leaders are collaborating with individual teams, forming groups as needed, planning whole class lessons, and diving into specific areas in *Second Step* that were identified as needing support. At the 5-8 grade levels, staff have been looking at individual survey results and cross referencing that data with information gathered from relationship mapping. This analysis allows staff to gain broader insight into trends and patterns present at the building level, and also, to identify students in their respective classrooms in need of supports. Relatedly, this data allows teachers to make a concerted effort to make connections with students who are performing below expected proficiency targets. Having objective, screening data has proven helpful in guiding conversations with parents about their child's progress towards development of the social emotional learning competencies.

### **Student Growth**

Historically, District 39 students achieve well above their statewide peers in reading and mathematics. Although achievement data is meaningful, District 39 began to reflect on student progress which is measured by how much "growth" students make over time, typically from one year to the next. When achievement and growth data are used *together*, it can provide insight into student learning.

Within the past academic year, eduCLIMBER, District 39's data warehouse tool, has been fully configured to provide timely access to assessment data. In addition, assessment platforms such as NWEA MAP and aimswebPlus provide progress reports that offer useful information for instructional decision-making. For example, MAP's Achievement Status and Growth Report applies a Student Growth Percentile Model to display a cross-section of achievement and growth and the Learning Continuum report provides the learning standards that students are ready to learn based on assessment results. This year, District 39 has provided access and training to staff on these tools so that they are referenced as teachers meet to plan for class instruction and/or interventions for all levels of student achievement.

In addition, administrators collaboratively restructured Intervention Leadership Teams to include representatives from each grade level and embedded the inclusion of student growth data to the Response to Intervention process. With the understanding that a single measure does *not* provide enough information for a complete assessment of student growth, these teams use quantitative assessment data, qualitative classroom performance data along with other factors that may influence student growth such as learning history, habits, mindset, and time management in order to determine how they can differentiate instruction and what curriculum resources match the learner’s needs within the classroom and/or a designated intervention time during the day. Guidance, support and training have been provided and will be ongoing so that District 39 can address the learning needs of all students.

**School Attendance**

District 39 is in its third year of implementing a goal to bring positive attendance rates up to 75%. Since the goal was initiated, the number of students with positive attendance increased from 67% in June of 2016 to 72% by June 2018. Key efforts have centered around:

- Routinely monitoring student attendance and pairing with a tiered system of supports
- Increasing parent and teacher awareness on the importance of healthy attendance habits
- Providing teacher and parent education on strategies for building resiliency in students and supporting students school avoidance and anxiety

During the 2018-2019 school year, school teams have continued the practice of routinely monitoring attendance data and providing tiered systems of supports for students and families. New this year was the incorporation of late and tardy data information into the school’s routine monitoring and reporting to parents. This was added as District 39 believes that students miss important learning opportunities when regularly late or tardy. Research also shows that chronic tardiness is a predictor of future chronic absenteeism.

Attendance and tardy data as of February 15, 2019 is represented in the tables below. Current attendance data is consistent with previous mid-year reports. This is the first year District 39 tracked late and tardy data across the district. The Board can expect an update in June 2019 with final positive attendance data from the 2018-19 school year and future recommendations.

**Attendance Data**

	<b>EC</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Positive</b>	82%	69%	77%	75%	75%	72%	73%	73%	70%	65%	<b>72%</b>
<b>Chronic</b>	9%	4%	4%	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%	9%	9%	<b>6%</b>

### Tardy Data

	EC	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
<b>Positive</b>	92%	93%	79%	86%	84%	85%	96%	96%	92%	84%	<b>87%</b>
<b>Chronic</b>	3%	4%	10%	5%	6%	6%	1.5%	1%	6%	8%	<b>5%</b>

### Learning Commons

#### *Facility Development*

STR Partners architects have been working with staff on the Highcrest Learning Commons addition. Design plans and cost estimates have been reviewed at the Facility Development Committee meetings throughout the year. The district went out to bid in January and will be requesting board approval for the bids at the February board meeting.

Due to construction timing, the district worked with STR for the initial hardscape/drainage design for the outdoor classroom and discussed a phased-in plan for the garden work:

- Phase 1: Hardscape for outdoor classroom
- Phase 2: Green/planting design for outdoor classroom  
Plan for excavation/salvage of current plants
- Phase 3: Additional planning for exterior gardens (i.e. rain garden, garden between gym and classrooms, mini farm re-do, etc.)

The Outdoor Classroom Committee will meet in March to begin Phase 2 and identifying a landscaping company. Phase 2 is expected to be completed in spring of 2020 after the learning commons construction is completed.

#### *Educational Development*

Romona and McKenzie Schools are in the final reflective year. Both schools strive to have 80% of their respective students demonstrating creativity, communication, critical thinking, and collaboration when engaged in learning experiences held in the Learning Commons. Staff have engaged students in identifying the application of the 4C's -- collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and creativity -- through self-assessments. Self-assessments have been conducted through surveys, journals, and/or videos. For example, Romona students fill out a survey after activities on an iPad. McKenzie students have created short reflection videos as they complete STEAM projects sharing successes, failures, how more time would influence their work, and what supplies could improve their designs. Teachers are noting changes to instruction as a result of the Learning Commons.

#### *Classroom Environment*

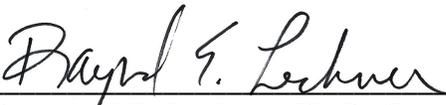
Lessons learned from the Learning Commons initiative have influenced the design of the classroom environment. A learning space is an important aspect of the educational experience as it fosters an environment that promotes communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration. As a result, schools district-wide have begun to creatively transform their traditional seating and desk arrangements to a more flexible classroom environment in some classrooms. The flexibility comes in the form of a variety of tables/desks that allow for small groups to gather and work and seats such as chairs on wheels, ball chairs, armchairs, large cushions and stools that allow for a variety of seating arrangements. However, the purpose of a

flexible classroom environment is more than simply having a variety of different seating arrangements. It is about utilizing student voice, increasing student engagement, heightening collaborative learning, and prioritizing students' learning environment needs.

### **CONCLUSION**

District 39 administrators and staff have worked diligently toward achieving the goals and/or outcomes of the 2018-2019 Strategic Plan. The Board will be presented updates on the New Strategic Initiatives in March. Our work will continue and the Board may expect a full Strategic Plan review in June.

**Recommended for presentation to the Board of Education,**

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**Raymond E. Lechner, Ph.D., Superintendent**