

DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
Wilmette Public Schools

INFORMATION ITEM

Date: June 14, 2021

To: Members, Board of Education

From: Building Principals
Grade Level Administrators
Assistant Principals

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Subject: Review of 2020-2021 District 39 Strategic Plan

BACKGROUND

On September 21, 2020, the Board of Education approved the implementation of the 2020-2021 District 39 Strategic Plan. The district initiatives were divided into three sections: New Strategic Initiatives, Continuing Strategic Initiatives, and Annual Business. This month's executive summary report will note the status of each goal, provide an update and any applicable next steps.

New Initiative

2020-2021 Wilmette District 39 Reopening Plan Year 1: Implementing	
Intended Outcome	By June 2021, District 39 will have implemented the 2020-2021 Reopening Plan keeping student, staff, and community safety and wellness as a priority while ensuring that learning is targeted, connected, meaningful and manageable.
Status	<i>Outcome Met</i>
<p>Background</p> <p>On March 13, 2020, Governor Pritzker made an emergency declaration to close schools statewide. Unfortunately, the 2019-2020 school year ended with teaching and learning occurring remotely as the community needed to abide by the Stay at Home order.</p> <p>Our District 39 Fall 2020 Planning Committee¹ and Advisory Task Force² teams have launched their summer work, and our school principals are completing a careful review of school facilities with an eye on returning to in-person instruction through a variety of scenarios and attention to the health, safety and social distancing guidelines available to us thus far.</p> <p>Our Fall 2020 Planning Committee and Advisory Task Force teams, comprising teachers, staff, administrators, parents and students, are working to develop a continuum of scenarios under which Illinois schools may be allowed to reopen this fall, including scenarios for in-person instruction, hybrid models, and remote learning. Our planning teams are organized into the areas of consideration which inform our work, including Health and Safety, School Operations and Logistics, and Teaching and Learning. We aim to build in-person student learning and connections as often as possible while abiding by state health and safety guidelines. Our teams are guided by our four commitments for return to learning and our plans will focus on solutions that are flexible and adaptable for different scenarios, ensuring that learning is targeted, connected, meaningful and manageable while thoughtfully addressing the health and safety needs of students and staff in sustainable ways. We will be designing plans with these commitments in mind as we work to maximize student learning.</p> <p>As District 39 plans for the 2020-2021 school year, school leaders and committee members will abide by the following principles and commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The health and safety of students and staff is a priority. ● Flexible and adaptable instructional models must be developed to provide consistency and the ability to respond without interruption. ● Manageable, meaningful and sustainable teaching and learning are critical to our ongoing success. ● Targeted and connected learning is our goal. <p>Our District 39 planning commitments were established early last spring and throughout our planning process we have been guided by an unwavering pledge to honor these commitments. The health and safety of students and staff has remained a priority as we aimed to develop models that will provide in-person</p>	

¹ Fall 2020 Planning Committee -

<http://wilmette39.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=360930&pageId=43495014>

² Advisory Task Force - <http://wilmette39.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=360930&pageId=43495018>

learning and connection to the greatest extent possible while abiding by state health and safety guidelines. In order to accomplish this aim, we recognized that our plans must adhere to and comply with the guidelines of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Additionally, plans must be flexible enough to implement full in-person learning, partial in-person learning (hybrid/blended), and remote learning in connected ways while providing the opportunity for us to collectively pivot without interruption while maintaining the critical student-teacher relationships that make learning engaging and meaningful. Given the changing nature of state and federal health guidance for schools amid the COVID-19 pandemic, our continuum of instructional models is specifically designed to ensure robust teaching and learning throughout the school year in connected ways. Adjustments and improvements will continue to be made as we work to ensure ongoing access to robust and meaningful educational services for all students.

District 39 implemented the 2020-2021 Reopening Plan³ which was developed and refined in collaboration with a multi-stakeholder (community members, district families, staff, and administrators) during the summer months. Throughout the school year, District staff conducted ongoing reviews, reflection, and refinement to the plan, as necessary. A Metrics Reopening Advisory Team⁴ was established to review and study the metrics and progress related to the Reopening Plan. The Metrics Team met regularly (weekly at first, then twice a month) to suggest improvement recommendations regarding operational procedures along with health/safety protocols to the Superintendent. A central hub of information, 2020-2021 District 39 Families Toolbox⁵, was created and updated for parents/families to access useful and helpful information, videos, and updates throughout the year. The Board of Education was provided/presented updates at each Board of Education meeting and Committee of the Whole meetings this year.⁶

Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District 39 has reflected on lessons learned and identified key “silver linings” to apply to the 2021-2022 school year.
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Continuing Initiatives

Designing a Kindergarten Enrichment Program Year 3: Developing/Implementing	
Intended Outcome	By June 2021, District 39 will have completed and reviewed the Kindergarten Enrichment and Enhancement Program (KEEP39) at Central Elementary School and Harper Elementary School.
Status	<i>Outcome Met</i>
Background	
For many years, District 39 focused efforts toward meeting a long standing need in our community by providing families an option for a kindergarten enrichment program within their neighborhood school to complement the existing high-quality half-day academic kindergarten programming. Over time and with careful, phased implementation planning by the Board of Education and administration, District 39 began preparing to offer a tuition-based, optional program to launch in Fall 2020 at two elementary schools:	

³ <https://bit.ly/2ThfVPX>

⁴ <https://bit.ly/3iwXmBM>

⁵ <https://sites.google.com/wilmette39.org/reopeningplan/reopening-plan-overview>

⁶ <http://www.wilmette39.org/cms/one.aspx?portalid=360930&pageid=826231>

Central School and Harper School. Kindergarten enrichment will be offered to Central and Harper families during the 2020-2021 school year with plans to extend the program to Romona and McKenzie families pending the success of the program and completion of construction projects at each of these schools to support program expansion.

During the 2019-2020 school year and throughout Summer 2020, District 39 began developing the Kindergarten Enrichment and Enhancement Program or “KEEP39.” KEEP39’s program goals included enrichment and exploration opportunities, purposeful play designed to offer opportunities to enhance development as critical and creative thinkers and activities to promote how to be responsible and productive lifelong learners. With these goals in mind, the Kindergarten Enrichment Program Development Committee, comprised of four Kindergarten teachers, Administrator for Curriculum & Instruction, and elementary principals, met and developed the program’s framework. This framework includes lesson ideas and activities that will enrich learning in literacy, math, social studies, science, socialization and purposeful play. It also provides enhanced social emotional experiences to inspire kindness, empathy, and resilience as well as embrace inclusivity and diversity.

Year 1 Implementation: Enrollment

While preparing for the unique 2020-2021 school year, District 39 committed to move forward with offering KEEP39 at Central and Harper Elementary Schools. Although all adjustments required to adhere to health and safety guidelines were made, families were faced with a challenging enrollment decision. Initially, approximately 75% of Central kindergarten students and 87% of Harper kindergarten students were interested in participating in KEEP39 -- 70 and 66 students respectively. As noted in the chart below, the COVID19 pandemic had a significant impact on enrollment this year. However, District 39 is confident in the original interest numbers and believe they are a more accurate indicator of interest in future years.

KEEP39	Central	Harper
Total Academic Kindergarten Enrollment (June 2020)	93	76
Original Interest in KEEP39	70	66
Early August	54	50
Start of School	32	22
Current Enrollment	35	19

Year 1 Implementation: Program Review

During this first year of implementation, the KEEP39 program review committee, comprised of KEEP39 teachers, principals of Central and Harper Schools, and the Administrator for Curriculum & Instruction, have met and will continue to meet throughout the year to conduct a program review. These meetings offer opportunities to discuss and reflect on program implementation. The feedback gathered from the review of programming elements will be used to guide any updates/revisions, if necessary.

During the first semester, the members of the committee met on December 15, 2021 and January 12, 2021. These meetings focused on the teachers’ perceptions, reflections, and evaluations on how the goals of KEEP39 are being met as well as the benefits they observe in their students. For example, the teachers have noted the increased comfort and familiarity with the kindergarten setting, connectedness and sense of

community with teachers and peers, and the benefits of continuity throughout the day. In addition, they noted the elements they were not able to implement such as the highly interactive cooperative games. Those games were replaced with other shared learning activities that were more aligned with the health and safety protocols. Throughout the second semester, the committee’s work will continue along with gathering feedback and input from students and families.

KEEP39 Phase II Update

The Board of Education has begun planning for construction at McKenzie and Romona Elementary Schools to accommodate KEEP39 programming district-wide as early as the 2021-22 school year, pending program evaluation and expansion. The construction recommendations have been reviewed with STR Architects and administration has requested the Board of Education to authorize the bidding process. These projects are out to bid and garnered high interest based on the 51 companies who attended the pre-bid meeting held on February 1, 2021. The Bid Opening was held on Wednesday, February 17, 2021. The Board voted to approve the McKenzie and Romona KEEP39 projects during the February 22, 2021 meeting. Construction is well underway and all four elementary schools will offer KEEP39 starting Fall 2021.

Year 2 Implementation: Enrollment

KEEP39 registration for 2021-2022 school year concluded at each elementary school - Central, Harper, McKenzie, and Romona Elementary Schools. At this point, the confirmed enrollment numbers guarantee three (3) sections of KEEP39 for Central, Harper, and Romona and four (4) sections at McKenzie next school year.

Confirmed KEEP39 Enrollment as of June 8, 2021

School	Confirmed Enrollment	Wait List
Central	62	0
Harper	56	0
McKenzie	67	5
Romona	51	0

Next Steps

- This summer, KEEP39 teachers will review program elements to make adjustments, if needed, for the 2021-2022 school year.
- In 2021-2022, all four elementary schools will offer the optional, fee-based KEEP39 to District 39 families with registered students in half day, academic Kindergarten.

**Student Growth through Differentiation & Personalization
Year 3: Implementing**

Intended Outcome

District 39 will evaluate the impact of differentiating instruction and personalized learning as measured by maintaining or increasing the percentage of students who demonstrate high growth by meeting or exceeding growth targets at 65% on MAP Growth Reading and Mathematics Assessments.

District 39 will evaluate the impact of teaching and learning as measured by the percentage

	<p>of students and student subgroups who grow in performance on MAP Reading and Mathematics Assessments.</p> <p>In addition, District 39 will continue to analyze benchmarking assessments such as NWEA MAP, aimswebPlus, Devereaux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) and Mindsets, Essential Skills, and Habits (MESH) along with curriculum-based measures to inform improvement efforts in differentiating instruction for all students.</p>
Status	<i>In Progress; Ongoing</i>
<p>The Board of Education was presented with an annual Fall Assessment Report during the November 16, 2020 Board of Education meeting. Throughout the year, the administration has focused on reviewing assessment data, sharing data with staff, and addressing ways to support student growth. The following are examples of the action steps taken at each school/district to engage staff on the use of qualitative and quantitative data to inform instructional decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Department of Curriculum & Instruction met with building administrators to review school specific data and how to crosswalk growth data (eduCLIMBER) and the learning continuum report (NWEA MAP) with staff. ● The Department of Student Services met with building administrators to review the universal social and emotional screeners data - Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) and the Mindsets, Essential Skills and Habits (MESH). ● The student achievement and growth process includes a review of benchmark assessment data and dedicated time for teachers to discuss student data as well as intervention programming. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building administrators provide several opportunities for student data reviews throughout the year: data reviews after fall, winter, spring benchmarking with staff, grade level/team-specific meetings, as well as during the intervention leadership team meetings. ○ Building administrators lead staff in applying the problem-solving steps/process to ensure that both qualitative and quantitative data are included when identifying students in need of additional support or enrichment. ○ Building administrators, with support from the Department of Curriculum & Instruction, provide staff training on how to best interpret assessment reports to identify trends or patterns in areas of focus or enrichment to assist in planning for reteaching or enrichment at the grade level, classroom level, and student level. ● Each elementary building has an Intervention Leadership Team (ILT) comprised of staff members. This team provides support grade level teams for student intervention. Teachers can contact members of the team to request support and to document student needs. The team provides intervention programming ideas, data tracking systems, and continued progress monitoring. Each grade level may meet with a member of the ILT during Friday collaboration meetings to review student data, discuss new student needs while following the problem solving process. ● Grades 5-8 administrators lead teams through the problem solving process and in intervention planning during team meetings. In efforts to engage students in understanding assessment data and setting personal goals, a 6th grade team of teachers are piloting a goal setting process. They are using reading and math MAP data and conferencing with students in setting growth goals. Fostering student agency and involvement in monitoring personal growth is the end goal. ● These systems of support are not only for academic areas. The process and data include social emotional well-being. 	

⁷ Fall Assessment Report: <https://bit.ly/3dp3c5E>

- DESSA and/or MESH data is reviewed and discussed to identify school-wide strengths that are celebrated as well as relative areas of weakness that are used to build upon and improve. Teams continue to build a sense of belonging among and throughout the school community.
- DESSA and/or MESH data is shared with teams/teachers. With support from building administrators, teams are asked to reflect on what the data indicates, to consider what questions are raised by the data, and to develop an SEL goal based on an identified area for growth.

The Board of Education was presented with a Spring Assessment Report⁸ during the June 14, 2021 Board of Education meeting. District 39 shared that NWEA has conducted a norms study using pre-COVID/pandemic assessment data from 2015 - 2018.⁹ NWEA has implemented the new norms this academic year and 2020 norms were applied for fall, winter, and spring replacing the 2015 norms. The reason for this is best presented by NWEA in the following quote:

“For many reasons, it is inadvisable to compare performance of a student on one set of MAP Growth test norms to his or her performance on another set of MAP Growth test norms (i.e., 2015 versus 2020 norms). NWEA strongly advises educators to use the 2020 MAP Growth norms, especially when reviewing data longitudinally, because these norms provide the most current and accurate reference for MAP Growth scores.”¹⁰

As historical/longitudinal data is presented to the Board of Education, it is important to note that there may be slight differences in the national norms information compared to what District 39 shared previously.

District 39 students continue to demonstrate overall high achievement. District 39 students mean RIT scores indicate performance that is equivalent to the national mean RIT score for a higher grade level. In addition, the percentage of students who fall in the average/above average range for achievement has been within 90-99% range. When comparing Reading Spring 2019 to Spring 2021¹¹, the average RIT score for each grade level declined by 1-2 points except for 7th grade. When comparing Math Spring 2019 to Spring 2021¹², the average RIT score for each grade level declined 1-4 points except for 2nd, 6th, and 7th grade.

NWEA studies “observe that approximately 50%-60% of students meet or exceed”¹³ their growth targets in any given district. In reading, the percentage of District 39 students meeting or exceeding projected growth targets falls within or beyond 50% - 60% benchmark range in some grades but not all grades. In grades 3, 4, and 8, the percentage of students who met/exceeded fall - spring growth targets did not reach expectations in reading. When comparing Reading Spring 2019 to Spring 2021¹⁴, the percentage of students who met/exceeded fall - spring reading growth targets declined in all grades except 7th. The most noteworthy declines occurred in grades 2, 3, 5, and 8. In math, the percentage of District 39 students meeting or exceeding projected growth targets falls within or beyond 50% - 60% benchmark range in all grades. The percentage of students who met/exceeded fall - spring growth targets did reach expectations in math. When comparing Math Spring 2019 to Spring 2021¹⁵, the percentage of students who met/exceeded fall - spring math growth targets declined in some grades but not all grades. The most noteworthy decline

⁸ http://www.wilmette39.org/board_of_ed/meeting_information

⁹ <https://teach.mapnwea.org/impl/normsResearchStudy.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://teach.mapnwea.org/impl/MAPGrowthNormativeDataOverview.pdf>

¹¹ Spring 2020 data is not available.

¹² Ibid

¹³ <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2013/interpreting-percentage-students-meeting-exceeding-growth-projections/>

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

of 8% is in 5th grade.

Included in the Spring Assessment Report were the end of year MESH results.

Social and Emotional Competencies

- For students in grades 3-5, all areas of social and emotional competencies continued at or above the 90th percentile nationally. The areas of Self Efficacy and Social Awareness showed growth since fall with Self Efficacy showing the most growth.
- For students in grades 6-8, students' collective responses indicated that social emotional skills were well-developed. All domains were at the 90th percentile or greater, and two areas of strength to note are Self-Management and Classroom Effort, both of which fell in the 99th percentile. Seeing the most improvement since fall is Social Perspective Taking, which moved from the 80th percentile nationally to the 90th percentile nationally, with an increase over its fall score, and the highest percentage of favorable answers in the last three years.

School Environment

- For students in grades 3-5, the results indicate all areas are strengths with composite scores placing Wilmette at or above the 90th percentile nationally, with the exception being School Climate at the 70th percentile nationally. School Safety, however, is of note falling at the 99th percentile when compared to national norms. All areas on this portion of the MESH scored lower than in the fall, so School Environment overall will be an area for further investigation and planning for the fall.
- For students in grades 6-8, teacher and student relationships and school safety were strengths with comprehensive scores falling at the 90th percentile respectively. School climate and sense of belonging both fell between the 40th and 50th percentile nationally. All areas on this portion of the MESH scored lower than in the fall, so School Environment overall will be an area for further investigation and planning for the fall.

The DESSA is an assessment taken by teachers as they reflect on their grades PK-2 students' unique patterns of strengths and areas of need. The DESSA is meant to screen students who may be in need of further social and emotional instruction.

- Fall results on the DESSA indicated that 38 percent of students fall in the strength category of performance, 59 percent fall in the typical range while 3 percent were identified as having social and emotional needs. When compared with the spring data, it is quite similar, in that 38 percent of students continued in the strength category, with 58% in the typical range and 4% identified as having social and emotional needs.
- When students are identified as having needs for more instruction and intervention, specific interventions have been planned and carried out to support these students in their social and emotional development.

Based on the overall results from the spring administration of the MESH at grades 3-8, the area of School Environment, specifically School Climate and Sense of Belonging, has been identified as an area of focus for the 2021-2022 school year. The district-wide SEL Committee is in the process of developing lessons and curricular support for students in grades K-8 in all SEL competencies, and will identify specific lessons to use to support students in these areas. Additionally, more in-depth use of the data from the fall survey with teachers to identify interventions for specific students and groups of students is planned to help address these concerns.

District 39 will continue building the capacity of staff to address the needs of students and monitor student growth academically, socially, and emotionally.

Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiation and personalization of teaching and learning have been significant areas of discussion by the D39 Strategic Planning Core Team. Continued work in this area will likely be incorporated into the Draft Strategic Plan that will be presented to the Board in Fall 2021. • District 39 continuously monitors student achievement and growth and strives to improve in how student needs are met both academically, socially, and emotionally. • District 39 will continue building the capacity of staff to address the needs of students and monitor student growth academically, socially, and emotionally.
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Learning Commons Year 3: Implementing - Highcrest Middle School	
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Intended Outcome	By spring of 2021, the plan to address outdoor learning space (Phase III) will be finalized and implemented.
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Status	<i>In Progress - Courtyard and Outdoor learning space/garden</i>
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The Learning Commons spaces provide students with opportunities to explore and collaborate together in ways not possible within more traditional spaces. It is about utilizing student voice, increasing student engagement, heightening collaborative learning, and prioritizing students' learning environment needs.

With the help of the Board of Education, District 39 has completed a significant, multi-year, district-wide facility improvement effort. The last ribbon cutting ceremony of the new Learning Commons took place at Highcrest Middle School on January 27, 2020. This means that all of our students pre-K through 8th grade now have access to a state-of-the-art learning center designed to enhance collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity. The development of these spaces has been a community effort involving staff representation and partnerships with PTAs and PTOs to raise funds for furniture. Additionally, each school received generous financial gifts from District 39 Educational Foundation.

At Highcrest Middle School, the staff and students were prepared to shift their attention to the Outdoor Classroom/Garden Project now that construction has been completed. However, due to restrictions posed by COVID19, some of the concrete benches were installed as well as the planting of initial shrubs. Due to a lack of volunteers and the ability to maintain space, all other planting was paused. Therefore, the final installation of benches/seating areas and planting is scheduled for Spring 2021. An Eagle Scout has chosen Highcrest Middle School to complete a project and has begun building a reading nest for the outdoor classroom on Friday, June 11, 2021. Since the midyear update, the Outdoor Classroom has been fully planted, and seating has been completed. The outdoor reading nook has also been created, and furnishing efforts will continue through the summer, as well as planting. A team will be assembled in the Fall of 2021 to examine Phase III options, and plan for prairie garden re-planting next school year.

Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A team will be assembled in the Fall of 2021 to examine Phase III options, and plan for prairie garden re-planting next school year.
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Annual Business

Building School Culture & Community	
Intended Outcome	<p>District 39 understands the impact of school culture on the promotion of inclusion, diversity, and a sense of belonging. District 39 values how school culture contributes to a positive climate among students and staff. During the 2020-2021 school year, District 39 will improve school culture by directly engaging in learning/conversations about diversity/inclusion and fostering a sense of connectedness among all students and staff. Improved school culture will be measured by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive and Chronic Absenteeism Student Attendance ● Annual Bullying Report ● 5Essentials Survey for Students & Staff ● District School Culture Survey for Staff ● School Climate Section of Mindsets, Essential Skills, and Habits (MESH)
Status	<i>Ongoing</i>
<p>Background District 39 values diversity, equity, and inclusivity and understands the impact school culture has on the development of a deep sense of belonging community-wide -- students, staff, families. District 39’s statement of inclusion captures the entirety of this ongoing initiative:</p> <p><i>District 39 believes inclusion plays a vital role in student growth. We are committed to providing a safe and equitable learning environment that fosters a mindset of empathy, respect, and belonging for all District 39 students and staff. By respecting each person’s unique identity, perspective, and learning style, we create a stronger community. We honor differences including races and cultures, genders and sexual orientations, abilities and aspirations, identities and affiliations, socioeconomics and worldviews. Embracing diversity prepares our students to thrive in an increasingly complex global community.</i></p> <p>Social Emotional Learning For the 2020-2021 school year, District 39 has outlined a focus on building a positive and cohesive school community. This is affirmed by our commitment to support the health and well-being of students and staff as part of the return to learning plan. For students, the District has prioritized providing and sustaining a positive school climate by dedicating time in the daily schedule to focus on forging connections and providing targeted Social Emotional instruction. There are embedded daily check-ins between staff and students, both in person and synchronous, to cultivate relationships and support student needs.</p> <p>In order to inform these practices, universal social and emotional screeners were given to all students; the Mindsets, Essential Skills and Habits (MESH) survey was administered to students in Grades 3-8 for the 2020-2021 school year while the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) was administered to students in Grades PK through Grade 2.</p>	

The MESH assessment has two components - social and emotional competencies and school environment. School environment is a composite assessment looking at teacher and student relationships, school safety, school culture and sense of belonging. MESH results indicate that District 39 students continue to have the growth mindset and social and emotional skills necessary for school and life success.

Fall 2020 Results

Social and Emotional Competencies

- For students in grades 3-5, all areas of social and emotional competencies were at or above the 90th percentile nationally with self-management being a particular strength, with collective scores falling at the 99th percentile.
- For students in grades 6-8, students' collective responses indicated that social and emotional skills were well-developed and surpassed national norms -- most domains were at the 90th percentile or greater, with the one exception being social perspective taking, where the District fell at the 80th percentile nationally. Of note were classroom effort and self-management, which both fell at the 99th percentile nationally.

School Environment

- For students in grades 3-5, the results indicate all areas are strengths with composite scores placing Wilmette at or above the 90th percentile nationally. Teacher/student relationships and sense of belonging were areas of notable strength, both falling at the 99th percentile when compared to national norms. Also noteworthy was that the area of teacher and student relationships has increased seven percent since the spring assessment was administered.
- For students in grades 6-8, teacher and student relationships and school safety were strengths with comprehensive scores falling at the 90th and 99 percentiles respectively. School climate and sense of belonging both fell in the average range of achievement nationally, and are areas identified for further investigation and needed growth, as scores on those domains fell in the 70th and 50th percentiles respectively.

The DESSA is an assessment taken by teachers as they reflect on their grades PK-2 students' unique patterns of strengths and areas of need. The DESSA is meant to screen students who may be in need of further social and emotional instruction.

- Results on the DESSA indicate that 38 percent of students fall in the strength category of performance, 59 percent fall in the typical range while 3 percent were identified as having social and emotional needs.
- It should be noted that many of these students identified were already in receipt of social and emotional interventions.

Based on the overall results from the spring administration of the MESH at grades 3-8, the area of School Environment, specifically School Climate and Sense of Belonging, has been identified as an area of focus for the 2021-2022 school year. The district-wide SEL Committee is in the process of developing lessons and curricular support for students in grades K-8 in all SEL competencies, and will identify specific lessons to use to support students in these areas. Additionally, more in-depth use of the data from the fall survey with teachers to identify interventions for specific students and groups of students is planned to help address these concerns.

Spring 2021 Results

Spring Results - Social and Emotional Competencies

- For students in grades 3-5, all areas of social and emotional competencies continued at or above the 90th percentile nationally. The areas of Self Efficacy and Social Awareness showed growth since fall with Self Efficacy showing the most growth.
- For students in grades 6-8, students' collective responses indicated that social emotional skills were well-developed. All domains were at the 90th percentile or greater, and two areas of strength to note are Self-Management and Classroom Effort, both of which fell in the 99th percentile. Seeing the most improvement since fall is Social Perspective Taking, which moved from the 80th percentile nationally to the 90th percentile nationally, with an increase over its fall score, and the highest percentage of favorable answers in the last three years.

Spring Results - School Environment

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- Fall results on the DESSA indicated that 38 percent of students fall in the strength category of performance, 59 percent fall in the typical range while 3 percent were identified as having social and emotional needs. When compared with the spring data, it is quite similar, in that 38 percent of students continued in the strength category, with 58% in the typical range and 4% identified as having social and emotional needs.
- When students are identified as having needs for more instruction and intervention, specific interventions have been planned and carried out to support these students in their social and emotional development.

Based on the overall results from the spring administration of the MESH at grades 3-8, the area of School Environment, specifically School Climate and Sense of Belonging, has been identified as an area of focus for the 2021-2022 school year. The district-wide SEL Committee is in the process of developing lessons and curricular support for students in grades K-8 in all SEL competencies, and will identify specific lessons to use to support students in these areas. Additionally, more in-depth use of the data from the fall survey with teachers to identify interventions for specific students and groups of students is planned to help address these concerns.

Staff Professional Development

District 39 is focused on promoting and supporting skill development for both students and staff in the five domains/competencies of social emotional learning as defined by the Collaborative for Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) including self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness. In addition, staff continue to identify and support diversity, equity and inclusion across all educational environments. This work began with the development of a skill matrix

to identify those competencies which will ensure students receive purposeful instruction around how to be “productive citizens of a global society” as outlined in the District mission statement.

As a continuation of efforts to support all students' social and emotional needs, a core group of educators took part in a New Trier Township CASEL training series over the summer in order to help grow adult social and emotional learning competencies. Additionally, a group of staff has been provided professional development related to restorative practices in order to create more inclusive school and classroom environments. The district Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Committee is currently making plans to train a third group on the Responsive Classroom methodology in order to garner strategies that will further facilitate a sense of community in each respective classroom.

Social Emotional Learning Committee

To further ensure that District 39 can meet our SEL goals for students and staff, the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Committee has undertaken the task of building an instructional resource for teachers and staff to support skill building in the SEL competencies. This resource will include learning progressions, grade level outcomes, and lessons to guide the specific instruction of the competencies, while offering ways to embed competency development into everyday instructional practices. The committee is also examining current practices in order to determine how core teams will communicate with staff surrounding identifying and providing to meet building and individual needs and to plan for related, relevant professional development.

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, aligned with the District’s commitment for inclusive practices, the areas of diversity and equity are also being supported through the work of the Social Emotional Committee. The committee recently worked to specifically identify how to support student and staff social and emotional needs during the pandemic when stress and emotions may present differently than in a typical school year.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI) Efforts

Administrators, staff, and students have added to the list of accomplishments under District 39’s “Building School Culture and Community” initiative outlined in past Strategic Plans and board reports. For example, members of District 39 have/will:

- Engaged in summer learning around diversity, identity, and race organized by colleagues by choice (i.e. book talks/clubs).
- Organized Unity Day on October 21, 2020. On this day, members of each school community wore orange as a symbolic representation of showing that District 39 stands together against bullying because we are united around kindness, acceptance, and inclusion. They also participated in Kindness Day on November 13, 2020.
- Formed groups/committee focused on ensuring action items are aligned with beliefs such as adding more books and other resources that represent the diverse populations of the world, sharing teaching/learning resources that can be used by teachers and students, and continuing the conversations around identity/race, equity, and human rights.
- Participated in ADL’s Walk Against Hate on October 18, 2020. Highcrest Middle and Wilmette Junior High School’s administrators, staff, students, and families united in their fight against hate, and the pursuit of justice and fair treatment for all.
- Engaged in learning how to navigate conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusivity-- among adults and among students -- through guidance gleaned from a variety of resources (including those from Teaching Tolerance, Facing History and Ourselves, ADL). This is ongoing

work as this skill requires development and practice so that it is not what we simply do but rather a part of who we are.

- Meet to articulate and share ideas township wide and also with community organizations such as Healing Everyday Racism in Our Schools (HEROS).
- Dedicated the upcoming February Institute Day to the work of DEI and engaging staff in learning, conversations, and collaboration around anti-bias education. This day will lead with a keynote address from Douglas Reeves, author of more than 40 books and 100 articles on education/leadership and twice named to the Harvard University Distinguished Authors Series. His keynote will be based on his newest book about challenging conversations around race.

A prime example of District 39's end goal is encapsulated in this summary of events that were initiated by a group of Wilmette Junior High School students. In November, a group of students sent 8th Grade Level Administrator (GLAd), Eric Resis, a letter advocating for education around racial and gender slurs, and overall inclusion of others. Principal Kate Dominique and GLAd Eric Resis met with the students to discuss and understand what they would like to achieve. The second meeting was led by Bill Hicks, ADL liaison for "No Place for Hate". The students agreed that becoming a "No Place for Hate" designated school, and the workshops and educational opportunities that come with it, would be a great place to start. These students have collaborated with the school leaders and Bill Hicks to adapt ADL's "No Place for Hate" student survey. They also created a video introducing the survey and articulating the intent of gathering information. The hope is that this survey will encourage both 7th and 8th grade students to join them in forming a committee that will work with Bill Hicks to implement workshops for advisory classes and as a result become a "legit 'No Place for Hate'" designated school. These students believe that it is an annual, ongoing commitment and not a checkbox to mark; "We have to prove every year that our fight against hate continues."

Wilmette District 39 Board of Education, not only supported and endorsed the district's mission and statement of inclusion but also committed to engage in reflective learning this year through a book study focused on racial literacy. This punctuates District 39's belief and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity -- important ongoing work focused on the collective growth of all.

And finally, this year has been one that no one could have imagined. Linda Diekman, Library Information Specialist, led the charge of implementing "One Book, One District"¹⁶ to invite the entire community to unite as readers and learners. Reading together increases empathy, creativity, and connection. The book selected, *Outside, Inside* by LeUyen Pham provided readers of all ages opportunities to engage with the text and pictures in a multitude of meaningful ways. The "One Book One District" committee, comprised of staff and teachers from all of our schools, and the generosity of the District 39 PTOs and Education Foundation planned events like the Story Walks (May 3rd) and the virtual visit from author LeUyen Pham (May 4th). Thank you to Linda Diekman, Kate O'Brien, Lynn Mestanas, Kate Johnston-Legg, and Maddie Elman.

Family/Community Engagement Efforts

As in years past, District 39 has continued to host and offer educational presentations and events to engage families and residents of the community. Tony DeMonte, Administrator for Technology, Information, & Safety, has partnered with Family Service Center and other community/district members to plan and deliver these well-attended events.

Here are the events that have been offered this year:

- Building Resilience During a Pandemic (9/2/20)

¹⁶ <https://sites.google.com/wilmette39.org/one-book-one-dist-4-families/home>

- Parenting During COVID-19: Supporting Adjustment at Home and at School (9/22/20)
- Whole Brain Child Approach: Strategies for Effective parenting During Highly Emotional Times (10/20/20)
- Supporting Physical Health in a Digital World (10/28/20)
- Anxiety and Growth Mindset: Helping Kids Cope with Challenges and Setbacks (11/10/20)
- Stress Management: Helping Kids Cope with Stress (12/8/20)
- Developmental Expectations: Helping Kids Increase Competency and Independence (1/27/21)
- Social Relationships: Helping Kids Navigate Friendships and Groups (2/16/21)
- Parenting in a Digital Age (3/10/21)
- App Tasting: Quick Demonstrations of Apps Kids are Using (4/14/21)

All were welcome to participate and recordings of the webinar are posted for viewing at any time.

The recordings can be accessed through the 2020-2021 District 39 Family Toolbox under “Parent Events”.

Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School culture and climate along with diversity and inclusion practices have been significant areas of discussion by the D39 Strategic Planning Core Team. Continued work in this area will likely be incorporated into the Draft Strategic Plan that will be presented to the Board in fall 2021. ● District 39 will continue to positively impact school culture through the promotion of inclusion, diversity, and a sense of belonging among students and staff.
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School Safety	
Intended Outcome	Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, District 39 will continue implementation of the 2018 district-wide safety plan which includes facility improvements and safe practices training for students and teachers.
Status	<i>Ongoing</i>

Background

The State of Illinois requires school districts to review school safety plans annually. In efforts to continuously improve security and safety in District 39, a security review process was established categorizing priorities in phases for implementation during 2017-2018 school year. As a result, security measures are revisited and projects are identified, as needed, every school year. In addition, District 39 regularly collaborates with the Wilmette Police Department (WPD) and Wilmette Fire Department (WFD).

District 39 identified, planned, and completed many security projects last school year:

- Additional security cameras were installed at Wilmette Junior High School.
- District 39 gymnasiums were outfitted with stereo speakers to improve clarity of sound required.
- Stop the Bleed, a national awareness/call-to-action campaign, was initiated with training provided by the Wilmette Police Department on how to help in a bleeding emergency until professional help arrives. Stop the Bleed kits were donated by the Wilmette Optimist Club and North Cook Intermediate Service Center, and placed in all schools as well as the Mikaelian Education Center.
- District 39’s Crisis Plan language was reviewed, updated, and shared with staff. The abridged format allows for future updates to be made immediately. For example, last year, District 39 worked in conjunction with the Wilmette Police Department to identify a reunification site in the event of an emergency.

This 2020-2021 school year, administration identified and will complete the following security projects by the end of the year/summer:

1. Installation of additional security cameras at some schools.
 - a. The goal is to ensure coverage at playgrounds, blacktops, and bike racks as well as stairwells at WJHS. Cameras have been ordered and installation will occur once they arrive.
2. Installation of public announcement (PA) speakers in WJHS stairwells.
3. Additional “Stop the Bleed” kits provided and mounted in hallways for easy access.
4. Installation of some door locking mechanisms for large space areas.

Ensuring the safety and security of students and staff in District 39 is a primary and ongoing goal.

Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continued work in this area will likely be incorporated into the future action plans of the Strategic Plan as teams begin their work within the goal areas of the new Strategic Plan. ● District 39 will continue to engage in annual reflections on how to improve on school safety and security. ● District 39 will continue to create ongoing plans with action items identified based on yearly reflections.
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Grades K-8 Science Curriculum Review

Intended Outcome	<p>A six - eight year cycle is typical of curriculum reviews conducted by school districts. Based on the District 39’s curriculum review cycle, fall 2018 signaled the start of the seventh year since the last science curriculum review.</p> <p>As a result of this school year’s safety protocols and practices, the full implementation of the revised curricula implementation will pause for grades K-4 and begin fall 2021. Grades 5-8 will implement the revised curricula with special attention to the safety protocols and practices unique to this current school year.</p>
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Status	<i>Ongoing</i>
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Background

While implementing the established science curriculum, Grades K-8 Science Curriculum Review was initiated in 2018-2019 school year with a two-year developing phase. The review process involves a reflection on current units of study, an evaluation of standards alignment, and identification of curricular resources required to support teaching and learning. At that time, the newly released Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) suggested a shift in science education from “learning about” science to “figuring out” science with close attention to the engagement of students in phenomenon investigations while incorporating a variety of learning modalities, inquiry, and argumentation.

Review and Implementation Timeline

Year 1: Developing (2018-2019)

1. Review current District 39 Science Curriculum and reflect on current practices.
2. Evaluate alignment with the Next Generation Science Standards and adjust as needed.
3. Apply environmental literacy audit findings to the Science Curriculum Review process.
4. Assess curriculum material needs to deliver instruction.

Year 2: Developing (2019-2020)

1. Pilot and reflect on the effectiveness of curriculum materials and resources.
2. Revise/update/create curriculum maps, as needed.

3. Revise/update report card descriptors to reflect changes to course goals/objectives, if necessary.
4. Purchase curriculum materials and resources to support revisions/updates to curriculum.
5. Provide professional development and training.

Year 3: Implementing (2020-2021)

1. Implement Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) aligned lessons and units of study for grades K-8.
 - K-4 implementation will use curricular resources that support the safety protocols and practices unique to this school year and full implementation will begin fall 2021.
 - 5-8 Implementation of revised curriculum and Amplify Science curricular resources will begin.
2. Gather reflections and information from teachers in order to revise/update 5-8 curriculum maps, as needed.

Year 4: Implementing (2021-2022)

3. Implement K-4 revised curriculum and Elevate Science materials/resources.
4. Revise/update curriculum maps based on feedback, as needed.

The 2020-2021 school year marked the first year of the implementation phase of the revised curricula. The goals were to teach using the adopted curriculum materials -- Elevate Science for elementary (K-4) and Amplify Science for middle/upper elementary (grades 5-8) -- and conduct ongoing discussions to gather feedback that would be used to guide any updates/revisions to District 39 curriculum maps.

Elementary Update

NGSS aligned teaching and learning is underway. However, the planned use of Elevate Science curricular resources for elementary schools had to be postponed due to the restrictions placed on student interaction by classroom social distancing requirements and remote learning. Elevate Science lessons are structured so that students work together in groups and share materials which has not been possible this year. Instead, grades K-4 have been using Generation Genius as a teaching resource which better matches the requirements of remote and in-person instruction. Its online structure brings the science standards to life by pairing engaging videos with reading material, activities, and quiz games.

This year, elementary teachers have become more familiar with the Next Generation Science Standards for their grade levels which is preparing them for more in-depth study of these topics when they begin using Elevate Science next year. Generation Genius will continue to be used as a supplement to Elevate Science due to the added benefit of its online platform - a need that has surfaced and a lesson learned due to this unique school year.

Preparing for the full implementation of Elevate Science in grades K-4 in the fall has already begun. The focus of attention will be on staff training scheduled for summer/early fall:

- Planning lessons using the Elevate Science instructional model: Connect -> Investigate -> Synthesize -> Demonstrate
- Becoming familiar with the teacher and student materials for each grade level's topics and lessons
- Navigating the teacher and student digital components of Elevate Science which are available on the Savvas Realize platform

Middle/Upper Elementary Update

NGSS aligned teaching and learning is also underway. The planned use of Amplify Science curricular resources for grades 5-8 is in progress with a few modifications necessary due to the restrictions placed on student interaction by classroom social distancing requirements and remote learning. Ongoing discussions and reflections are shared among teachers and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction during grade level meetings, collaboration/planning sessions, and/or teacher surveys.

For example, teachers have indicated an overall satisfaction with the curricular resources and learning experiences provided through Amplify Science citing the regular use of the instructional materials provided. This indicates that Amplify Science is meeting their needs in regards to lesson design and delivery. In particular, several have noted that the online simulations demonstrate science concepts well and the writing-based questions require students to build and express their understanding in argument form. As always, the teachers tweak and modify as necessary to meet the needs of students. Many have found the need to modify assessment questions to challenge students’ depth of knowledge or alter the delivery format to make it more “student friendly”. Finally, teachers have shared that although there is a learning management system (student portal) embedded in Amplify’s digital platform, they are using Schoology for consistency and ease for students. The curriculum review committee members will meet in the spring/summer to complete the review process using the gathered information.

Some teachers have participated in professional learning opportunities with National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and a couple of more will participate this summer. Both groups are learning to expand upon their Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) learning and instructional shifts. A team of learning behavior specialists will engage in a summer writing project to design and plan for modifications and accommodations that align with science units of study. Next year, teachers will be engaged in collaborations/training opportunities to create assessments and lessons based on data.

Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the district pursues its new Strategic Plan initiatives in the coming years, it is likely that specific areas of curriculum review and improvement will be incorporated into this work. Continued work in this area will likely be incorporated into the future action plans of the Strategic Plan as teams begin their work within the goal areas of the new Strategic Plan. District 39 will continue to provide ongoing professional development and support.
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Sustainability Planning & Practices
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Intended Outcome	By June of 2021, District 39 will continually seek to achieve energy cost reductions and promote environmental literacy among students.
Status	<i>Ongoing</i>

Construction Projects
 District 39 continually seeks to ensure positive environmental practices during construction projects through the use of sustainable materials, grant funding applications, and cost analysis. Past addition/renovation projects undertaken by District 39 were designed to meet and/or exceed rigorous energy codes and standards and all future design processes will follow suit as well. STR Partners is aware of the district’s commitment to positive environmental practices for any and all construction projects (i.e. Romona and McKenzie construction). This commitment extends to all types of projects like the installation of air conditioning at Wilmette Junior High School. The project at Wilmette Junior High School will include some life safety electrical work that is partially funded by a state maintenance grant. In addition, STR

Partners continues to review the status of grants available at this time for construction and energy conservation.

Sustainability Practices & Education

District 39 has a long standing commitment to sustainability and green practices are institutionalized throughout the district. Specific to this unique school year, students and staff continue recycling efforts -- paper, aluminum, and plastic. Admittedly, other practices have been more challenging as adjustments/accommodations were made to adhere to health and safety protocols. For example, school cafeterias individually package lunches in boxes for in-person learners. In efforts to minimize sharing of items, condiments are provided in single use packets which inevitably produces more waste relative to when they were available in shareable containers in the cafeteria. Also, composting stations have been paused this year since students eat in their respective classrooms.

When able, school green teams were able to continue promoting green practices. For example, Central School's Green Team completed the following activities: 90% Spirit Day¹⁷, Earth Week celebrations, Sustainable Fashion education, holiday light drive, and the annual used school supply collection as students clean out their desks, backpacks, and lockers. Wilmette schools partnered with New Trier students for a Passion Project. Families were invited to donate students' used/usable school supplies so that they could be sorted and donated to other schools/groups in need, while those unusable were properly recycled helping to reduce landfill waste.

Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continued work in this area will likely be incorporated into the future action plans of the Strategic Plan as teams begin their work within the goal areas of the new Strategic Plan. ● District 39 will continually seek to achieve energy cost reductions and promote environmental literacy among students.
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STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

During the February 2020 Board of Education meeting, the Board approved the Consortium for Educational Change (also known as CEC) as the group to facilitate a new D39 Strategic Planning Process. Originally, CEC was going to work with a team of stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, staff and parents from throughout the district, to help facilitate our Strategic Planning work starting Spring 2020. The work with CEC paused at that time.

This school year, District 39 administration reached out to CEC to restart the strategic planning process. The work resumed in April 2020 to celebrate successes as a district and identify improvement opportunities with the goal to develop a multi-year plan. The District administration met with Arlana Bedard, consultant for Consortium for Educational Change (CEC), the strategic planning firm and accomplished the following actions:

- Readiness meetings with CEC
- Stakeholder awareness communications;
- Landing webpage created and live on the District website¹⁸;
- Meeting dates/times established;
- Recruitment of the Strategic Planning Team members, full multi-stakeholder team of approximately 47 assembled;
- Perception/intake surveys created and disseminated to all stakeholder groups with data collection in progress;

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6X25ZbiLk&t=59s>

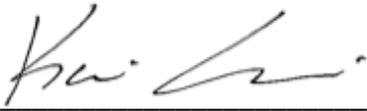
¹⁸ <http://wilmette39.org/cms/one.aspx?pagelId=44612212>

The Strategic Planning Team completed nine (9) of the ten (10) meetings which consisted of an orientation meeting, three data retreats, three vision retreats, and two setting direction meetings. District 39 invites all members of the community to visit the webpage to access specific information. All materials from each meeting such as the meeting agendas, presentation slides, articles, products, and chat logs are posted with the hope that the community will engage in the process alongside the full team.

CONCLUSION

As this report reflects, outcomes and goals may require multiple years to come to fruition. These initiatives have a large impact on teaching and learning; the updates provide a gauge for maintaining the schedule of implementation for successful results. District 39 is looking forward to completing the multi-year strategic planning process and launching the plan in Fall 2021.

Recommended for presentation to the Board of Education,



Kari Cremascoli, Ph.D., Superintendent