Jefferson Area Local Schools

Five Year (2018-2023) School Improvement Plan Narrative

Mission

The mission of the Jefferson Area Local School District is to provide an appropriate educational program and learning environment which will effectively meet the educational needs of its students and help its students accomplish educational goals

Our Vision

To be a k-12 school district that is highly regarded for its academic excellence and for its contribution in actively serving and improving the Jefferson Area Local Schools community.

School Improvement

School improvement in the Jefferson Area Local Schools is an ongoing effort to provide an effective education for our students while being responsive to our parents, community and taxpayers.

We seek to provide instruction in a caring, safe and healthy learning environment, responsive to each student, in collaboration with families and the community.

School District and Building Culture

The school district is committed to higher achievement for all students. A core belief against which initiatives and actions are judged is that all students can learn and that the school creates the conditions that make this a reality. We embrace the paradigm shift that asserts that our schools' product is the work that we create for students to do and that they and their parents are consumers of that product.

The district promotes an educational environment that is consistent with the research completed by the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC) and expressed in its Ohio Leadership Development Framework:

Based on this research our district is committed to:
- Using collaborative team structures that provide for meaningful engagement of internal and external community members;
- Using relevant data to identify the greatest district problems and apply effective decision-making at all levels of the system to solve them;
- Developing a single coherent improvement plan with focused goals for achievement and instruction to guide district-wide improvement efforts;

- Promoting Board of Education alignment and support to sustain our focus on district goals over time;
- Monitoring the degree of implementation of strategies and actions to reach district goals for achievement and instruction;
- Using resources, including time and personnel, to support district goals for achievement and instruction.

At a building level, building leadership, data and teacher teams will:
- Promote a commitment to continuous improvement.
- Maintain a school-wide focus on high achievement for all students.
- Facilitate the establishment and ongoing efforts of collaborative team structure(s) that use data to inform and improve instructional and assessment practice.
- Develop a single improvement plan that focuses on a limited number of actions each year that are aligned to the district's goals and strategies.
- Monitor the progress of the improvement plan, specifically adult implementation and student performance indicators and actions and make necessary adjustments based on data.
- Communicate both internally and externally to ensure all stakeholders are aware of and have the tools necessary to implement building goals.
- Provide opportunities for meaningful input and feedback from internal and external stakeholders.
- Make decisions regarding financial and capital management aligned to district goals and strategies.

Additionally, our school culture will promote:
- A commitment to professional learning communities
- Individualized and personalized instruction for all students
- Use of technology in instruction
- Enhanced connections to families

Standards and Assessments

Curriculum and Instruction
The Jefferson Area Local Schools is committed to and capable of implementing a standards-based educational program. In each building we support the planning, delivering, monitoring and improving of academic programs. Ohio's academic content standards are the basis for content in instruction and assessment.

The standards are used to ensure that students learn what is important, rather than allowing textbooks to dictate classroom practice. Student learning is our focus. Our educational program aims for a high and deep level of student understanding that goes beyond traditional textbook-based or lesson-based instruction. Standards define individual skills, but do not dictate a skill-by-skill teaching methodology. Teachers will be encouraged and supported in delivering instruction in creative and engaging ways. Multiple standards can and will be integrated in instructional activities across the curriculum and specialists in art, music, physical education, health and technology will be included in and integral to the dissemination of the core standards.

Learning for The Future
Our Instruction is grounded in the deployment of Ohio's standards, high quality assessments based on those standards, and use of curricula supports aligned with them. Our teachers will use Ohio's model curriculum to guide course and content development. We will support teachers through professional development in developing an in-depth understanding of the content, concepts and skills addressed in Ohio's standards. We are committed to having all our students graduate ready to succeed. This is a commitment to develop and maintain student centered learning environments that foster and nurture the fusion of the three Rs and the four Cs (critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation).

In addition to addressing Ohio's academic content standards, teachers will incorporate the foundational skills and soft-skills necessary to prepare students for standardized tests, high school end of course exams, the ACT, postsecondary careers and schooling.

Foundational skills include basic skills in reading, writing, arithmetic, mathematical operations, speaking and listening.

Soft-skills are defined as critical thinking skills, sociability, integrity, honesty, goal setting, pathway planning, creativity, decision-making, analysis, and reasoning skills.

Technology allows parents to view their child's academic and attendance information. We will work to expand access to the instructional resources and tools that have been assigned to their child so that they can participate in their child's education.

Throughout the improvement process our elementary teachers and administrators will continue training in the use of the Wilson Reading Model, Guided Reading, Gifted Student push-in curricula as a part of our intervention for students performing below or above grade level standards.

We will work district-wide to find resources and support for students who are at risk due to social and emotional issues, identified disabilities and other health challenges. When appropriate these challenges may be met with structural interventions that amend classroom and school practices i.e. the use of homework, discipline vs. punishment, student access to recess, use of technology, etc.

Curriculum alignment in the core academic content areas includes all special education instructors and extends to any course work offered to students with an IEP who receive instruction outside of the regular education classroom.

A Commitment to Social and Emotional Learning and Support

We are committed to the District-wide use of Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports ("PBIS") with students and the establishment of a school environment focused on the care, safety, and welfare of all students and staff members. PBIS serves as the foundation for the creation of a learning environment that promotes the use of evidence-based behavioral interventions, thus enhancing academic and social behavioral outcomes for all students. We are committed to promoting positive interventions and solutions to potential conflicts.

Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, is a broad range of systemic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes in school communities while preventing problem behavior. The key attributes of PBS include preventive activities, data-based decision making, and a problem-solving orientation (Horner, 2000; Lewis & Sugai, 1999; Sugai et.al., 2000; Weigle, 1997)

Social-Emotional Learning:
Students are entering a world of work in which interactions with others is one key to success. We are committed to helping students understand how to function in the context of social interactions in school and the workplace. This requires an awareness and understanding of the power of emotions and the contributions they make to such interactions. We will facilitate social-emotional learning, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, collaboration, team work, relationship skills and responsible decision-making, in classroom, extra-curricular and co-curricula settings.

Technology

Technology is reshaping society's personal, educational and work environments. The world of work has never been more complex and career paths more fluid. To prepare students for their future we must provide them the tools needed to become successful citizens and members of the world of work. We will use and teach technology skills consistent with the Ohio Technology Standards and the ISTE Standards for Students (International Society for Technology in Education). The following literacies support students in mastering the continually changing digital environment that they will encounter after high school.

- **Computer literacy** is the ability to use computers and related technology efficiently, with a range of skills covering levels from elementary use to programming and advanced problem solving. Computer literacy requires some understanding of computer programming and how computers work.

- **Information literacy** is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. It is the acquisition, interpretation, and dissemination of information. Information literacy focuses on the usage of the Internet and other electronic information resources including social media.

- **Technology literacy** is the ability of an individual, working independently and with others, to responsibly, appropriately and effectively use technology tools to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create and communicate information. It incorporates problem-based learning, utilizing mathematics; science, and technology principles. Technology education addresses the impact of technology on society including the study of technological advances in medical, agricultural, communication, energy, manufacturing, other trades and the arts. Students come to be aware of how the impact of these advances effects their own job readiness and post-secondary preparation.

Assessment

We are committed to assessments that are aligned with Ohio's content standards. We are committed to using a multi-faceted approach to assess students that provides opportunities for focused and timely interventions for students in need. This is true for both students who are struggling, and students who are performing at advanced levels. Formative and summative assessments aligned to the standards provide critical data to teachers throughout the year as they plan their instruction for students' individual needs.

An effective system of student assessment is critical and must have the following components: (1) multiple measures that are employed throughout the course of learning; (2) blending traditional testing with curriculum-embedded performance tasks; (3) engaging teachers as partners in the process and honoring their judgments; (4) using technology such as student response systems and electronic survey instruments to assess students in the classroom in order to provide immediate feedback that is reliable and informs instruction.

Using Data to Improve Instruction

"Evidence, data and clarity on desired outcomes are essential to school improvement. At the state level, Ohio is prioritizing the use of evidence as schools determine what strategies yield maximum results in student success. This is especially important as educators support more and more students with diverse needs. Evidence and data also provide critical feedback that can enable continuous improvement". (ODE Strategic Plan)

The JALSD is committed to using multiple sources of data to make decisions about instruction, identifying student needs and setting academic priorities. Data can be drawn from standardized tests, formative classroom assessment, summative assessments, student work samples and progress monitoring. Student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results provide early warning indicators of students who are at risk of educational failure or who might benefit from the additional challenges available to them through gifted instruction, college credit plus or extra-curricular or co-curricular opportunities within our school district.

Access to district and building level **achievement data that** evaluates how well students perform against a standard and **progress data (value added)** that measured by how much "gain" or "growth" students make over time is integral to our school improvement process. Teachers and administrators use this data to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions previously taken. Individual student data is utilized to personalize the educational program for all our students. Principals and teachers reflect on and use value added data in pre and post observation and evaluation conferences as a framework for setting personal, department, grade level, building and district instructional and achievement goals.

Student data is used to promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning around grade level and content area instruction in Teacher Based team and Building Leadership team meetings.

Evaluation Systems

The Jefferson Area Local schools utilize the tools and processes available in eTPES and the OTES, OPES and OSCES processes to align teacher, counselor and principal evaluation with our improvement plans.

Summary

The Jefferson School District Improvement process has been developed to make sure that the following strategies, present in effective schools, are implemented through a focused plan for professional development, the alignment of our curriculum, community engagement and promoting positive behavior intervention and supports to implement with a high degree of integrity the following:
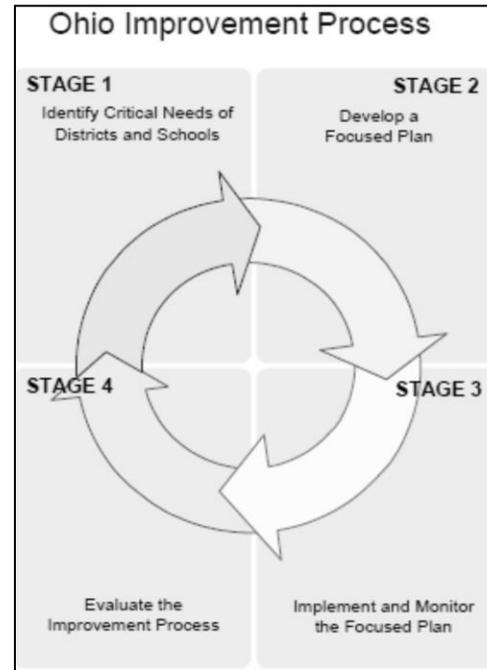
- All teachers implement a challenging, coherent curriculum
- Time is spent on teaching standards and instructional time is protected from distractions.
- High expectations for all students are clear and measured by a system of formative (as you learn) and summative (after the learning) assessments. Students receive feedback in a timely fashion and in a variety of ways besides assignment of grades. Technology will be used to give parents and students access to teacher grade books, student attendance data and high quality instructional tools that can be used at home.
- Parent and community communication is open and frequent
- An orderly and supportive environment is maintained
- Staff development opportunities are focused on the school goals and are deep, ongoing and embedded in our classrooms and buildings.
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The Jefferson Area Local Schools have adopted the following **Core Principles for School Improvement:**

1. We will use a collaborative, collegial process to initiate implement our goals and strategies.
2. We will produce one focused plan that aligns all improvement efforts.
3. We will rely on quality data, data interpretation and use data effectively at each grade level.
4. We will expect substantive changes in student performance and instructional practice because of our initiatives and professional development.

The Ohio Improvement Process the Jefferson Area Local School District began the Ohio Improvement Process (OIP) during the 2008-09 school year.

In Stage One of the OIP process the **_District Leadership Team (DLT) Identifies the Critical Needs of the District_** by using the state and district data in the decision framework. The DLT worked to identify the most pressing needs faced by the district. Data from four levels i.e. student performance, instructional management, expectations and conditions, and resource management were reviewed, and the district moved to stage 2 of the process.

In Stage 2 of the OIP the DLT **_Develops a Focused Plan_**. Stakeholders were involved in thinking about the district's overall direction and plan. During Stage 2, three critical areas of need were identified as being central to student success in the future: 1) implementing Ohio's standards with integrity 2) Using data to make decisions and insuring that the data be reliable and aligned with and accurately measure student progress against Ohio's standards and 3) Implementing Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports ("PBIS") leading to the establishment of a school environment focused on the care, safety, and welfare of all students and staff members and promotes social and emotional learning.

In Stage 3 of the OIP process: The district and building teams will Implement _**and Monitor this Plan**_. Building Leadership teams develop building goals, strategies and action steps in response to the district's goals this requires that all employees know their responsibilities for ensuring that the goals and strategies are achieved. In addition, each building has an action plan to implement and monitor their strategies.

In Stage 4 of the process buildings and district leadership teams _**Evaluate the Improvement Process**_ by examining the summative impact on student achievement as measured by Aimsweb Benchmark and progress monitoring data in grade K-6, State of Ohio Assessments, district and building data, value added data for grades 3-8, KRAL, CogAT data in grades 1 and 4, the Terra Nova Data in grades 2 and 3, classroom assessments, student self-assessment in grade 7&8, nine week grade distribution data by subject area and by teacher, ACT data, attendance data, all of the data in the district's decision framework, and student work samples. The degree of implementation of initiatives and actions prescribed in the building's plan are measured by principal walk-through visits to classrooms, data presented at grade level meetings, the continued reduction in the number of students referred for testing and the sharing of student work samples and review of classroom assessments.