

**WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
**2012-2017**  
**Overall School Improvement Strategy**

Schools are required to articulate a multi-year, school-wide strategy for improvement, the ultimate goal of which should be to improve student performance and to narrow the achievement gap.

**A. Overall Strategy and Key Reform Initiatives: Narrative Questions**

Please respond in brief narrative form to the following questions regarding your school's overall strategy and key reform initiatives.

1. What is your school's overall approach toward improving student performance and closing the achievement gap?

Washington Middle School's overall approach toward improving student performance and closing the achievement gap focuses on collaboration and capacity building of all stakeholders in the school community. The following initiatives will be the concentration of our approach:

- Professional Learning Communities (PLC)/Data Teams: Teachers are able to meet in content area instructional data teams on early release Thursdays and during scheduled meeting times throughout the school day. The school-wide data team meets monthly to analyze various school data, provide feedback to instructional data teams, monitor student progress, and impact professional development decisions.
- Learning Walks: Trained staff facilitators will lead a series of learning walks (each certified staff member will be given the opportunity to act as both the observed and observer), with the goal of promoting collaboration, providing feedback, sharing instructional strategies, creating an instructional focus, and improving student outcomes.
- School-Family Connections: With the assistance of the Family-School Liaison Team, we will promote positive relationships through connections with community agencies, support for families, and collaborative events to ensure that student performance increases.

2. Describe the rationale for the selection of the school's prioritized reform initiatives, including how such selection reflects data on identified student needs and the use of evidence-based initiatives.

Washington Middle School is prioritizing data teams, learning walks, and family and community involvement as reform initiatives that will have the greatest impact on improving student performance. The above initiatives will be focused on closing the achievement gap in the areas of reading, mathematics, writing, and science.

Enlisting a higher level of family and community involvement through school open house nights, parent and teacher conferences, Governance Council, the Parent Teacher Connection, the School Resource Officer, after school programs, the Family School Liaison Team, parent visits, and information sessions for parents through the Parent Teacher Connection will positively influence student learning.

The continuation of the data team model is a tool we will use to progress monitor all students. Through collaboratively setting goals, analyzing student data, and sharing best instructional practices, teachers and administrators are able to target specific student needs based on various forms of individual student data. Teachers can then provide academic and behavioral-based interventions to

support students in areas of need.

Learning walks will be a new initiative undertaken at Washington Middle School that will promote embedded professional development for teachers to increase student performance. Peer observations will be a non-evaluative way to allow teachers to create a common school vision of teaching and learning by sharing effective instructional strategies.

3. List the multi-year, measurable performance targets that will be used to gauge student success. What metrics, including ways to monitor student outcomes and indicators of school personnel activity, will be put in place to track progress towards performance targets?

	SPI 11-12	Students with Disabilities	Free Reduced Lunch	Black	Hispanic	ELL	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
SPI 2011-12	59.5	22.4	50.2	57.3	48.1	26.1	60.6	60.5	63.8	47.4
Target 2012-13	63.6	28.5	55.1	60.3	52.5	30.1	64.8	66.1	65	53.5

Washington Middle School's CMT School Performance Targets from 2012-13 to 2016-17 include mathematics, reading, writing, and science and include the following subgroups: Students with Disabilities, Free and Reduced Lunch students, English Language Learners (ELLs), Black students, and Hispanic students. Students participate in the Meriden District Assessment (MDA) which has progress monitoring scale scores within each grade level and is administered three times yearly. Washington Middle School will implement a rigorous and viable curriculum with instructional strategies incorporating the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in all content areas in grades 6-8.

Based on the 2012 mathematics CMT data, WMS students will increase their vertical scale growth scores as measured by the 2013 CMT for grade 6 by 19 points and for grade 7 by 4 points.

Based on the 2012 reading CMT data, WMS students will increase their vertical scale growth scores by 4 points in grade 6, 1 point in grade 7, and 5 points in grade 8.

4. How will reform initiatives interact/coordinate with other resources (e.g., Title I, Part A; Title II, Part A Teacher Quality; Title III, Part A English Language Acquisition funds; Priority School District funds; Summer School funds; philanthropic funds)?

I think you can omit this.

5. Please indicate how the school consulted with relevant stakeholders regarding the development of the Alliance School Plan by including a list of all stakeholders with which you have consulted and a brief description of the input received from each group.

Washington Middle School has collaborated with members of central office in creation of the overall school improvement strategy based on the current alliance district plan. Members of the school-wide data team also serve on the district data team which is comprised of members of central office, administrators and teachers from the elementary, middle, and high school level, and Meriden

Federation of Teachers and Meriden Association of Administrators members. A subcommittee of the school-wide data team has met to create, discuss, review, and revise the school improvement plan. Members of the Parent Teacher Connection and Governance Council were consulted in the creation of this plan. The Governance Council consists of teachers, parents/guardians, and community members. Teachers took part in a school climate survey which provided pertinent input on school strengths and areas of improvement which is reflected in this plan.

## **B. Key School Initiatives**

Using the following chart, please provide a description of each key individual reform initiative – both existing programs and those planned through the Alliance District process and other planning processes – which the school will undertake in the next five years in service of its overall strategy.

Schools should include a separate chart for each key initiative.

- **Overview:** Please describe the initiative briefly, including the purpose of the planned activities and their underlying rationale. Please indicate whether the initiative is drawn from the menu of reform options provided in this application.

If proposing to expand an existing reform and the existing reform has, in the past, led to increases in student performance, please describe the extent to which the reform has improved student performance and include supporting data.

If proposing to expand an existing reform and the existing reform has not led to increases in student achievement, please describe how the current proposal differs from previous reform efforts, and why it is likely to succeed where the previous effort did not.

- **Five Year Strategies and Implementation Steps:** List the steps the school will take over the next five years to implement the initiative.
- **Year One Implementation Steps Description:** Describe in greater detail the implementation steps that will occur in the 2012-13 school year.
- **Years of Implementation:** Indicate the anticipated length of the proposed initiative.

## Key School Initiative

Please copy/paste template on the following pages for each additional reform initiative.

**New or Existing Reform?**       New       Existing

### Overview:

Washington Middle School is committed to improving its implementation of Data Teams including the school-wide data team and instructional data teams. Our purpose is to improve teaching and learning through teacher and administrator collaboration and to support teachers through coaching and monitoring. Improved instruction will focus on establishing school-wide professional development that targets research-based areas such as formative assessment, effective teaching strategies, specific teaching strategies targeting ELLs, and other areas identified by the data teams. The overall goal of data teams is to help assure that students perform on grade level, to close the achievement gap between subgroup populations, and to move students up at least one band on the CMTs in reading, math, writing, and science.

### Five Year Strategies and Implementation Steps:

1. School-wide data team will provide ongoing feedback/support to instructional data teams to allow for greater consistency school-wide and to foster greater interdependence
2. Analyze various forms of student data, including but not limited to CMT scores, MDA scores, grades, behavioral data, student climate surveys
3. Align school-wide and instructional data team SMART goals to the CCSS
4. Evaluate school-wide data team effectiveness, maintain minutes, and set meeting calendar
5. Utilize data warehousing systems for storage and recovery of student information
6. School-wide data team will provide instructional supports for teachers via peer coaching, learning walks, and observations as well as the creation of an online shared resource containing effective teaching strategies aligned to the ten anchor CCSS
7. Provide instructional support to teachers through coaching and modeling as well as monitoring
8. Continue to monitor strategies and implementation steps to refine the process as needed

### Year 1 Implementation Steps Description:

1. Evaluate school-wide data team effectiveness, maintain minutes, and set meeting calendar
  - Instructional data teams will post minutes and the 5 step process worksheet on SharePoint
  - School-wide data team will review instructional team minutes and provide feedback and support to teams
  - School-wide data team will self-assess school progress triennially using the instructional data team rubric while instructional data teams will do so biannually
2. Conduct embedded professional development for teachers to implement effective teaching strategies
  - Consult with ELL instructor to develop and present effective teaching strategies for ELLs during PLC time
3. Provide instructional support to teachers through coaching and modeling as well as monitoring
  - School-wide data team will conduct professional development during PLC time based on trends discovered in learning walks
  - The ILA department will participate in professional development focusing on 21<sup>st</sup> century technology skills

### Years of Implementation:

- X Year 2
- X Year 3
- X Year 4
- X Year 5

**Key School Initiative**

Please copy/paste template on the following pages for each additional reform initiative.

**New or Existing Reform?**

**New**

**Existing**

Overview:

Working in conjunction with the Connecticut Center for School Change (CCSC), Washington Middle School administration and teaching staff will be trained in and implement learning walks. The purpose of these learning walks will be as follows:

- Develop relationships with staff in Meriden Family Zone (MFZ) schools;
- Gather information to begin to determine professional development needs related to school improvement planning, leadership development, and student achievement;
- Determine implications for school improvement planning process in the upcoming school years; and
- Participants conducting learning walks will observe the following process:

Participants (may or may not include)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Assistant Principal or Instructional Associate</li> <li>• Teachers</li> <li>• Central Office Representatives</li> <li>• CT Center for School Change (CCSC) Representatives</li> </ul>
Pre-Observation Meeting 30 minutes (whole group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-meeting to allow the principal to share school improvement goals and areas of challenge related to SIP</li> <li>• Discuss area of focus for learning walk related to the SIP</li> <li>• Develop norms for collection of data in classrooms (grain-size, non-judgmental evidence)</li> </ul>
Observation Process 40-60 minutes (small group)	<p>Classroom visitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-6 observers per team</li> <li>• 4 classrooms visited per team</li> <li>• 10 minutes per classroom</li> </ul>
Observation Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data gathering sheet focused around elements of the instructional core</li> </ul>
Debrief Process 15-20 minutes (Individual reflection)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual debrief-review notes and select evidence related to area of focus</li> <li>• Team debrief-share data related to area of focus</li> </ul>
25-30 minutes (small group discussion*)	<p><i>*Groups larger than 8 should be split into smaller groupings for first round of debrief.</i></p>
Debrief Summary 40-60 minutes (whole group discussion)	<p>After data is shared, the group develops responses to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strengths were observed?</li> <li>• What trends were identified?</li> <li>• What are the implications for professional development for teachers and administrators?</li> <li>• What data was collected related to the school improvement goals and what are the implications for school improvement planning?</li> </ul>
Feedback to Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principal will share the summary of the observations with staff.</li> <li>• No individual feedback will be given to staff members who were observed.</li> </ul>
Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools will use process to gather information around instruction in a non-evaluative manner in their building and to inform SIP work.</li> <li>• CCSS Staff and MPS will use information gathered to jointly plan professional development aimed at instructional improvement.</li> </ul>

**Five Year Strategies and Implementation Steps:**

For the 2012-13 school year and years 3-5, learning walks will be conducted once per term. By the end of year 5, it is anticipated that all staff will have been observed and been trained as observers as part of the learning walks process.

Data gathered as a result of learning walks will be used to determine professional development needs related to school improvement planning and leadership development as well as to determine the implications for school improvement.

**Year 1 Implementation Steps Description:**

1. Determine area(s) of focus based on need as per SIP
2. Determine participants
3. Select classrooms to be observed by members of the learning walks teams
4. Participants (observers) will be formally trained in the process of learning walks (as outlined above)
5. Learning walks will be conducted
6. Feedback based on the learning walks will be shared with staff
7. Feedback will be used to determine professional development needs related to SIP

**Years of Implementation:**

- X Year 2
- X Year 3
- X Year 4
- X Year 5

## Key School Initiative

Please copy/paste template on the following pages for each additional reform initiative.

**New or Existing Reform?**       **New**       **Existing**

**Overview:**

**In collaboration with the Family School Liaison Team, the School Resource Officer, parents/guardians, and community members, we will promote positive relationships through community connectedness, family supports, and collaborative events to ensure increased student performance. A higher level of family and community involvement will go a long way to promote positive relationships, enabling the needs of all students to be met academically, emotionally, and socially as evidenced by increased CMT and MDA scores, improved attendance rates, decreased number of referrals and truancy, and parent, student and teacher climate survey results.**

**Five Year Strategies and Implementation Steps:**

- 1. Collaboration with the Family School Liaison Team**
- 2. Continued collaboration with families and the community through parent/teacher conferences, Parent Teacher Connection meetings (including information sessions for parents), multi-cultural night, volunteering and mentoring opportunities, Open House, chaperoning, and involvement with extra-curricular activities**
- 3. Continued family and community advisory of the principal through the Governance Council, whose members also serve on the school-wide data team**
- 4. Implementation of various classes taught by the School Resource Officer to support students in specific areas of need**
- 5. Implementation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (CLCC), formerly known as REACH, to provide assistance in academics and extracurricular activities to students through partnerships with community agencies**
- 6. Continued relationship with various community programs including the following:**
  - Meriden Extended Day Treatment Program through a Cox Charities Community Grant in conjunction with the Village for Families & Children, Inc.**
  - On the Move Program at Girls Inc. This program provides a safe and nurturing environment after school for girls to keep them focused on strong academic achievement, to provide exposure to programs specific to their development, and to help them form lifelong relationships by working with girls from other schools.**
  - WMS Express at the Boys and Girls Club. This is an after school educational enrichment program for WMS students in grades 6-8. Tutoring services in math, science, language arts, and social studies will be provided. This program takes place two days a week from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (There is more info on this one; I will copy and put in your boxes).**

**Year 1 Implementation Steps Description:**

- 1. Provide students with PBIS rewards through collaboration with the Family School Liaison Team**
- 2. Continue to carry out family open house night and other yearly events with assistance of community members**
- 3. Establish connectedness with families through advisory teacher positive calls home**
- 4. Continuation of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program**

**Years of Implementation:**

- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5