Washoe County School District

Desert Skies Middle School

Classification: 1 Star School

Title I, TSI

2026-2027 School Improvement Plan

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Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Student Success

Areas of Strength

The listening and speaking domains continue to be an area of strength for our EL students; 48% of our students meeting the "bridging" or "reaching" targets of the listening domain and 60% are in "developing" or "expanding" in the speaking domain. 78% of students are "developing" or "expanding" in writing. Additionally, for the last three years, Desert Skies students have grown in all ACCESS domains. Sixth grade students made consistent growth, as measured by SBA. Twenty-three percent of 6th graders scored at a level three or four in ELA, and 18% of 6th grade students scored at a level three or four in math.

Areas for Growth

Desert Skies Middle School continues to see an achievement gap between students that are designated as English Learners (EL) and receiving additional services under that designation and students that are not receiving those services. SBAC scores for the 25-26SY show that 100% of DSMS students designated as EL scored as less than proficient (level 1 and 2) in ELA. In math, 99% of our students designated as EL scored as less than proficient (level 1 and 2). In addition, only 45% of EL students met their annual growth targets in iReady and 20% met their stretch growth goals. iReady data also shows that 54% of the EL students at DSMS are three or more grade levels below their current grade level with an additional 11% that are at least two grade levels below. Finally, ACCESS scores from the 24-25SY show that there has been a slight decline each year in the overall ACCESS scores from 21-22, 22-23, and 23-24 school years with only two students exiting EL classification this last school year.

English Language students at DSMS are still not making the growth that we would like to see and therefore will continue to be the focus of our School Performance Plan in the area of Student Success.

Equity Resource Supports

Student Group	Challenge	Solution
English Learners	Our primary assessments for growth (iReady, SBAC, access) are all in English. As English is not the first language for our EL students, taking/ understanding the assessments is more difficult for them than students for which English is their first language.	Provide EL students with evidence-based strategies in English language acquisition in all academic classes. Provide EL mainstream and EL advanced classes for all English learners.
Foster/Homeless	Students in this category show inconsistent attendance and have additional barriers to attending school regularly.	Ensure any students who are missing more than 10% of the scheduled school days are referred to each grade level attendance teams. Refer to Family Resource Center as necessary. Utilize Mental Health Professional, counselors will run connectedness groups.

Student Group	Challenge	Solution
Free and Reduced Lunch	100% of our students are FRL; all solutions will apply to student body as a whole.	Ensure 100% of student population has consistent, equitable access to Tier 1 instruction through observations, walkthroughs, and feedback to teachers.
Migrant/Title1-C Eligible	N/A	
Racial/Ethnic Minorities	Teachers and staff may not understand students' backgrounds and how to make connections with students.	Utilize EL staff, Tribal Youth Advocacy Specialist, and Home Visit Program to better understand the needs around racial/ethnic minorities.
Students with IEPs	Students with IEPs are not provided equitable access to Tier 1 curriculum and concepts.	Desert Skies will utilize responsive scheduling, a more robust co-teaching model, designated resource classes, appropriate scaffolds and supports, and consistent data monitoring to ensure students with IEPs are reaching their goals and accessing Tier 1 curriculum.

Problem Statements Identifying Student Success Needs

	Problem Statement	Critical Root Cause
1 ★	English Learners at DSMS are under performing compared to their regular education peers.	Desert Skies Middle School continues to have inconsistent implementation of appropriate (grade-level), evidence based strategies designed to help our English Learners with language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and academic curriculum. EL instruction needs to target skills such as reading, writing, and speaking in order to increase the capacity of our EL students to succeed.
2 ★	State assessment performance data reveals a persistent achievement gap between students identified as English learners and other identified student groups at the school, district, and state levels.	The school's assessment data indicates that English learner students may benefit from increased opportunities for rigorous, language-rich instruction, stronger intervention structures, and enhanced collaboration among instructional staff to address both academic and language acquisition needs.

★ = Priority

Adult Learning Culture

Areas of Strength

DSMS teachers meet consistently for PLCs, as well as academic team meetings and content team meetings. In these meetings, they use the Solution Tree PLC guiding questions around data generated from common assessments and student assignments. The structures for teachers to analyze student learning data are already in place.

SB81: Staff Climate Survey: One area of decrease reported by staff members was staff collaboration, which was 14 points below the district average, and only a 72% favorable response from DSMS staff. An emphasis on PLCs will help increase overall staff collaboration and help staff collaboration be more purposeful and student-achievement centered.

Areas for Growth

Since they are already consistently having data-driven discussions, Desert Skies staff will focus on how to strengthen the use of student data when designing instruction. Staff will be encouraged to utilize GLAD and EL strategies, utilize feedback from the MTSS committee for Tier 2 and 3 supports and interventions, and use research-based district-approved curriculum. Additionally, teachers will utilize Teacher Clarity concepts.

Equity Resource Supports

Student Group	Challenge	Solution
English Learners	EL students may not access district-approved, grade-level curriculum without adequate supports.	Teachers will be GLAD trained, utilize the EL strategy of the quarter, and collaborate with EL staff on progress-monitoring EL students.
Foster/Homeless	These students may not access district-approved, grade-level curriculum without adequate supports.	Refer to MTSS team as necessary; utilize "No New Content Wednesdays" and iReady MyPath data and resources for individual and small group interventions.
Free and Reduced Lunch	Our entire student population is FRL. These students may not access district-approved, grade-level curriculum without adequate supports.	Refer to MTSS team as necessary; utilize "No New Content Wednesdays" and iReady MyPath data and resources for individual and small group interventions.
Migrant/Title1-C Eligible	N/A	

Student Group	Challenge	Solution
Racial/Ethnic Minorities	These students may not access district-approved, grade-level curriculum without adequate supports.	Refer to MTSS team as necessary; utilize "No New Content Wednesdays" and iReady MyPath data and resources for individual and small group interventions. Collaborate with EL staff and staff who have participated in Home Visits to better understand needs of students from diverse backgrounds.
Students with IEPs	These students may not access district-approved, grade-level curriculum without adequate supports.	Teachers will provide data frequently to case managers for progress monitoring. Special education staff will collaborate with general education staff to ensure that IEP accommodations are implemented.

Problem Statements Identifying Adult Learning Culture Needs

	Problem Statement	Critical Root Cause
1 ★	Teachers at DSMS are not consistently using student data to inform their instructional practices.	Approximately 50% of the teaching staff at DSMS have been in the classroom for 5 years or less. Many teachers are still learning how to implement common assessments, use newly-adopted district curriculum, and collaborate with EL and Special Education staff members. Collaboration with these professionals will enable staff to use data when designing instruction for students.

★ = Priority

Connectedness

Areas of Strength

Our goal is to increase parent involvement and participation in the DSMS community. We host several parent/student events throughout the year and are continually seeking ways to increase attendance and build trust in the community. We have been responsive to family feedback on the climate survey and moved evening events to start at at least 5:00 PM. We have an "Events" committee that will work on organizing annual events and will include families in the planning and have been cognizant of more advance notification. Our Home Visit Program is robust and we had over 10 families sign up for visits during Scorpion Day.

Areas for Growth

DSMS has been diligently working to increase overall parent participation in school functions and engage parents in the school community. An area for growth is encouraging more family feedback and input through quarterly surveys and a Parent Advisory Committee. Additionally, we need to update our communication avenues to include more social media posts.

Equity Resource Supports

Student Group	Challenge	Solution
English Learners	Many families do not speak English in their homes and might not understand communication from the school if it is in English.	Provide communications for parent/ student events in both English and Spanish.
Foster/Homeless	Families need advance notice to make arrangements to attend, or families may need transportation.	Give as much advance notice and request reminders of upcoming events. Continue to collaborate with RTC to maintain the Desert Skies bus stop.
Free and Reduced Lunch	Our school is 100% free and reduced lunch; many families cannot afford to miss work to attend functions at the school.	Provide opportunities for family engagement at different times of the day and different days of the week to ensure that families have multiple opportunities to participate.
Migrant/Title1-C Eligible	N/A	
Racial/Ethnic Minorities	Many families do not speak English in their homes and might not understand communication from the school if it is in English.	Ensure communication is in native language; collaborate with Home Visit team to identify unique barriers for families.

Student Group	Challenge	Solution
Students with IEPs	Progress reports, IEPs, and many communications utilize specific academic language and acronyms.	Ensure communication around IEP meetings, progress reports, etc. are worded in family-friendly language, and provide explanations for any acronyms or specific terms. Ask for and answer family questions during IEPs.

Problem Statements Identifying Connectedness Needs

	Problem Statement	Critical Root Cause
1 ★	Low percentages of DSMS families participate in DSMS parent centered events throughout the year which leads to low engagement in the overall school community.	There is a general lack of trust in the school system for many parents in the community. Many parents are also unsure of how they can participate in the school community and help their child be successful. In addition, some parents are reluctant to engage with staff and attend events due to language barriers.

★ = Priority

Priority Problem Statements

	Problem Statement	Critical Root Cause
1 ★	English Learners at DSMS are under performing compared to their regular education peers.	Desert Skies Middle School continues to have inconsistent implementation of appropriate (grade-level), evidence based strategies designed to help our English Learners with language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and academic curriculum. EL instruction needs to target skills such as reading, writing, and speaking in order to increase the capacity of our EL students to succeed.
2 ★	Teachers at DSMS are not consistently using student data to inform their instructional practices.	Approximately 50% of the teaching staff at DSMS have been in the classroom for 5 years or less. Many teachers are still learning how to implement common assessments, use newly-adopted district curriculum, and collaborate with EL and Special Education staff members. Collaboration with these professionals will enable staff to use data when designing instruction for students.
3 ★	Low percentages of DSMS families participate in DSMS parent centered events throughout the year which leads to low engagement in the overall school community.	There is a general lack of trust in the school system for many parents in the community. Many parents are also unsure of how they can participate in the school community and help their child be successful. In addition, some parents are reluctant to engage with staff and attend events due to language barriers.
4 ★	State assessment performance data reveals a persistent achievement gap between students identified as English learners and other identified student groups at the school, district, and state levels.	The school's assessment data indicates that English learner students may benefit from increased opportunities for rigorous, language-rich instruction, stronger intervention structures, and enhanced collaboration among instructional staff to address both academic and language acquisition needs.

★ = Priority

Data Documentation for CNA

Data Documentation for CNA

The following data were used to verify the comprehensive needs assessment analysis:

Student Success

- [x] **I-Ready**
- [x] **Local benchmark, common assessments, diagnostic assessments, or interim assessments data**
- [x] **Nevada State Performance Framework (NSPF)**
- [x] **Smarter Balanced (SBAC)**
- [x] **Student Climate Survey, Student Voice**
- [x] **Student failure and/or retention rates**
- [x] **WIDA ACCESS for ELLs**
- [x] **Other**

Adult Learning Culture

- [x] **Lesson Plans**
- [x] **Master schedule**
- [x] **Professional learning communities (PLC) data/agenda/notes**
- [x] **School department and/or faculty meeting discussions and data**
- [x] **School leadership data**
- [x] **Staff surveys and/or other feedback**
- [x] **Walk-through data**

Connectedness

- [x] **Attendance**
- [x] **Behavior**
- [x] **Community surveys and/or other feedback**
- [x] **Home Visits**
- [x] **Perception/survey data**

☑ **Other**

Inquiry Areas

Inquiry Area 1 Student Success

SMART Goal 1

AB 335 EL Goal:
DSMS will increase the percentage of EL students who are proficient (level 3 or 4) in ELA as measured by the annual SBA from 1% to 5%.

DSMS will increase the percentage of EL students who are proficient (level 3 or 4) in math as measured by the annual SBA from 0% to 3%.

Formative Measures: iReady Inform tests three times per year
ACCESS test
Use of GLAD strategies
Use of common assessments and district-approved curriculum

Improvement Strategy 1

i-Ready

Actions for Implementation

Action #	Actions for Implementation	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Complete
1	Schedule iReady Inform tests; DSMS will administer ACCESS during 2nd semester; collaborate with EL department for PD on GLAD strategies and learning walks for teacher feedback and support; regular walk-throughs to ensure use of district-approved curriculum. DSMS will implement mainstream support classes for EL students that have been in the country for more than two years and an Advanced EL course for students that are newer to the country. EL students will receive additional support in reading, writing, speaking and listening in these courses to help further develop their English language skills.	Principal	SY 26-27	

Position Responsible: Principal

Evidence Level

Level 3: Promising:
i-Ready

Problem Statements: Student Success 1

Status Checks

November	February	May

SMART Goal 1 Problem Statements Identifying Student Success

	Problem Statement	Root Cause
1	English Learners at DSMS are under performing compared to their regular education peers.	Desert Skies Middle School continues to have inconsistent implementation of appropriate (grade-level), evidence based strategies designed to help our English Learners with language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) and academic curriculum. EL instruction needs to target skills such as reading, writing, and speaking in order to increase the capacity of our EL students to succeed.

SMART Goal 2

DSMS increase ELA proficiency (level 3 or 4) for all students, as measured by the annual SBA, from 21% to 26%.

DSMS increase math proficiency (level 3 or 4) for all students, as measured by the annual SBA, from 14% to 19%.

Formative Measures: iReady Inform tests three times per year
GLAD and Ellevation strategies
Use of common assessments and district-approved curriculum

Improvement Strategy 1

ELLevation Strategies

Actions for Implementation

Action #	Actions for Implementation	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Complete
1	DSMS will continue to utilize ELLevations strategies in every classroom throughout the 26-27SY. Schedule iReady Inform tests; DSMS will administer ACCESS during 2nd semester; collaborate with EL department for PD on GLAD strategies and learning walks for teacher feedback and support; regular walk-throughs to ensure use of district-approved curriculum DSMS will also continue to utilize iReady for all students during intervention period to increase student capacity in reading and math.	Principal, Assistant Principals	SY 2026-27	

Position Responsible: Principal, Assistant Principals

Evidence Level

Level 2: Moderate:
ELLevations

Problem Statements: Student Success 2

Status Checks

November **February** **May**

SMART Goal 2 Problem Statements Identifying Student Success

	Problem Statement	Root Cause
2	State assessment performance data reveals a persistent achievement gap between students identified as English learners and other identified student groups at the school, district, and state levels.	The school's assessment data indicates that English learner students may benefit from increased opportunities for rigorous, language-rich instruction, stronger intervention structures, and enhanced collaboration among instructional staff to address both academic and language acquisition needs.

Inquiry Area 2

Adult Learning Culture

SMART Goal 1

100% of DSMS teaching staff will complete their PLC binders by the end of SY 2026-2027.

DSMS will utilize the PLC process to help staff build capacity to analyze student data to make instructional decisions and increase student performance.

By the end of the 2026-2027 SY, 100% of the instructional staff will be using research-based, district-approved curriculum.

Formative Measures: Quarterly binder checks

Improvement Strategy 1

PLC and Professional Development

Actions for Implementation

Action #	Actions for Implementation	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Complete
1	DSMS will utilize the PLC process to help staff build capacity to analyze student data to make instructional decisions and increase student performance.	Principal, Assistant Principals	SY 26-27	

Position Responsible: Principal, Assistant Principals

Evidence Level

Level 2: Moderate:
PLC

Problem Statements: Adult Learning Culture 1

Status Checks

November **February** **May**

SMART Goal 1 Problem Statements Identifying Adult Learning Culture

	Problem Statement	Root Cause
1	Teachers at DSMS are not consistently using student data to inform their instructional practices.	Approximately 50% of the teaching staff at DSMS have been in the classroom for 5 years or less. Many teachers are still learning how to implement common assessments, use newly-adopted district curriculum, and collaborate with EL and Special Education staff members. Collaboration with these professionals will enable staff to use data when designing instruction for students.

Inquiry Area 3

Connectedness

SMART Goal 1

DSMS will engage at least 40% of our parents and community members at calendared events as measured by attendance sheets.

Formative Measures: Attendance sheets at each event
Quarterly ConnectEd surveys to ask about event attendance
Quarterly Parent Advisory Committee for feedback on events and barriers

Improvement Strategy 1

Family Engagement/PBIS

Actions for Implementation

Action #	Actions for Implementation	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline	Complete
1	Attendance sheets for calendared events, e.g., parent night, student led conferences, etc.; informal surveys around event attendance.	Principal, FACE liaison	SY 26-27	

Position Responsible: Principal, FACE liaison

Evidence Level

Level 2: Moderate:
PBIS

Level 3: Promising:
Family Engagement

Problem Statements: Connectedness 1

Status Checks

November **February** **May**

SMART Goal 1 Problem Statements Identifying Connectedness

	Problem Statement	Root Cause
1	Low percentages of DSMS families participate in DSMS parent centered events throughout the year which leads to low engagement in the overall school community.	There is a general lack of trust in the school system for many parents in the community. Many parents are also unsure of how they can participate in the school community and help their child be successful. In addition, some parents are reluctant to engage with staff and attend events due to language barriers.

Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance Title I Element Summary

Schoolwide and Targeted Assistance Title I Elements

1.1 Comprehensive Needs Assessment

For all Title 1 Elements, please see addendum.

2.1 School Performance Plan (SPP) developed with appropriate stakeholders

The Site Based Committee, which includes staff, parents, and community members meets twice in the fall to review the plans and provide feedback for making revisions. In addition, additional stakeholder feedback is gathered by the newly-formed Parent Advisory Committee who will meet quarterly, hear progress on the goals, and provide feedback from multiple perspectives regarding strategies and the goals.

2.2 Regular monitoring and revision

We hold status checks quarterly with the teams responsible for monitoring each strategy and document our lessons learned and next steps in Plan4Learning.

2.3 Available to parents and community in an understandable format and language

The plan is posted on our school website in English and Spanish, as well as sent to families in the newsletter, and available at the front desk. It will also be summarized and shared during our Parent Advisory Committee meetings.

2.4 Opportunities for all children to meet State standards

This year's Title I budget is for extra personnel:

- A second Dean of Students to support with behaviors and Progressive Discipline, as well as Restorative processes; decreased behaviors support productive learning environments.
- A FACE to encourage and support family participation within Desert Skies, including updating families on academic progress toward meeting standards
- An EL assistant to support students in science and social studies with language development
- Tutoring hours for teachers to provide additional supports and interventions for students

2.5 Increased learning time and well-rounded education

This year's Title I budget includes tutoring hours for teachers to provide additional supports and interventions for students.

2.6 Address needs of all students, particularly at-risk

A second Dean of Students to support with behaviors and Progressive Discipline, as well as Restorative processes; decreased behaviors support productive learning environments. A FACE to encourage and support family participation within Desert Skies, including updating families on academic progress toward meeting standards

3.1 Annually evaluate the schoolwide plan

Once annual SBA scores have been received, teachers and staff complete a "data dive" to compare the goals to our data to ensure we are making progress.

4.1 Develop and distribute Parent Involvement and Family Engagement Policy

The newly-formed Parent Advisory Committee will review and revise/update the policy. Our new Parent Involvement and Family Engagement Policy is posted on our website in English and Spanish.

4.2 Offer flexible number of parent involvement meetings

We responded to our climate survey data by holding events later in the evening, and we also hold events at multiple times during the day. For example, our fall and spring Student-Led Conferences are at 1:30 PM and 5:00 PM.

Community Outreach Activities

Activity	Date	Lesson Learned
Scorpion Day	July 31, 2026	Multiple check-in tables; online fees through Infinite Campus
6th Grade Parent Info Night	August 3, 2026	Smaller groups (academic teams?) for a Q&A session
Back to School Night (Open House)	August 12, 2026	How to accommodate for families with multiple children
1st Quarter Parent Advisory Meeting	September 2026 TBD	
Hug High Vertical Event	September 11, 2026	
Student-Led Conferences (Fall)	October 14, 2026	
Fall Festival	October 29, 2026	
2nd Quarter Parent Advisory Meeting	November 2026 TBD	
3rd Quarter Parent Advisory Meeting	January 2027 TBD	
4th Quarter Parent Advisory Meeting	March 2027 TBD	
Student-Led Conferences (Spring)	March 10, 2027	
Field Day/Carnival/8th Grade Field Trip	June 1, 2027	
8th Grade Signature Academy Signing Day	June 2, 2027	
8th Grade Awards Night	June 3, 2027	
Color Run	June 4, 2027	