



**School Improvement &
Performance Plan
2021-2022**

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Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication School Improvement & Performance Plan 2020-2021

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

ISAAC is a safe, nurturing, and diverse middle school in which arts and communication act as the heartbeat. Our professional learning community, comprised of passionate educators, are committed to the delivery of a rigorous curriculum that promotes effort through a growth mindset. We believe that all students can succeed with hard work and grit. Our stakeholders support the development of each student's journey in becoming lifelong learners by developing the academic, civic, and social skills needed to be difference makers as active citizens in our communities. Learning at ISAAC prepares our students to become empathetic and courageous leaders through authentic tasks and experiences that promote creativity, critical thinking, and excellence.

Vision of the Graduate

The ISAAC Vision of the Graduate is that all graduates are proficient in the following competencies:

- Write effectively for various purposes
- Speak to diverse audiences in an accountable manner
- Develop the behaviors needed to interact and contribute with others on a team
- Analyze and solve problems independently and collaboratively
- Be responsible, creative, and empathetic members of the community

About ISAAC

ISAAC, established in 1997, is a public charter middle school operated by a board of directors. Enrollment is at max capacity with 276 students who are accepted through an open, non-merit-based lottery that currently draws from 13 different towns and cities in southeastern Connecticut. The charter states that 50% of students must come from New London while the other 50% come from all other surrounding districts. In 2014, ISAAC was awarded the CT State Department of Education School of Distinction Award for the Highest Progress. In June 2020, ISAAC received initial candidacy accreditation with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and a 3-year Charter Renewal extension. ISAAC offers an extensive array of arts and communication-themed programs and opportunities, as well as academically rigorous high school preparatory classes that meet the needs of all students. Sixth graders are heterogeneously placed in high school-prep only courses. In seventh grade, advanced levels of study are offered in Honors Pre-Algebra and English Language Arts. During the 8th grade year, students can enroll in advanced courses such as Algebra I, Honors English, and Honors Science. Students must take foundational art courses that prepare them for advanced art courses offered in the 8th grade year. The ISAAC Music Department is one of the strongest middle school music programs in southeastern Connecticut. Students can participate in athletics including boys' and girls' basketball and beginning in 2021-2022, cross country and fencing.

ISAAC Highlights

- ISAAC received the CT Department of Education School of Distinction Award for highest progress in 2014
- ISAAC received candidacy status with the New England Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC) in June 2020
- The CT State Board of Education renewed ISAAC's charter for 3 additional years in June 2020
- More than 60% of the ISAAC music students were accepted into the Middle School Eastern Region Music Festival in 2019-20
- The ISAAC Board of Directors expanded the Arts program by voting to add an additional art, dance/theatre, and multi-media arts teachers for the 2020-2021 school year

Theory of Action

Strategic Action 1.1:

If we create regular, structured, collaborative opportunities for teachers to meet weekly in content-specific Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams with a focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, then they will use assessment data to improve their instructional strategies and student achievement will improve.

SA 1.1: Action Steps:

- We will commit to extensive professional development in the area of PLCs, curriculum development, assessment development, and results.
- We will commit one block period per week to PLC time.
- We will establish and practice a structure for peer observation through Learning Walks within PLCs each month.
- We will develop the curriculum throughout the school year based upon support from administration and feedback from the PLC teams, parents, and students.
- We will create rigorous, authentic unit tasks that allow students to utilize the skills and knowledge gained in the classroom and beyond.
- We will meet in PLCs to discuss lesson planning (what we want each student to learn) and student performance through assessment results (how do we know and respond).
- We will incorporate the use of common formative assessments such as school-wide rubrics, in the areas identified through ISAAC's Vision of the Graduate, as part of our regular practice and use the results of these rubrics to make purposeful, effective instructional choices that will appropriately challenge each student.
- We will calibrate the school-wide rubrics using the Stanford Calibration Method during PLC time.

Strategic Action 1.2:

If we use the advisory model to foster and establish shared belief among all stakeholders that “**all students can succeed** with hard work and grit” then we will increase student efforts towards achievement and responsibility for their own personal, academic, and career goals.

SA 1.2: Action Steps:

- We will promote and discuss among all stakeholders the concepts of grit (Angela Duckworth), hard work leads to success, growth mindset (Carol Dweck), and Accountable Talk (University of Pittsburgh's Institute of Learning).
- We will foster a shared belief that “all students can succeed with hard work and grit” through faculty-focused conversations related to effort-based success of ourselves and our students.
- We will continue to lead students in growth mindset, grit, self-efficacy, and goal orientation through advisory experiences.
- We will utilize the Advisory program to work with students, setting goals by developing Goal Setting Plans and conferencing one-on-one with students during advisory twice per week.
- We will incorporate the school-wide rubric of Civic and Social Responsibility into our Advisory assessments to ensure students are prepared for high school.

Strategic Action 1.3:

If we incorporate Accountable Talk within our culture and motivate students to listen, respond critically to their teacher and peers, and defend their positions with evidence, then students will intentionally think at a higher level and improve academic achievement.

SA 1.3: Action Steps:

- We will provide professional development on Academically Productive Talk that incorporates Accountable Talk.
- We will utilize PLC time to implement the Learning Walk model to observe and promote professional and respectful discourse that will improve our instructional strategies in the area of Academically Productive Talk.
- We will showcase and share exemplary lessons that promote the practice of Accountable Talk.
- We will all create and practice the norms and skills of Academically Productive Talk in our classrooms and professional discourse.
- We will incorporate the Accountable Talk school-wide rubric to assess students in Social Studies.

Strategic Action 1.4:

If we continuously discuss and monitor student progress through a multi-measured systematic process over time, then scientifically based interventions will improve student achievement.

SA4: Action Steps:

- We will continue to utilize the SRBI process that will provide teachers with research-based interventions to improve student learning and behaviors 2-3 times per week.
- We will share school-wide rubrics and common SBAC-styled assessment data, including the data tied to our SLOs.
- We will share common assessment data among PLC and interdisciplinary teams to create lessons with teaching strategies that improve student achievement.
- We will administer, disaggregate, and share 6th grade admissions and annual SBAC data with our teachers.

Strategic Action 2.1:

If we provide effective integration of technology by teachers in a focused and deliberate manner that aligns with learning outcomes, then students will be motivated to become proficient in the use of technology and become active participants in the learning process through a love of learning.

SA 2.1: Action Steps:

- We will commit to extensive professional development in the area of establishing a Google classroom for all classes, as appropriate.
- We will utilize technology to provide high-quality feedback to students.
- We will plan lessons that incorporate the use of technology by way of the one-to-one Chromebook program in all grades.
- We will ensure that all students receive Digital Citizenship curriculum in the advisory program and all 7th graders within the Digital Arts curriculum.
- We will select and purchase new technology that promotes the use of Accountable Talk, then train staff to use the new technology in their classroom.

Strategic Action 2.2:

If we ensure that our school facilities are designed, developed, and maintained based on contemporary research to maximize teaching and learning, then teachers will have the ability to provide students with unique opportunities to explore and discover opinions and thoughts of others in an atmosphere that promotes a passion for learning.

SA 2.2: Action Steps:

- We will continue to utilize additional classroom space by partnering with the Garde Arts Center to provide an authentic experience within the arts.
- We will ensure that the success of our school continues through a strategic three-year budget plan.
- We will apply for outside funding that provides our facilities with innovative products and services that maximize learning and prepare our students for high school.
- We will enrich the safety and security of our school by instituting best practices used throughout our country.
- We will enhance the technological infrastructure by seeking cost-effective tools and hardware that improves teaching and learning.
- We will seek opportunities that allow our students to play, learn, and grow through afterschool programming and athletics.

Strategic Action 3.1:

If we increase the communication of the strengths of ISAAC and celebrate the successes throughout the school year in different modes of communication, then students, parents, staff, and the community will voice their *ISAAC Pride* to promote ISAAC as one of the premier middle schools to attend in southeastern Connecticut.

SA 3.1: Action Steps:

- We will communicate important highlights and upcoming events to our students, parents, and the community through weekly emailed newsletters and text messages and by utilizing Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts.
- We will seek feedback from parents, students, and teachers and use the retrieved data to adjust school environment practices, procedures, and policies, as needed.
- We will provide press releases for positive events and celebrations at ISAAC.
- We will provide families with a weekly newsletter from the principal's office entitled: Marty's Hot News.
- We will hold monthly PTO meetings in both English and Spanish to accommodate all parents.

Strategic Action 3.2:

If we deepen partnerships with community, business, and education leaders in the field of academics, arts, and communications, then students will benefit from a multitude of unique opportunities, and our teachers will gain the skills and knowledge necessary to prepare students for high school and beyond.

SA 3.2: Action Steps:

- We will meet with leaders from local high schools and higher education institutions to gain insight and ideas for providing expert instruction and high school preparation for our students.
- We will track our graduates and their successes at local high schools.
- We will partner with leaders in the fields of arts and communications to enhance the curriculum and experiences for teachers and students.
- We will develop innovative programs in collaboration with post-secondary institutions and/or local community leaders in many fields, including arts and communications.

- We will interface with local political leaders for the promotion, support, and funding of ISAAC and charter education in Connecticut.
- We will provide opportunities for students to interact with members of the community through the Leadership Program.

District Goal 1: All Students Can Succeed

Students learn best when teachers and students adopt a growth mindset that embraces high expectations, meaningful feedback, and the ability to reflect on their own learning.



School Goal One:

To prepare all students with the competencies needed to demonstrate success in mathematics, reading, and writing.

ISAAC follows the Common Core State Standards that concentrate heavily on literacy within all academic areas, including language arts and mathematics. Within the language arts and beyond, students must be able to read and write effectively for a variety of purposes by interpreting multiple sources with purpose and evidence. In addition, mastery of mathematics is an integral aspect within ISAAC's Vision of the Graduate. The Common Core requires students to use, explain, and understand the role that mathematics plays in the world. Moreover, students are expected to make and explain well-founded judgments with mathematical reasoning using descriptive analysis that shows comprehension and evidence of understanding.

The *ISAAC Core Values, Beliefs About Learning, and the Vision of the Graduate* states that, upon 8th grade graduation, our students will possess a variety of academic, civic, and social competencies that will translate toward success at the high school level. These transferable skills and competencies are paramount to achieve our ultimate goal in ensuring that all students will be prepared for secondary education at any comprehensive, magnet, private, or technical high school they attend following graduation.

In 2014, the Connecticut State Department of Education adopted The Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test as the grade 6, 7, and 8 state assessment. The SBAC test uses a redesigned assessment that focuses on the Common Core standards in reading, writing, and mathematics skills. The results from these exams are weighed and heavily considered in the decision regarding the number of years granted during the Charter Renewal process, decided by the Connecticut State Department of Education and Board of Education.

In order to ensure student academic, social, and civic success, ISAAC will identify action steps for a variety of strategic actions that will be supported by teachers' student learning objectives (SLOs) for the 2021-2022 school year and beyond. These SLOs will be aligned to the SBAC-styled summative assessments. ISAAC will create a school development improvement plan (SDIP) for all areas of improvement related to academic and social-emotional goals, along with a professional development plan in several areas. In subsequent years, beginning with a pilot process for the 2021-2022 school year, teachers will use the ISAAC School-wide Analytic Rubrics created in alignment with the competencies described in the *ISAAC Vision of the Graduate* statement. These school-wide rubrics will be formative in nature and will accompany summative assessments and unit tasks as listed in the curriculum. ISAAC will also integrate the practice of Accountable Talk from the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburgh. Their research in reading comprehension has shown that using Accountable Talk in the classroom supports and increases cognitive development in students' learning and using this discourse-based instructional approach facilitates effective reading comprehension. Furthermore, in a 2016 study of mathematics teaching across different schools, Jo Boaler found that instructional reform, that included a focus on Accountable Talk, increased student learning.

Strategic Action #1:

If we create regular, structured, collaborative opportunities for teachers to meet weekly in content-specific Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams with a focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, then they will use assessment data to improve their instructional strategies and student achievement will improve.

SA 1.1: Action Steps:

- We will commit to extensive professional development in the area of PLCs, curriculum development, assessment development, and results.
- We will commit one block period per week to PLC time.
- We will establish and practice a structure for peer observation through Learning Walks within PLCs each month.
- We will continue to revise the curriculum throughout the school year based upon support from administration and feedback from the PLC teams, parents, and students.
- We will continue to implement rigorous, authentic unit tasks that allow students to utilize the skills and knowledge gained in the classroom and beyond.
- We will meet in PLCs to discuss lesson planning (what we want each student to learn) and student performance through assessment results (how do we know and respond).
- We will utilize the use of common formative assessments such as school-wide rubrics, in the areas identified through ISAAC's Vision of the Graduate, as part of our regular practice and use the results of these rubrics to make purposeful, effective instructional choices that will appropriately challenge each student.

Strategic Action #2:

If we use the advisory model to foster and establish shared belief among all stakeholders that “**all students can succeed with hard work and grit**”, then we will increase student efforts towards achievement and responsibility for their own personal, academic, and career goals.

SA 1.2: Action Steps:

- We will continue to promote and discuss among all stakeholders the concepts of grit (Angela Duckworth), growth mindset (Carol Dweck), the belief that “all students can succeed with hard work and grit,” and Accountable Talk (University of Pittsburgh's Institute of Learning).
- We will foster a shared belief that “all students can succeed with hard work and grit” through faculty-focused conversations related to effort-based success of ourselves and our students.
- We will continue to lead students in growth mindset, grit, self-efficacy, and goal orientation through advisory experiences.
- We will utilize the Advisory program to work with students, setting goals by developing Goal Setting Plans and conferencing one-on-one with students during advisory week.

Strategic Action #3:

If we incorporate Accountable Talk within our culture and motivate students to listen, respond critically to their teacher and peers, and defend their positions with evidence, then students will intentionally think at a higher level and improve academic achievement.

SA 1.3: Action Steps:

- We will provide continued professional development on Academically Productive Talk that incorporates Accountable Talk.
- We will utilize PLC time to implement the Learning Walk model to observe and promote professional and respectful discourse that will improve our instructional strategies in the area of Academically Productive Talk.

- We will showcase and share exemplary lessons that promote the practice of Accountable Talk.
- We will all create and practice the norms and skills of Academically Productive Talk in our classrooms and professional discourse.

Strategic Action #4:

Strategic Action 1.4:

If we continuously discuss and monitor student progress through a multi-measured systematic process over time, then scientifically based interventions will improve student achievement.

SA4: Action Steps:

- We will continue to utilize the SRBI process that will provide teachers with research-based interventions to improve student learning and behaviors.
- We will share school-wide rubrics and common SBAC-styled assessment data, including the data tied to our SLOs.
- We will share common assessment data among PLC and interdisciplinary teams to create lessons with teaching strategies that improve student achievement.
- We will administer, disaggregate, and share 6th grade admissions and annual SBAC data with our teachers.

Strategic Action #5:

Strategic Action 2.1:

If we provide effective integration of technology by teachers in a focused and deliberate manner that aligns with learning outcomes, then students will be motivated to become proficient in the use of technology and become active participants in the learning process through a love of learning.

SA 2.1: Action Steps:

- We will commit to extensive professional development in the area of establishing a Google classroom for all classes, as appropriate.
- We will utilize technology to provide high-quality feedback to students.
- We will plan lessons that incorporate the use of technology by way of the one-to-one Chromebook program in grades 7 and 8.
- We will ensure that students receive Digital Citizenship curriculum in the advisory program and with all 7th graders within the Digital Arts curriculum.
- We will select and purchase new technology that promotes the use of Accountable Talk, then train staff to use the new technology in their classroom.

Student Learning Objective #1:

Students will be able to demonstrate success on the mathematics and language arts sections of the SBAC.

Action Steps:

SOCIAL STUDIES PLC

- We will model SBAC problems as warm-ups on a daily basis
- We will model new skills and writing techniques prior to student independent practice.
- We will discuss and practice selecting effective evidence.

- We will practice making inferences and supporting them with evidence from nonfiction texts.
- We will redesign summative assessments to align to SBAC format and skills using Edulastic.
- We will improve reading and writing stamina by working through increasingly longer and more complex texts and written response.
- We will collaborate with ELA to find lessons and techniques to integrate into our classes.
- We will provide explicit feedback on written response on how to show better understanding.
- We will revise curriculum to match the most frequent topics appearing on SBAC and the standards with the common core of teaching.
- We will utilize group discussion and accountable talk to stress the importance it places on searching for evidence to accurately respond to questions.

MATH PLC

- We will model SBAC problems as Do Nows on a daily basis.
- We will encourage use and give time for use of Khan academy during class.
- We will provide test taking strategies to students to prepare them for test day.
- We will redesign summative assessments to align to SBAC format and skills.
- We will utilize IAB tests to collect data that is correlated to the SBAC.
- We will revise curriculum to match the most frequent topics appearing on SBAC and the standards with the common core of teaching.

LANGUAGE ARTS PLC

- We will provide lessons and assignments tailored towards writing a well-developed paragraph.
- We will Model SBAC problems as “Do Nows” on a daily basis.
- We will have students apply teacher feedback to revise essays.
- We will provide opportunity for peer review and feedback on practice responses.
- We will provide effective annotation and analysis both collaboratively and independently.
- We will provide written feedback on specific points for improvement
- We will provide exemplars to demonstrate skills aligned to SBAC format.
- We will provide lessons on grammatical and mechanical issues occurring in student writing.
- We will provide test taking strategies to students to prepare them for test day.
- We will provide and review exemplars to demonstrate skills aligned to SBAC format.
- We will redesign summative assessments to align to SBAC format and skills.
- We will utilize IAB’s to collect data that is correlated to the SBAC.
- We will revise curriculum to match the most frequent topics appearing on SBAC and the standards with the common core of teaching.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLC

- We will monitor student understanding of vocabulary through class discussion, questions, and writing.
- We will provide opportunities for students to practice vocabulary usage through conversation and 1:1 student/teacher.
- We will provide vocabulary building activities.
- We will check in with students and reteach content as necessary to ensure understanding.
- We will use “Do Nows” as notes and provide student access to them on Google Classroom with instructions to follow.
- We will pre-teach and re-teach classroom lessons.
- We will provide checklists for students to self-assess.

- We will scaffold lessons for students in cotaught classes to reach SBAC quality goals.
- We will provide explicit teaching in small groups
- We will provide test taking strategies and student specific additional support strategies to assist with test taking.
- We will review and revise co-teaching curriculum to meet needs of students in alignment with SBAC.
- We will scaffold the rubrics and accommodate students in using the rubrics.

School Goal One: Indicators of Academic Growth and Development

- All students will increase their SBAC scores on the SBAC Mathematics and Language Arts sections, maintain level 4 or move up one level based upon September 2021 data and previous SBAC data.

School Goal Two: To ensure that all graduates are high school ready upon graduation.

ISAAC adopted its Vision of the Graduate in reference to the skills and competencies that all students need in preparation for any high school that they attend. The future success of our graduates will be contributed to the new academic and social-emotional curriculum at ISAAC. The three-year advisory program includes input directly from the mental health team comprised of our two social workers and our school counselor. Throughout a student's three years at ISAAC, each counselor ensures that the student and their family are thinking, researching, and planning for secondary education that meets the needs of the student academically, emotionally, and financially. As each class leaves ISAAC to their high school of choice, our ultimate goal is to ensure that they are prepared for the challenges of secondary pursuits.

Strategic Action #1:

Strategic Action 3.2:

If we deepen partnerships with community, business, and education leaders in the field of academics, arts, and communications, then students will benefit from a multitude of unique opportunities, and our teachers will gain the skills and knowledge necessary to prepare students for high school and beyond.

SA 3.2: Action Steps:

- We will meet with leaders from local high schools and higher education institutions to gain insight and ideas for providing expert instruction and high school preparation for our students.
- We will partner with leaders in the fields of arts and communications to enhance the curriculum and experiences for teachers and students.
- We will develop innovative programs in collaboration with post-secondary institutions and/or local community leaders in many fields, including arts and communications.
- We will interface with local political leaders for the promotion, support, and funding of ISAAC and charter education in Connecticut.

Student Learning Objective #3:

Students will be able to build a graduation portfolio showcasing their proficiency in the ISAAC academic, civic, and social competencies.

Action Steps:

- We will create school-wide rubrics for each of the five competencies: writing, Accountable Talk, teamwork, problem solving, civic and social.
- We will pilot the rubrics and use the Stanford Calibration process to build school-wide consistency.
- We will promote the area choice schools to allow students and families to choose from various options for high school.
- We will help students through the application process and keep parents updated.
- We will schedule high schools to present to students during their advisory blocks.

School Goal Two: Indicators of Academic Growth and Development

- 100% of ISAAC will graduate in June 2022 and have a plan for secondary education.
- 100% of students will be assessed using each of the ISAAC Competencies and begin creating a graduation portfolio.

District Goal 2: Safe and Nurturing Environment

Students learn best when teachers and students create an emotionally safe environment built upon clear expectations, which promote respectful and inclusive interactions, recognition of effort, opportunity for self-regulation, and the development of positive relationships.



School Goal Three:

To provide a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment that supports the personal, academic, and middle school goals of every student.

School Goal Four:

To ensure that the school and its parents have a collective understanding of a student's success through a system of periodic and reactive communication.

School Goal Five:

To establish clear school-wide expectations, classroom to classroom, that are known, understood, and respected by students, teachers, and families

Our Core Values and Beliefs About Learning begins with the following statement: ISAAC is a safe, nurturing, and diverse middle school. This year, ISAAC will be using the NEASC survey to measure the degree of our collective efforts to maintain a positive learning environment based on positive survey results; scoring above the 85% mark in all categories within the safe school climate category. We feel it is essential for these results to be positive in order to achieve success for all who work, learn, and grow at ISAAC.

Based on parent feedback from our stakeholders, PowerSchool accuracy, communication from advisory teachers, and teacher efficiency in recording homework and assignments on PowerSchool are the topics that were presented.

Strategic Action #1:

If we develop a school climate and culture where every student, parent, and teacher feels safe, valued, respected, and informed, then all stakeholders will share in the partnership of meeting students' academic and social needs towards becoming active and responsible citizens.

SA1: Action Steps:

- We will continue to foster opportunities to communicate ideas and/or concerns for the betterment of the school culture and climate through the monthly Principal Advisory Committee (PAC) and ISAAC Wellness Committee meetings.
- We will continue the Safe School Climate Committee that meets with ISAAC teachers, students, parents and administration to ensure a safe culture and climate for all people who work and learn at ISAAC.
- We will connect and establish strong relationships between our students and teachers through the advisory model and with all of our student's families by periodically speaking with them throughout the school year.
- We will continue to communicate important highlights and upcoming events with our students, parents, and the community through the weekly *Marty's Hot News* Newsletter and social media.
- We will continue to provide cultural awareness through professional development opportunities.
- We will continue to seek feedback from the parents, teachers, and students and use the data retrieved to adjust school environment practices, procedures, and policies as needed.
- We will deepen our partnership with the New London Police Department.

- We will provide informational sessions to parents on topics such as, PowerSchool, Google Classroom, understanding the legal process of special education and emotional wellness of your child.

Strategic Action #2:

If we use the advisory model to foster and establish shared belief among all stakeholders that “**all students can succeed** with hard work and grit” then we will increase student efforts towards achievement and responsibility for their own personal, academic, and career goals.

SA 1.2: Action Steps:

- We will continue to promote and discuss among all stakeholders the concepts of grit (Angela Duckworth), hard work leads to success, growth mindset (Carol Dweck), and Accountable Talk (University of Pittsburgh’s Institute of Learning).
- We will continue to foster a shared belief that “all students can succeed with hard work and grit” through faculty-focused conversations related to effort-based success of ourselves and our students.
- We will continue to lead students in growth mindset, grit, self-efficacy, and goal orientation through advisory experiences.
- We will continue to utilize the Advisory program to work with students, setting goals by developing Goal Setting Plans and conferencing one-on-one with students during advisory week.

Strategic Action #3:

Strategic Action 3.1:

If we increase the communication of the strengths of ISAAC and celebrate the successes throughout the school year in different modes of communication, then students, parents, staff, and the community will voice their *ISAAC Pride* to promote ISAAC as one of the premier middle schools to attend in southeastern Connecticut.

SA 3.1: Action Steps:

- We will communicate important highlights and upcoming events to our students, parents, and the community through weekly emailed newsletters and text messages and by utilizing social media.
- We will seek feedback from parents, students, and teachers and use the retrieved data to adjust school environment practices, procedures, and policies, as needed.
- We will provide press releases for positive events and celebrations at ISAAC.

School Goal Three Action Steps by Department:

Maintain and enhance a respectful, positive, safe learning environment for all students at ISAAC.

SOCIAL STUDIES PLC

- We will maintain and encourage a positive and accepting classroom environment built on relationships of respect and caring, modeling respectful behavior and accountable talk.
- We will have open discussions with students about their grades and progress in the course material.
- We will be available for students before and after school for additional help in course work, and to check in and build relationships.
- We will clearly state and reinforce expectations to every class.

- We will use “Dragon Time” to meet one-on-one with students to close learning gaps.
- We will make ourselves available to our advisory students as caring adults they can confide in.
- We will ensure timely/accurate grades in the PowerSchool gradebook
- We will maintain in-class check-ins to review missed assignments and address any school-related questions.
- We will collect and implement student feedback in crafting and delivering lessons.

SCIENCE PLC

- We will provide and communicate to students and parents structure, routines, and clear expectations for student behavior and performance in class.
- We will ensure all students are always treated with respect in and out of the classroom by every member of our school community.
- We will create a safe environment in our classrooms and check in with students regularly.
- We will develop a strong rapport with every student in our classes so that students feel safe talking to us.
- We will report any behavior that may be construed as bullying to administration so it can be dealt with appropriately.
- We will practice and perform school and lab safety procedures.
- We will provide specific praise, accountable talk moves and constructive feedback to support and encourage all learners.
- We will encourage students to speak up when they feel unsafe in school.
- We will develop and maintain a respectful classroom environment through rigorous attention to accountable talk norms.
- We will request and respond to student feedback during and at the end of units.
- We will incorporate the ISAAC Core Values into class discussions.

MATH PLC

- We will create and maintain positive relationships with the students in our classes, so they feel comfortable coming to us with any questions or concerns.
- We will clearly state and reinforce expectations to every class.
- We will model and recognize respectful behavior in class.
- We will develop and maintain a respectful classroom environment through rigorous attention to accountable talk norms,
- We will request and respond to student feedback during and at the end of units.
- We will incorporate the ISAAC Core Values into class discussions.

ENGLISH PLC

- We will model respectful, positive behavior both in and out of the classroom.
- We will address behavioral issues with students on a one-to-one basis.
- We will be requesting students who need extra assistance or support during Dragon Time
- We will give ample feedback (with an emphasis on the positive) on all student work.
- We will make explicit references to the ISAAC Core Values on a regular basis.
- We will make advisory phone calls and Goal Setting Meetings
- We will use Accountable Talk in class discussions

- We will frequently provide one-on-one check-ins with students to ensure they feel welcomed, heard, and supported
- We will teach organizational skills and time management skills for the middle school brain.

SPANISH PLC

- We will model appropriate behavior and Accountable Talk to and with students inside and outside of the classroom.
- We will make advisory phone calls and Goal Setting Meetings.
- We will promote the use of PowerSchool gradebook
- We will use Dragon Time to meet with students and provide support as needed
- We will work collaboratively with students on ensuring that the classroom environment stays positive and one where learning takes priority.
- We will email students the night before to remind them of homework that is due

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLC

- We will meet with students quarterly to assess progress on individual IEP goals and objectives.
- We will develop personal relationships with each student.
- We will meet with students when they fall behind to develop strategies for improvement.
- We will provide positive feedback via email to students, cc'ing parents.
- We will communicate regularly with parents regarding student performance for both concerning issues as well as positive aspects.
- We will frequently check in on students in a one-to-one setting so students feel heard and supported
- We will request students needing extra assistance during Dragon Time.

School Goal Four Action Steps by Department:

Increase the communication between faculty/teachers and parents.

SOCIAL STUDIES PLC

- We will update Power School at a minimum weekly.
- We will post homework assignments daily.
- We will accurately input grades in Power School.
- We will email weekly, summaries to parents in English and Spanish
- We will make advisory calls quarterly.
- We will contact parents via email or phone when their child begins to fall behind or concerning missing assignments and class failure.
- We will contact parents when their child is successful.

SCIENCE PLC

- We will update Power School at a minimum weekly.
- We will post homework assignments daily.
- We will accurately input grades in Power School.
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind.
- We will contact parents with positive reports, successes, or affirmation.

- We will reply to parent emails or calls in a timely fashion.
- We will post information about information in Google Classroom.

MATH PLC

- We will update Power School at a minimum weekly.
- We will post homework assignments daily.
- We will accurately input grades in Power School.
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind.
- We will send an email to parents when their child improves.

ENGLISH PLC

- We will update Power School at a minimum weekly.
- We will send weekly email summaries to parents in English and Spanish
- We will accurately input grades in Power School.
- We will present opportunities for students to assess his or her own learning through a reflection process at the end of each quarter
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind.
- We will respond to all parent emails within a timely fashion.
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind, failing, or missing assignments.

SPANISH PLC

- We will update Power School at a minimum weekly.
- We will post homework assignments daily.
- We will accurately input grades in Power School.
- We will make parent advisory calls quarterly.
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind.
- We will send bi-weekly update emails to parents/guardians.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PLC

- We will update Power School at a minimum weekly.
- We will post homework assignments daily.
- We will accurately input grades in Power School.
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind.
- We will contact parents when their child is experiencing success.
- We will contact caseload parents quarterly or as needed.
- We will keep up to date Parent Contact Tracking Google Form.
- We will communicate to parents when a new unit has begun.

School Goal Five Action Steps:

Decrease the number of in school and out of school suspensions

- We will revise the Parent-Student Handbook that details the school rules and policies.

- We will ensure that school policies and rules are consistent classroom to classroom.
- We will eliminate school uniforms and continue to monitor the effectiveness of the decision for upcoming years.
- We collaborate with the families regarding possible disciplinary actions.
- We will ensure our staff understands the policies and rules by thoroughly going through the Parent-Student Handbook at the beginning of the school year with added reminders throughout the year.
- We will continue to train our teachers and administrators about racial bias associated with school discipline.
- We will ensure our teachers and administrators are trained in de-escalation strategies.
- We will reach out to families when a student does something positive to build a good rapport from the beginning of sixth grade year until they graduate and beyond.

School Goal Three, Four, and Five: Indicators of Growth and Development as a School

- Maintain each of the identified areas in the Parent Survey above 85% satisfactory
- Maintain each of the identified areas in the Student Survey above 85% satisfactory
- ISAAC will have an end of year suspension rate below 10%

District Goal 3: Professional Development & Evaluation

Students learn best when their teachers have the tools, skills, and knowledge to provide data driven instruction that is authentic, interactive, motivating, and leads to the application of knowledge and skills.



School Goal Six: To collaborate within ISAAC and outside of ISAAC with available resources that enhance the rigor and relevance of our instruction through professional learning communities.

Author Dale Dauten wrote “Great employees don’t have jobs, they have talents.” ISAAC is committed to become the “best place for the best teachers.” Through the lens of student data and through teacher collaboration in a SRBI Team/Professional Development Advisory Committee, we will identify areas of need including Academically Productive Talk/Accountable Talk, mindset and grit, technology in the classroom, SBAC instructional strategies, special education, diversity amongst of our students and the community, formative assessment creation and calibration, and data driven planning and instruction.

Our Professional Development Committee has identified six major areas:

- School-wide Rubric Calibration (Stanford Calibration Method),
- Team Building and retention of staff,
- Academically Productive Talk and the use of Accountable Talk school-wide,
- Developing Personalized Learning through Differentiation and Instructional Strategies,
 - Classroom Environment (mindset and grit)
 - Individualized Rigor for All Students
 - Technology in the Classroom
 - Researched-based Instructional Strategies
 - Data Driven Planning and Instruction
 - Modifications and Accommodations for our Diverse Student Body
- SBAC: *Understanding and Familiarity, Tracking for Success*
- NEASC: Candidacy Status towards Full Accreditation

In April 2020, the Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication submitted a candidate for accreditation application to the New England Association of School and Colleges (NEASC). As a result of this work, ISAAC will continue to grow by examining the self-study areas of growth that was reported to NEASC in each of the five standard areas:

1. Learning Culture
2. Student Learning
3. Professional Practices
4. Learning Support
5. Learning Resources

In the most recent renewal of our charter renewal from the State Department of Education, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) standardized assessment was identified as an area of concern for whole school ELA and mathematics, along with 7th and 8th grade mathematics. Annually, the SBAC test measures all students and schools in Connecticut. Our professional development will dive into the specifics to the SBAC test and the understanding of how students will be assessed. Further curricula changes may occur with more familiarity.

Our restructuring of the academic and instructional model at ISAAC will be grounded in the opportunities for educators to collaborate and learn from one another. Weekly professional development will exist within the PLC Model. As teachers reflect throughout the year within their professional learning communities and their interdisciplinary teams, our professional development will support the individual and school growth within each of the areas listed within the PLC Model. Furthermore, the teachers will begin to share instructional practices and their expertise with one another through professional development opportunities.

Strategic Action #1:

If we create regular, structured, collaborative opportunities for teachers to meet weekly in content-specific Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams with a focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, then they will use assessment data to improve their instructional strategies and student achievement will improve.

SA 1.1: Action Steps:

- We will continue to provide extensive professional development in the area of PLCs, curriculum development, and assessment development and results.
- We will commit one block period per week to PLC time.
- We will establish and practice a structure for peer observation through Learning Walks within PLCs each month.
- We will revise the curriculum throughout the school year based upon support from administration and feedback from the PLC teams, parents, and students.
- We will continue to implement rigorous, authentic unit tasks that allow students to utilize the skills and knowledge gained in the classroom and beyond.
- We will meet in PLCs to discuss lesson planning (what we want each student to learn) and student performance through assessment results (how do we know and respond).
- We will use common formative assessments such as school-wide rubrics, in the areas identified through ISAAC's Vision of the Graduate, as part of our regular practice and use the results of these rubrics to make purposeful, effective instructional choices that will appropriately challenge each student.

Strategic Action #2:

If we continuously discuss and monitor student progress through a multi-measured systematic process over time, then scientifically-based interventions will improve student achievement.

SA4: Action Steps:

- We will continue to utilize an SRBI process that will provide teachers with research-based interventions to improve student learning and behaviors.
- We will share school-wide rubrics and common SBAC-styled assessment data, including the data tied to our SLOs.
- We will share common assessment data among PLC and interdisciplinary teams to create lessons with teaching strategies that improve student achievement.
- We will administer, disaggregate, and share 6th grade admissions and annual SBAC data with our teachers.

Strategic Action #3:

If we incorporate Accountable Talk within our culture and motivate students to listen, respond critically to their teacher and peers, and defend their positions with evidence, then students will intentionally think at a higher level and improve academic achievement.

SA 1.3: Action Steps:

- We will provide professional development on Academically Productive Talk that incorporates Accountable Talk.
- We will utilize PLC time to implement the Learning Walk model to observe and promote professional and respectful discourse that will improve our instructional strategies in the area of Academically Productive Talk (Learning Walks 2.0).
- We will showcase and share exemplary lessons that promote the practice of Accountable Talk.
- We will all create and practice the norms and skills of Academically Productive Talk in our classrooms and professional discourse.

Action Steps

- We will continue to seek feedback from the parents, teachers, and students and use the data retrieved to adjust school environment practices, procedures, and policies as needed.
- We will examine the self-study from the NEASC application and look to create and adopt the procedures and materials needed to achieve the six foundational elements and other principles within each standard.
- We will create opportunities for the staff to build rapport with one another.
- We will review and understand the NEASC standards and the foundational elements needed to be an accredited school.
- We will read, discuss, and incorporate research-based instructional strategies.
- We will embed SBAC strategies into our curricula and lessons.

School Goal Six: Evidence of Progress

Scheduled trainings and professional development with inside and outside sources throughout the school year along with continued department and interdisciplinary PLC time before, during and after-school.

1. NEASC
 - Teacher and Administrator Site Visits
 - NEASC Survey twice each school year
2. Personalized Learning through Differentiation and Instructional Strategies
 - Stanford Calibration Method, November 2020 & March 2020, August 2021, November 2021, March 2022
 - Academically Productive Talk/Accountable Talk – August 2020, November 2020 & March 2020, August 2021, November 2021, March 2022, June 2022, August 2022, November 2022, March 2023, June 2023
 - Writing to Learn – June 2022, November 2022, March 2023, June 2023, November 2023, March 2024, June 2024, November 2024, March 2025, June 2025
 - Effective Feedback – June 2023, August 2023, November 2023, March 2024, June 2024, November 2024, March 2025, June 2025, November 2025, March 2026, June 2026
 - Technology in our Classrooms – August 2020
 - Assessment Design – Monthly in PLC Time in 2020-2022
 - Weekly Interdisciplinary PLC & Departmental PLC
 1. Learning Walks, Educational Research Review and Discussion, Unit Sharing
 2. Learning Walks, Curriculum, Assessment/SLO Data, Stanford Calibration

School Goal Seven: To support and grow our certified staffing in all domains as prescribed through the evaluation process through effective feedback, accountability, and supervision.

Strategic Action #1:

If we provide positive and constructive feedback to teachers on their practice to create a safe learning environment that is designed to engage and motivate all students based on best practices, then teacher performance will continuously improve and students will develop a love of learning that is evident through positive actions and academic outcomes.

Action Steps

- We will continue to provide professional development on identifying the foundational skills and competency standards from the CT Common Core of Teaching Rubric.
- We will continue to provide formal and informal feedback according to ISAAC Educator Development and Evaluation Plan.
- We will meet regularly to review student learning outcome progress throughout the school year and if necessary, revise at mid-year goal meetings.
- We will assist teachers in the implementation of a data assessment tracker to ensure that students are working toward SBAC style assessments.
- We will provide formative reviews conducted to assess progress to date toward mutually agreed upon performance goals.
- We will ensure that the monthly calendar is reflective of the written curriculum and is followed with fidelity in the classroom.
- We will display the professionalism and ethical behavior in the same manner that is expected of teachers and staff.
- We will promote the passion for professional improvement by sharing best practices and learned skills with the faculty and staff.

School Goal Seven: Evidence of Progress

- Scheduled trainings and professional development with inside and outside sources throughout the school year along with continued department and interdisciplinary PLC time before, during and after-school.

Overall Summary of Data

As presented in the data, the Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication has experienced low levels of performance on the SBAC for the past few years. Most recently in 2018-19, ISAAC was ranked last amongst all Connecticut schools on the 8th grade mathematics section of the SBAC. These results were instrumental in the decision to put ISAAC on warning for four areas academically: English Language Arts for all grades combined, Mathematics for all grades combined, Mathematics for 7th grade, and Mathematics for 8th grade. In addition, ISAAC was put on notice for high suspension data for which an action plan was created to support the work needed to improve all areas.

In 2020, the ISAAC Board of Directors hired three new administrators charged with developing a system for teaching and learning that would support the school's Core Values and Beliefs about Learning that ensured that all students can succeed through hard work and grit and that ISAAC would become a premier middle school. To accomplish this work, ISAAC applied and was granted candidacy status with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Six foundation elements were identified and are the foundation for the professional development that will support the academic and social emotional needs for all students.

Choice schools know that the makeup of classes will dictate the scores for the SBAC from year to year. Although schools can raise student scores, it is still a challenge to ensure all students are meeting the state goal when they have experienced a variety of curriculums and school environments from a variety of different sending schools/districts. The English Language Arts and Mathematics departments will utilize their common PLC time to analyze SBAC data and design lesson plans that include SBAC practice starting their 6th grade year. Locally conducted research has shown that there is a strong correlation between the success of students on the ELA section of standardized testing, and a school-wide Literacy rubric. Further research will help us predict student SBAC scores and target students for interventions.

The strength of ISAAC is its school culture and climate. The school's cornerstone is its advisory program which allows each student to partner with the same group of students and teacher for all 3 years at ISAAC. Within these advisories, topics such as: bullying, teen dating violence, teen suicide, school and personal goals, grit, mindset, Black Lives Matter, and team building are discussed and embraced. Students, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders have an influence and input on our advisory curriculum. The advisory becomes the student's "family" in the school by assisting with developing relationships, problem solving, celebrations of life events and sharing in challenges. The advisor is the student's primary advocate in the school and the initial home-school contact. There are a number of committees and groups in our school community that play a critical role in our school culture and climate. The Instructional Leadership Team is a group of 10 teachers and faculty members that meet monthly with school administration to address culture and climate issues, specific to the teaching and working environment. The Parent Teacher Organization is a group of parents that meets with the Principal and Dean of Students to address areas of success and growth from a parent perspective. If there are specific policies that welcome review and evaluation, the School Improvement Team is the parent conduit to address them.

The data from the student, parent, and teacher surveys support the efforts of providing a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment as written in our core values and belief statement. Parents, teachers, and students are members of the Safe School Climate Committee and School Safety Committee which provides ISAAC with a constant examination of its practices and its effects on the safety, culture, and climate. The New London Police Department provides ISAAC with unwavering support and service in all areas of safety and resources. Our goal this school year is to increase participation in the Parent Teacher Organization and increase our connections with local education, political, and community leaders. By accomplishing this task, we will ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the student's journey towards becoming lifelong learners, a core value and belief of ISAAC.