



**Carson Middle School**

## **2023-2024 Mid-Year Progress Report**

Dear Eagle Family,

Once again, the end of the year is right around the corner and we are in our planning phase for the 2024-2025 school year. I cannot believe that I will be concluding my fifth year at Carson Middle School. What a wonderful journey it has been! I am so proud to share that this year our culture of excellence is at an all-time high based on the work of our dedicated staff, supportive community, and the MOST outstanding students in the region. The evidence is simple; our students are achieving at a higher level inside/outside the classroom, we have had more families in our building for engagement/planning events (over 600 parents), and our data indicates that positive student decision making is at an all time high. These points of individual student growth in relation to the current state of affairs in our world, IS a major celebration of our collective work.

### **Who we are...**

It is an honor to work in District 8, where our district leadership is fully committed to supporting our military families. At Carson Middle school our student population represents 98% of students who fall into the “military child” dynamic. Here are some simple facts that define our military children:

- Carson Middle School is the only middle school in the state of Colorado on a military post.
- CMS welcomes students from 36 different states, territories, or countries making it one of the most diverse schools in the nation.
- On average, our students have already attended six different schools in their academic career.
- Our current diverse demographic and transient population represents 2% of schools “like” Carson Middle school nationwide.
- 48% of our student population will arrive, or experience, a Permanent Change of Station move during their three years at Carson Middle School. Historically, these moves occur most often in October, December, and April.

Based on these unique factors, our student’s experience is in stark contrast to traditional neighborhood school settings across the nation. At traditional neighborhood schools the student enrollment variation is on average 12% (cumulative change) from grades 1-8. This comparative factor to the 48% movement rate of our student population, brings to light why CMS students are so uniquely skilled, adaptive, and inclusive. In short, they have had to apply academic knowledge based on different standards from different school systems each time they move (on average six moves). This allows them to develop unique adaptive skill sets that are demonstrated inside/outside the classroom. It also provides a challenge to our staff to quickly determine specific academic levels, and identify strategies to even the academic playing field for a CMS student in relation to mastery of Colorado state standards.

## Data Overview

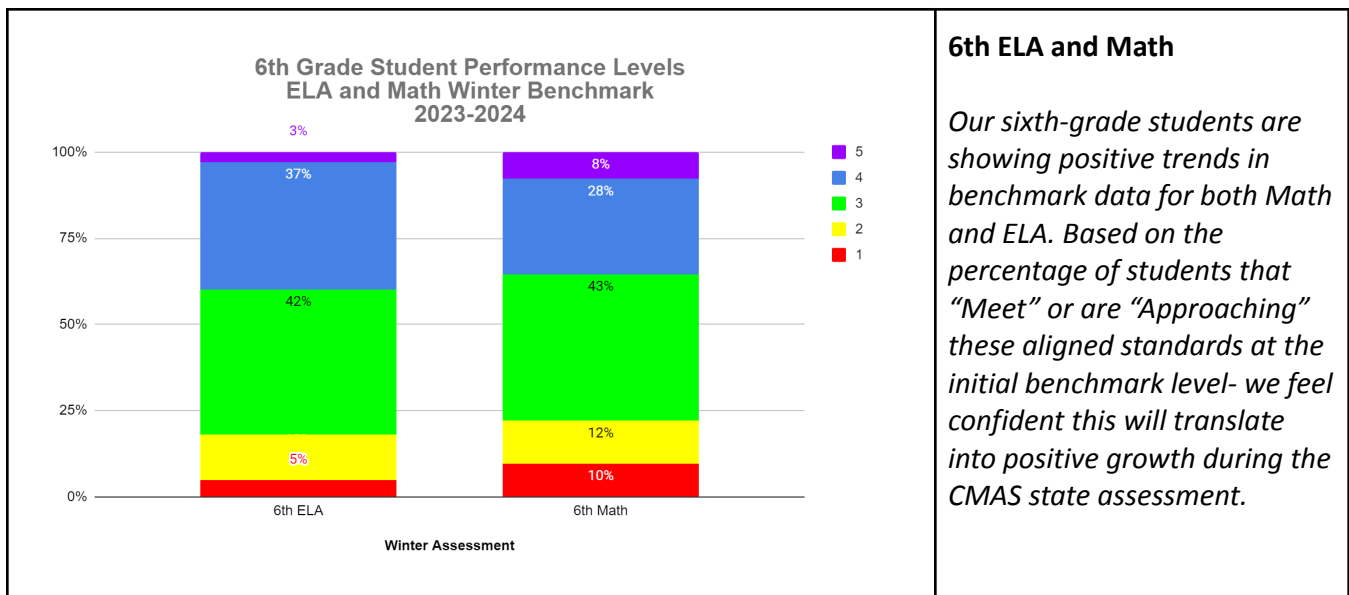
One of our assessment methods to determine academic levels is to use a series of achievement benchmarks both from district and state assessments. In District 8, we use a local assessment called Illuminate to help determine growth, and areas of focus.

- Fall ELA/Math schoolwide Illuminate assessment - a benchmark, which we will compare to our Spring Illuminate test (May 2024) to determine growth towards mastery of specific Colorado-English Language Arts Standards. We will provide this information once we have completed the May ELA Illuminate test.
- Winter ELA/Math Illuminate assessment - a benchmark that helps us determine growth in mastery of standards from first semester and areas of continued focus for second semester.

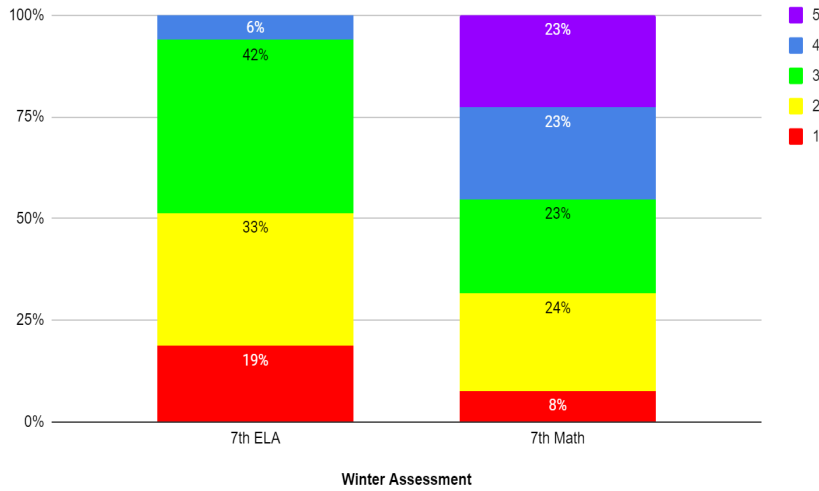
Below we have listed the same data teachers use from our Winter Illuminate test to determine strategies and adjustments to address for our second semester work.

## ELA and Math Achievement

What type of progress did our students make in mastering standards in ELA and Math?



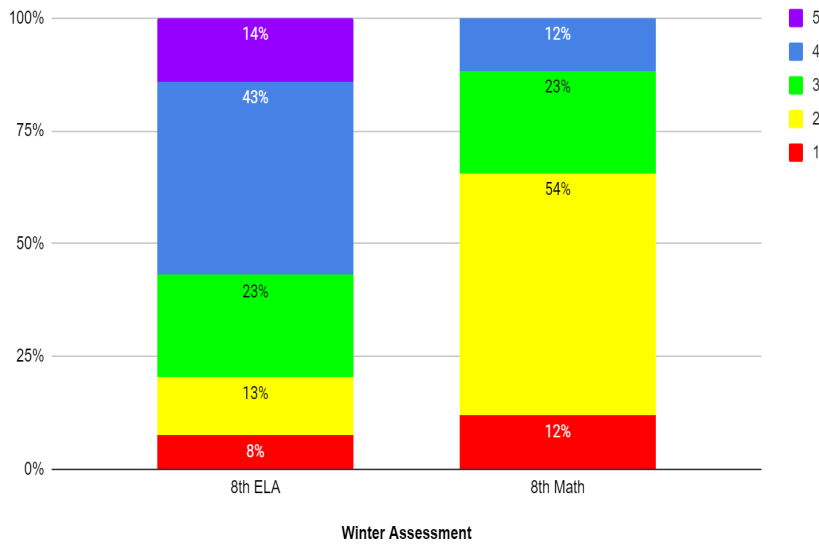
**7th Grade Student Performance Levels  
ELA and Math Winter Benchmark  
2023-2024**



**7th ELA and Math**

*Our seventh-grade students are showing positive trends in benchmark data for Math. Based on the percentage of students that “Meet” or are “Approaching” these aligned standards at the initial benchmark level- we feel confident this will translate into positive growth during the CMAS state assessment.*

**8th Grade Student Performance Levels  
ELA and Math Winter Benchmark  
2023-2024**



**8th ELA and Math  
Explain Data 2-3 sentences**

*Our eighth-grade students are showing positive trends in benchmark data for ELA. Based on the percentage of students that “Meet” or are “Approaching” these aligned standards at the initial benchmark level- we feel confident this will translate into positive growth during the CMAS state assessment.*

*Currently, our team is analyzing specific data Math trends aligned to 8<sup>th</sup> grade standards in order to determine specific strategies that will shift each performance category by 15% (positive) prior to the CMAS state assessment.*

At Carson Middle School we use multiple strategies to address achievement and growth in the area of math. It is important to note that our new Math Curriculum adoption (Open Up) has allowed student lead activities throughout each math lesson such as:

- student presenting/explaining ideas
- small group work with students providing examples to support or refute counterexamples.
- Students making real world connections and persevering through challenging problems.

In addition, our teachers use collaborative PLC time to address Math content and grade level specific trends by aligning the following:

- Summative and formative assessments to refine instruction in order to meet student needs.
- Vertically aligned math PLCs, which focus on data driven decision making.
- Incorporating research based instructional routines to meet the needs of all students, with a focus on multi language learners.

Similarly, we use a variety of strategies at Carson Middle School to addresses achievement and growth in the area of ELA using the following strategies:

- Use formative and summative data to determine specific trends and areas of growth.
- Students reflect on their writing data and performance, set goals, revise writing, and monitor their own progress.
  - Use the curriculum provided rubrics and grade level CMAS rubrics to have students self-assess, peer assess, and receive standardized marks from their teachers.
  - PLC focus is on data driven decision making, research best practices for literacy, and study on adolescent neuroscience to design instructional practices both vertically and horizontally at CMS.

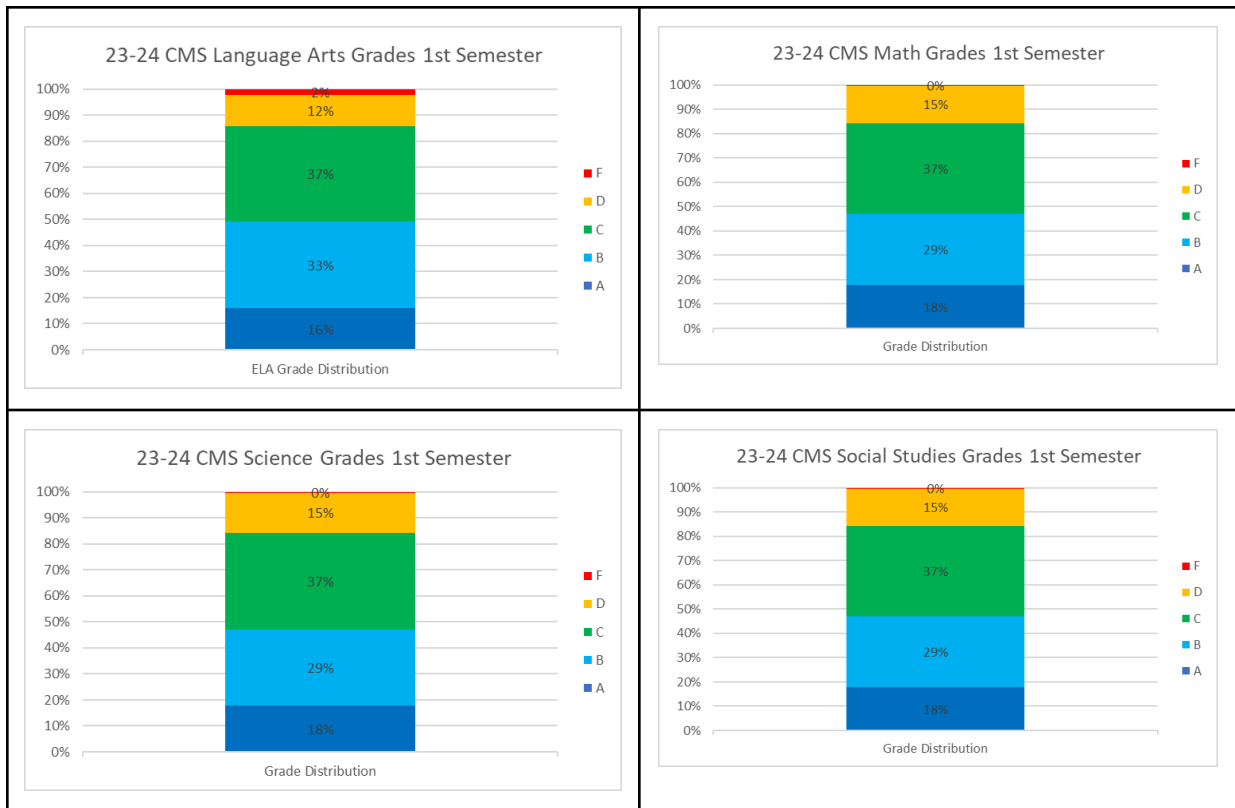
## Student Content Mastery

Many of the success we have seen in our Illuminate data stem from our staff, as they have worked diligently on moving our grading system to a standards-based (1-4) model. This model has allowed us a deeper dive into student strengths and weakness as they pertain to specific mastery learning objectives/goals aligned to Colorado State Standards. The implementation of this process was not overnight, as it is the culmination of multiple years of planning/set up that included the following steps:

- 2022-23 Math teacher pilot/expertise. Our math teachers piloted this process for an entire year to create an expert in each grade level. (Helped all teachers implement this year 2024).
- Identify and align specific standards per content and grade level
- To help student understand how Standard's based grading applies to their learning (student's can explain the process).
- To help our community understand how Standards based grading applies to their child's learning (Thrive nights, parent walk throughs, and student led conferences).

- Gradebook set up and design to “speak” to Standards based grading and also provide a corresponding letter grade- as not all our students will transfer to schools using Standards Based Grading systems.

The tables below provide insight to the success of this process which has directly correlated to our ability to predict student’s strengths and weaknesses when approaching district and state assessments. This data shows the ability to meet students’ academic goals through the lens of specific standards where we are seeing a higher level of students showing mastery of standards (green, light blue, dark blue) across all content areas, and a much smaller percentage of students approaching standard level mastery (yellow and red).

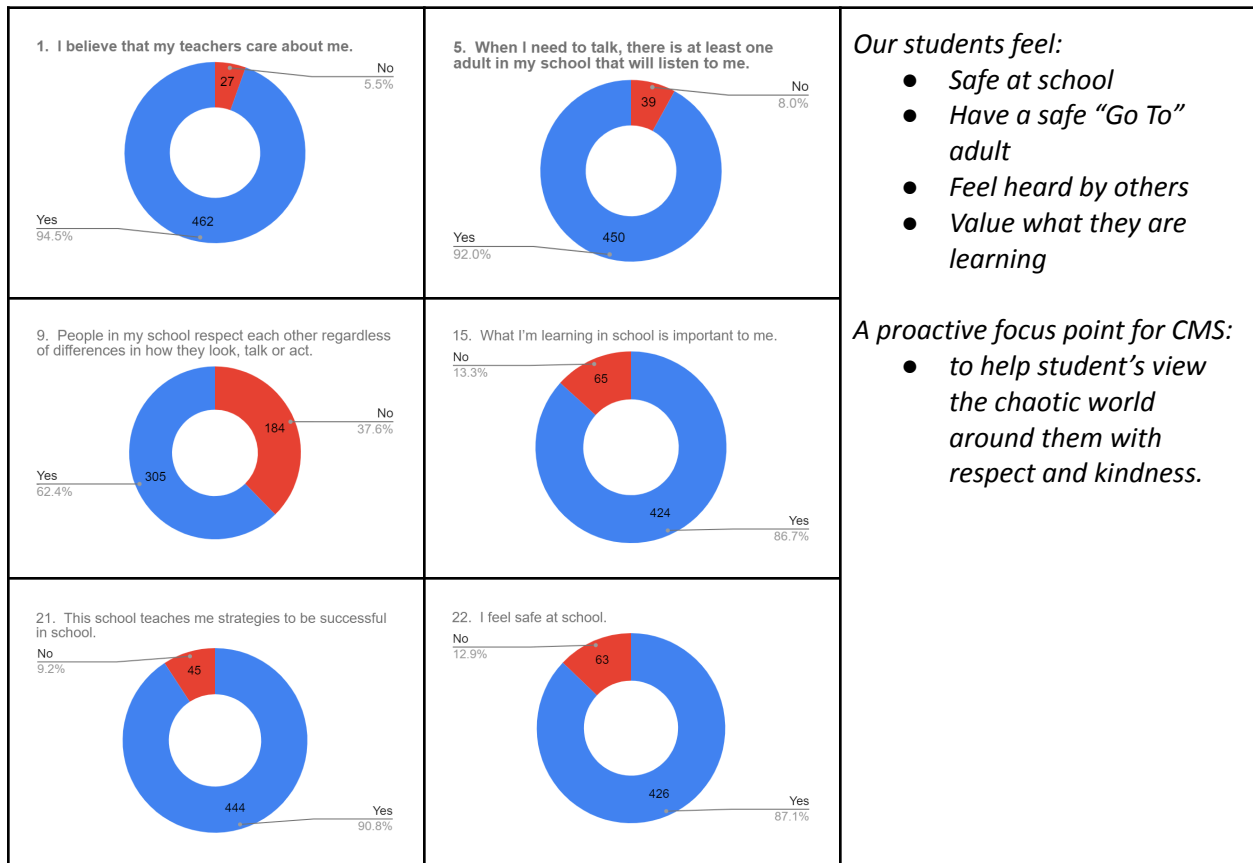


The shift to Standards Based Grading has allowed teachers to address student specific needs, instead of the antiquated task completion grading system (homework, tests, projects). Students can demonstrate mastery of a standard in a variety of methods (evidence) in order to demonstrate growth in their own learning process. Although, these charts are listed from the traditional A-F grading scale, it is more indicative of our work aligned to Standards Based Grading. The data shows the ability to meet students’ academic goals through the lens of standards (sub standards) where we are seeing a higher level of students showing mastery of standards (green, light blue, dark blue) across all content areas, and a much smaller percentage of students approaching standard level mastery (yellow and red).

# Student Climate Survey Data

## Why students feel they are succeeding at Carson Middle School?

Our school is an a very healthy place! This evidence is what we are most excited about this year. Our positive momentum has been a collective effort of staff, students, and our community. To date we have had over 600 parents come into the building through our Parent/Student Thrive events, personal walking tours, grade level orientation meetings, and our open-door meeting feedback process. In addition, we have continued to expand on our school priorities including bolstering student/staff relationships and essential skill development (CDE aligned). The primary focus has been through celebrating individual strengths, self-worth and value through student guided analysis of their own abilities. This has built confidence, awareness and motivation as seen by the data below with our students at Carson Middle School. Their voice also reflects a substantial increase in positive decision making by our students. Behavioral incidents decreased by 40% this year which reflects the work of our student led/created support groups of Eagle Rangers, Eagles in Action, NJHS, STUCO, AVID, and SWAT teams. All of these student organizations have helped build foundational healthy choices, student voice, and kindness initiatives in our building.



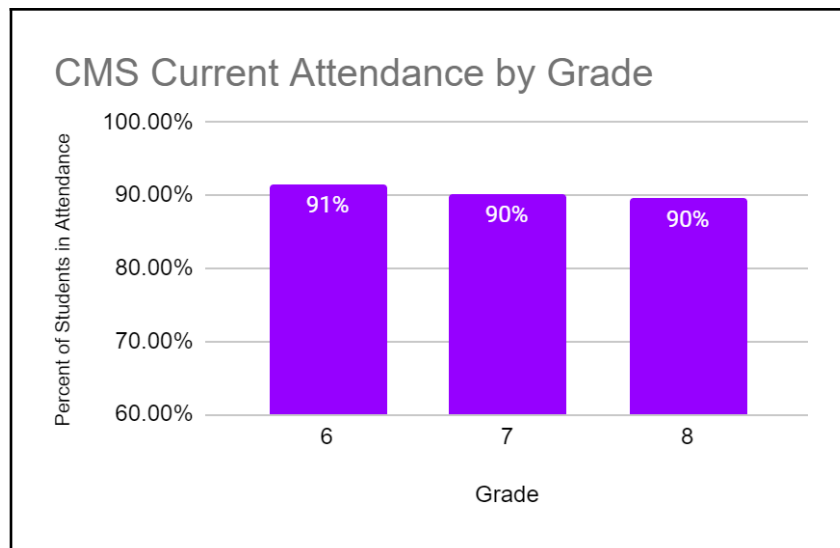
[Complete Student Survey Results](#)

# Attendance Data

## How are students actively engaged in school?

Student engagement equates to student success. Since COVID (2020) we have seen a downward trend in student attendance across the nation. At Carson Middle School we have been consistently at an average of 90%-92% over the last three years. However, this is short of the goal to achieve 95% attendance rate during a school year. We feel this goal is attainable, but have had to determine new strategies to address truancy this year. These include adaptative scheduling, family supports, community partnerships and personal communication strategies. Once we assess the efficiency of these interventions at the conclusion of the school year, we will embed the most productive into our school culture next year.

**HIGHLIGHT!** We have seen a tremendous increase in after school participation in all clubs, activities, and athletics. For example, clubs, tutoring, band, choir, and all sports have seen on average a 60% increase in participation this year. Our programs (STEM, MUSIC, BAND, ART) have been recognized with multiple award winners, and our sports programs have won numerous league titles. These accomplishments are a direct reflection of our “student first” mindset and the confidence we have instilled in our students to a risk and demonstrate their unique skill sets. In short, opportunity at Carson Middle School is producing results in our student engagement, pride, and overall belief in our school.



CMS has been steadily consistent between the 90%-92% attendance rate over the last three years. However, to achieve the 95% attendance rate we need to rethink strategies pertaining to attendance interventions for the 2024-2025 school year.

## How will continue to build upon our opportunities for growth, inclusive community and positive culture?

Our students have shown tremendous growth in advocacy, essential skills, and personal voice. These factors have been developed through unique strategies of essential skill development, academic awareness, our “Eagle Way” of expectations, and building skill showcase opportunities for our students.

To complement our work and fine tune our focus-Our full implementation of Standards Based Grading has allowed CMS students a reflective method on how they learn, their strength/weaknesses, and the ability to gain confidence during a the very awkward phase of middle school life.

Lastly, based on the transient nature of our student population we have created a “bingo” card initiative, which is a creative way student identify their personal/academic strengths, celebrate them with staff/parents, and carry them to their next stop via a portfolio thumbprint design they build during their time at CMS. Despite all of the positives we have observed at CMS this year- we still have room for improvement. In particular, as our world feels more divided- we need to be aware of the anxiety this can create for a military student and their family. A primary focus that our staff has identified, is to continue to build student specific interventions, seek out and bolster our community partnerships, and emphasize the importance of sustaining a “culture that cares” at Carson Middle School.

Based on the data and evidence I have shared throughout this document, I feel our future is extremely bright. Our students are showing potential for substantial growth on our upcoming CMAS State Assessment in April and final grades at the end of the semester. *Please note, this test is important for us to determine our strengths and weaknesses.* It is the second part of our comparative benchmark process and will provide us with essential data to continue to build systems of success at CMS. Having students take this test, go to bed early, and eat a good breakfast are very important to reinforce at home. I realize the challenges or students face taking another state assessment in their ever-changing academic journey. Yet, I believe it is another opportunity to show how great the students are at Carson Middle School and will speak to all the work we all have done as a community to make this a wonderful learning environment.

In closing, your student truly holds a special place in my heart- as I watch them overcome so many obstacles during the already difficult middle school years-I have come to realize in my five years at CMS that they are the most adaptable, open minded, and talented students I have had the privilege of working with in my career. I am so proud of our staff and the multiple opportunities they have created to develop and expand our student’s unique skill sets. Most importantly, I have been in awe of the parent response we have had this year for community events, general support and timely feedback. It is an absolute honor to serve in my role as Principal at a school that I believe is second to none.

Let’s finish strong, and feel free to stop by and experience all the positive things transpiring at Carson Middle School.

Anthony Greco