

# Northstar Middle School

## School Improvement Plan

### Annual Update: 2023-24

*This school improvement plan meets the requirements of WAC 180-16-220 and WAC 180-105-020.<sup>1</sup>*

#### SCHOOL OVERVIEW

**Description:** Northstar Middle School began in 1981 as one of Lake Washington’s first choice schools. Northstar has four full-time teachers and a student body of 90, with 30 students per grade level.

At Northstar, we believe students learn best in a small, caring community where individual talents can be recognized and nurtured, academic growth encouraged, and social development fostered.

Located on the Emerson Campus in the Houghton neighborhood of Kirkland, Northstar emphasizes academic excellence, personal responsibility, and creativity. Experienced teachers work as a team to lead multiage, theme-based classes. We foster the unique aspects of each student and appreciate individual differences. Students are encouraged to connect to people in their community through service learning.

At Northstar, we believe a growth mindset is a critical component of student development. Parents participate by working cooperatively with teachers to sustain a cohesive learning community, provide enriching experiences and promote a love of learning. Students develop the positive perceptions of self, school and life that are the foundation for continued success. It is a great place to work and learn.

Last year was the first time since before the COVID-19 pandemic that students participated in Smarter Balanced Assessments in Math and Literacy and the WCAS (science assessment). Data from those assessments was overwhelmingly positive, however, there are a small number of students who did not meet proficiency on grade level assessment measures necessitating targeted academic interventions as an aspect of our School Improvement Plan.

Our small size provides both an opportunity and a challenge. Due to our small cohorts of students, assessment data can be easily skewed by single student scores. On the other hand, our small environment allows teachers to get to know each student personally and work as a collaborative team to support individual student needs.

**Mission Statement:** Each student will leave Northstar on-track to graduate prepared to lead a rewarding, responsible life as a contributing member of our community and greater society

#### 2023-24 PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

Priority	Priority Area	Focus Grade Level(s) and/or Student Group(s)	Desired Outcome
1	Mathematics	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	<b>Increased proficiency for students scoring Level 2 or 3 on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade SBA.</b>

<sup>1</sup> LWSD School Board Approval on <insert date>

2	ELA	6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Increased proficiency for students scoring level 1 or 2 on a school-wide writing assessment (delivered in Support Group).
3	Social and Emotional	All-School	Reduction in school related stress and anxiety as measured by Spring 2024 Panorama and counselor survey data.

### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Our target is that all students and student groups are improving, with all gaps closing, each year. The following priorities have been set to guide us in achieving this.

Priority #1											
<b>Priority Area</b>	Mathematics										
<b>Focus Area</b>	SBA Proficiency Level										
<b>Focus Grade Level(s) and/or Student Group(s)</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> graders who scored Level 2 or 3 on the 5 <sup>th</sup> grade SBA										
<b>Desired Outcome</b>	Students who scored Level 2 or 3 on the 5 <sup>th</sup> grade SBA will improve by one proficiency scale.										
<b>Alignment with District Strategic Initiatives</b>	MTSS										
<b>Data and Rationale Supporting Focus Area</b>	75% of the 6 <sup>th</sup> grade cohort met or exceeded proficiency on the 5 <sup>th</sup> grade math SBA which is a relatively low score compared to other cohorts entering Northstar at 6 <sup>th</sup> graders. Additionally, a few students in this sub-group were either not enrolled in the LWSD for 5 <sup>th</sup> grade and/or were enrolled but didn't take the test.										
<b>Strategy to Address Priority</b>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Action</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Measure of Fidelity of Implementation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Targeted assistance before and after school.</td> <td>Participation and attendance.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In-class instructional support in small groups (provided by teacher and IA)</td> <td>FastBridge MOY and EOY scores. Data tracking for MTSS team.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Frequent opportunities for students to engage in SBA-like practice during 6<sup>th</sup> grade math.</td> <td>Math teachers collaborate regularly re: norming, planning, and evaluation sessions.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Optional study skills group during Advisory.</td> <td>Data tracking for MTSS team</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Action	Measure of Fidelity of Implementation	Targeted assistance before and after school.	Participation and attendance.	In-class instructional support in small groups (provided by teacher and IA)	FastBridge MOY and EOY scores. Data tracking for MTSS team.	Frequent opportunities for students to engage in SBA-like practice during 6 <sup>th</sup> grade math.	Math teachers collaborate regularly re: norming, planning, and evaluation sessions.	Optional study skills group during Advisory.	Data tracking for MTSS team
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Optional study skills group during Advisory.	Data tracking for MTSS team										
<b>Timeline for Focus</b>	Fall, 2023 - Spring, 2024										
<b>Method(s) to Monitor Progress</b>	Classroom based assessments, FastBridge, SBA practice, and spring SBA scores.										

**Priority #2**

<b>Priority Area</b>	English Language Arts/Literacy	
<b>Focus Area</b>	Writing Proficiency (expository and argument)	
<b>Focus Grade Level(s) and/or Student Group(s)</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> graders who scored Level 1 or Level 2 on 6 <sup>th</sup> grade common support group writing assignment.	
<b>Desired Outcome</b>	Students who scored Level 1 or Level 2 on the Northstar common writing assignment will increase proficiency by at least one level.	
<b>Alignment with District Strategic Initiatives</b>	MTSS	
<b>Data and Rationale Supporting Focus Area</b>	The majority of the 6 <sup>th</sup> grade cohort did not meet proficiency on the first draft of a whole-school writing assignment. As 6 <sup>th</sup> graders, they are new to us, so this is our first opportunity to support their academic growth in this area focusing immediately on tier 2 interventions and enrichment.	
<b>Strategy to Address Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of Fidelity of Implementation</b>
	Targeted assistance before and after school.	Participation and attendance.
	In-class instructional support in small groups (provided by teacher and IA)	FastBridge MOY and EOY scores. Data tracking for MTSS team.
	Frequent opportunities for students to engage in similar writing practice across content areas	Teachers collaborate regularly re: norming, planning, and evaluation sessions related to literacy across the curriculum.
	Optional study skills group during Advisory.	Data tracking for MTSS team
<b>Timeline for Focus</b>	Fall, 2023 - Spring, 2023	
<b>Method(s) to Monitor Progress</b>	Classroom based assessments, FastBridge, SBA practice, scores on revised writing assignments, and overall, ELA grades.	

**Priority #3**

<b>Priority Area</b>	Social and Emotional	
<b>Focus Area</b>	Anxiety and stress reduction	
<b>Focus Grade Level(s) and/or Student Group(s)</b>	All-Students	
<b>Desired Outcome</b>	Students will report and exhibit more healthy coping strategies.	
<b>Alignment with District Strategic Initiatives</b>	MTSS	
<b>Data and Rationale Supporting Focus Area</b>	School climate survey data (students), parent survey, counselor identification, and teacher observations all indicate that stress and anxiety are major social/emotional concerns for Northstar students. While overall Northstar students are high achievers and often meet/exceed standards on academic measures, many experience anxiety and unhealthy levels of stress.	
<b>Strategy to Address Priority</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of Fidelity of Implementation</b>
	All school mindfulness training and practice.	Embedded in Support Group (6 <sup>th</sup> period) with rotating instructor.
	All school basic neuroscience curriculum.	Whole-school unity of study.
	Continue use of Character Strong and other District provided SEL resources focusing on wellness.	Embedded in Support Group with all students receiving the same lessons.
<b>Timeline for Focus</b>	Fall, 2023 - Spring, 2024	
<b>Method(s) to Monitor Progress</b>	Survey data, common classroom assessments, counselor reports.	

## STATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that all schools meet at least a 95% participation rate for state assessments for all students as well as each subgroup. Schools that fall below this threshold in any group must include goals and actions the school will take to ensure 95% of students participate.

Strategies the school is using to meet participation requirements include:

- Common language on the importance of state testing is used by all schools in the district.
- Staff receive training on the administration of state assessments, including the use of supports and accommodations to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate learning.
- Make-up testing is provided for students that miss the school’s date.
- Test completion lists are monitored by both school testing coordinators and district personnel.
- The district is using the recommended refusal procedures and form developed by the Washington Educational Research Association.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

As a district of doers, learners, and believers, our “why” drives us. We do this all-important work because we want all of our students to have equitable and quality experiences in the Lake Washington School District in order to ensure that they get to choose their futures instead of their circumstances choosing them.

Research has consistently shown that family and community engagement is key to increasing the academic success and positive connections that students have at school, especially students from groups that are demographically under-represented or those historically marginalized. Therefore, it is imperative that we consistently plan and implement strategies to engage our families and school communities in authentic and culturally appropriate approaches.

To ensure that families have the support that they need to assist their children, OSPI requires that school districts have a family engagement policy in place that applies to all families.<sup>2</sup> The specific strategy our school is using to involve and inform the community of the School Improvement Plan is as follows:

<b>Strategy to Engage Students, Families, Parents and Community Members in the development of the SIP</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
	Direct communication during Northstar Advisory Committee (NAC) meetings	September & October 2023
	Direct communication during spring conferences (SIP progress review and preplanning for 2024-2025)	June 2024
	Annual survey	February 2024 (estimated)
<b>Strategy to Inform Students, Families, Parents and Community Members of the SIP</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
	SIP posted on website	January 2024
	Updates at monthly NAC meetings	Monthly
	Direct communication during spring conferences	June 2024

<sup>2</sup> LWSD’s policy is found at: <https://www.lwsd.org/about-us/policy-and-regulations/community-relations-4000/community-education-program-4265>

