

STELLA SCHOLA

School Improvement Plan

Annual Update: 2023-24

This school improvement plan meets the requirements of WAC 180-16-220 and WAC 180-105-020.¹

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Description: Stella Schola ("Star School" in Latin) is a Choice middle school in Lake Washington School District. Stella Schola offers sixth, seventh, and eighth graders a comprehensive, consistent, and challenging learning environment with high academic and behavioral standards and solid teacher support. The school encourages parents and community members to assist students in developing skills to become independent and self-sufficient adults who will succeed and contribute responsibly in a global community. The rich, comprehensive learning environment is based on historical themes with an emphasis on mastery learning for all students. By integrating as many subjects as possible into year-long historical themes, students learn from the past to make better choices and decisions in the future. Students have the same teacher for most of the school day, which enhances opportunities for integration of subject matter, helps promote curricular continuity, and increases the students' sense of belonging during early adolescence. Teachers work collaboratively to provide a challenging, stimulating, and hands-on curriculum for students. In-depth studies of the core subjects are emphasized. Students participate in a student-to-student mentoring program. Stella Schola's unique schedule allows teachers to create a highly personalized environment for students. Students get individual academic assistance after school as necessary to ensure mastery of content. Students recognize the benefits of their hard work and focus on learning by experiencing personal and academic success.

Mission Statement: Stella Schola's mission is to provide an inclusive, comprehensive, challenging, and engaging learning environment with high academic standards and character development, through extraordinary school-family-community partnerships.

2023-24 PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

Priority	Priority Area	Focus Grade Level(s) and/or Student Group(s)	Desired Outcome
1	Science	6 th – 8 th	All students will improve in their participation in and depth of scientific discussions by Spring 2024.
2	Science	6 th – 8 th	Science curriculum is updated to include phenomenon-based instruction and more closely aligned to NGSS. Each year, each grade will update one grade-level unit to meet this outcome over three years. By Spring 2024, each grade will have three updated phenomenon-based instructional units in science.
3	Social and Emotional	6 th – 8 th	Data from the Spring 2024 Panorama survey will reflect a 17% increase from the Fall 2023 survey in the area of Sense of Belonging.

¹ LWSD School Board Approval on <insert date>

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									
Priority Area	Science								
Focus Area	Participation in and quality/depth of scientific discussions.								
Focus Grade Level(s)	6 th – 8 th								
Desired Outcome	All students will improve in their participation in and depth of scientific discussions by Spring 2024.								
Alignment with District Strategic Initiatives	MTSS								
Data and Rationale Supporting Focus Area	Data gathered in Fall 2023 at each grade level demonstrated that many Stella students were not participating in scientific discussions. Of those that did participate, few contributed in a way that deepened the discussion (i.e. provide evidence to support claim, provide a new idea/rationale, etc.).								
Strategy to Address Priority	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Action</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Measure of Fidelity of Implementation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Implement instructional strategies to strengthen in these two areas</td> <td>100% of student population will receive instruction and opportunities to engage in the process in each unit</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Assess 1 – 2 scientific discussions per unit per grade-level</td> <td>100% of student population will be assessed; common data collection methods and tracker will be used</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1st year of implementation</td> <td>Will assess in Spring 2024 to determine if these priority needs a multi-year focus</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Action	Measure of Fidelity of Implementation	Implement instructional strategies to strengthen in these two areas	100% of student population will receive instruction and opportunities to engage in the process in each unit	Assess 1 – 2 scientific discussions per unit per grade-level	100% of student population will be assessed; common data collection methods and tracker will be used	1 st year of implementation	Will assess in Spring 2024 to determine if these priority needs a multi-year focus
	Action	Measure of Fidelity of Implementation							
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	Assess 1 – 2 scientific discussions per unit per grade-level	100% of student population will be assessed; common data collection methods and tracker will be used							
1 st year of implementation	Will assess in Spring 2024 to determine if these priority needs a multi-year focus								
Timeline for Focus	Fall, 2023 - Spring, 2024								
Method(s) to Monitor Progress	Common data collection process and tracker								

Priority #2

Priority Area	Science	
Focus Area	Phenomenon-based instruction	
Focus Grade Level(s)	6 th – 8 th	
Desired Outcome	Science curriculum is updated to included phenomenon-based instruction and more closely aligned to NGSS. Each year, each grade will update one grade-level unit to meet this outcome over three years. By Spring 2024, each grade will have three updated phenomenon-based instructional units in Science.	
Alignment with District Strategic Initiatives	MTSS	
Data and Rationale Supporting Focus Area	Our science instructional methods have not kept pace with NGSS phenomenon-based instructional practices.	
Strategy to Address Priority	Action	Measure of Fidelity of Implementation
	Each grade will redesign 1 Science unit per year to be phenomenon-based instruction	By the end of each year, 1 Science unit per grade will be redesigned to be phenomenon-based instruction
	3 rd year of implementation	By the end of this school year, all grades will have three redesigned science units to be phenomenon-based instruction
Timeline for Focus	Fall, 2021 - Spring, 2024	
Method(s) to Monitor Progress	By the end of each year, 1 Science unit per grade will be redesigned to be phenomenon-based instruction. By the end of the 23-24 school year, each grade will have three redesigned Science units that are updated to meet the NGSS phenomenon-based instructional practices.	

Priority #3

Priority Area	Social and Emotional	
Focus Area	Sense of Belonging	
Focus Grade Level(s)	6 th – 8 th	
Desired Outcome	Data from the Spring 2024 Panorama survey will reflect a 17% increase from the Fall 2023 survey in the area of Sense of Belonging.	
Alignment with District Strategic Initiatives	MTSS	
Data and Rationale Supporting Focus Area	In the Fall 2023 Panorama survey, Sense of Belonging for Stella Schola students was measured at 63%. In order to strengthen our students' sense of belonging, we'd like to work towards 80% or better.	
Strategy to Address Priority	Action	Measure of Fidelity of Implementation
	Two weeks of mentor connection activities at the very beginning of the school year	Students have more opportunity to get to know one another and have input (thru student survey) on who they'd like their mentor(s)/mentee(s) to be
	Include lessons on and opportunities for students to connect with their peers, staff, and the Stella community as a whole	Monthly mentoring activities, all-school programs and events, annual camp
	Include lessons on and opportunities for students to practice recognizing their peers positive behaviors, earning Stella Steps in our PBIS system	Student-led Stella Steps in our PBIS system
	Staff model recognizing others' contribution to the school community	Model throughout the day. Staff has had a personal, non-school related conversation with each student every month
Timeline for Focus	Fall, 2023 - Spring, 2024	
Method(s) to Monitor Progress	We will use our Spring 2024 Panorama results and hope to increase 17% in Sense of Belonging.	

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.² The specific strategy our school is using to involve and inform the community of the School Improvement Plan is as follows:

Strategy to Engage Students, Families, Parents and Community Members in the development of the SIP	Action	Timeline
	Gather and collect family feedback via Early Winter Parent Survey	February 2024
	Parent-Student-Teacher Conferences	December 2023 and March 2024
	Parents invited into the classrooms for student presentations multiple times a year	Year-long
	Engage families/community members by utilizing them to assist in the classroom (virtual/in-person) and on campus (following state/local/district guidelines).	Ongoing (families volunteer at least 20-hours per year)
	Building partnerships with local community members and organizations	Year-long

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

Strategy to Inform Students, Families, Parents and Community Members of the SIP	Action	Timeline
	Use emails/ParentSquare to engage families and community members in the curriculum scope and sequence, as well as learning process.	Ongoing
	Classroom Monthly Parent Letter to inform families of curriculum scope and sequence and upcoming class/school events.	Every month (first school day of each month)
	Stella E-Updates sent a least once a month informing families of important school information and upcoming school events.	Every month (sometimes more frequently)
	Invite families/community into the classroom for various student-lead events.	Minimum of 1 each semester for each grade level
	Invite families/community to school-led community events.	Twice a year