



Islander Middle School



School Improvement Plan

2023/2024

Goals:

Student Goal:

By the end of the 23/24 school year, Islander Middle School will increase opportunities for student voice and participation in developing, implementing, evaluating, and reflecting on school-wide initiatives. In providing more voice for students, it puts students more in the center of their learning and gives them more agency and sense of belonging in their school community.

We will gather student voice through student focus groups convened at various points during the school year (qualitative measure). Students will be given an opportunity to provide feedback and influence our school-wide initiatives. In addition, IMS will continue to participate in the EES survey, the Healthy Youth Survey and other quantitative data gathering tools for examination throughout the year.

Staff Goal:

Because we believe in upholding the humanity and dignity of all of our students, Islander Middle School will work to build a community of inclusion where we seek to provide an equitable learning environment for all students. Because of the focus on equity and inclusion by the adults at IMS, all students will take a more active role in the learning process, understanding what success looks like, make better decisions around their learning progression and take ownership in their learning that will serve them both in the short- and long-term.

The primary focus this year will be leveraging data to build relationships and improve learning outcomes for students.

- Fostering a Warm and Welcoming School Community
- Igniting the Joy of Learning and Promoting Growth in our Community
- Building Bridges of Understanding through Effective Communication

Leadership:

Student Goal:

To gather qualitative data through student focus groups, the administrative team will work with the IMS Counseling team, Leadership, WEB (Where Everybody Belongs) Advisors, Justice and Understanding Support Team Advisor, and club/activity advisors to ensure that the focus group is both inclusive and reflective of our diverse student community.

Staff Goal:

The first group is the Professional Planning and Support Team. This team consists of admin, coaches and teachers. They meet weekly to analyze best practices around G4E, develop professional development opportunities for staff, examine progress and barriers to progress and determine next steps in the work.

Overall, the entire IMS staff will be working on the goal of **fostering a warm and welcoming school community**. We are addressing feelings of challenges internal to the organization by weaving a fabric of respect, understanding, and inclusivity by reducing the "I-they" respect gap between staff members. In addition, we will be working towards a feeling of belonging for all students by making every student feel valued, heard, and cared for. Finally, IMS will continue to enhance teacher understanding and application of equity and social-emotional learning.

The IMS staff will specifically be addressing the concepts of **igniting the joy of learning and promoting growth in our community**. We will be creating a new students recognition program that celebrates student successes by increasing recognition of examples of students promoting the Islander Way. We will be increasing academic rigor and achievement by guiding every student towards academic excellence and personal growth. The third action will be to implement the Student Support Team (SST) for early interventions and partner with families in this process. Finally, the IMS staff will continue our work around the Grading for Equity practices to ensure every staff member is effectively utilizing Mindset 2 to drive assessments and instruction based on the results of those assessments. This year, our PLC work will also focus on digging deeper into PLC questions 3 & 4. Question 3 focuses on what happens when students don't learn. Question 4 focuses on what happens if students have already learned

A third area of focus for IMS staff will be to continue to **build bridges of understanding through effective communication**. IMS will seek to enhance the clarity, frequency, and effectiveness of communication with students and families to partner with families in the learning process. We will be refining current practices while adding new practices to promote IMS.

Alignment to MISD district priorities and goals:

Student Goal:

Student inclusion in the decision making process aligns with our values of increasing student belonging as well as broadcasting student voice. As our primary constituents, students should have an amplified voice in the initiatives and instructional practices that make up their learning experience. The collection of student voice, both quantitative and qualitative, also aligns with the district's values of "creating inclusive and equitable learning settings." By collecting and broadcasting student voice in relation to instructional initiatives, we believe that students will feel more included in the educational process.

Having a voice in the development, implementation, and reflection of school-wide initiatives requires self-awareness and encourages responsible decision making as students are asked to (and provided support in) seeing the big picture and thinking critically on behalf of the whole school community. Additionally, ensuring that student voice opportunities are inclusive and reflective of our diverse community models for students the ideas of inclusiveness and respect for all voices. Increasing opportunities for student participation in the school-wide learning process also aligns to student-centered Fundamentals 3 (Self-awareness), 4 (Analytical and critical thinking) and 5 (Foster and embrace diversity).

Staff Goal:

The IMS School Improvement Plan aligns with several key constructs:

1. District Improvement Plan
2. MISD's Values, Vision and Mission
 - **Values:** Students are the priority. We believe in:
 - Supporting the whole child
 - Creating inclusive and equitable learning settings
 - Ensuring our school communities are safe and supportive
 - Providing rigorous and challenging learning

- **Vision:** Inspiring our students to be lifelong learners as they create their futures.
 - **Mission:** The District will foster learning by engaging students in thinking critically, solving problems creatively, and working collaboratively.
3. Dr. Rundle's 4 Bs (The Scholars First-Dr. Tammy Campbell)
- Belonging - every student feeling connected and capable,
 - Belief - limitless potential of every student,
 - Barriers - breaking down traditional mindsets of teaching and learning and having the willingness to embrace change, research, and professional voice,
 - Broadcasting - Giving students an authentic voice and role in the learning process

Results IMS will use to determine the effectiveness and impact on students:

1. Fostering a Warm and Welcoming School Community (**Belonging**):

- Weave a fabric of respect, understanding, and inclusivity by reducing the "I-they" respect gap by 10% by the end of the school year.
 - (22/23 Staff EES) Willingness to Work at Change. 23% gap
 - (22/23 Staff EES) Openness to New Ideas. 22% gap
 - (22/23 Staff EES) Willingness to be held accountable 21% gap
- Make every student feel valued, heard, and cared for, aiming for a 10% increase in students reporting these feelings by the end of the school year.
 - (22/23 Staff EES) Staff at this school value and respect all students. 86%
 - (22/23 Staff EES) Students believe the adults in this school genuinely care about them. 80%
 - (22/23 Student EES) In this school, there is at least one adult who knows and cares about me. 84%
 - (22/23 Student EES) Most students are respectful of others at this school. 47.9%
 - (22/23 Student EES) My teacher(s) listen to my ideas and/or concerns. 78%
 - (22/23 Student EES) Students are involved in solving problems in this school. 71%
 - (22/23 Family EES) This school provides a caring/supportive environment for my student. 76%
- Enhance teacher understanding and application of equity and social-emotional learning by aiming for a 10% increase and students and families report that we engage in difficult conversations by 5%.
 - (22/23 Staff EES) This school has effective equity practices for all. 65%
 - (22/23 Staff EES) I incorporate social emotional instruction into my daily instructional delivery. 55%
 - (22/23 Student EES) Our school engages in difficult conversations about race, gender, oppression and discrimination. 83%
 - (22/23 Family EES) Our school engages in difficult conversations about race, gender, oppression and discrimination. 72%

2. Igniting the Joy of Learning and and Promoting Growth in our Community (**Belief/Barriers**):

- Celebrate student successes by increasing recognition instances by 10% by the end of the school year.
 - (22/23 Staff EES) We have a system for celebrating student success. 53%
- Guide every student towards academic excellence and personal growth by reducing the number of students needing academic or behavioral interventions by 10% by the end of the school year.
 - (22/23 Student EES) I enjoy coming to this school. 57%
 - (22/23 Student EES) My teacher(s) help me learn by challenging me with interesting activities in class. 59%
 - **i-Ready assessments:** Students will complete the iReady assessments in literacy and numeracy during a Fall, Winter and Spring testing window. All students will show typical growth through the implementation of standard classroom curriculum and the MyPath app. Students who have

targeted interventions will reach beyond the typical growth and reach their stretch growth numbers in both the areas of literacy and math.

- Implement the SST for early interventions and partner with families in this process, aiming for a 10% increase in family engagement by the end of the year.
 - (22/23 Staff EES) Assessment data are used to identify student needs and appropriate instructional intervention. 59%
 - (22/23 Staff EES) Struggling students receive early intervention and remediation to acquire skills. 48%
 - (22/23 Staff EES) We monitor the effectiveness of instructional interventions. 71%
 - (22/23 Student EES) My teacher(s) find other ways for me to learn things I find difficult. 57%
- Ensure every staff member is effectively utilizing Mindset 2 to drive assessments, aiming for 10% growth in the following data points:
 - (22/23 Staff EES) I believe all students can meet state standards. 78%
 - (22/23 Staff EES) Staff are held accountable for the new behaviors and practices needed to achieve our school improvement plan goals. 74%
 - (22/23 Staff EES) The curricula we teach are aligned with state learning standards. 92%
 - (22/23 Staff EES) Regular formative assessments are used to monitor student progress toward standards. 77%

3. Building Bridges of Understanding through Effective Communication (Broadcasting):

- Enhance the clarity, frequency, and effectiveness of communication with students and families, targeting a 10% increase in communication instances around homework, collaboration, progress and concerns, and a 10% improvement in communication satisfaction by the end of the school year.
 - (22/23 Staff EES) This school encourages parent involvement in their child's learning. 74%
 - (22/23 Family EES) This school tells me how I can help my student with homework. 27.9%
 - (22/23 Family EES) I am encouraged to collaborate with my student's teachers about my student's learning. 32.0%
 - (22/23 Family EES) I am given opportunities to discuss my student's progress at school. 39%
 - (22/23 Family EES) When I share concerns with my student's teacher, they listen. 72%
 - (22/23 Family EES) This school communicates effectively with my family. 57%

Resources needed to realize the IMS goals:

- Professional Development time during District Directed days, Staff meetings, Gator Time PLC time and other learning improvement opportunities
- Release Time for alignment and data conversations
- Professional development opportunities outside of the workday including conferences and institutes.

Addendum: What is G4E?

*4 Mindset Practices:

- 1) Student behavior is ungraded,
- 2) The “veil” is lifted for students so they know the steps involved to progress to high-levels of learning,
- 3) Students have flexible means to engage in learning, and
- 4) Students will have multiple opportunities to show evidence of understanding because learning never ends.

(Belief, Barriers) What is it? Grading 4 Equity is an approach that combines a Standards-Based mindset with a Universal Design for Learning Framework to ensure that students and families have specific information on what a student knows and can do while eliminating factors that can distort the final grade mark. In addition, Grading 4 Equity practices better articulate student strengths and areas of growth in the learning process. The ultimate goal is to communicate a grade mark that is the best representation of how well a student knows the content while ensuring equity and access for each student.

(Barriers, Broadcasting) What are the outcomes? Grading 4 Equity measures the mastery of the essential standards, or how well students understand the important content and skills in class after giving students a variety of ways to enter into, practice and engage with the content (Universal Design for Learning). Grading 4 Equity aligns standards (specify what all students should know and be able to do by the end of the school year) with proficiency scales (a detailed learning progression for students). A Grading 4 Equity approach allows teachers, students and families to understand more clearly what is expected of our learners and how to help them be successful. It gives students multiple ways to enter into the learning, lots of choice, as well as multiple ways to demonstrate learning. Ultimately, at IMS we believe learning is never done!

(Belief, Belonging, Broadcasting) What is the purpose of Grading 4 Equity?

The purpose of Grading 4 Equity is to improve student learning by focusing on students. We believe that by planning multiple pathways for students to enter into the learning and interact with the concepts and ideas they will better engage in the learning process and be able to access higher levels of learning. We believe that when instruction, curriculum and assessment are aligned with essential standards and proficiency scales, it provides an accurate measurement and reporting process on students’ proficiency in meeting those standards. We also believe that it is essential to actively involve students in the whole process. The intention of Grading 4 Equity is to provide better communication to students, parents, teachers and administrators on the students’ academic abilities and to shift the conversation away from grades and points and instead emphasize student learning and progress within the content.

(Barriers, Belief) Why is IMS emphasizing Grading 4 Equity rather than simply calling it standards-based grading? In order for us to successfully implement Universal Design for Learning, we must have firm goals aligned to a learning progression that lifts the veil for students to become the expert learners they need to be to keep doors open for them in the future. Standards Based Grading alone doesn’t ensure we are designing high-levels of learning throughout the unit, nor does it ensure that students have the flexibility they need to engage in learning that works for them. A typical Standards Based Grading mindset makes the level 4 on a proficiency scale almost unattainable for students. It describes it as students being able to address content not taught in class, or purports that students are able to cover content at the next grade level. We believe that all students need to be given ongoing opportunities to work at a level 4. We want level 4 to be clear and attainable, with lots of opportunities to practice, even if this isn’t a place all students can live. We want level 4 to be the “now what” do I do with this learning, the “so what” connections to real life, and “that’s what” connections to issues of equity and social justice. Answers to these questions bring the rigor, depth and complexity in thinking and doing that we’d like all students to practice. Additionally, with our MISD emphasis on UDL, we saw an

opportunity to expand our practices (mindset 3 and mindset 4) to offer a variety of opportunities for all students to engage and access high quality content/skills and thinking opportunities, as well as multiple means for students to share what they've learned. The UDL concept of creating multiple access points for students and giving them voice and choice in their learning is another layer of G4E that focuses on equity for ALL learners. These alterations to a typical SBG model are what changed it in our perspective from simply calling our work Standards Based Grading to creating the Grading 4 Equity concept.

(Broadcasting, Belief, Barriers) How does Grading 4 Equity differ from traditional letter grades?

Grading 4 Equity informs us what students have learned and know. It measures a student's knowledge of grade level content over time by reporting the most recent, consistent level of performance. For example, a student might struggle in the beginning of a grading period with new content but then demonstrate proficiency by the end of the grading period. In traditional grading, the student's performance for the whole grading period would be averaged, and early assessment scores that were low would be averaged together with proficient assessment scores. The result of the scores averaged would be a lower grade. When a percentage system is applied, it can be misleading. In Grading 4 Equity, a student who reaches proficiency would be reported proficient, and the grade would reflect current performance levels.

(Belief, Broadcasting) Why Change?

Traditional grading often measures many different factors such as homework, extra credit, attendance, behavior etc. and sometimes compares how well students do in relation to their classmates. Grading 4 Equity measures how well an individual student is doing in relation to each grade-level standard or skill against a proficiency scale of 4, 3, 2 or 1. Grading 4 Equity gives students and parents specific information on what the student knows and what the student can do. It eliminates many of the factors that can distort the final traditional grade as a true indicator of mastery. It clears up the uncertainty about what the grade means. The goal is to do all we can to make sure that a grade is the best representation of how well a student knows the content and to transform the classroom to be a place where learning is the focus, not competition and points.