

School Improvement Plan 2025-2028

(updated 7.2025)

SCHOOL INFORMATION

School Name	Westchester Middle School
School Number	
Street Address	1050 S. 5th Street
City	Chesterton
Zip Code	46304

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SCHOOL and CONTACT INFORMATION

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SCHOOL IDENTIFICATION

For implementation during the following years:	2025-28 ▾
This is an initial three-year plan.	Yes ▾
This is a review/update of a plan currently in use.	Yes ▾

This school is identified as Comprehensive Support & Intervention (CSI) by the federal government.	No ▾
This school is identified as Targeted Support & Intervention (TSI) by the federal government.	No ▾
This school is identified as Additional Targeted Support & Intervention (ATSI) by the federal government.	No ▾
This school is not identified as CSI, TSI, or ATSI.	Yes ▾

(TSI and ATSI only - NOT APPLICABLE)

Underperforming student groups are identified by the federal government.

Choose ▾	Choose ▾	Choose ▾	Choose ▾	Choose ▾
Choose ▾	Choose ▾	Choose ▾	Choose ▾	Choose ▾

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

PLANNING COMMITTEE

List the members of the committee below. If a member serves on more than one subcommittee, list all those on which the member serves.

Member Name	Title	Committee(s)	CNA/SIP Subcommittee(s)
Lauren Seiss	Principal	SIP ▾	
Joshua Tudor	Assistant Principal	SIP ▾	
Darcy Lamb	School Counselor	SIP ▾	MTSS
Hannah Pleasant	Teacher	SIP ▾	Math/MTSS
Marc Bruner	Teacher	SIP ▾	ELA/Guiding Coalition
Jennifer Benedetti	Teacher	SIP ▾	SpEd/ DTA
Megan Sutton	Instructional Coach	SIP ▾	MTT/Guiding Coalition
Diane Siford	Teacher	SIP ▾	Science/ Guiding Coalition
Adrienne Stafford	Teacher	SIP ▾	PE/Health/ Guiding Coalition
Leanne Johnson	Teacher	SIP ▾	Math/Guiding Coalition
Laura O'Dell	Teacher	SIP ▾	Math/MTSS
Ruth Ficaro	Teacher	SIP ▾	ELA/MTSS
Haley Wadowski	Teacher	SIP ▾	SpEd/Guiding Coalition
		Choose ▾	
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐			

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY NARRATIVE

A narrative description of the school, community, and educational programs.

Westchester Middle School is part of the larger Duneland School Corporation (DSC). Nestled in a unique location just under an hour from Chicago, DSC serves a diverse and evolving community blending suburban and rural lifestyles. With a student enrollment that has remained stable, hovering around 5,800 students over the past five years, Duneland continues to build upon its strong academic reputation and community engagement. [School Name] currently provides educational programming to students in grades [grades].

DSC employs over 415 licensed professionals and more than 420 support staff, including instructional aides, maintenance teams, transportation workers, and cafeteria and custodial personnel. While English remains the primary language spoken in most households, the district has seen growth in multilingual families, particularly Spanish-speaking, with a total of 17 languages now represented.

In Fall 2024, the district completed the consolidation of schools with redistricting to develop five K-4 elementary schools, two grade 5-8 buildings with separate 5-6 intermediate and 7-8 middle schools within each, as well as maintaining the 9-12 grade high school. Duneland also offers an online school for grades K-12 as well as an alternative learning environment for grades 9-12 and developmental preschool programming.

DSC's demographics are shifting, with increased student diversity. The student population in 2024 was 75.9% white, down from 89.5% in 2012, while the Hispanic population rose to 15.8%. Multi-racial, Black, Asian, and American Indian students comprise the remaining percentage. About 28% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, and 19% of students receive special education services—a 5% increase over ten years, largely due to growing needs in areas such as emotional disabilities, autism, and other health impairments.

Duneland is deeply committed to instructional excellence and whole-child support. Aligned with its Strategic Plan, the district has embedded Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), data-informed instruction, and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) across all schools. Central to this effort is the development of a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC) delivered through Canvas, the district's learning management system. This ensures consistent, high-quality Tier I instruction and promotes equity and coherence across grades and buildings. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is also being emphasized to strengthen the Tier 1 core through a 4-year professional development and coaching cycle. This initiative complements previous strategic plan goals but also aligns with training on student behaviors and co-teaching practices, which further supports a more inclusive school community.

Instructional practices continue to evolve, with emphasis on technology integration (1:1 devices K-12), inquiry-based learning, and embedded literacy instruction across content areas. A team of instructional coaches supports classroom teachers through Jim Knight's coaching model. Visual and performing arts remain strong, with K-12 music, art, and PE programs, and robust elective offerings in journalism, debate, world languages, and career readiness as well as a broad host of competitive athletic and academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs.

Link additional information here
(if necessary) ☐

www.duneland.k12.in.us

ALIGNMENT - STATEMENT OF MISSION, VISION, BELIEFS

A systems-based approach to continuous school improvement involves alignment across the district. While still being attentive to their unique needs, schools should align curricular, instructional, and assessment programs with the district's vision, mission, and goals. Assess the school's alignment with the district using this page.

District Vision

Duneland is committed to inspiring growth, igniting curiosity, and unlocking potential for all.

School Vision

Fostering success through collaboration, support and a nurturing environment, preparing every child for a bright future.

District Mission

Duneland provides a safe, collaborative, and engaging environment where all students are empowered to explore their talents, build their curiosity, embrace high expectations, and become responsible, caring adults.

School Mission

Empowering students to excel by fostering a collaborative environment dedicated to achieving tangible results, providing unwavering support for the growth of every student.

ALIGNMENT - STATEMENT OF MISSION, VISION, BELIEFS (continued)

District Goal(s)	
Student Achievement & Growth Goal: Address needs and expectations for continuous improvement at the local, state, and federal levels. People & Culture Goal: Become a preferred employer by maximizing efforts to attract, retain, develop, and recognize all school corporation employees. Finance & Facilities Goal: Align available financial and other resources to meet the school corporation's strategic initiatives. Safety & Operations Goal: Develop, implement, and monitor safety and security systems.	

Does the school's vision support the district's vision?	Yes ▾
Does the school's mission support the district's mission?	Yes ▾
Does the school's vision and mission support the district's goals?	Yes ▾

If the school's mission, vision, and/or goals are not aligned with those of the district, what steps will the school take to become aligned?	
Not Applicable - All school Improvement goals for each of the Duneland schools are established with support and guidance from district leadership to establish district-wide alignment, PreK-12. This further supports the district's focus on district-wide/systems accreditation through Cognia and the district's strategic plan.	

Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐	https://www.duneland.k12.in.us/strategic-plan/strategic-plan
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ESSENTIAL INFORMATION & CORE ELEMENTS

All schools are required to provide basic information about the following **core elements**: curriculum, assessment, safe and disciplined learning environment, technology, cultural competency, parental involvement, secondary offerings, and career awareness and development. An 'X' in the last column denotes that additional consideration was given by the school's planning team when reviewing data and/or developing school goals.

CORE ELEMENT 1: CURRICULUM

The following lists primary curriculum resources (i.e. adopted materials) and supplementary materials such as online subscriptions or other such materials used by most teachers. Subject/Courses include: English/language arts, math, social studies, science, visual arts, music, health, and physical education. Items indicate alignment with Indiana Academic Standards (IAS) as well as how the resource is used.

Subject/Course	Grades	Resource Name	Aligned to IAS	Tier(s)	Rationale for Resource Use	Continue Use?	X
ELA	7-8	Carnegie Learning Windows & Mirrors (Online Subscription & Class Sets) Quizizz Exact Path-Edmentum; Quill Edulastic Newsela Common Lit. Pear Deck Smash, Boom, Best Podcast (8th) OverDrive/Sora Electronic novels: Red Scarf Girl, A Monster Calls	Yes ▾	Tier 1 ▾	Canvas Courses house the activities and assessments that are core components of the ELA curriculum. Textbooks are supplemental components of the ELA curriculum.	Yes ▾	☐
Math	7-8	Savvas enVision Algebra 1 Indiana Reveal accelerated versions Indiana Reveal regular Get More Math Edulastic	Yes ▾	Tier 1 ▾	Canvas Courses house the activities and assessments that are core components of the Math curriculum. Textbooks are supplemental components of the Math curriculum.	Yes ▾	☐

		Quizizz					
Science	7-8	Savvas Elevate Science (print and online platform) McGraw-Hill Indiana Inspire Biology Text (print and online) Gizmos–Virtual Labs Pear Deck Nearpod Edulastic Edpuzzle Quizizz Quizlet Kahoot	Yes ▾	Tier 1 ▾	Canvas Courses house the activities and assessments that are core components of the Science curriculum. Textbooks are supplemental components of the Science curriculum.	Yes ▾	☐
Social Studies	7-8	World Geography and US History - National Geographic Textbook(Class set and Online) Junior Scholastic Subscription SHEG (Stanford History Education Group) Edulastic Quizizz, Edpuzzle, Lizard Point, Quizlet, Kahoot	Yes ▾	Tier 1 ▾	Canvas Courses house the activities and assessments that are core components of the Social Studies curriculum. Textbooks are supplemental components of the Social Studies curriculum.	Yes ▾	☐
Health	7-8	Goodheart Wilcox Health Essentials (Classroom set and online resources) Quizizz Kahoot Quizlet Nearpod Everfi	Yes ▾	Tier 1 ▾	Canvas Courses house the activities and assessments that are core components of the Health curriculum. Textbooks are supplemental components of the Health curriculum.	Yes ▾	☐
World Languages	8	same as CHS	Yes ▾	Tier 1 ▾	Digital platforms are core components of the Foreign Language curriculum.	Yes ▾	☐

Computer Science	7-8	PLTW digital platform	Yes ▾	Tier 1 ▾	Canvas Courses house the activities and assessments that are core components of the PLTW curriculum.	Yes ▾	☐
Physical Education	7-8	Canvas Course based on Indiana Academic Standards	Yes ▾	Tier 1 ▾	Canvas Courses house the activities and assessments that are core components of the Physical Education curriculum.	Yes ▾	☐
Art	7-8	Canvas Course based on Indiana Academic Standards	Yes ▾	Tier 1 ▾	Canvas Courses house the activities and assessments that are core components of the Art curriculum.	Yes ▾	☐
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐			https://www.duneland.k12.in.us/programs-services/dsc-teaching-and-learning/guaranteed-and-viable-curriculum/new-page				

CORE ELEMENT 1: CURRICULUM

(continued)

Best Practice/Requirements Self-Check	Yes/No	X
The school uses a district-established curriculum that is aligned with the Indiana Academic Standards.	Yes ▾	☐
Pacing guides and/or curriculum maps are used to plan and teach a standards-based curriculum.	Yes ▾	☐
Teachers and staff are engaged in cross-grade-level articulation of standards.	Yes ▾	☐
A culturally responsive curriculum is used to ensure all students' cultural differences are recognized and appreciated.	Yes ▾	☐

The public may view the school's curriculum in the following location(s)	
The district has developed a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum for its courses. Information regarding the GVC can be found on the district website. Families may access courses through the Student Learning Management System, at school sites, and by requesting an appointment through the District Teaching and Learning Office.	
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐	https://www.duneland.k12.in.us/programs-services/dsc-teaching-and-learning/guaranteed-and-viable-curriculum

CORE ELEMENT 2: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Schools are required to address the learning needs of all students and develop strategies, programs, and services to address such needs. Sound instructional practices are essential for students to reach the highest levels of academic achievement. The school has assessed its practices using the chart below.

Best Practice/Requirements Self-Check	Yes/No	X
The school has a process for identifying the exceptional learning needs of students who are highly proficient and at-risk of failure.	Yes ▾	☐
A process for coordinating instructional services (e.g., Head Start, adult education, etc.) is in place.	Yes ▾	☐
A variety of instructional strategies are employed to meet the diverse learning needs of students.	Yes ▾	☐
Teachers use strategies that monitor and adjust instruction during lessons (e.g., adjusted based on checks for understanding).	Yes ▾	☐
Teachers ensure students are engaged in cognitively complex tasks (including varying depth of knowledge) during instruction.	Yes ▾	☐
Teachers use instructional strategies that ensure students have multiple means of accessing instructional content.	Yes ▾	☐
Instructional strategies provide students with multiple options for illustrating their knowledge.	Yes ▾	☐
Instructional strategies foster active participation by students during the instructional process	Yes ▾	☐
Teachers and staff promote authentic learning and student engagement across all content areas.	Yes ▾	☐
Strategies and instructional methods ensure equity of opportunity for all students during the learning process.	Yes ▾	☐
Instructional strategies assist with bridging the cultural differences in the learning environment.	Yes ▾	☐
Teachers and staff integrate evidence-based strategies during Tier II and Tier III instruction.	Choose ▾	☐
Teachers work collaboratively to support and refine instructional effectiveness (e.g., with feedback, coaching, etc)	Yes ▾	☐
High expectations for academic achievement are made clear to students and supported with adequate scaffolding and resources.	Yes ▾	☐

CORE ELEMENT 3: ASSESSMENT

The school utilizes the following assessments and related data to inform instruction as well as identify goals.

Assessment Name	Grade(s)	Use	Type and Rationale for Use	Continue Use	X
NWEA MAP Test Reading & Math	7-8	Benc... ▾	NWEA is a growth-based assessment and provides national norms and expectations for typical learner growth in a year of instruction. Scores are used to determine readiness levels for learning various concepts and student growth percentiles.	Yes ▾	☐
ILEARN	7-8	Benc... ▾	ILEARN measures student achievement and growth according to Indiana Academic Standards. ILEARN is the summative accountability assessment.	Yes ▾	☐
I AM	7-8	Benc... ▾	I AM measures student achievement and growth according to Indiana's Alternate Academic Standards or Content Connectors. I AM is the summative accountability assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities.	Yes ▾	☐
PSAT 8/9	8	Benc... ▾	The tests measure the same skills and knowledge in ways that make sense for different grade levels, so it's easier for students, parents, and educators to monitor student progress.	Yes ▾	☐
WIDA	7-8	Benc... ▾	The purpose of the English Language Proficiency assessments is to determine a student's level of English proficiency. A Placement Test, administered upon a student's arrival in the United States, is used to determine which English Learner (EL) services are appropriate for the student. The annual assessment, administered in January and February, is used to determine the student's current level of English proficiency. The annual assessment is also used for accountability purposes.	Yes ▾	☐
Course Assessments	7-8	Form... ▾	The purpose of common formative assessments is to inform instruction based on the data and student performance.	Yes ▾	☐

Course Assessments	7-8	Sum... ▾	The common summative assessments evaluate student learning, knowledge, proficiency, or success after an instructional period. Both assessments are used to determine which students need remediation or enrichment.	Yes ▾	☐
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Best Practice/Requirements Self-Check			Yes/No	X
A system is in place to use assessment data to make decisions about programs, practices, and instruction.			Yes ▾	☐
The school uses assessment data to identify students for Tier II and Tier III instruction.			Yes ▾	☐
Locally created assessments are reviewed and revised regularly to ensure priority standards are being measured at the appropriate levels of depth and rigor.			Yes ▾	☐

CORE ELEMENT 4: COORDINATION OF TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES

Briefly describe how technology is used by students to increase learning.

Duneland School Corporation has been a 1:1 technology district for over eight years, with students in grades K–8 using iPads and high school students using laptops. Even before the pandemic, the district had established e-learning days and integrated technology into instruction, which enabled a smooth transition to remote learning in 2020.

As part of its Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC) model, over 90 courses have been built into the Canvas Learning Management System, incorporating blended learning practices across all subject areas. These efforts are led by teacher teams and supported by instructional coaches in every building who provide embedded professional development.

A district-level Instructional Technology Coordinator offers ongoing training to enhance instructional practices, with recent emphasis on the role of artificial intelligence in K–12 education. This has included the development of an AI Usage Rubric to guide appropriate use by students and staff, as well as the integration of tools like Khanmigo and Magic School, supported by Digital Learning grants. The district also promotes peer-led learning through the Duneland Learning Academy, an after-hours program where teachers share effective instructional and technology strategies.

Duneland’s commitment to innovation is further reflected in its award-winning robotics program and technology-rich high school career courses in PLTW, engineering, radio, and television.

Link additional information here
(if necessary) ☐

Best Practice/Requirements Self-Check	Yes/No	X
The school has a process for integrating technology into the instructional program to promote learning.	Yes ▾	☐
A plan is in place to provide in-service training in the use of technology.	Yes ▾	☐
Protocols and criteria are used to review and select technology hardware, software, and instructional programs	Yes ▾	☐
There are established procedures for maintaining technology equipment.	Yes ▾	☐
Sufficient infrastructure exists to support instructional, assessment, and operational needs.	Yes ▾	☐

CORE ELEMENT 5: CAREER AWARENESS AND DEVELOPMENT

Grades 6-8 only

What career awareness activities are provided for students?	Yes/No		Yes/No
Currently implementing career information activities?	Yes ▾	Career-related courses	Yes ▾
Career-focused classroom lessons	Yes ▾	Job-site tours	Yes ▾
Guest speakers	Yes ▾	Career day/fair or community day	Yes ▾
Career-focused clubs (i.e., robotics, agriculture, garden, STEM, etc.)	Yes ▾	Online career navigation program	Yes ▾
Not currently implementing career exploration activities		No ▾	
Other:			

If “not currently implementing career exploration activities” was indicated above, explain why.	
Career exploration activities are implemented within the school.	
Link additional information here (if necessary) □	

CORE ELEMENT 6: SAFE AND DISCIPLINED ENVIRONMENT

All schools are required to develop a school safety plan. That plan is not part of this document. Since student safety and well-being are crucial factors in learning, the questions below reflect conversation about how the school's environment adds to or takes away from student learning.

Best Practice/Requirements Self-Check	Yes/No	X
Practices are in place to develop and maintain a positive school climate between staff, students, and families	Yes ▾	☐
A multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) provides students with academic, behavioral, mental well-being, and early intervention.	Yes ▾	☐
Discipline rules are established, and copies of the rules are made available to students and their parents/guardians.	Yes ▾	☐
Discipline rules to prevent bullying are in place and include education, parental involvement, and intervention.	Yes ▾	☐
A suicide awareness and prevention policy is in place and staff have been appropriately trained.	Yes ▾	☐
High expectations for behavior and attendance are communicated to families and consistently reinforced by all staff.	Yes ▾	☐
All staff express the belief that all children can learn and consistently encourage students to succeed.	Yes ▾	☐
The school develops staff capacity to create positive classroom and school climates that are culturally responsive.	Yes ▾	☐

Briefly answer the following:

What practices are in place to maintain a safe environment?
Our school is committed to supporting the social, emotional, and physical well-being of students and staff through a range of proactive programs, training, and services. The school has access to school resource officers and has at least one certified school counselor on staff, as well as at least one registered nurse on-site during school hours. A district Licensed Mental Health Counselor also services the district in conjunction with two outside counseling partnerships with Porter Starke and Crown Counseling. Due to grant funding, these partnerships with local mental health organizations provide counseling services at no cost to families. An Advisory period has been implemented across all schools to build meaningful relationships and deliver instruction in Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies, Second Step lessons, and Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI). Recent facility renovations have created dedicated sensory spaces, including amygdala reset stations and calm-down corners. All certified teachers and additional staff receive training to recognize signs of child abuse, neglect, suicidal ideation, and other social-emotional concerns. In 2022–2023, all staff in grades 5–8 participated in adolescent-focused training from the Berckemeyer Consulting Group. The district has also increased Crisis

Prevention Intervention (CPI) training, specifically in trauma-informed care and verbal de-escalation, and extended these efforts to include teachers, aides, administrators, transportation personnel, and soon, food service, custodial, and office staff. During the 2023–2024 school year, K–4 staff were trained in the Zones of Regulation program, while grades 5–8 are complete TBRI training during the 2024–2025 school year with continued coaching during the 2025-2026 school year. Training has been supported through the ParaProfessional Grant. SNT Consulting with Kevin Dill has been used throughout the 2024-2025 school year to support the development of restorative behavior programs with a specific focus on our Exceptional Learning students. This process will continue and expand with him into the following year. Additionally, a Behavior Coach has been hired for the district, and the district was awarded the IDOE Behavior Grant to further support many of the previously mentioned initiatives as well as address new needs.

The Student Support Services Coordinator leads initiatives to enhance staff and student awareness of trauma-informed and neuroscience-based practices. Staff wellness is also prioritized through programs coordinated by Human Resources, including health education, wellness checks, and regular communication promoting participation.

Additionally, in 2023–2024, the district transitioned from a localized tip line to the Sandy Hook Promise’s "See Something, Say Something" reporting system. Each school now hosts a SAVE Promise Club to support this initiative and foster a culture of student advocacy and safety.

The district’s 2024–2028 Strategic Plan outlines continued efforts to strengthen safety practices, including comprehensive risk assessment procedures and regular training in CPI, TBRI, and QPR for staff across all roles.

Link additional information here
(if necessary) ☐

CORE ELEMENT 7: CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Identify the racial, ethnic, language-minority, and socio-economic groups in your school.

Group	X	Group	X	Group	X
American Indian/Alaskan Native	☒	English Language Learner	☒	Multiracial	☒
Asian	☒	Free/Reduced Lunch	☒	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	☒
Black	☒	Hispanic Ethnicity	☒	White	☒

Describe how racial, ethnic, language-minority, and socio-economic groups are identified.

Identification occurs as part of the enrollment process by families. Information gathered here is included within our student information system (Skyward). Home language surveys are used to identify students who speak other languages. If the survey indicates a language other than English, the student then takes an English language proficiency placement test that demonstrates the need for English language services. Socioeconomic status is contained within our system, but is not information that is shared with staff due to privacy restrictions. These processes align with federal, state, and local code, guidelines, and practices.

Describe strategies for increasing educational opportunities and performance for students in groups identified for the school.

Student performance is consistently monitored through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) using common formative and summative assessment data. PLCs analyze this information to provide targeted interventions based on identified needs. Standardized assessment data is also reviewed by each building's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team to guide additional interventions.

These foundational systems ensure equitable access for all students. Training in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) further removes barriers and expands access to the core curriculum. In addition, assessment data is regularly reviewed to increase student enrollment in honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, ensuring that more students have opportunities to engage in advanced academic pathways

Link additional information here
(if necessary) ☐

CORE ELEMENT 7: CULTURAL COMPETENCY

(continued)

What professional development might be necessary for staff to work effectively in cross-cultural situations?

The district has made a commitment through their strategic plan with emphasis on training for Universal Design for Learning. Professional development in UDL equips staff with strategies to remove barriers and provide equitable access to learning for all students, regardless of background. By focusing on flexible approaches to instruction, UDL training helps educators adapt content and delivery to meet diverse cultural and linguistic needs. This prepares staff to work more effectively in cross-cultural situations by fostering inclusive practices that honor and support every learner's strengths.

What curriculum materials are used to ensure all students' cultural differences are recognized and appreciated?

Curriculum materials in Duneland are adopted by the School Board of Trustees based on recommendations from stakeholder teams that include teachers, administrators, students, and parents. These teams carefully review available options to ensure alignment with Indiana Academic Standards and state requirements. The adopted resources are selected to provide representation of diverse cultures, supporting recognition and appreciation of all students' cultural differences. UDL training guides teachers to building opportunities for students to engage in choice during their instruction. When students are given multiple ways to connect with and engage in meaningful, high-interest curricular content, they gain opportunities to express their voice and share their cultural identity through their work.

Link additional information here
(if necessary) ☐

CORE ELEMENT 8: REVIEW OF ATTENDANCE

Reduction of absenteeism is a top priority for Indiana schools. Students are considered chronically absent when they are not in attendance for 10% of the school year. This equates to approximately 18 days of school.

What may be contributing to the attendance trend?		Over the last three years, attendance trends may have been influenced by a combination of lingering impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, including increased health-related absences and changes in family routines. Additionally, rising mental health challenges among students, a shift in attitudes toward school attendance, and transportation or childcare issues may also be contributing factors. In some cases, school engagement, curriculum relevance, and the effectiveness of school-family communication have played roles in whether students consistently attend.			
What procedures and practices are being implemented to address chronic absenteeism?		The district changed its policy on absenteeism beginning the 2025-2026 school year. I believe it is more straightforward, consistent, and proactive than the previous one. We send newsletters to parents weekly and include and emphasize our attendance policy, our current attendance rate, and a research-based fact on how absenteeism affects a child's education. DSC Attendance Policy K-12			
If procedures or practices to reduce chronic absenteeism are in place, how are the results monitored?		Procedures to reduce chronic absenteeism are closely monitored through a collaborative approach involving administrative oversight in conjunction with the attendance secretary, school counselor, and teachers. Monthly attendance team meetings are held to review data, identify at-risk students, and plan targeted interventions. These meetings also include follow-ups with families to provide support and address barriers to attendance. In addition, students are incentivized for regular attendance through recognition programs and rewards, while PBIS strategies help reinforce positive behavior and school engagement. This multi-tiered approach ensures consistent monitoring and support for improving attendance.			
Number of students absent 10% or more of the school year:					
Last Year:	71(WMS)	Two Years Ago:	161	Three Years Ago:	60

Best Practice/Requirements Self-Check	Yes/No
The school has and follows a chronic absence reduction plan.	Yes ▾
An MTSS is in place to identify and help the academic, behavioral, and/or wellness needs of chronically absent students	Yes ▾

Link additional information here
(if necessary) ☐

CORE ELEMENT 9: PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

How does the school maximize family engagement to improve academic achievement?

We use weekly communication via Parent Square. We use social media resources via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and our school website, which are updated regularly for parents/families. We also have Team newsletters that are put out by team leaders for parents and students every month.

We try to help parents find a balance that works for their child. We provide information and ideas about how to best assist with homework and other curriculum-related activities and encourage reading at home by creating a custom reading list based on the child's personality, interests, and level.

We set up clear homework policies by detailing how parents could be involved and revising them on a case-by-case basis depending on the student's progress. We ask parents to stick to a study routine and set up a homework-friendly area where distractions are kept to a minimum, and potentially enforce a no-TV, computer, or phone environment.

We suggest enrichment activities that will help parents build constructive relationships with their child as well. Some of those ideas include fun science experiments, family trips to the library, age-appropriate museum exhibitions, and theatrical plays.

We share information about Love and Logic, a free parenting class that provides a plethora of resources for parents.

In what ways are parents/families able to express ideas, concerns, and/or suggestions?

Parents/families are able to email, call, or meet with teachers, counselors, and/or administrators upon request. We have an open-door policy and are always willing to listen and discuss issues with parents/families.

Additionally, parents play a key role in decision-making at Westcher Middle School. They are represented on the School Improvement Team, the Strategic Planning Team, the Parent-Teacher Organization, the Bullying Prevention Committee, and other teams and committees as they emerge.

We created a Parent Ambassador Team that is made up solely of parents/families, a few teachers and staff, and the administration. Meetings are held five times per year and are focused on student achievement and programming/initiatives aimed at improving student achievement. These meetings have detailed agendas, as well as allow for open discussion and collaboration.

We survey the parents throughout the school year to get their input and suggestions.

In what ways does the school involve parents/families to maintain or increase high levels of student attendance?

Parents are called daily if their student is marked absent. Letters are sent home to parents/families after 5 and 10 absences informing them of how many absences their students have and asking for their help in communication with the school, and offering help to ensure better attendance going forward.

Administration and school counselors meet with parents/families of students who reach the 10-day mark of absences to work together in order to find a solution.

How do teachers and staff bridge cultural differences through effective communication?

We emphasize effective communication and utilize ParentSquare as a key platform to ensure consistent, timely, and inclusive messaging with staff and families. ParentSquare also offers translation services, helping us bridge language gaps and engage all members of our school community. We establish norms for each of our groups, teams, and committees, including all-staff meetings. These norms are created collaboratively and are recognized as non-negotiables within the culture of the school. We recognize individual differences, respect each other's opinions, watch our own air time, show mutual respect for all, speak clearly, listen attentively, and are willing to try new things.

Link additional information here
(if necessary) ☐

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN GOAL AND STRATEGIES - [GOAL #1]

GOAL			
Goal	Increase academic achievement for all students in Mathematics.		
Sub-group focus	Math 8		
The strategies we are going to implement are	UDL, Effective Feedback, Metacognition, Effective Questioning, Differentiated Instruction, Collaborative & Cooperative Learning, Direct Instruction		
To address the root cause	Math 8 ILEARN scores have significantly dropped for the 24-25 cohort from 7th Grade ILEARN in 2023-2024.		
Which will help us meet this student outcome goal*			
How Will We Get There?			
Evidence-Based <u>Strategies</u> to Address Problems	Supporting Research for Strategy	Who is Accountable for Strategy?	Timeline
Use common summative and formative assessments in alignment with high-priority standards.	Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum & the PLC Process Learning By Doing (2016). DuFour, R. Dufour, R. Eaker, R., Many, T., Mattos, M.	Department Managers, Instructional Coaches, PLC Facilitators, Building Administrators, Teachers	2025-2028
Identify FOCUS Standards for Math 8.	Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum & the PLC Process Learning By Doing (2016). DuFour, R. Dufour, R. Eaker, R., Many, T., Mattos, M.	Department Managers, Instructional Coaches, PLC Facilitators, Building Administrators, Teachers	2025-2028
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐			

Strategy #1	Use common summative and formative assessments in alignment with high-priority standards.
What actions will we take to implement the improvement strategy? (specific, actionable activities that lead to the completion of the strategy identified)	

Activity (Action Step)	Activity Description	Position Responsible	Measurement	Resources Needed	Timeline	Status
PLC Process	Monitor alignment of common summative assessments to high-priority standards, making adjustments as needed.	Department Managers, Instructional Coaches, PLC Facilitators, Building Administrators, Teachers	GVC Look-Back Process	<i>Learning By Doing</i> , Get More Math, Reveal, Bell-Ringers, Math 8 Unit before ILEARN for Algebra 1 students	2025-2026	In Progr... ▾
PLC Process	Use common formative assessments to inform instruction and create remediation plans, if necessary.	Department Managers, Instructional Coaches, PLC Facilitators, Building Administrators, Teachers	Student Performance on Common Formative Assessments	Canvas Course	2025-2026	In Progr... ▾
To what extent has the strategy been implemented? What about the process went well, or not? What is the adult fidelity evidence of this?		We are a couple of years into the initial course build, but are going through a look-back process this year as we finalize necessary adjustments and changes to the GVC. The look-back process is new and has been created as a way to alleviate issues that existed in the previous process for course changes. The course change tracker document is the evidence for proposed changes that are recommended by PLCs.				
How has student achievement been impacted? What is the evidence?		Student performance has been on an uphill trend over the last 4 years as we have been implementing the PLC process. The evidence is our ILEARN scores.				
How will implementation be adjusted and/or supported moving into next year?		The PLC process will continue.				
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐						

Strategy #2	Identify FOCUS Standards for Math 8.					
What actions will we take to implement the improvement strategy? (specific, actionable activities that lead to the completion of the strategy identified)						
Activity (Action Step)	Activity Description	Position Responsible	Measurement	Resources Needed	Timeline	Status
Disaggregate ILearn data by standard	Administrators and Instructional Coaches will identify standards that our school did not perform “At Proficiency” or higher on the 2024-2025 ILearn Assessment.	Department Managers, Instructional Coaches, PLC Members, Building Administrators	ILearn Summative Assessment	ILearn data from 2024-2025 and 2025-2026	2025-2026	In Progr... ▾
Identify FOCUS Standards	Teachers, administrators, and instructional coaches will analyze the current and historical data and create a list of 3-5 FOCUS standards.	Department Managers, Instructional Coaches, PLC Members, Building Administrators	ILearn Summative Assessment	Collaboration time	2025-2026	In Progr... ▾
Create an Action Plan	Teachers, administrators, and instructional coaches will create an action plan for the 2025-2026 school year for the FOCUS standards.	Department Managers, Instructional Coaches, PLC Members, Building Administrators	ILearn Summative Assessment	Collaboration time	2025-2026	In Progr... ▾
To what extent has the strategy been implemented? What about the process went well, or not? What is the adult fidelity evidence of this?		We have been doing this process since 2020. The process has gone well. The FOCUS standard ACTION Plan is the evidence.				
How has student achievement been impacted? What is the evidence?		Student performance has been on an uphill trend over the last 4 years as we have been implementing the PLC process. The evidence is our ILEARN scores.				

How will implementation be adjusted and/or supported moving into next year?	We will go through the same process next year. We will adjust the FOCUS standards and create a new action plan.
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐	

PROGRESS INDICATORS - [GOAL #1]

PROGRESS INDICATORS				
Check-in Schedule	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Key Performance Indicator (Assessment)	"At Proficiency" or higher on ILearn Checkpoint Assessment 80% Proficiency on classroom CSA's	"At Proficiency" or higher on ILearn Checkpoint Assessment 80% Proficiency on classroom CSA's	"At Proficiency" or higher on ILearn Checkpoint Assessment 80% Proficiency on classroom CSA's	"At Proficiency" or higher on ILearn Summative Assessment 80% Proficiency on classroom CSA's
Results				
On Track to Meet Goals?				
Strengths				
Areas for Growth				

Next Steps				
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐				

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN GOAL AND STRATEGIES - [GOAL #2]

GOAL			
Goal	Our goal is to maintain an average weekly attendance rate of 94% or higher for the 2025–2026 school year.		
Sub-group focus	Students with chronic absenteeism, missing more than 18 school days in the previous school year.		
The strategies we are going to implement are	PBIS, Teacher Mentor during Advisory, Weekly parent newsletter, Visual reminders around the school building and in classrooms, Monthly Advisory incentives, Quarterly team competitions, Cross-school and community partnerships		
To address the root cause	Chronic absenteeism at our school is primarily driven by a combination of inconsistent family engagement, lack of student connection to school, and limited awareness of the academic and social impact of missed instructional time. Contributing factors include transportation challenges, health-related absences, and a need for more proactive and personalized interventions. Addressing these root causes is essential to achieving and sustaining our attendance goal of 94%.		
Which will help us meet this student outcome goal*			
How Will We Get There?			
Evidence Based Strategies to Address Problems	Supporting Research for Strategy	Who is Accountable for Strategy?	Timeline
PBIS	Research shows that PBIS improves school climate, reduces behavior issues, and increases student engagement and attendance. Schools that implement PBIS with fidelity see positive impacts on both behavior and academic outcomes.	School Administration Attendance Secretary Counselor Teachers and Teacher Mentors Attendance Committee	2025-2028

Strong School-Student Relationships	Research shows that strong, positive relationships between students and school staff improve attendance, boost academic performance, and reduce behavioral issues. Students who feel connected to at least one trusted adult at school are more likely to stay engaged and attend regularly.	School Administration Attendance Secretary Counselor Teachers and Teacher Mentors Attendance Committee	2025-2028
Consistent and Fair Attendance Policies	Studies show that clearly communicated, consistently applied, and equitable attendance policies lead to improved student attendance. When students and families understand expectations and consequences—and see them enforced fairly—trust and accountability increase, supporting a stronger school culture.	School Administration Attendance Secretary Counselor Teachers and Teacher Mentors Attendance Committee	2025-2028
School wide Campaigns and Messaging	Research supports that consistent, school-wide messaging about the importance of attendance raises awareness, shifts attitudes, and encourages positive habits. Campaigns that include visual reminders, regular communication, and shared goals help foster a culture where attendance is valued by students, families, and staff.	School Administration Attendance Secretary Counselor Teachers and Teacher Mentors Attendance Committee	2025-2028
Attendance Incentive Programs	Research shows that attendance incentive programs can positively influence student behavior by reinforcing the value of being present. When incentives are meaningful, timely, and tied to clear goals, they help motivate students, especially when paired with other supportive strategies like mentoring and recognition.	School Administration Attendance Secretary Counselor Teachers and Teacher Mentors Attendance Committee	2025-2028
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐			

Strategy #1						
What actions will we take to implement the improvement strategy? (specific, actionable activities that lead to the completion of the strategy identified)						
Activity (Action Step)	Activity Description	Position Responsible	Measurement	Resources Needed	Timeline	Status
PBIS	PBIS creates a positive and supportive school environment that encourages students to attend regularly. By recognizing and rewarding good attendance and behavior, PBIS motivates students to stay engaged and reduces barriers that lead to absenteeism.	School Administration Attendance Secretary Counselor Teachers and Teacher Mentors Attendance Committee	Attendance Rates	Staff training Incentives & Rewards	2025-2028	In Progress ▾
To what extent has the strategy been implemented? What about the process went well, or not? What is the adult fidelity evidence of this?		The strategy has been implemented with strong administrative support and active involvement from the attendance team, including teachers, counselors, and the attendance secretary. The collaborative process of regular data review and family outreach has gone well, fostering clear communication and timely interventions. Challenges remain in consistently applying incentives and ensuring all staff fully engage with PBIS practices. Adult fidelity is evidenced by documented meeting minutes, consistent attendance tracking, and positive feedback from staff during monthly check-ins, demonstrating ongoing commitment and areas for continued growth.				
How has student achievement been impacted? What is the evidence?		Student achievement has improved as consistent attendance has increased, leading to greater instructional time and engagement. Evidence includes higher test scores, improved grades, and reduced course failures compared to previous years. Additionally, data shows a correlation between students with improved attendance and better academic performance, reinforcing the positive impact of attendance strategies on overall student success.				
How will implementation be adjusted and/or supported moving into next year?		Moving into next year, implementation will be strengthened by increasing staff training on attendance strategies and PBIS to improve consistency and fidelity. We will enhance family engagement through expanded use of ParentSquare’s translation services and targeted communication. Data monitoring will become more frequent, with quicker interventions for at-risk students. Additionally, we plan to refine our incentive programs based on student feedback and increase collaboration with community partners to address barriers to attendance. Regular team meetings will continue to ensure ongoing support and continuous improvement.				

Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐	
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Strategy #2						
What actions will we take to implement the improvement strategy? (specific, actionable activities that lead to the completion of the strategy identified)						
Activity (Action Step)	Activity Description	Position Responsible	Measurement	Resources Needed	Timeline	Status
Attendance Incentive Programs	Attendance incentives and awards recognize and reward students for consistent attendance, motivating them to attend school regularly. These may include monthly prizes, team competitions, certificates, or special events that celebrate positive attendance habits and encourage ongoing participation.	School Administration Attendance Secretary Counselor Teachers and Teacher Mentors Attendance Committee	Attendance Rates	Staff training Incentives & Rewards	2025-2028	In Progr... ▾
To what extent has the strategy been implemented? What about the process went well, or not? What is the adult fidelity evidence of this?		Attendance incentives and awards have been implemented school-wide with monthly individual and advisory rewards, as well as quarterly team competitions. The process has gone well in generating student excitement and visibility through posted tracking charts and digital displays. Some inconsistency remains in timely distribution of rewards. Adult fidelity is evident through staff participation in tracking, promoting incentives, and reporting progress during monthly attendance team meetings.				
How has student achievement been impacted? What is the evidence?		Student achievement has shown positive growth as improved attendance has led to increased instructional time and engagement. Students with regular attendance are demonstrating higher classroom performance, more consistent assignment completion, and improved assessment scores. Evidence includes a reduction in failing grades, improved benchmark assessment data, and stronger participation in class activities, particularly among students previously identified as chronically absent.				
How will implementation be adjusted and/or supported moving into next year?		Moving into next year, implementation will be adjusted by streamlining the reward system to ensure timely and consistent delivery of incentives. Staff will receive clear guidelines and roles to support fidelity, and student input will be gathered to align rewards with their interests. We will also expand visual tracking and recognition, increase family communication through ParentSquare, and continue regular attendance team meetings to review data and adjust strategies as needed. These adjustments aim to strengthen engagement and improve overall attendance outcomes.				
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐						

PROGRESS INDICATORS - [GOAL #2]

PROGRESS INDICATORS				
Check-in Schedule	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Key Performance Indicator (Assessment)	Average weekly attendance rate of 94% or higher for the 2025–2026 school year through Skyward reporting.	Average weekly attendance rate of 94% or higher for the 2025–2026 school year through Skyward reporting.	Average weekly attendance rate of 94% or higher for the 2025–2026 school year through Skyward reporting.	Average weekly attendance rate of 94% or higher for the 2025–2026 school year through Skyward reporting.
Results				
On Track to Meet Goals?				
Strengths				
Areas for Growth				
Next Steps				
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐				

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Professional Development Goal(s)	All certified staff will be trained in Universal Design for Learning best practices by Fall 2028.
Is professional development linked to SIP goals?	Yes ▾
Possible Funding Sources	Title II General Funds
Plan for coaching and support during the learning process	IU Cell is leading the district in a four year professional development and implementation cycle that covers the following: • Initial Cohort Training (new cohort each year): 2-6 Teachers, Instructional Coaches and Administrators will participate in training provided by IU Cell. This includes five training days and additional embedded coaching cycles. • Continued Cohort Training (following initial training): Cohorts will participate in Think Tank coaching cycles and CAST Level 1 and Level 2 certification. • Instructional Coach Training: IU Cell will be working in year 2 of the cycle to train and support instructional coaches in local ownership of embedded coaching cycles as well as facilitating training for new cohorts. • Ongoing Support: Building Implementation Teams and the District Implementation Team provide oversight to further expand and develop professional learning opportunities and ongoing support for implementation beyond the four years with IU Cell. • Building Based Training: High Impact Teaching Strategies are embedded into the Certified Employee Evaluation with an emphasis on UDL. Ongoing training throughout the year is provided to support HITS and therefore UDL for all staff.
Evidence of Impact	District Capacity Assessment Student Performance Data Cognia Surveys and Inventories

How will effectiveness be sustained over time?	The District and Building Implementation teams are receiving concurrent training to provide ongoing support and oversight to solidify a district culture to support sustainability. The DIT and BITs will be responsible for training and support beyond the four years with IU Cell.
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐	

Professional Development Goal(s)	Math teachers, building administrators, and instructional coaches will become more familiar with the types of questions and content covered on ILEARN.
Is professional development linked to SIP goals?	Yes ▾
Possible Funding Sources	Title II, Title IV, State/Local funds
Plan for coaching and support during the learning process	The guiding coalition will provide support in implementing ILEARN strategies in the classroom.
Evidence of Impact	Formative assessments in the classroom will be similar to the ILEARN assessment.
How will effectiveness be sustained over time?	Meetings with Department Managers, Instructional Coaches, and Teachers in the Math Department for collaboration and learning together.
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐	

Professional Development Goal(s)	Math teachers will learn how to use and leverage digital resources such as Get More Math, REVEAL, IXL, etc., to supplement instruction, remediation, and spiral review.
Is professional development linked to SIP goals?	Yes ▾
Possible Funding Sources	Title II, Title IV, State/Local funds
Plan for coaching and support during the learning process	Instructional coaches, administrators, and teachers will facilitate training and support.
Evidence of Impact	Teachers will regularly use the digital resources to supplement instruction and remediation.
How will effectiveness be sustained over time?	Meetings with Department Managers, Instructional Coaches, and Teachers in the Math Department for collaboration and learning together.
Link additional information here (if necessary) ☐	