



**Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

November 19, 2025 at 4:00 pm via ZOOM Link Available on Website
New London, CT

This meeting will be held virtually

AGENDA

4:00 pm

1. WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER

Chairman R. Muckle

- 1a. Establishment of Quorum
- 1b. Public Comment

The Board of Directors welcomes public comment. Due to the nature of the virtual format of the meeting, all comments are to be submitted via email prior to noon on the day of the meeting. Comments may be made on almost any matter related to the operations of ISAAC and will be shared with the Board members in their packet. We shall not read or address any comments at this meeting. However, comments concerning individual students or staff members shall not be permitted.

4:01 pm

2. CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman R. Muckle

- Approval for the October BOD Minutes
- Acceptance of the Year-to-Date Profit/Loss Financial Report for October 2025
- 2026 ISAAC Board of Directors Meeting Dates
- Revised 2025-2026 ISAAC Budget
- 2025-2026 ISAAC School Calendar
- Approval of the Executive Director's Goals for 2025-2026

Possible Motion: Approve and accept all items on the consent agenda

4:03 pm

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Dr. Spera

- 3a. CSDE Report Update
- 3b. Grant Update
- 3c. Legislative Update
- 3d. Hiring Update
- 3e. Recruitment Plan

4:15 pm

4. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

4a. FINANCE

Treasurer L. Muller

- Finance Update – October Minutes
- Revised 2025-2026 ISAAC Budget
- 2026-27 ISAAC Special Education Hourly Rate

Possible Motion: Approve the 2026-27 ISAAC Special Education rate of \$53.77 per hour.

4b. GOVERNANCE

Vice-Chairman Spellman

- Executive Director Goals

4:20 pm

5. NEW BUSINESS

Chairman R. Muckle

- 5a. Accountability Index Review & School Improvement Plan
- 5b. Chairman's Year-End Comments

Dr. Spera

5:00 pm

6. ADJOURN

Chairman R. Muckle



Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication

Board of Directors Finance Committee

November 18, 2025 at 1:00 pm

New London, CT

AGENDA

- | | | |
|---------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1:00 pm | 1. WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER | <i>Finance Chair L. Muller</i> |
| 1:00 pm | 2. FINANCIAL REVIEW <ul style="list-style-type: none">• October 31 2025 Profit/Loss• Audit work is underway | <i>E. Robb</i> |
| 1:08 pm | 3. SPECIAL EDUCATION RATE 26-27 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Possible Motion: Recommend that the ISAAC BOD approve the 2026-2027 Special Education hourly rate at \$53.77.</i> | <i>N. Spera/E. Robb</i> |
| 1:18 pm | 4. 2025-2026 BUDGET REVISION <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revision corrects grant items, Special Education costs, capital expenditures and changes in Per Pupil.• Adjustments allow for increase in contingency reserve | <i>N. Spera</i> |
| 1:28 pm | 5. OTHER UPDATES | <i>N. Spera</i> |
| 1:35 pm | 6. ADJOURNMENT | <i>Finance Chair L. Muller</i> |

INTERDISTRICT SCHOOL FOR ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

as of Nov 14, 2025

Statement of Activities (Profit & Loss)

Oct 31, 2025

	Current Yr	Prior Yr	%	approved May 2025 BUDGET incl CapRsv	%
	Oct 25	Oct 24	% Change	25-26 Full Year	% of Budget
TOTAL REVENUES [CSP = \$209K]	2,739,939	2,708,199	1.2%	6,681,412	41.0%
SALARIES	1,165,131	1,056,287	10.3%	4,631,759	25.2%
FRINGE BENEFITS	16.7% 194,294	17.6% 185,611	4.7%	703,959	27.6%
TOTAL SALARIES + FRINGE BENEFITS	1,359,425	1,241,898	9.5%	5,335,718	25.5%
<i>Employee Costs as % of Revenue</i>	<i>49.6%</i>	<i>45.9%</i>		<i>79.9%</i>	
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	13,626	44,061	-69.1%	181,282	7.5%
FACILITIES COSTS	66,155	55,318	19.6%	213,517	31.0%
GENERAL OPERATING COSTS incl insurance	54,247	37,813	43.5%	112,067	48.4%
SUPPLIES (incl Food Svc) [CSP]	186,433	117,416	58.8%	376,000	49.6%
TECHNOLOGY & CAPITAL EXPENSES [CSP]	239,553	355,037	-32.5%	259,269	92.4%
OTHER EXPENSES	11,007	15,643	-29.6%	31,039	35.5%
UNANTICIPATED EXPENSE / CONTINGENCY	-	-	0.0%	50,000	0.0%
DEBT SERVICE (PRINCIPAL & INTEREST)	79,234	71,431	10.9%	257,520	30.8%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	2,009,680	1,938,618	3.7%	6,816,412	29.5%
NET ORDINARY INCOME (before Carryforward)	730,259	769,581		(135,000)	
OTHER INCOME: PRIOR YEAR CARRY-FORWARD	147,161	156,767		60,000	245.3%
OTHER: CAPITAL TRANSFER-IN / (OUT) to Gen Fund				75,000	0.0%
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	877,420	926,348		-	

SPECIAL EDUCATION HOURLY RATE: 2026-2027

	48.36	49.86	49.63	\$53.62	53.77
	ACTUAL 22-23	ACTUAL 23-24	ACTUAL 24-25	Appr 25-26	PRELIM 26-27
	<i>SPECIAL ED</i>	<i>SPECIAL ED</i>	<i>SPECIAL ED</i>	<i>SPECIAL ED</i>	<i>SPECIAL ED</i>
	<i>Rate est \$48.36</i>	<i>Rate est \$49.86</i>	<i>Rate est \$49.63</i>	<i>Rate est \$53.62</i>	<i>Rate est \$53.77</i>
ACCT DESCRIPTION	22-23 REVIEW	23-24 FINAL	24-25 FINAL	25-26 Budget	25-26 PRELIM
SUBTOTAL: SALARIES	565,077	717,387	939,971	1,116,368	1,233,877
FRINGE BENEFITS (avg 18-19%)	106,768	130,959	180,507	202,156	219,975
TOTAL EMPLOYEE COSTS	671,845	848,346	1,120,478	1,318,524	1,453,852
OTHER EXPENSES	75,427	59,721	79,306	65,466	80,052
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:	747,272	908,067	1,199,784	1,383,990	1,533,905
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	(804)	746	(111)		
Assumed/estimated IEP service hours	15,221	18,213	23,795	25,812	** 28,526
Effective Special Ed Reimbursement Rate	\$48.36	\$49.86	\$49.63	\$53.62	\$53.77

* Addition of 52 seats in SchYr 24-25 and large influx of needs led to increased IEP hours & eval needs, which requires additional staff and supplies

** In 25-26, ISAAC added daily Co-taught ELA for all 6th graders; had high needs in literacy; and added 2 Psychologists for student testing/evals

1 26-27 FTE = 12.5 certified staff (admin/teachers/socwork/psych); 4.3 educational & other supports

2 Fringe benefits average approximately 18-19% of salary

3 "Other expenses" include facilities usage; instructional & testing/evaluation materials; software & tech (laptops/iPads)

Based on the above items, ISAAC's the 26-27 Special Ed hourly rate is estimated at **\$53.77**.

328 # Students Enrolled		(0)		(0)		-	-	-	-	-
		Approved May 2025		REVISED Fall 2025	GENERAL ED incl new 52 seats	SPECIAL ED Approved @ \$53.62/IEP hr	TITLE incl Bilingual	MISC Grants incl SMHS/CSP	Grants 21 CCLC	FOOD SVC
QB	ACCT DESCRIPTION	25-26 BUDGET	Change	25-26 BUDGET	25-26 BUDGET	25-26 BUDGET	25-26 BUDGET	25-26 BUDGET	25-26 BUDGET	25-26 BUDGET
097	STATE FUNDING (\$13,214 for 276 + 52)	(4,335,832)	76,424	(4,259,408)	(4,259,408)		-	-	-	
098	SPEC ED: IEP & COUNS INVOICES	(1,427,000)	(59,626)	(1,486,626)	-	(1,486,626)	-	-	-	
091	FOOD SERVICES	(346,000)	(16,600)	(362,600)	-		-	-		(362,600)
092	GRANTS - STATE/FEDERAL	(494,580)	(224,242)	(718,822)	-		(262,448)	(321,807)	(134,567)	
095	GRANTS - misc (security, equip, etc)	(12,000)	(1,070)	(13,070)	-		-	(13,070)	-	-
094	CONTRIBUTIONS / DONATIONS	(1,000)	-	(1,000)	(1,000)	-	-	-		-
096	INVESTMENT INCOME	(45,000)	-	(45,000)	(45,000)					
099	STUDENT ACTIVITY FUNDS	(20,000)	-	(20,000)	(20,000)		-	-		
TOTAL REVENUES		(6,681,412)	(225,114)	(6,906,526)	(4,325,408)	(1,486,626)	(262,448)	(334,877)	(134,567)	(362,600)
611	CERT ADMINISTRATORS	558,317	1,967	560,284	354,976	130,000	39,039	-	-	36,269
612	CERT TEACHERS & STAFF	2,707,728	65,086	2,772,814	1,721,927	886,719	93,285	70,883	-	-
613	NON-CERT SCH STAFF	282,857	(24,999)	257,858	118,684	63,216	75,958	-	-	-
6144*	NON-CERT DIRECTORS	478,755	-	478,755	411,725	46,530	-	-	-	20,500
614	NON-CERT STAFF	387,612	4,280	391,892	283,922	60,384	-	-	-	47,586
616	STIPENDS	216,490	(5,180)	211,310	56,400	7,100	24,000	16,300	107,510	-
SUBTOTAL: SALARIES		4,631,759	41,154	4,672,913	2,947,634	1,193,949	232,282	87,183	107,510	104,355
6201/2	EMPL TAXES - FICA/MED (7.65%/1.45%)	151,532	(706)	150,826	118,057	26,562	-	1,028	-	5,179
6205-7	EMPL BENEFITS - INSUR (9%)	416,858	1,264	418,122	233,972	149,244	21,291	7,115	5,000	1,500
62010	EMPL COSTS - UNEMPL (0.6% eff rate)	27,791	246	28,037	21,191	5,970	-	354	-	522
62020	EMPL COSTS - WRKR COMP (0.8% eff rate)	37,054	329	37,383	23,691	11,939	-	709	-	1,044
62035	EMPL BENEFITS - RETIREMENT (403b)	45,724	-	45,724	37,428	8,296	-	-	-	-
62050	EMPL TUITION REIMB (est)	25,000	(4,625)	20,375	5,000	10,000	5,375	-	-	-
15.0%	SUBTOTAL: FRINGE BENEFITS	703,959	(3,492)	700,467	439,339	212,011	26,666	9,206	5,000	8,245
TOTAL EMPLOYEE COSTS (77.8% of Rev)		5,335,718	37,662	5,373,380	3,386,973	1,405,960	258,948	96,389	112,510	112,600
63***	PROFESSIONAL/SKILLED SERVICES	54,013	(9,500)	44,513	27,797	1,716	-	-	-	15,000
63221	PROF SVC / STAFF DEVEL	18,769	(11,769)	7,000	3,500	3,500	-	-	-	-
63235	AUDITORS	20,500	-	20,500	20,500	-	-	-	-	-
63245	LEGAL FEES	88,000	-	88,000	87,000	1,000	-	-	-	-
SUBTOTAL: PROFESSIONAL SERVICES		181,282	(21,269)	160,013	138,797	6,216	-	-	-	15,000
646**	UTILITIES	120,500	-	120,500	90,500	30,000	-	-	-	-
642/647	MAINTENANCE / FACIL COSTS	65,925	11,400	77,325	57,575	18,750	-	-	-	1,000
64400	FACILITIES USAGE (Graduation/Events)	2,000	-	2,000	2,000	-	-	-	-	-
64720	RENTAL-EQUIPMENT (Copiers)	25,092	-	25,092	18,842	6,250	-	-	-	-
SUBTOTAL: FACILITIES		213,517	11,400	224,917	168,917	55,000	-	-	-	1,000
6532*	STUDENT FIELD TRIPS (incl Aft-Sch)	3,000	-	3,000	3,000	-	-	-	-	-
65325	PARENTAL ACTIVITIES (21st CCLC)	2,000	-	2,000	-	-	-	-	2,000	-
65900	OTHER PURCHASED SERVICES	11,650	-	11,650	6,150	-	-	-	5,500	-
65911/2	INSURANCE	76,900	-	76,900	76,900	-	-	-	-	-
65920	TELEPHONE & INTERNET	12,960	(1,000)	11,960	11,960	-	-	-	-	-
6593/5/7*	POSTAGE / PRINTING / BANK FEES	5,557	3,500	9,057	9,057	-	-	-	-	-
SUBTOTAL: GENERAL OPERATING COSTS		112,067	2,500	114,567	107,067	-	-	-	7,500	-
66110/3	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES + MUSICAL INSTR	62,500	56,887	119,387	36,306	15,700	-	67,381	-	-
66120	OFFICE SUPPLIES (incl classroom basics)	19,500	(4,500)	15,000	15,000	-	-	-	-	-
66130	OTHER SUPPLIES (incl Grad)	19,000	(4,000)	15,000	14,000	-	1,000	-	-	-
66131	AFT-SCH/SUMMER PROGRAM SUPPLIES	3,250	11,338	14,588	1,146	-	-	-	13,442	-
66140	CUSTODIAL / MAINT SUPPLIES	29,750	(5,000)	24,750	24,750	-	-	-	-	-
66330	GAS & MISC FOR VANS	5,000	6,700	11,700	11,700	-	-	-	-	-
665**	FOOD SERVICE PURCHASES	217,000	15,000	232,000	-	-	-	-	-	232,000
999**	STUDENT ACTIVITY EXPENSES	20,000	-	20,000	20,000	-	-	-	-	-
SUBTOTAL: SUPPLIES		376,000	76,425	452,425	122,902	15,700	1,000	67,381	13,442	232,000
675/6	TECHNOLOGY SUPPLIES & SOFTWARE	77,019	-	77,019	71,454	2,650	2,500	-	415	-
67731	FURNITURE & GEN EQUIPMENT	42,000	72,294	114,294	2,000	500	-	111,794	-	-
67735/9	TECH HARDWARE & CAP EQUIP incl vans	20,250	79,327	99,577	39,664	600	-	59,313	-	-
67900	CONSTRUCTION (non-ARP)	-	8,936	8,936	8,936	-	-	-	-	-
67901/2	BLDG IMPROV/CAPITAL REPAIRS	45,000	(5,000)	40,000	38,400	-	-	-	-	1,600
SUBTOTAL: TECHNOLOGY & CAPITAL		184,269	155,557	339,826	160,454	3,750	2,500	171,107	415	1,600
689**	MISC EXPENSE incl food for programming	16,850	-	16,850	16,850	-	-	-	-	-
68***	DUES & FEES (incl fingerprinting)	14,189	-	14,189	13,089	-	-	-	700	400
SUBTOTAL: OTHER EXPENSES		31,039	-	31,039	29,939	-	-	-	700	400
68999	CONTINGENCY/UNANTICIPATED EXPENSE	50,000	50,000	100,000	100,000	-	-	-	-	-
69901	LOAN PRINCIPAL	67,476	-	67,476	67,476	-	-	-	-	-
69902	LOAN INTEREST	182,400	-	182,400	182,400	-	-	-	-	-
69903/4	VEHICLE LOAN	7,644	-	7,644	7,644	-	-	-	-	-
SUBTOTAL: DEBT SERVICE		257,520	-	257,520	257,520	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES:	6,741,412	312,275	7,053,687	4,472,569	1,486,626	262,448	334,877	134,567	362,600
	CHANGE IN NET ASSETS (OPERATING)	(60,000)	(87,161)	(147,161)	(147,161)	-	-	-	-	-
98800	PRIOR YEAR CARRYOVER/FUND BALANCE	60,000	87,161	147,161	147,161	-	-	-	-	-
	CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(0)	0	(0)	0	0	0	0	0	0



2026 ISAAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING DATES
ALL MEETINGS TO BEGIN AT 4 PM

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2026

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026*

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2026

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026*

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2026**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2026

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2026

* Moved for Vacation Breaks

**Subject to be Moved based on Graduation Date

ISAAC 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

190 Governor Winthrop Boulevard 🏡 New London, CT 06320 📞 860.447.1003

Dr. Nicholas J. Spera, *Executive Director* 🏡 Tanya N. Collins, *Principal* 🏡 Mercedes Alger, *Associate Principal*



August (9)					September (21/30)					October (22/52)				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4				1	2
10	11	12	13	14	7	8	9	10	11	5	6	7	8	9
17	18	19	20	21	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16
24	25	26	27	28	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23
31					28	29	30			26	27	28	29	30

November (18/70)					December (17/87)					January (18/105)				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4					1
9	10	11	12	13	7	8	9	10	11	4	5	6	7	8
16	17	18	19	20	14	15	16	17	18	11	12	13	14	15
23	24	25	26	27	21	22	23	24	25	18	19	20	21	22
30					28	29	30	31		25	26	27	28	29

March (21/143)					April (17/160)					May (19/179)				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
1	2	3	4	5				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31			26	27	28	29	30	31				

February (17/122)					June (1/180)				
Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4
8	9	10	11	12	7	8	9	10	11
15	16	17	18	19	14	15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25	26	21	22	23	24	25
					28	29	30		

IMPORTANT DATES:

August 19: First Day of School (Half Day)

June 1: Last Day of School (Half Day)

HOLIDAYS:

September 7: Labor Day

November 26-27: Thanksgiving

December 24 - January 3: Winter Break

January 6: Three Kings Day

January 18: Dr. Martin L. King Day

February 15 – 16: Presidents' Days

April 12 – April 16: Spring Break

May 31: Memorial Day

PD DAYS (No School for Students):

Full Day: Aug 17-18, Nov 3, February 9, May 8, June 3

HALF DAY & ACTIVITIES OF NOTE:

August 19, 20, 21: Half Day Students/PD Staff

September 24: ISAAC Open House (Half Day)

October 8: Parent-Teacher Virtual Conf (Half Day)

October 13: LIP DUB DAY! (Half Day)/PD Staff

November 25: Half Day – Thanksgiving Break

December 23: Half Day – Winter Break

February 12: Half Day – February Break

March 18, 19: Half Day – PD for Staff

March 25: Half Day – Easter Break

April 9: Half Day – April Break

April 22, 23: Parent-Teacher Virtual Conf (Half Day)

May 6 & 7: Half Day/PD for Staff

May 10 to 14: Half Days (SBAC)/PD for Staff

May 28: CT Get Out & Play Day (Half Day)

June 1: Half Day (Last Day of School)

Any school cancellations will be added to the end of the year as half days

SBAC TESTING (HALF DAYS)

May 10 through 14

MARKING PERIOD QUARTER DATES:

1st: October 23, 2026

2nd: December 23, 2026

3rd: March 19, 2027

4th: June 1, 2027



*We Believe that All Students Can Succeed &
Effort Creates Ability*

www.isaacschool.org



ISAAC Executive Director Goal Setting

Dr. Nicholas J. Spera

2025-2026 School Year

November 5, 2025

GOAL 1: Educational Leadership Practice:

To establish and maintain high-quality relationships that support the ISAAC's Core Values, Beliefs about Learning and the Vision of the Graduate

1.1 Shared Vision, Mission and Goals — Leaders collaboratively develop, implement, and sustain the vision, mission, and goals to support high expectations for all students and staff.

- Discuss, draft, and present the 2025-2026 ISAAC district and school goals to the Board of Directors
- Create and submit the necessary documents in compliance with the Charter Renewal Visit
- Revise a School Improvement and Performance Plan that aligns to the school's Core Values, Beliefs about Learning, and Vision of the Graduate statement and the Teacher Evaluation System
- Lead ISAAC towards the expansion of 4th and 5th grades

1.2 Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment — Leaders develop a shared understanding of standards-based best practices in curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

- Ensure the template for written curriculum is drafted in a consistent format for all courses in all departments throughout ISAAC
- Create professional development opportunities that enhance the development of curriculum and instruction

1.3 Continuous Improvement — Leaders use assessments, data systems and accountability strategies to monitor and evaluate progress and close achievement gaps.

- Cultivate a sense of urgency and commitment to improving the performance of all students through the development of SBAC and NGSS styled assessments by creating an action plan for the areas in need of improvement
- Guide and participate on the SRBI Team that includes systems for identifying, tracking, and providing supports that ensures that all students can succeed

2.2 Professional Learning — Establishes a collaborative professional learning system that is grounded in a vision of high-quality instruction and continuous improvement through the use of data to advance the school or district's vision, mission and goals.

- Ensure the system of Professional Learning Communities by discipline is established to allow teachers to develop curriculum, improve instruction, and create and discuss formative and summative assessments
- Maintain a master schedule that provides opportunities for teachers and students to maximize teaching and learning success while having collaboration time to meet in Professional Learning Communities

GOAL 2: Organizational Management Practice:

To facilitate the effective administration of the day-to-day operations of ISAAC to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of students and staff

2.1 Recruitment, Selection, and Retention — Recruits, selects, supports, and retains effective educators needed to implement the school or district's vision, mission, and goals.

- Establish and use effective methodologies for recruiting, hiring, developing, and retaining staff
- Utilize multiple channels to identify the most effective leaders and teachers, and strategically place them into positions based on knowledge, experience, and the needs of our students and faculty (ex. SRBI, Bilingual Program, Advisory)
- Mentor and support the school administration team
- Ensure the comprehensive evaluation and accountability system is completed with fidelity
- Ensure the school is in compliance with all teachers holding the appropriate certifications
- Provide opportunities for staff members to grow as leaders within the school for the purpose of retention of the professional staff

2.3 Observation and Performance Evaluation — Ensures high-quality, standards-based instruction by building the capacity of educators to lead and improve teaching and learning.

- Develop a system that allows for peer-to-peer observation through the PLC model and reflection of their practice on a monthly basis
- Evaluate teacher effectiveness according to the ISAAC Evaluation Plan that includes review of teacher SLOs and completed evaluations for all certified staff

3.1 Operational Management — Strategically aligns organizational systems and resources to support student achievement and school improvement.

- Revise and implement a crisis management plan that allows for systematic and appropriate decision making, communication, and resource allocations for crisis or emergency situations including student self-harm, school violence, DCF, and health related scenarios.
- Deliver and ensure the comprehensive Emergency Crisis & Safety Plan that meets state and federal laws and best practices used in surrounding school districts

3.2 Resource Management — Establishes a system for fiscal, educational and technology resources that operate in support of teaching and learning.

- Provide oversight of the facilities management system that ensures the delivery of all programs in a safe and healthy environment
- Recommend, facilitate, and oversee the infrastructure and facility upgrades with the appropriate vendors, staff members, and construction companies
- Oversee the completion of the 4th and 5th grade expansion project in collaboration with the Associate Principal who oversees the 4th and 5th grade programming
- Initiate, lobby, and pursue legislation that supports ISAAC
- Collaborate with multiple stakeholders to develop a fiscally responsible overall budget that supports the improvement goals and operations of ISAAC
- Ensure that the Special Education Billing Methodology that was approved by SDE is being completed with fidelity along with the appropriate cycles for billing
- Certify that the use of grants including the 21CCLC and GSCT Grants allow ISAAC to remain at the forefront in its offerings, experiences, and future
- Oversee the Food Service Operations and its fiscal management in collaboration with staff

GOAL 3: Community and Board of Directors Relations:

To support positive Board of Directors relations to support the success of ISAAC

4.1 Family, Community and Stakeholder Engagement — Uses professional influence to promote the growth of all students by actively engaging and collaborating with families, community partners and other stakeholders to support the vision, mission and goals of the school and district.

- Keep the board informed and updated on educational issues, needs and operations, and/or appropriate information about ISAAC.
- Build and maintain positive working relationships with board members, community partners, and other stakeholders
- Engage with state legislative politicians to support the financial future of ISAAC

4.2 School Culture and Climate — Establishes a positive and inclusive climate for student achievement, as well as high expectations for adult and student conduct.

- Revise and implement a comprehensive social-emotional curriculum that will be delivered to all students that is aligned to national standards
- Effectively anticipate and respond to challenges and conflicts and remain focused on the vision of high expectations when faced with adversity
- Build a culture of accountability and hard work by focusing our efforts on student achievement

4.3 Equitable and Ethical Practice — Maintains a focus on ethical decisions, cultural competencies, social justice, and inclusive practice for all members of the school/district community.

- Ensure that student and staff health and safety remain a priority in the decision-making process
- Effectively anticipate and respond to challenges and conflicts and remain focused on the vision of high expectations when faced with adversity (repeat 4.2)
- Build a culture of accountability and hard work by focusing our efforts on the student achievement (repeat 4.2)
- Maintain the highest standards of professional conduct by holding high expectations of self and others



School Improvement & Performance Plan

2025-2026

Dr. Nicholas Spera
Executive Director

Tanya Collins
Principal

Mercedes Alger
Associate Principal

Amy Geary
Director of Special Education

Michael Presti
Dean of Humanities

Tucker Regan
Student Supports Coordinator



Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication School Improvement & Performance Plan 2025-2026

Core Values, Beliefs and Learning Expectations

At ISAAC Middle School, we pride ourselves on fostering a safe, fun, and nurturing environment that promotes hard work, happiness, and effort for all who work, learn, and grow within our school community. We believe that *All Students Can Succeed* with high expectations, maximum effort, and a growth mindset. Our success as an ISAAC Family is deeply rooted in the positive relationships shared among our diverse student body, devoted staff, and engaged families. Our professional learning community of talented and passionate educators is committed to the delivery of a rigorous and innovative curriculum, which promotes the shared belief that *Effort Creates Ability*. We support the growth of each student by developing the academic, civic, and social skills essential to succeed in high school and beyond.

Vision of the Graduate

The ISAAC Vision of the Graduate is that all graduates are proficient in the following competencies:

- Write effectively for various purposes
- Speak to diverse audiences in an accountable manner
- Develop the behaviors needed to interact and contribute with others on a team
- Analyze and solve problems independently and collaboratively
- Be responsible, creative, and empathetic members of the community

About ISAAC

Established in 1997, ISAAC is a public charter middle school overseen by a dedicated board of directors. Currently operating at full capacity with an enrollment of 328 students, admission is determined through an open and non-merit-based lottery system that attracts participants from 13 different towns and cities in southeastern Connecticut. The charter mandates a balanced enrollment, with 50% of students coming from New London and the remaining 50% from surrounding districts. Recognized in 2014 with the CT State Department of Education School of Distinction Award for the Highest Progress, ISAAC provides a diverse array of arts and communication-themed programs along with academically challenging high school preparatory classes, meeting the needs of all students. ISAAC's academic structure includes identification of talented and gifted students for fourth through eighth grade and the implementation of rigorous above-grade-level programming. Additionally, sixth, seventh, and eighth graders have access to advanced levels of study available in Honors Pre-Algebra, Honors Social Studies, Honors Science, Honors Humanities, and Honors English Language Arts. Foundational art courses are essential prerequisites, preparing students for advanced art courses offered in the eighth-grade year. Starting in 2023, 8th-grade students choose from several Science electives, including Honors Aquarium Science and Honors Marine Science. ISAAC's athletic program features boys' and girls' basketball, cross country, fencing, soccer, and volleyball. The school is currently in its 5th year of a five-year grant cycle, benefiting from the 21st Century Community Learners Centers (21st CCLC) grant. This funding supports various after-school programs such as Culinary Club, Environmental Exploration, Broadway at ISAAC, and Backstage Club. Additionally, the grant provides funding for the summer Step-Up Program for incoming 6th graders and supports summer theater activities for students in grades seven and eight.

ISAAC Highlights

- In 2014, ISAAC earned the CT Department of Education School of Distinction Award, recognizing its outstanding progress.
- The ISAAC Board of Directors demonstrated its commitment to the arts by voting to expand the Arts program. This expansion included the addition of extra art, dance/theatre, and multi-media arts teachers for the 2020-2021 school year.
- In October 2022, the ISAAC Board of Directors further enhanced the school's offerings by incorporating STEAM electives, curricula, and programming. This expansion is supported by the new \$2.8 million building, showcasing the board's dedication to providing students with a comprehensive education that encompasses Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics.
- In 2023, ISAAC's English learners outperformed the state average on the LAS Links Assessment.
- In 2023, ISAAC achieved its highest accountability index rating in school history, reflecting the institution's continuous commitment to academic excellence.
- In 2024, ISAAC was approved by the CTSDE for 52 additional seats for grades four and five.
- In 2024, ISAAC began groundbreaking for a second expansion to house grades four and five.
- In 2025, ISAAC will now be a 4-8 school for the first time ever.

Theory of Action

Strategic Action 1.1:

If teachers and staff collaborate in the examination of assessment and instructional practice through the PLC process, then they will enhance the curriculum and improve their planning and instruction with fidelity to promote student success

SA 1.1: Action Steps:

- We will commit to extensive professional development in the area of PLCs, curriculum development, assessment development, and results.
- We will commit one block period per week to PLC time.
- We will establish and practice a structure for peer observation through Learning Walks within PLCs each month.
- We will develop the curriculum throughout the school year based upon support from administration and feedback from the PLC teams, parents, and students.
- We will create rigorous, authentic unit tasks rooted in high-leverage practices that allow students to utilize the skills and knowledge gained in the classroom and beyond.
- We will meet in PLCs to discuss lesson planning (what we want each student to learn) and student performance through assessment results (how do we know and respond).
- We will review and revise curricula to align to student needs, vertical alignment, and state standards

Strategic Action 1.2:

If we use the advisory model to foster and establish shared belief among all stakeholders that “**all students can succeed** with hard work and grit” then we will increase student efforts towards achievement and responsibility for their own personal, academic, and career goals.

SA 1.2: Action Steps:

- We will promote and discuss among all stakeholders the concepts of grit (Angela Duckworth), hard work leads to success, growth mindset (Carol Dweck), and Accountable Talk (University of Pittsburgh's Institute of Learning).
- We will foster a shared belief that "all students can succeed with hard work and grit" through faculty-focused conversations related to effort-based success of ourselves and our students.
- We will continue to lead students in growth mindset, grit, self-efficacy, and goal orientation through advisory experiences.
- We will utilize the Advisory program to work with students, setting goals by developing Goal Setting Plans and conferencing one-on-one with students during advisory twice per week.
- We will design and provide professional development promoting "The Year of Rigor" with a focus on high-leverage practices of writing to learn and effective feedback.

Strategic Action 1.3:

If we incorporate Accountable Talk within our culture and motivate students to listen, respond critically to their teacher and peers, and defend their positions with evidence, then students will intentionally think at a higher level and improve academic achievement.

SA 1.3: Action Steps:

- We will provide professional development on Academically Productive Talk that incorporates Accountable Talk.
- We will utilize PLC time to implement the Learning Walk model to observe and promote professional and respectful discourse that will improve our instructional strategies in the area of Academically Productive Talk.
- We will showcase and share exemplary lessons that promote the practice of Accountable Talk.
- We will all create and practice the norms and skills of Academically Productive Talk in our classrooms and professional discourse.

Strategic Action 1.4:

If we continuously discuss and monitor student progress through a multi-measured systematic process over time, then scientifically based interventions will improve student achievement.

SA4: Action Steps:

- We will continue to utilize the SRBI process that will provide teachers with research-based interventions to improve student learning and behaviors 2-3 times per week.
- We will share common SBAC-styled assessment data, including the data tied to our SLOs.
- We will share common assessment data among PLC and interdisciplinary teams to create lessons with teaching strategies that improve student achievement.
- We will administer, disaggregate, and share 4th-8th grade new student admissions and annual SBAC data with our teachers.
- We will implement tiered systems of support and targeted social/emotional interventions (SRBI)
- We will increase the frequency of mathematics for incoming 6th graders

Strategic Action 2.1:

If we provide effective integration of technology by teachers in a focused and deliberate manner that aligns with learning outcomes, then students will be motivated to become proficient in the use of technology and become active participants in the learning process through a love of learning.

SA 2.1: Action Steps:

- We will commit to extensive professional development in the area of establishing a ParentSquare for all teachers, as appropriate.
- We will utilize technology to provide high-quality feedback to students.
- We will plan lessons that incorporate the use of technology by way of the one-to-one Chromebook program in all grades.
- We will ensure that all students receive Digital Citizenship curriculum in their 6th grade year within the Digital Arts curriculum.
- We will commit to continued exploration of appropriate use of Artificial Intelligence for both educators and students in the classroom setting.

Strategic Action 2.2:

If we ensure that our school facilities are designed, developed, and maintained based on contemporary research to maximize teaching and learning, then teachers will have the ability to provide students with unique opportunities to explore and discover opinions and thoughts of others in an atmosphere that promotes a passion for learning.

SA 2.2: Action Steps:

- We will utilize our additional classroom spaces to enhance instruction for all learners
- We will ensure that the success of our school continues through a strategic three-year budget plan.
- We will apply for outside funding that provides our facilities with innovative products and services that maximize learning and prepare our students for high school.
- We will enrich the safety and security of our school by instituting best practices used throughout our country.
- We will enhance the technological infrastructure by seeking cost-effective tools and hardware that improves teaching and learning.
- We will seek opportunities that allow our students to play, learn, and grow through afterschool programming and athletics.

Strategic Action 3.1:

If we increase the communication of the strengths of ISAAC and celebrate the successes throughout the school year in different modes of communication, then students, parents, staff, and the community will voice their *ISAAC Pride* to promote ISAAC as one of the premier middle schools to attend in southeastern Connecticut.

SA 3.1: Action Steps:

- We will communicate important highlights and upcoming events to our students, parents, and the community through weekly emailed newsletters and text messages and by utilizing ParentSquare, Facebook, and Instagram accounts.
- We will seek feedback from parents, students, and teachers and use the retrieved data to adjust school environment practices, procedures, and policies, as needed.
- We will provide press releases for positive events and celebrations at ISAAC.
- We will provide families with a weekly newsletter from the principal's office entitled: *Dragon Tales*.
- We will hold monthly PTO meetings in both English and Spanish to accommodate all parents.

Strategic Action 3.2:

If we deepen partnerships with community, business, and education leaders in the field of academics, arts, and communications, then students will benefit from a multitude of unique opportunities, and our teachers will gain the skills and knowledge necessary to prepare students for high school and beyond.

SA 3.2: Action Steps:

- We will meet with leaders from local high schools and higher education institutions to gain insight and ideas for providing expert instruction and high school preparation for our students.
- We will track our graduates and their successes at local high schools.
- We will partner with leaders in the fields of arts and communications to enhance the curriculum and experiences for teachers and students.
- We will develop innovative programs in collaboration with post-secondary institutions and/or local community leaders in many fields, including arts and communications.
- We will interface with local political leaders for the promotion, support, and funding of ISAAC and charter education in Connecticut.
- We will provide opportunities for students to interact with members of the community through our Student Council.

District Goal 1: All Students Can Succeed

Students learn best when teachers and students adopt a growth mindset that embraces high expectations, meaningful feedback, and the ability to reflect on their own learning.



School Goal One:

To prepare all students with the competencies needed to demonstrate success in mathematics, reading, and writing.

ISAAC follows the Common Core State Standards that concentrate heavily on literacy within all academic areas, including language arts and mathematics. Within the language arts and beyond, students must be able to read and write effectively for a variety of purposes by interpreting multiple sources with purpose and evidence. In addition, mastery of mathematics is an integral aspect within ISAAC's Vision of the Graduate. The Common Core requires students to use, explain, and understand the role that mathematics plays in the world. Moreover, students are expected to make and explain well-founded judgments with mathematical reasoning using descriptive analysis that shows comprehension and evidence of understanding.

The *ISAAC Core Values, Beliefs About Learning, and the Vision of the Graduate* states that, upon 8th grade graduation, our students will possess a variety of academic, civic, and social competencies that will translate toward success at the high school level. These transferable skills and competencies are paramount to achieve our ultimate goal in ensuring that all students will be prepared for secondary education at any comprehensive, magnet, private, or technical high school they attend following graduation.

In 2014, the Connecticut State Department of Education adopted The Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test as the grade 4-8 state assessment. The SBAC test uses a redesigned assessment that focuses on the Common Core standards in reading, writing, and mathematics skills.

In order to ensure student academic, social, and civic success, ISAAC will identify action steps for a variety of strategic actions that will be supported by teachers' student learning objectives (SLOs) for the 2024-2025 school year and beyond. These SLOs will be aligned to the SBAC-styled summative assessments. ISAAC will create a school development improvement plan (SDIP) for all areas of improvement related to academic and social-emotional goals, along with a professional development plan in several areas. ISAAC will also integrate the practice of Accountable Talk from the Institute for Learning at the University of Pittsburgh. Their research in reading comprehension has shown that using Accountable Talk in the classroom supports and increases cognitive development in students' learning and using this discourse-based instructional approach facilitates effective reading comprehension. Furthermore, in a 2016 study of mathematics teaching across different schools, Jo Boaler found that instructional reform, that included a focus on Accountable Talk, increased student learning.

Strategic Action #1:

If we create regular, structured, collaborative opportunities for teachers to meet weekly in content-specific Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams with a focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, then they will use assessment data to improve their instructional strategies and student achievement will improve.

SA 1.1: Action Steps:

- We will commit to extensive professional development in the area of PLCs, curriculum development, assessment development, and results.
- We will ensure rigorous lessons are delivered daily in every classroom.
- We will commit one block period per week to PLC time.
- We will establish and practice a structure for peer observation through Learning Walks within PLCs each month.
- We will continue to revise the curriculum throughout the school year based upon support from administration and feedback from the PLC teams, parents, and students.
- We will continue to implement rigorous, authentic unit tasks that allow students to utilize the skills and knowledge gained in the classroom and beyond.
- We will meet in PLCs to discuss lesson planning (what we want each student to learn) and student performance through assessment results (how do we know and respond).
- We will utilize the use of common formative assessments in the areas identified through ISAAC's Vision of the Graduate, as part of our regular practice.

Strategic Action #2:

If we use the advisory model to foster and establish shared belief among all stakeholders that **“all students can succeed”** and **“Effort Creates Ability”**, then we will increase student efforts towards achievement and responsibility for their own personal, academic, and career goals.

SA 1.2: Action Steps:

- We will continue to promote and discuss among all stakeholders the concepts of grit (Angela Duckworth), growth mindset (Carol Dweck), the belief that “all students can succeed with hard work and grit,” and Accountable Talk (University of Pittsburgh's Institute of Learning).
- We will foster a shared belief that “all students can succeed with hard work and grit” through faculty-focused conversations related to effort-based success of ourselves and our students.
- We will continue to lead students in growth mindset, grit, self-efficacy, and goal orientation through advisory experiences.
- We will utilize the Advisory program to work with students, setting goals by developing Goal Setting Plans and conferencing one-on-one with students during advisory week.

Strategic Action #3:

If we incorporate Accountable Talk within our culture and motivate students to listen, respond critically to their teacher and peers, and defend their positions with evidence, then students will intentionally think at a higher level and improve academic achievement.

SA 1.3: Action Steps:

- We will provide continued professional development on Academically Productive Talk that incorporates Accountable Talk.
- We will provide feedback to teachers through the evaluation process.

- We will utilize PLC time to implement the Learning Walk model to observe and promote professional and respectful discourse that will improve our instructional strategies in the area of Academically Productive Talk.
- We will showcase and share exemplary lessons that promote the practice of Accountable Talk.
- We will all create and practice the norms and skills of Academically Productive Talk in our classrooms and professional discourse.

Strategic Action #4:

Strategic Action 1.4:

If we continuously discuss and monitor student progress through a multi-measured systematic process over time, then scientifically based interventions will improve student achievement.

SA4: Action Steps:

- We will continue to utilize the SRBI process that will provide teachers with research-based interventions to improve student learning and behaviors.
- We will share common SBAC-styled assessment data, including the data tied to our SLOs.
- We will share common assessment data among PLC and interdisciplinary teams to create lessons with teaching strategies that improve student achievement.
- We will administer, disaggregate, and share new student admissions and annual SBAC data with our teachers.

Strategic Action #5:

Strategic Action 2.1:

If we provide effective integration of technology by teachers in a focused and deliberate manner that aligns with learning outcomes, then students will be motivated to become proficient in the use of technology and become active participants in the learning process through a love of learning.

SA 2.1: Action Steps:

- We will commit to extensive professional development in the area of communication through ParentSquare for all classes, as appropriate.
- We will utilize technology to provide high-quality feedback to students.
- We will plan lessons that incorporate the use of technology by way of the one-to-one Chromebook program in grades 4-8.
- We will ensure that students receive Digital Citizenship curriculum in 6th grade within the Digital Arts curriculum.

Student Learning Objective #1:

Students will be able to demonstrate success on the mathematics and language arts sections of the SBAC.

Action Steps:

SOCIAL STUDIES/HUMANITIES

- Model SBAC problems during classroom instruction
- Improve reading and writing stamina by working through increasingly longer and more complex texts and written responses

- Increase the rigor on written assignments in Honors classes by challenging students to demonstrate a greater depth of knowledge
- Lessons and assignments on concepts that directly align with NCSS and CT Social Studies State Standards
- Provide test taking strategies to students to prepare them for all assessments
- Provide exemplars to demonstrate skills aligned to SBAC format
- Provide timely feedback on writing assignments
- Redesign summative assessments to include Document Based Questions (DBQ's) that align to SBAC format and skills
- Utilize IAB tests to collect data that is correlated to the SBAC
- Revise curriculum to familiarize students with the vocabulary used on the ELA SBAC

SCIENCE

- Model SBAC/NGSS problems as warm-ups and the use of TWPS questioning daily
- Annotate Informational Text and model how to respond to text-dependent questions
- Provide test-taking strategies to students to prepare them for test day
- Redesign summative assessments to align to ELA SBAC format and skills using Pear Assessment
- Utilize IAB tests to collect data that is correlated to the ELA SBAC according to the assessment schedule
- Revise curriculum to match the most frequent topics appearing on NGSS and the ELA standards with the common core of teaching
- Provide effective and timely feedback to honors-level classes.
- Increase rigor of science explanations in honors-level classes.

MATHEMATICS

- Model SBAC problems as “Do Nows” and TWIPS on a daily basis.
- Provide test-taking strategies to students to prepare them for test day.
- Provide exemplars to demonstrate skills aligned to SBAC format.
- Redesign summative assessments to align to SBAC format and skills.
- Utilize IAB tests to collect data that is correlated to the SBAC.
- Provide feedback for Think Write Pair Share (TWPS).
- Provide effective and timely feedback to honors-level classes.
- Increase rigor of mathematical explanations in honors-level classes.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- Model SBAC problems as warm-ups and the use of TWPS questioning daily
- Annotate Informational Text and model how to respond to text dependent questions
- Annotate and interpret literature and how to respond to text dependent questions
- Provide and model test taking strategies to students to prepare them for test day
- Redesign summative assessments to align to LA SBAC format and skills using Pear Assessment
- Utilize IAB tests to collect data that is correlated to the LA SBAC according to the assessment schedule
- Revise curriculum to match the most frequent topics appearing on NGSS and the LA standards with the common core of teaching
- Provide exemplars to demonstrate skills aligned to SBAC format.
- Think Write Pair Share (TWPS)
- Half hour a week of explicit test-taking strategy instruction.

- Push honor students in their writing and thinking
- Give effective and immediate writing feedback

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- We will monitor students' understanding of vocabulary through class discussion, questions, and writing.
- We will provide opportunities for students to practice vocabulary usage through conversation and 1:1 student/teacher.
- We will provide explicit, evidence-based vocabulary-building activities.
- We will check in with students and reteach content as necessary to ensure understanding.
- We will use “Do Nows” and TWPS to build knowledge and increase writing, speaking, and listening across content.
- We will pre-teach and re-teach classroom lessons.
- We will scaffold lessons for students in cotaught classes to reach SBAC quality goals.
- We will provide explicit teaching in small groups and individually
- We will provide differentiation instruction and materials related to content.
- We will provide structured literacy instruction with multi-sensory approaches to enhance learning
- We will provide classroom-based technology to elevate learning.
- Model AimsWeb problems to prepare students for standardized summative assessments
- Provide ongoing test-taking strategies to students with intentional practice of SBAC accommodations, such as listening and understanding test items being read aloud, utilizing text to speech, and other accommodations
- Redesign summative assessments to align to AimsWeb format and skills using Pear Assessment
- Utilize IAB tests to collect data that is correlated to the AimsWeb according to the assessment schedule
- Monitor student understanding of vocabulary through class discussion, questions, and writing.
- Scaffold lessons for students in cotaught classes to reach AimsWeb quality goals.
- Provide explicit teaching in small groups or with an individual student to ensure understanding and learning

School Goal One: Indicators of Academic Growth and Development

- ☐ All students will increase their SBAC scores on the SBAC Mathematics and Language Arts sections, maintain level 4, or move up one level based upon September 2025 data and previous SBAC data according to the success matrix.
- ☐ We will maintain an Accountability Index score of 72.5 (SY 2023-2025)

School Goal Two:

To ensure that all graduates are high school ready upon graduation.

ISAAC adopted its Vision of the Graduate in reference to the skills and competencies that all students need in preparation for any high school that they attend. The future success of our graduates will be contributed to the new academic and social-emotional curriculum at ISAAC. The three-year advisory program includes input directly from the mental health team comprised of our two social workers and our school counselor. Throughout a student's three years at ISAAC, each counselor ensures that the student and their family are thinking, researching, and planning for secondary education that meets the needs of the student academically, emotionally, and financially. As each class leaves ISAAC to their high school of choice, our ultimate goal is to ensure that they are prepared for the challenges of secondary pursuits.

Strategic Action #1:

Strategic Action 3.2:

If we deepen partnerships with community, business, and education leaders in the field of academics, arts, and communications, then students will benefit from a multitude of unique opportunities, and our teachers will gain the skills and knowledge necessary to prepare students for high school and beyond.

SA 3.2: Action Steps:

- We will meet with leaders from local high schools and higher education institutions to gain insight and ideas for providing expert instruction and high school preparation for our students.
- We will partner with leaders in the fields of arts and communications to enhance the curriculum and experiences for teachers and students.
- We will develop innovative programs in collaboration with post-secondary institutions and/or local community leaders in many fields, including arts and communications.
- We will interface with local political leaders for the promotion, support, and funding of ISAAC and charter education in Connecticut.

Student Learning Objective #3:

Students will transition to a regional high school and be on track to graduate.

Action Steps:

- We will promote the area choice schools to allow students and families to choose from various options for high school.
- We will help students through the application process and keep parents updated.
- We will schedule high schools to present to students during their advisory blocks.
- We will provide high level honors classes to academically prepare students.
- We will provide high quality elective programming for diverse interests.
- We will provide students with surveys to provide future graduating ISAAC students with high school options

School Goal Two: Indicators of Academic Growth and Development

- ☐ 100% of ISAAC will graduate in June 2026 and have a plan for secondary education.
- ☐ 94% of students will be on track to graduate as determined by the Accountability Index (SY 2023-2024)

District Goal 2: Safe and Nurturing Environment

Students learn best when teachers and students create an emotionally safe environment built upon clear expectations, which promote respectful and inclusive interactions, recognition of effort, opportunity for self-regulation, and the development of positive relationships.



School Goal Three:

To provide a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment that supports the personal, academic, and middle school goals of every student.

School Goal Four:

To ensure that the school and its parents have a collective understanding of a student's success through a system of periodic and reactive communication.

School Goal Five:

To establish clear school-wide expectations, classroom to classroom, that are known, understood, and respected by students, teachers, and families

Our Core Values and Beliefs About Learning begin with the following statement: ISAAC is a safe, nurturing, and diverse middle school. ISAAC will be using an anonymous survey to measure the degree of our collective efforts to maintain a positive learning environment based on positive survey results, scoring above the 85% mark in all categories within the safe school climate category. We feel it is essential for these results to be positive in order to achieve success for all who work, learn, and grow at ISAAC.

Based on parent feedback from our stakeholders, PowerSchool accuracy, communication from advisory teachers, and teacher efficiency in recording homework and assignments on PowerSchool are the topics that were presented.

Strategic Action #1:

If we develop a school climate and culture where every student, parent, and teacher feels safe, valued, respected, and informed, then all stakeholders will share in the partnership of meeting students' academic and social needs towards becoming active and responsible citizens.

SA1: Action Steps:

- We will continue to foster opportunities to communicate ideas and/or concerns for the betterment of the school culture and climate through the monthly Principal Advisory Committee (PAC) and ISAAC Wellness Committee meetings.
- We will continue the Safe School Climate Committee that meets with ISAAC teachers, students, parents and administration to ensure a safe culture and climate for all people who work and learn at ISAAC.
- We will connect and establish strong relationships between our students and teachers through the advisory model and with all our students' families by periodically speaking with them throughout the school year.
- We will continue to communicate important highlights and upcoming events with our students, parents, and the community through Parent Square, the weekly *ISAAC Family* newsletter, and social media.
- We will continue to provide cultural awareness through professional development opportunities.

- We will continue to seek feedback from the parents, teachers, and students and use the data retrieved to adjust school environment practices, procedures, and policies as needed.
- We will deepen our partnership with the New London Police Department.
- We will provide informational sessions to parents on topics such as ParentSquare, PowerSchool, Google Classroom, understanding the legal process of special education and emotional wellness of your child.

Strategic Action #2:

If we use the advisory model to foster and establish shared belief among all stakeholders that “**all students can succeed**” then we will increase student efforts towards achievement and responsibility for their own personal, academic, and career goals.

SA 1.2: Action Steps:

- We will continue to promote and discuss among all stakeholders the concepts of grit (Angela Duckworth), hard work leads to success, growth mindset (Carol Dweck), and Accountable Talk (University of Pittsburgh’s Institute of Learning).
- We will continue to foster a shared belief that “all students can succeed with hard work and grit” through faculty-focused conversations related to effort-based success of ourselves and our students.
- We will continue to lead students in growth mindset, grit, self-efficacy, and goal orientation through advisory experiences.
- We will continue to utilize the Advisory program to work with students, setting goals by developing Goal Setting Plans and conferencing one-on-one with students during advisory week.
- We will develop and provide professional development that is focused on “The Year of Rigor” that focuses on the high-leverage practices of writing to learn and effective feedback.

Strategic Action #3:

Strategic Action 3.1:

If we increase the communication of the strengths of ISAAC and celebrate the successes throughout the school year in different modes of communication, then students, parents, staff, and the community will voice their *ISAAC Pride* to promote ISAAC as one of the premier middle schools to attend in southeastern Connecticut.

SA 3.1: Action Steps:

- We will communicate important highlights and upcoming events to our students, parents, and the community through weekly emailed newsletters, ParentSquare messages and by utilizing social media.
- We will seek feedback from parents, students, and teachers and use the retrieved data to adjust school environment practices, procedures, and policies, as needed.
- We will provide press releases for positive events and celebrations at ISAAC.

School Goal Three Action Steps by Department:

Maintain and enhance a respectful, positive, safe learning environment for all students at ISAAC.

SOCIAL STUDIES/HUMANITIES

- We will use Accountable Talk in class discussions
- We will model and recognize respectful behavior

- We will develop and maintain a respectful classroom environment for everyone to feel accepted
- We will greet each student by name as they enter the classroom
- We will promote the use and timely/accurate grades in the PowerSchool gradebook
- We will promote the use of Google Classroom and actively posting all assignments on there for in person students as well as those who are absent

SCIENCE

- We will use of Accountable Talk in class discussions
- We will make advisory phone calls and Goal Setting Meetings
- We will promote the use and timely/accurate grades in the PowerSchool gradebook
- We will promote the use of Google classroom and actively posting all assignments on there for in person students as well as those who are absent
- We will create a plan with students who are falling behind of how to make up the assignments as well as how to continue to be successful in class
- We will create and maintain positive relationships with students to feel comfortable and supported
- We will clearly state and reinforce expectations
- We will model and recognize respectful behavior
- We will monitor and assist with positive hallway behavior
- We will develop and maintain a respectful classroom environment for everyone to feel accepted
- We will greet each student by name as they enter the classroom
- We will request and respond to student feedback during and at the end of units
- We will incorporate the ISAAC Core Values into class discussions
- We will provide effective and timely feedback to all regular and honors-level classes.
- We will increase the rigor of science explanations using CERs in honors-level classes.

MATHEMATICS

- We will use of Accountable Talk in class discussions
- We will have advisory Goal Setting Meetings
- We will have timely/accurate grades in the PowerSchool gradebook
- We will promote the use of Google Classroom and actively posting all assignments on there for in person students as well as those who are absent
- We will create a plan with students who are falling behind of how to make up the assignments as well as how to continue to be successful in class
- We will create and maintain positive relationships with students to feel comfortable and supported
- We will clearly state and reinforce expectations
- We will model and recognize respectful behavior
- We will monitor and assist with positive hallway behavior
- We will develop and maintain a respectful classroom environment for everyone to feel accepted
- We will greet each student by name as they enter the classroom
- We will request and response to student feedback during and at the end of units
- We will incorporate the ISAAC Core Values into class discussions
- We will provide effective and timely feedback to honors-level classes.
- We will increase the rigor of mathematical explanations in honors-level classes.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- We will use of Accountable Talk in class discussions
- We will make advisory phone calls and hold Advisory Goal Setting Meetings
- We will promote the use and timely/accurate grades in the PowerSchool gradebook
- We will promote the use of Google Classroom and actively posting all assignments on there for in person students as well as those who are absent
- We will create a plan with students who are falling behind of how to make up the assignments as well as how to continue to be successful in class
- We will create and maintain positive relationships with students to feel comfortable and supported
- We will clearly state and reinforce expectations
- We will model and recognize respectful behavior
- We will monitor and assist with positive hallway behavior
- We will develop and maintain a respectful classroom environment for everyone to feel accepted
- We will greet each student by name as they enter the classroom
- We will request and respond to student feedback during and at the end of units
- We will incorporate the ISAAC Core Values into class discussions

BILINGUAL

- We will use Accountable Talk in class discussions
- We will promote of the use and timely/accurate grades in the PowerSchool gradebook
- We will provide and communicate with students and parents structure, routines, and clear expectations for student behavior and performance in class.
- We will ensure all students are always treated with respect in and out of the classroom by every member of our school community.
- We will create a safe environment in our classrooms and check in with students regularly.
- We will develop a strong rapport with every student in our classes and advisory so that students feel safe talking to us.
- We will report any behavior that may be construed as bullying to administration so it can be dealt with appropriately.
- We will provide specific praise, accountable talk moves and constructive feedback to support and encourage all learners.
- We will encourage students to speak up when they feel unsafe in school.
- We will develop and maintain a respectful classroom environment through rigorous attention to accountable talk norms,
- We will request and respond to student feedback during and at the end of units.
- We will incorporate the ISAAC Core Values into class discussions.
- We will discuss and remind students of ISAAC Family Values posted in each classroom

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- We will use of Accountable Talk in class discussions to increase students' understanding of academic language
- We will use phone calls quarterly and Goal Setting Meetings
- We will promote of the use and timely/accurate grades in the PowerSchool gradebook

- We will promote the use of Google Classroom and actively posting all assignments on there for in person students as well as those who are absent
- We will create a plan with students who are falling behind of how to make up the assignments as well as how to continue to be successful in class
- We will create and maintain positive relationships with students to feel comfortable and supported
- We will clearly state and reinforce expectations
- We will model and recognize respectful behavior
- We will monitor and assist with positive hallway behavior
- We will develop and maintain a respectful classroom environment for everyone to feel accepted
- We will greet each student by and me as they enter the classroom
- We will request and response to student feedback during and at the end of units
- We will incorporate the ISAAC Core Values into class discussions
- We will discuss and remind students of ISAAC Family Values posted in each classroom

School Goal Four Action Steps by Department:

Increase the communication between faculty/teachers and parents.

SOCIAL STUDIES/HUMANITIES

- We will update Power School at a minimum weekly.
- We will post homework assignments daily.
- We will accurately input grades in Power School.
- We will email weekly, summaries to parents in English and Spanish
- We will make parent advisory phone calls quarterly (documented)
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind, failing, or missing assignments in your class
- We will create a plan with parents for students falling behind and how they can continue to be successful in the classroom.

SCIENCE

- We will update Power School at a minimum weekly.
- We will post homework assignments daily.
- We will accurately input grades in Power School.
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind, failing, or missing assignments in your class.
- We will create a plan with parents for students falling behind and how they can continue to be successful in the classroom

MATHEMATICS

- We will update PowerSchool at a minimum weekly.
- We will post homework assignments daily.
- We will accurately input grades in Power School.
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind, failing, or missing assignments in your class
- We will create a plan with parents for students falling behind and how they can continue to be successful in the classroom.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- We will update Power School at a minimum weekly.
- We will send weekly email summaries to parents in English and Spanish
- We will accurately input grades in Power School.
- We will make parent advisory phone calls quarterly (documented)
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind, failing, or missing assignments in your class
- We will create a plan with parents for students falling behind and how they can continue to be successful in the classroom.
- We will post homework assignments daily

BILINGUAL

- We will send out by-weekly newsletter to parents in English and Spanish
- We will accurately input grades in PowerSchool
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind, failing, or missing assignments
- We will update Power School at a minimum bi-weekly.
- We will contact parents with positive reports, successes, or affirmation.
- We will reply to parent emails or calls in a timely fashion.
- We will promote parent involvement by planning monthly meetings and trainings in Spanish and English
- We will celebrate student success on the LAS Links Assessment for those who exit from bilingual supports

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- Reach out to parents proactively and reactively when issues arise – social/emotional issues, SRBI identified, parents of Advisory students, IEP Counseling students.
- Provide referrals to SBHC or outpatient setting when requested/needed for behavioral health.
- Regular communication with parents of students on counseling caseload and 504 students.
- Communicate with Spanish speaking parents when language is a barrier.
- Participate in home visits when necessary to address basic needs, social/emotional needs, or increase school engagement.
- Engage parents through High School Transition Night to prepare parents and families for the transition to high school
- Engage parents in collaborative discussions to increase student success through modifying or adopting accommodations through a Section 504 Plan

SPECIAL EDUCATION

- We will update Power School grading at a minimum weekly.
- We will post homework assignments daily.
- We will accurately input grades in Power School.
- We will contact parents to discuss progress on IEP goals
- We will contact parents to discuss initial/triennial evaluations and proposed goals/objectives
- We will contact parents when their child begins to fall behind, failing, or missing assignments.
- We will contact parents when their child is experiencing success.
- We will contact caseload parents quarterly, or as needed.
- We will keep up to date Parent Contact Tracking Google Form.

School Goal Five Action Steps:

Decrease the number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions

- We will revise the Parent-Student Handbook that details the school rules and policies.
- We will ensure that school policies and rules are consistent from classroom to classroom.
- We collaborate with families regarding possible disciplinary actions.
- We will ensure our staff understands the policies and rules by thoroughly going through the Parent-Student Handbook at the beginning of the school year with added reminders throughout the year.
- We will continue to train our teachers and administrators about racial bias associated with school discipline.
- We will ensure our teachers and administrators are trained in de-escalation strategies.
- We will reach out to families when a student does something positive to build a good rapport from the beginning of sixth-grade year until they graduate and beyond.
- We will implement a school-wide social-emotional Advisory Program.
- We will continue to provide cultural competency training to staff and students periodically.
- We will provide opportunities to engage parents in the school community through multiple methods
- We will utilize Restorative Practices as a tool to support students and staff.
- We will provide bi-weekly disciplinary updates to the administrative team.
- We will continue to eliminate any disproportionality around Black students getting suspended at higher rates than their peers.
- We will ensure that all school safety and security initiatives are reviewed and revised periodically.
- We will provide the staff with opportunities for culture and climate feedback through various committees.

School Goal Three, Four, and Five: Indicators of Growth and Development as a School

- ☐ Maintain each of the identified areas in the Parent Survey above 85% satisfactory
- ☐ Maintain each of the identified areas in the Student Survey above 85% satisfactory
- ☐ ISAAC will have an end-of-year suspension rate below 5.1% (SY 2025-2026)

District Goal 3: Professional Development & Evaluation

Students learn best when their teachers have the tools, skills, and knowledge to provide data-driven instruction that is authentic, interactive, motivating, and leads to the application of knowledge and skills.



School Goal Six:

To collaborate within ISAAC and outside of ISAAC with available resources that enhance the rigor and relevance of our instruction through professional learning communities.

Author Dale Dauten wrote “Great employees don’t have jobs, they have talents.” ISAAC is committed to become the “best place for the best teachers.” Through the lens of student data and through teacher collaboration in a SRBI Team/Professional Development Advisory Committee, we will identify areas of need including Academically Productive Talk/Accountable Talk, mindset, grit and rigor, technology in the classroom, SBAC instructional strategies, special education, diversity amongst of our students and the community, formative assessment creation and calibration, and data driven planning and instruction.

Our Professional Development Committee has identified seven major areas:

- Team Building and retention of staff
- Academically Productive Talk and the use of Accountable Talk school-wide,
- Writing to Learn, through the daily use of Think, Write, Pair, Share,
- Developing Personalized Learning through Differentiation and Instructional Strategies,
 - Classroom Environment (mindset and grit)
 - Individualized Rigor for All Students
 - Technology in the Classroom
 - Researched-based Instructional Strategies
 - Data Driven Planning and Instruction
 - Modifications and Accommodations for our Diverse Student Body
- SBAC: *Understanding and Familiarity, Tracking for Success*
- Unconscious Bias and Diversity Training
- Social Emotional Learning

In the most recent renewal of our charter renewal from the State Department of Education, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) standardized assessment was identified as an area of concern for whole school ELA and mathematics. Annually, the SBAC test measures all students and schools in Connecticut. Our professional development will dive into the specifics to the SBAC test and the understanding of how students will be assessed. Further curricula changes may occur with more familiarity.

Our restructuring of the academic and instructional model at ISAAC will be grounded in the opportunities for educators to collaborate and learn from one another. Weekly professional development will exist within the PLC Model. As teachers reflect throughout the year within their professional learning communities and their interdisciplinary teams, our professional development will support the individual and school growth within each of the areas listed within the PLC Model. Furthermore, the teachers will begin to share instructional practices and their expertise with one another through professional development opportunities.

Strategic Action #1:

If we create regular, structured, collaborative opportunities for teachers to meet weekly in content-specific Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams with a focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, then they will use assessment data to improve their instructional strategies and student achievement will improve.

SA 1.1: Action Steps:

- We will continue to provide extensive professional development in the area of PLCs, curriculum development, and assessment development and results.
- We will commit one block period per week to PLC time.
- We will establish and practice a structure for peer observation through Learning Walks within PLCs each month.
- We will revise the curriculum throughout the school year based upon support from administration and feedback from the PLC teams, parents, and students.
- We will continue to implement rigorous, authentic unit tasks that allow students to utilize the skills and knowledge gained in the classroom and beyond.
- We will meet in PLCs to discuss lesson planning (what we want each student to learn) and student performance through assessment results (how do we know and respond).
- We will use common formative assessments in the areas identified through ISAAC's Vision of the Graduate, as part of our regular practice and use the results to make purposeful, effective instructional choices that will appropriately challenge each student.

Strategic Action #2:

If we continuously discuss and monitor student progress through a multi-measured systematic process over time, then scientifically-based interventions will improve student achievement.

SA4: Action Steps:

- We will continue to utilize an SRBI process that will provide teachers with research-based interventions to improve student learning and behaviors.
- We will share school-wide common SBAC-styled assessment data, including the data tied to our SLOs.
- We will share common assessment data among PLC and interdisciplinary teams to create lessons with teaching strategies that improve student achievement.
- We will administer, disaggregate, and share 6th grade admissions and annual SBAC data with our teachers.

Strategic Action #3:

If we incorporate Accountable Talk within our culture and motivate students to listen, respond critically to their teacher and peers, and defend their positions with evidence, then students will intentionally think at a higher level and improve academic achievement.

SA 1.3: Action Steps:

- We will provide professional development on Academically Productive Talk that incorporates Accountable Talk.
- We will utilize PLC time to implement the Learning Walk model to observe and promote professional and respectful discourse that will improve our instructional strategies in the area of Academically Productive Talk (Learning Walks 2.0).
- We will showcase and share exemplary lessons that promote the practice of Accountable Talk.

- We will all create and practice the norms and skills of Academically Productive Talk in our classrooms and professional discourse.

Action Steps

- We will continue to seek feedback from the parents, teachers, and students and use the data retrieved to adjust school environment practices, procedures, and policies as needed.
- We will create opportunities for the staff to build rapport with one another.
- We will read, discuss, and incorporate research-based instructional strategies.
- We will embed SBAC strategies into our curricula and lessons.

School Goal Six: Evidence of Progress

- ☐ Scheduled trainings and professional development with inside and outside sources throughout the school year along with continued department and interdisciplinary PLC time before, during and after-school.

1. School Improvement
 - SIPP Goal Development and Accountability through Evaluations of School Leaders
 - Survey twice each school year
2. Personalized Learning through Differentiation and Instructional Strategies
 - Stanford Calibration Method, November 2020 & March 2020, August 2021, November 2021, March 2022
 - Academically Productive Talk/Accountable Talk – August 2020, November 2020 & March 2020, August 2021, November 2021, March 2022, June 2022, August 2022, November 2022, March 2023, June 2023, June 2024, November 2024, March 2025, June 2025
 - Writing to Learn – June 2022, November 2022, March 2023, June 2023, November 2023, March 2024, June 2024, November 2024, March 2025, June 2025, November 2025, March 2026, June 2026
 - Effective Feedback – June 2024, August 2024, November 2024, March 2025, June 2025, November 2025, March 2026, June 2026, November 2026, March 2027, June 2027
 - Technology in our Classrooms – August 2020
 - Assessment Design – Monthly in PLC Time in 2020-2022
 - Weekly Interdisciplinary PLC & Departmental PLC
 1. Learning Walks, Educational Research Review and Discussion, Unit Sharing
 2. Learning Walks, Curriculum, Assessment/SLO Data, Stanford Calibration

School Goal Seven:

To support and grow our certified staffing in all domains as prescribed through the evaluation process through effective feedback, accountability, and supervision.

Strategic Action #1:

If we provide positive and constructive feedback to teachers on their practice to create a safe learning environment that is designed to engage and motivate all students based on best practices, then teacher performance will continuously improve and students will develop a love of learning that is evident through positive actions and academic outcomes.

Action Steps

- We will continue to provide professional development on identifying the foundational skills and competency standards from the ISAAC Leader and Educator Evaluation and Support Plan.
- We will continue to provide formal and informal feedback according to ISAAC Educator Evaluation and Support Plan.
- We will meet regularly to review student learning outcome progress throughout the school year and if necessary, revise at mid-year goal meetings.
- We will assist teachers in the implementation of a data assessment tracker to ensure that students are working toward SBAC style assessments.
- We will provide formative reviews conducted to assess progress to date toward mutually agreed upon performance goals.
- We will ensure that the monthly calendar is reflective of the written curriculum and is followed with fidelity in the classroom.
- We will display the professionalism and ethical behavior in the same manner that is expected of teachers and staff.
- We will promote the passion for professional improvement by sharing best practices and learned skills with the faculty and staff.

School Goal Seven: Evidence of Progress

- ☐ Scheduled trainings and professional development with inside and outside sources throughout the school year along with continued department and interdisciplinary PLC time before, during and after-school.

Overall Summary of Data

As presented in the data, the Interdistrict School for Arts and Communication has experienced low levels of performance on the SBAC for the past few years. Most recently in 2018-19, ISAAC was ranked last amongst all Connecticut schools on the 8th grade mathematics section of the SBAC. These results were instrumental in the decision to put ISAAC on warning for four areas academically: English Language Arts for all grades combined, Mathematics for all grades combined, Mathematics for 7th grade, and Mathematics for 8th grade. In addition, ISAAC was put on notice for high suspension data for which an action plan was created to support the work needed to improve all areas.

In 2020, the ISAAC Board of Directors hired a new Executive Director charged with developing a system for teaching and learning that would support the school's Core Values and Beliefs about Learning that ensured that all students can succeed through hard work and grit and that ISAAC would become a premier middle school.

Choice schools know that the makeup of classes will dictate the scores for the SBAC from year to year. Although schools can raise student scores, it is still a challenge to ensure all students are meeting the state goal when they have experienced a variety of curriculums and school environments from a variety of different sending schools/districts. The English Language Arts and Mathematics departments will utilize their common PLC time to analyze SBAC data and design lesson plans that include SBAC practice starting their 4th grade year. Further research will help us predict student SBAC scores and target students for interventions.

The strength of ISAAC is its school culture and climate. The school's cornerstone is its advisory program which allows each student to partner with the same group of students and teacher for 3 years at ISAAC, starting in 6th grade. Within these advisories, topics such as: bullying, teen dating violence, teen suicide, school and personal goals, grit, mindset, high school choice, and team building are discussed and embraced. Additionally, ISAAC is a No Place for Hate School certified by ADL. Students, teachers, parents, and community stakeholders have an influence and input on our advisory curriculum. The advisory becomes the student's "family" in the school by assisting with developing relationships, problem solving, celebrations of life events and sharing in challenges. The advisor is the student's primary advocate in the school and the initial home-school contact. There are a number of committees and groups in our school community that play a critical role in our school culture and climate. The administration team is a group of school leaders that meet weekly with the Executive Director to address current and upcoming events, curricular decision making, review of data, and other topics that ensure the success of ISAAC. If there are specific policies that welcome review and evaluation, the School Improvement Team is the parent conduit to address them.

The data from the student, parent, and teacher surveys support the efforts of providing a safe, respectful, and nurturing learning environment as written in our core values and belief statement. Parents, teachers, and students are members of the Safe School Climate Committee and School Safety Committee which provides ISAAC with a constant examination of its practices and its effects on the safety, culture, and climate. The New London Police Department provides ISAAC with unwavering support and service in all areas of safety and resources. Our goal this school year is to increase participation in the Parent Teacher Organization and increase our connections with local education, political, and community leaders. By accomplishing this task, we will ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the student's journey towards becoming lifelong learners, a core value and belief of ISAAC.