



2025-2026 Phase Two: The Needs Assessment for Schools_10152025_13:40

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Middlesboro Middle School
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Understanding Continuous Improvement: The Needs Assessment for Schools

The Needs Assessment Diagnostic will facilitate the use of multiple sources of data to determine the current reality and establish a foundation for decision-making around school goals and strategies. Once completed, the diagnostic will lead to priorities to be addressed in the comprehensive school improvement plan to build staff capacity and increase student achievement. The needs assessment is to be conducted annually as an essential part of the continuous improvement process and precedes the development of strategic goals (i.e. desired state).

While the focus of continuous improvement is student performance, the work must be guided by the aspects of teaching and learning that affect performance. An effective improvement process should address the contributing factors creating the learning environment (inputs) and the performance data (outcomes).

The needs assessment provides the framework for all schools to clearly and honestly identify their most critical areas for improvement that they will address later in the planning process through the development of goals, objectives, strategies and activities. 703 KAR 2:225 requires, as part of continuous improvement planning for schools, each school to complete the needs assessment between October 1 and November 1 of each year and include: (1) a description of the data reviewed and the process used to develop the needs assessment; (2) a review of the previous plan and its implementation to inform development of the new plan; and, (3) perception data gathered from the administration of a valid and reliable measure of teaching and learning conditions.

Protocol

1. Clearly detail the process used to determine the priorities of this year's needs assessment. Include the following information in your response:

- names of school council members, leadership teams and stakeholder groups (i.e., Family Resource Youth Service Centers, community partners such as civic and business organizations, etc.) involved in the process
- a timeline of the process
- the specific data reviewed and analyzed
- how and where the meetings were documented.

Middlesboro Middle School utilizes data from multiple sources to identify the needs of the students and staff. During both grade level and content area PLC meetings, teachers, the school principal (Erica Arnette), Assistant Principal (Aaron Sowders), and curriculum coaches (Charity Hayes and Brandy King), along with the district Instructional Supervisor (Carlena Carter) and Chief Academic Officer (Jamie Johnson) review and analyze assessment and attendance data continuously. In addition the Attendance Team (Holly Vanover - teacher, Jessica Heck - YSC Director, Allison Hamlin - PTO president, Sandy Evans - teacher, Theresa Allen - guidance counsellor, and Jenna Voges - PRI Full Service Community and Schools Coordinator) reviews the academic and behavioral data for students who are chronically absent

and works to establish relationships with those students. All of this data is shared with and reviewed by the school SBDM council (Jared Akers - parent, Allen Cornelius - teacher, Crystal Cox - teacher, Robert Patterson - parent, and Holly Vanover - teacher). The review of data is documented in the agendas for PLC meetings, SBDM meetings, and Attendance Team meetings. Data is stored in shared google drives and spreadsheets for continual access by all stakeholders. Initial placement in Rtl groups is determined by the previous school year's data. Fall benchmark assessments (STAR Reading and Math, PEAR assessments, and Study Island Diagnostic Assessments) are given within the first month of school. These results are used to reorganize Rtl groups as needed and to plan individualized skill plans for student using IXL. As KSA data is released, unit assessments are given, and winter and spring benchmark assessments are given, data is updated and analyzed to identify patterns, successes, and continued needs.

Review of Previous Plan

2. Summarize the implementation of the goals, objectives, strategies and activities from the previous year's comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP). What was successful? How will your results inform this year's plan?

The first two goals, objectives, strategies, and activities of the previous CSIP centered on curriculum review and data analysis. In support of this, teachers created curriculum maps and pacing guides in a shared drive. This helped to ensure that all standards were being taught within each core area. Supplemental support programs such as IXL and Study Island were used to help provide students with personalized intervention. Data from benchmark assessments and analytics from the supplemental programs were used to measure student progress. In further support of academic goals, several teachers at MMS earned their STEM certification and MMS became a STEM certified school through the National Institute for STEM Certification. The goal for Achievement Gap was to reduce the percent of economically disadvantaged students scoring Novice. The comparison of fall to spring STAR test scores in both math and reading show a decrease in the percentage of students scoring Novice at every grade level. To further promote these goals, HQIR materials have been purchased and are being implemented for every content area. Teachers are now adding unit and lesson plans to the curriculum maps and pacing guides from the previous school year. In addition, to the benchmark assessments from STAR for math and reading, benchmark assessments for science and social studies have also been developed to better monitor the progress of students in these areas. A reading and writing consultant has also been hired to assist teachers with the implementation of a stronger writing program. Between each benchmark assessment, unit assessments are also being analyzed for student performance. Multiple parent and family engagement events have also been planned to focus on enabling families to help students reach proficiency. Goal 4 was to increase the rating of school climate and safety. The metal detectors mentioned in the CSIP have been installed and are being used daily. The school resource officer is visible throughout the school and interacts with students. We are further striving to increase climate and safety through a relationship building network between teachers and students and families.

Trends

3. After analyzing data trends from the previous two academic years, which academic, cultural and behavioral measures remain significant areas for improvement?

Example of Trends

- Behavior remains an area for improvement, as referrals have increased in the last two years from 204 in 2023-2024 to 288 in 2024-2025.
- Reading for students in our gap groups remains an area for improvement because the district saw an 11% increase in novice scores in reading among students with achievement gaps from 2024-2025.

Though overall scores on the KSA rose from 2024 to 2025, the percentage of students scoring Novice in both math and reading continue to be areas in need of improvement. The 2024 KSA showed 30% Novice in reading and 38% Novice in math; the 2025 KSA shows 26% Novice in reading and 42% Novice in math. Two complete cycles of KSA testing from fifth through 8th grades show the percent of students scoring Novice in both reading and math decreasing significantly from fifth grade to sixth grade, decreasing again slightly from sixth grade to seventh grade, but increasing from seventh grade to eighth grade. This is an area of concern.

Science and social studies scores are also an area of concern. the 2024 KSA showed 46% of student scoring Novice in Social studies and 31% Novice in science; the 2025 KSA shows 48% Novice in social studies and 25% Novice in science.

Though the Combined Writing scores for eighth grade showed a decrease in Novice from 18% to 5% over the last two assessment years, the fifth grade remains constant at 54% Novice. The result is a schoolwide percentage of 37% Novice on the 2024 KSA and 34% Novice on the 2025 KSA.

STAR assessment data from 2024-2025 shows a steady decrease in students scoring Novice in both math and reading from the fall to the winter to the spring assessment. However, the eighth grade math scores show an increase in Novice from fall to winter with a slight decrease from winter to spring - the percent of Novice in spring slightly higher than the fall. The fall 2025 STAR assessment data shows similar percentages of NAPD to the 2025 KSA. 2025 STAR data further shows that 26% of fifth graders, 34% of sixth graders, 41% of seventh graders, and 27% of eighth graders are scoring two or more years behind grade level in reading.

Likewise, 20% of fifth graders, 32% of sixth graders, 44% of seventh graders and 54% of eighth graders are scoring two or more years behind in math.

Attendance data shows that in 2024-2025 Middlesboro Middle School had 40.76% of students chronically absent.

Current State of Academics and Climate and Culture

4. Describe in narrative form the current academic state of the school using precise numbers and percentages as revealed by multiple sources of your most recent outcome data. Cite the source of data used. Consider the following data sources:

- Kentucky Summative Assessments
- Benchmark assessments

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- Formative assessments
 - Graduation rate
 - Progress in achieving English language proficiency
 - Student access to high quality instructional resources, advanced placement courses, dual credit courses, career and technical education courses, before/after school and summer programs, preschool, full day kindergarten

Example of Current Academic Narratives:

- Thirty-four percent (34%) of students in the achievement gap scored proficient on Kentucky Summative Assessment (KSA) in reading. Local benchmark data indicates that 32% of all students receive Tier II intervention in reading.
- Fifty-four percent (54%) of our students scored proficient in math on the KSA compared to the state average of 57%. Local formative assessments show 53% of students are on grade level in math.

The percent of students scoring Proficient or Distinguished has remained constant over the last two testing years. The 2024 KSA showed 40% P/D in reading, 27% P/D in math, 25% P/D in science, 29% P/D in social studies, and 23% P/D in combined writing. The 2025 KSA shows 40% P/D in reading, 29% P/D in math, 28% P/D in science, 30% P/D in social studies, and 27% P/D in combined writing.

The fall 2025 STAR Assessment shows fifth grade has 39% of students scoring P/D and 38% of students at or above grade level in reading and 19% scoring P/D and 20% scoring at or above grade level in math. In the sixth grade 29% are scoring P/D in reading with 30% at or above grade level in reading and 23% P/D with 32% at or above grade level in math. Seventh grade shows 36% of students scoring P/D in reading with 41% at or above grade level in reading and 32% scoring P/D in math with 33% of students at or above grade level. Finally, eighth grade shows 41% of students scoring P/D in reading with 54% of students at or above grade level in reading and 24% P/D with 32% scoring at or above grade level in math.

High Quality Instructional Resources are now being used in all content areas.

Reading and social studies use SAVVAS materials, math uses Eureka Math, and science uses Amplify Science. All teachers have had training on the implementation of these curricula; are creating curriculum maps, pacing guides, unit plans, and lesson plans; and analyzing unit and benchmark assessment data to monitor student progress.

Through the 21st Century grant and Partners for Rural Impact grant, MMS offers four days a week of after school tutoring. Approximately 25 students participate in after school tutoring with four teachers. MMS also provides a six week summer school that services approximately 30 kids.

Each grade level provides Tier 1 Rtl intervention services to all students through the "Jacket Block" class period. In addition approximately 25 students receive Tier 2 intervention services in math with a math intervention teacher and 15 receive Tier 2

intervention with a tutor from the Hindman Settlement and the Americorp program.

5. Describe in narrative form the current climate and culture conditions of the school using precise numbers and percentages as revealed by multiple sources of your most recent data. Cite the source of data used. Consider the following data sources:

- Educator and school staff retention rates
- High-quality professional learning opportunities
- Chronic absenteeism
- School climate
- Behavior
- Staff and student access to mental healthcare
- Family and community involvement

Example of Current Climate and Culture Narratives:

- Teacher attendance rate was 84% for the 2024-2025 academic year. 2023-2024 Impact survey data shows that 71% of staff feel like they belong at our school.
- Fifty-eight percent (58%) of families participated in a family engagement activity during the 2024-2025 school year.

Middlesboro Middle School has a 95% retention rate among staff. During an intensive two day professional development, Middlesboro U, teachers have the opportunity to participate in activities designed to enhance and develop many areas of teaching and learning. All teachers have received training on utilizing the district chosen HQIRs and participate in bi-monthly PLCs for imbedded professional development on curriculum, assessment, and data analysis.

Middlesboro Middle School is a PBIS school. The emphasis on identifying, recognizing, and rewarding positive behavior has had a positive impact on overall school behavior. An Infinite Campus Behavior Audit shows that the number of behavior incidents resulting in an attendance change (In School Suspension or Out of School Suspension) decreased from 37 events in 2023-2024 to 13 events in 2024-2025. This has also had a positive impact on the school Climate and Safety scores as reported through the KSA survey. The school Climate score rose from 76.2 in 2024 to 78.9 in 2025. Likewise in the same testing cycles the school safety scores increased from 70 to 73.1. Chronic absenteeism has reduced from 40.76% in 2024-2025 to currently 20.1% in 2025-2026.

The mental and emotional health of students and staff is a school priority. In addition to the school guidance counselor, the students have access to a district social worker and district mental health counselor. Middlesboro Middle School also has a Comp Care counselor who operates within the school. The combination of these resources allows students the ability to seek help for a variety of issues related to their mental and emotional health.

Middlesboro Middle School provides opportunities for families and community to partner with the school. According to data from the GEAR Up grant, during parental engagement events in the 2024-2025 school year 55% of families participated in one or more events. Through Partners for Rural Impact, teachers made 112 home visits to at risk students prior to the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.

Through the Youth Service Center, 146 home visits were made during the 2024-2025 school year. Through GEAR Up, Middlesboro Middle School partners with the local community college to offer all seventh and eighth grade students an introduction to the different educational and career opportunities available through their institution. In addition, GEAR Up hosts a career fair for students where 15 local businesses are represented to speak with students.

Strengths

6. Plainly state, using precise numbers and percentages revealed by current data, the strengths of the school.

Example:

- We have active partnerships with twelve community organizations and businesses.
- Eighty-three percent (83%) of certified staff have participated in high-quality professional learning through the Kentucky Reading Academies.

Some of the strengths of Middlesboro Middle School lie in the quality and training of the teachers. 31% of the teachers at MMS have a Bachelor's degree, 42% have a Masters degree, and 28% have an advanced graduate degree - including two teachers with Education Specialist degrees and 2 with Doctorate degrees. Seven of the teachers at MMS are nationally STEM certified through the the National Institute for STEM Education. In addition, 100% of the content area teachers at MMS have had and are having ongoing professional development in the use of HQIRs.

Middlesboro Middle School is a nationally certified STEM school through the National Institute for STEM Education and is a Verizon Innovative Learning School. Through Verizon Innovative Learning, each student at MMS has a personal chromebook equipped Verizon LTE internet. Through a partnership with Verizon and Arizona State University, MMS is in the process of getting a state of the art STEM lab.

Through partnerships with FRYSC, GEAR Up, 21st Century, Partners for Rural Impact, and Innovative Approaches to Literacy grants, MMS has been able to purchase tools, resources, and programs to help increase the academic and social emotional well being of students. These initiatives have funded 112 home visits, parent/family engagement events servicing over 150 families, and guest speakers for students and families. In addition they have provided personnel such Academic Interventionists, Career and College Navigators, Full Service Community Schools Coordinator, and tutors.

The combination of teacher preparation and supports have allowed MMS to have a color ranking change for the 2025 KSA testing cycle. MMS had a combined index of 49 in 2024 with a color ranking of orange; in 2025 the combined index for MMS was

55.8 with a color ranking of yellow. The most impressive gains between these two testing cycles were the decreases in the percentage of students scoring Novice in reading and math as fifth graders in 2024 to sixth graders in 2025. In reading the percent of these scoring Novice reduced from 50% to 30%. In math, the percent of the same students scoring Novice decreased from 64% to 50%.

Culturally, MMS has seen a reduction of discipline referrals requiring In School or Out of School suspension decrease from 46 during the 2023-2024 school year to 13 during the 2024-2025 school year. Chronic absenteeism has reduced from 40.76% in 2024-2025 to currently 20.1% in 2025-2026. In parallel, the school climate and safety survey of the KSA showed an increase in scores from 2024 to 2025 with the school climate score rising from 76.2 to 78.9 and the school safety score increasing from 70 to 73.1.

Leverages/Assets

7. Explain how the district will utilize its strengths and leverages, including community resources and assets (i.e., colleges, community partnerships, businesses, industry, etc.) to improve areas for improvement listed above.

Examples:

- We will coordinate efforts with our community partners to meet the behavior needs of more students.
- We will utilize the knowledge gained from the Kentucky Reading Academies to develop a reading action plan to target students in our achievement gap groups.

We will use the knowledge and insights gained from perpetual data analysis to identify students in need of interventions services. We will utilize the programs and tools available to us to develop individualized plans for those students and will monitor the success of these plans through benchmark assessments. We will leverage the grant resources available to us to provide additional tutorial help, instructional resources, and college/career experiences to promote student success.

We will use a relationship building network to cultivate relationships with students and families to promote both improved attendance and academic success. We will utilize the partnerships with community businesses and members to develop attendance incentives for students who are chronically absent.

Middlesboro Middle School will further utilize the resource of the regional educational cooperative (SESC) and the trainings and cohort groups available to build the capacity of the staff in guiding student achievement.

Evaluate the Teaching and Learning Environment

Consider the processes, practices and conditions evident in the teaching and learning environment as identified in the six Key Core Work Processes outlined below:

KCWP 1: Design and Deploy Standards

KCWP 2: Design and Deliver Instruction

KCWP 3: Design and Deliver Assessment Literacy

KCWP 4: Review, Analyze and Apply Data Results

KCWP 5: Design, Align and Deliver Support Processes

KCWP 6: Establish Learning Environment and Culture

8a. KCWP 1: Design and Deploy Standards

Schools continually assess, review, and revise school curricula to support the assurance that all students have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for future success.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☒ No

☐ Yes

COMMENTS

N/A

8b. KCWP 2: Design and Deliver Instruction

Instructional programs include consistent implementation of evidence-based instructional practices essential for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional competencies that are aligned to Kentucky Academic Standards and current research.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☒ No

☐ Yes

COMMENTS

N/A

8c. KCWP 3: Design and Deliver Assessment Literacy

Schools have a comprehensive, balanced assessment system that provides a variety of evidence to support educational decision making and includes four primary assessment purposes: formative, diagnostic, interim/benchmark, and summative.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☒ No

☐ Yes

COMMENTS

N/A

8d. KCWP 4: Review, Analyze and Apply Data Results

Schools communicate and implement a sustainable system for reviewing, analyzing, and applying data results to ensure a uniform way to elicit, interpret, and act on meaningful evidence of student learning.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☐ No

☒ Yes

COMMENTS

Through PLC meetings and attendance committee meetings, as well as SBDM meetings, data collected from benchmark assessments, unit assessments, and attendance records will be continuously analyzed in order to monitor student progress, make necessary changes in instruction and assessment in the classroom, and to inform the decisions being made about intervention services through the tiers of RtI.

8e. KCWP 5: Design, Align and Deliver Support Processes

Schools establish a framework that organizes systems, data, and practices to promote positive, equitable and inclusive learning experiences for all students.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☐ No

☒ Yes

COMMENTS

Through PLC meetings, unit plans, lesson plans, and unit assessments will be created, reviewed, and stored in a shared drive along with reflections of data gathered from the unit assessments. Data will be disaggregated to analyze the performance of students in GAP groups so that supports necessary for these students may be identified. Further, systems will be put in place to develop relationships with families in hopes of increasing both academic performance and attendance or at risk students.

8f. KCWP 6: Establish Learning Environment and Culture

Schools intentionally design the learning environment to be inclusive and accessible for all students within a culture where learning and continued growth is the primary focus and foundation for all actions.

Will this be a focus? **If yes, describe in the Comments. If no, write N/A.**

☒ **No**

☐ Yes

COMMENTS

N/A

Attachment Summary

Attachment Name	Description	Associated Item(s)
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