Madison Metropolitan School District

Stephens Elementary School

State Report Card: Exceeds Expectations (4 star)

2025-2026 School Improvement Plan

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School Overview

Stephens is a large diverse school of 500 students from five neighborhoods on the west side of Madison led by an experienced and skilled staff and administration dedicated to building a solid community with a strong sense of belonging. We are very proud of our Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) program, whose goal is to develop high achieving bilingual and biliterate students. Our students in the DBE program and our English Language Instruction program learn with and from each other. We are MMSD pioneers in school-wide mindfulness. Stephens staff and students participate in daily practices for self-calming to use in and outside our school. Over the last several years we have added two outdoor classrooms and lessons in our school garden. We are considered a Welcoming School to provide students with texts, lessons and activities that affirm diverse families, address bias-based bullying and offer opportunities to talk about the identities of our students. Since 2021-22 Stephens upgraded its technology and each student has a device. Although our staff professional development has included race and equity for decades, we have intensified and centered around it for the past ten years. Last year we began new reading curricula that are aligned to the science of reading.

Our Strengths:

- Sense of belonging and community building
- Strong seasoned teachers and administration with high quality relationships and good communication
- Positive cultural diversity and cultural celebrations.

During an interview, a 10 year old 4th grade student described what makes Stephens special is: Teachers talk with expression and inspire. They give time on computers sometimes and sometimes not. Kids need both."(They need)... more choice, time and multiple ways to learn and teach kids what they need to know. Our staff aspires to do just that.

Our Progress:

We implemented new science curriculum as well as two different reading curricula in our DBE and English language classrooms. We also were tightly progress monitoring and using our literacy committee to determine what interventions or supports students to strengthen their learning. We began our first Gay/Straight Alliance as well as African American Boys groups. We want to continue to find ways for all to feel they belong.

Area of Continued Growth:

Before covid we had integrated our DBE program more and now we need to relook at ways to do so. In 2023-24 the DBE and ELI classrooms will mix together to go to specials. We are also looking at the measure of safety in common spaces like bathrooms, hallways and at recess because of slightly lower scores by 3rd to 5th graders on the climate survey.

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Goals

Goal 1 Every child is on track to graduate ready for college, career, and community.

Performance Objective 1

By the end of three years, we will have increased our students' literacy proficiency by 10 percentage points as measured by Fastbridge(2)/Forward/ACT.

Evaluation Data Source: FastBridge CBMreading (Grade 2)
Forward ELA (Grades 3-8)
ACT Reading (Grade 11)

Strategy 1

ELA: Staff will regularly collect, analyze and use data to tailor instruction. Microphase Small Group Instruction will be taught explicitly, consistently and sequentially to increase student achievement. This will be supported by regular coaching cycles and team planning.

Strategy 2

DLI-DBE: In Spanish and English, staff will regularly collect, analyze and use data to tailor instruction. Small Group Instruction will be taught explicitly, consistently and sequentially to increase student achievement. This will be supported by regular coaching cycles and team planning.

Strategy 3

All students at some risk or high risk on assessments will receive repeated reading during their core with support teachers and volunteers to ensure practice.

Performance Objective 2

By the end of three years, we will have increased our students' math proficiency by 10 percentage points as measured by Fastbridge(2)/Forward/ACT.

Evaluation Data Source: FastBridge Math (Grade 2)
Forward Math (Grades 3-8)
ACT Math (Grade 11)

Strategy 1

Strategy Teachers [& admin] regularly monitor student data and engage in collaborative data analysis to plan strategies for responding to student needs [within whole group instruction, targeted small group instruction focused on content that is connected to and promotes access

to grade-level curriculum].

Strategy 2

Stephens staff will work on C3 teams to plan math using language protocols, engagement strategies to enhance math and move from less whole group to smaller heterogeneous groups.

Goal 2 The district and every school in it is a place where children, staff, and families thrive.

Performance Objective 1

By the end of three years, we will have increased our students' attendance rate of 90% or higher by 15 percentage points.

Evaluation Data Source: Percent of students with 90% or higher attendance rate.

Strategy 1

Staff are intentionally planning for being an inclusive, welcoming school by deepening their understanding of culture & climate engagement strategies. For example deepening relationships thru using Developmental Designs, Restorative Justice practices and new attendance practices.

Strategy 2

Internalize the importance of attendance for the success of students and create a mutual mindset around our attendance goal, staff will bring the topic into monthly grade level team meetings, promote and celebrate attendance, and discuss how to support individual students as well as families in increasing and maintaining attendance throughout the year.

Goal 3 African American children and youth excel in school.

Performance Objective 1

By the end of three years, we will have increased our African American students' literacy proficiency by 15 percentage points. as measured by Fastbridge(2)/Forward/ACT.

Evaluation Data Source: FastBridge CBMreading (Grade 2)
Forward ELA (Grades 3-8)
ACT Reading (Grade 11)

Strategy 1

Decrease teacher talk by utilizing equity protocols that promote increased student discourse including small groups.

Performance Objective 2

By the end of three years, we will have increased our African American students' math proficiency by 15 percentage points as measured by Fastbridge(2)/Forward/ACT.

Evaluation Data Source: FastBridge Math (Grade 2)
Forward Math (Grades 3-8)
ACT Math (Grade 11)

Strategy 1

Teachers monitor student data disaggregated by focus group and engage in collaborative data analysis in order to accelerate African American students in reading, math and attendance.

Performance Objective 3

By the end of three years, we will have increased our African American students' attendance rate of 90% or higher by 25 percentage points.

Evaluation Data Source: Percent of African American students with 90% or higher attendance rate.

Strategy 1

Staff reach out to families in collaboration with the CARES staff to find out about barriers to attendance and plan supports for improved attendance.