

Northstar Middle School

School Improvement Plan

Annual Update: 2025-26

This school improvement plan meets the requirements of WAC 180-16-220 and WAC 180-105-020.¹

SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Description: Northstar Middle School began in 1981 as one of Lake Washington's first choice schools. Northstar has four full-time teachers and a student body of 90, with 30 students per grade level.

At Northstar, we believe students learn best in a small, caring community where individual talents can be recognized and nurtured, academic growth encouraged, and social development fostered.

Located on the Emerson Campus in the Houghton neighborhood of Kirkland, Northstar emphasizes academic excellence, personal responsibility, and creativity. Experienced teachers work as a team to lead multiage, theme-based classes. We foster the unique aspects of each student and appreciate individual differences. Students are encouraged to connect to people in their community through service learning.

At Northstar, we believe a growth mindset is a critical component of student development. Parents participate by working cooperatively with teachers to sustain a cohesive learning community, provide enriching experiences and promote a love of learning. Students develop positive perceptions of self, school and life that are the foundation for continued success. It is a great place to work and learn.

Northstar students consistently exceed State and District average scores on Smarter Balanced Assessments in Math and Literacy and the WCAS (science assessment). Data from those assessments is overwhelmingly positive, however, there are a small number of students who did not meet proficiency on grade level assessment measures necessitating targeted academic interventions as an aspect of our School Improvement Plan.

Our small size provides both an opportunity and a challenge. Due to our small cohorts of students, assessment data can be easily skewed by single student scores. On the other hand, our small environment allows teachers to get to know each student personally and work as a collaborative team to support individual student needs.

Mission Statement: Each student will graduate prepared to lead a rewarding, responsible life as a contributing member of our community and greater society.

2025-26 PRIORITIES AT A GLANCE

Priority	Priority Area	Focus Grade Level(s) and/or Student Group(s)	Desired Outcome
1	Literacy	Students who are "high risk"	Students will improve their ELA skills moving from high risk" or "low risk" scores

¹ LWSD School Board Approval on <insert date>

		or “some risk” as measured by FastBridge fall assessment data.	to “low risk” or “minimal risk” as measured by FastBridge spring 2026 assessment data.
2	Mathematics	Students who are “high risk” or “some risk” as measured by FastBridge fall assessment data.	Students will improve their Math skills moving from high risk” or “low risk” scores to “low risk” or “minimal risk” as measured by FastBridge spring 2026 assessment data.
3	Social Emotional Learning	All students	Increase in students reporting positive sense of belonging as measured by Spring 2026 Panorama and counselor survey data.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Our target is that all students and student groups are improving, with all gaps closing, each year. The following priorities have been set to guide us in achieving this.

Priority #1		
Priority Area	Literacy	
Focus Grade Level(s) and/or Student Group(s)	Students who are “high risk” or “some risk” as measured by FastBridge fall assessment data.	
Focus Area	Academic achievement	
Desired Outcome	Students will improve their ELA skills moving from high risk” or “low risk” scores to “low risk” or “minimal risk” as measured by FastBridge spring 2026 assessment data.	
Current Data Supporting Focus Area	Fall FastBridge aReading Data: 0 students in the “high risk” range 5 students in the “some risk” range	
Strategy to Address Priority	Action	Measure of Fidelity of Implementation
	Targeted ELA support before school during 2 nd semester	Participation and attendance.
	In-class instructional support in small groups (provided by teacher and IA).	FastBridge MOY and EOY scores. Data tracking for MTSS team.
	Frequent opportunities for students to engage in similar writing practice across content areas.	Teachers collaborate regularly to norm, plan, and evaluate student proficiency in interdisciplinary literacy related skills.
	Small group support during Advisory.	Data tracking for MTSS team.
Strategy to Engage Students, Families, Parents and Community Members	-Conferences for each student twice per year - Conference week classes led by parents and community members -Volunteer opportunities regularly throughout the school year -Northstar Advisory Council (parent organization) monthly meetings including admin and teacher representatives - Student focus groups - Tier 1 SEL support from YES counselor	
Timeline for Focus	Fall, 2025 - Spring, 2026	
Method(s) to Monitor Progress	Classroom based assessments, FastBridge, SBA practice, scores on revised writing assignments, and overall, ELA grades.	

Priority #2		
Priority Area	Mathematics	
Focus Grade Level(s) and/or Student Group(s)	Students who are “high risk” or “some risk” as measured by FastBridge fall assessment data.	
Focus Area	Academic achievement	
Desired Outcome	Students will improve their Math skills moving from high risk” or “low risk” scores to “low risk” or “minimal risk” as measured by FastBridge spring 2026 assessment data.	
Current Data Supporting Focus Area	Fall FastBridge Math Data: 2 students in the “high risk” range 4 students in the “some risk” range Fall FastBridge CBM Math Automaticity Data: 0 students in the “high risk” range 3 students in the “some risk” range	
Strategy to Address Priority	Action	Measure of Fidelity of Implementation
	Targeted math support before school.	Participation and attendance.
	In-class instructional support in small groups (provided by teacher and IA)	FastBridge MOY and EOY score reports and performance indicators. Data tracking for MTSS team.
	Frequent opportunities for students to engage in SBA-like practice during 6 th grade math.	Math teachers collaborate regularly re: norming, planning, and evaluation sessions.
	Parent led extra-curricular math competition club open to all students.	Participation and attendance.
Strategy to Engage Students, Families, Parents and Community Members	-Conferences for each student twice per year - Conference week classes led by parents and community members -Volunteer opportunities regularly throughout the school year -Northstar Advisory Council (parent organization) monthly meetings including admin and teacher representatives - Student focus groups - Tier 1 SEL support from YES counselor	
Timeline for Focus	Fall, 2025 - Spring, 2026	

Method(s) to Monitor Progress	Classroom based assessments, FastBridge, SBA practice, and spring SBA scores.
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Priority #3		
Priority Area	Social Emotional Learning	
Focus Grade Level(s) and/or Student Group(s)	All students at Northstar Middle School	
Focus Area	Sense of belonging among students.	
Desired Outcome	Increase in students reporting positive sense of belonging as measured by Spring 2026 Panorama and counselor survey data.	
Current Data Supporting Focus Area	Sense of Belonging questions and data from Spring 2025 survey: How connected do you feel to the adults at your school? 68% favorable How well do people at your school understand you as a person? 56% favorable Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at your school? 75% favorable How much respect do students in your school show you? 66% favorable	
Strategy to Address Priority	Action All-school engagement with students about meaning and key indicators of “belonging.”	Measure of Fidelity of Implementation Embedded in Support Group (6 th period).
	All-school learning project assignment driven by student interest to learn new content and/or skill.	All students will engage in at least one choice learning project in Support Group.
	All teachers will provide opportunities for student choice in how they show content/skill competency in core content.	Samples of assignments and assessments that allow for some individualization and choice for students.
Strategy to Engage Students, Families, Parents and Community Members	-Conferences for each student twice per year - Conference week classes led by parents and community members -Volunteer opportunities regularly throughout the school year -Northstar Advisory Council (parent organization) monthly meetings including admin and teacher representatives - Student focus groups - Tier 1 SEL support from YES counselor	
Timeline for Focus	Spring, 2025 - Spring, 2026	
Method(s) to Monitor Progress	Survey data, common classroom activities, counselor reports.	

STATE ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that all schools meet at least a 95% participation rate for state assessments for all students as well as each subgroup. Schools that fall below this threshold in any group must include goals and actions the school will take to ensure 95% of students participate.

Strategies the school is using to meet participation requirements include:

- Common language on the importance of state testing is used by all schools in the district.
- Staff receive training on the administration of state assessments, including the use of supports and accommodations to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate learning.
- Make-up testing is provided for students that miss the school's date.
- Test completion lists are monitored by both school testing coordinators and district personnel.
- The district is using the recommended refusal procedures and form developed by the Washington Educational Research Association.