

Michael E. Smith Middle School
100 Mosier Street
South Hadley MA 01075

School Improvement Plan
2026 - 2028



Michael E. Smith Middle School

School Improvement Plan 2026-2028

Executive Summary

Michael E. Smith Middle School is a public school located in South Hadley, Massachusetts, serving students in grades 5-8. According to the 2025-26 Massachusetts DESE School Profile, the school's enrollment is 468 students, with a student-to-teacher ratio of 11.2 to 1. Student demographics are 71.3% White, 16.0% Hispanic or Latino, 5.9% Black or African American, 3.6% Multi-Race/Non-Hispanic, 2.7% Asian, and 0.4% American Indian or Alaska Native.

Mission

We, as a community of students, staff, families and stakeholders, strive to be inclusive, open-minded and curious. We value self-reliance, scholarship, honesty, and kindness while fostering opportunities for growth and building community. We encourage each other to embrace challenges while also celebrating successes within a safe and welcoming environment.

Vision

Our vision is to develop a well-rounded curriculum that helps students to achieve their full potential. We will do this by having students begin to explore their interests in a welcoming, safe, and supportive learning environment.

Core Values

The Michael E. Smith Middle School Tigers will show:

GRIT

- **Be Ready to Learn:** Come prepared with the materials you need, and stay focused during lessons. Participate and ask questions when you need help.

RESPECT

- **Be Respectful:** Treat everyone with kindness. Listen when others are speaking, and be considerate of their feelings and opinions.
- **Be Kind:** Help others when they need it. Use positive language, and make sure your actions help create a friendly environment.

RESPONSIBILITY

- **Be Responsible:** Take care of your belongings, school materials and your actions. Complete your assignments on time and always do your best, if you make a mistake own it.
- **Be Safe:** Follow all safety rules. Walk in the hallways, use equipment properly, and report any unsafe behavior or situations to a trusted adult.

Civic and Social Expectations: Building Character Together

Practice Kindness and Respect

- Be Inclusive: Invite others to join in activities, especially those who might feel left out.
- Show Empathy: Try to understand what others are going through and offer support when needed.
- Use Positive Language: Speak kindly to peers and teachers, avoiding negative or hurtful comments.

Have Integrity

- Be Honest: Tell the truth even when it's difficult, and avoid cheating or plagiarism.
- Stand Up for What's Right: If you see bullying or unfair treatment, speak out or seek help from an adult.
- Stay True to Values: Hold onto your principles, even when it's challenging or unpopular.

Collaborate Effectively

- Work Well with Others: Respect different opinions and work towards common goals in group settings.
- Communicate Openly: Express your ideas and listen to others, ensuring everyone has a voice.
- Resolve Conflicts Peacefully: Use problem-solving skills to address disagreements without resorting to anger or violence.

Reflect on Personal Growth

- Self-Assessment: Regularly think about your actions and decisions, considering how they align with your values.
- Set Goals: Identify areas for improvement and set specific goals to build character traits like patience, diligence, or generosity.
- Seek Feedback: Ask teachers, peers, or family members for constructive criticism to help you grow.

Theory of Action

If we . . .

- Provide relevant learning opportunities that are engaging, inclusive and equitable
- Create strong relationships between staff and students in order to build equity and an inclusive culture
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of students, staff, families and the community,

Then we will . . .

- Foster a joy of learning and maximize student success, providing every student with opportunities and support they need for academic achievement and overall wellness.

Strategic Objectives

Goal #1 - Instructional Coherence, Curriculum, and Rigor

District alignment: South Hadley Public Schools will strengthen PK-12 instructional coherence so every student experiences consistent grade-level learning, aligned curriculum, clear expectations for rigor, and high-quality tiered instruction across schools, subjects, and transition points.

MESMS priority: Ensure every classroom provides standards-aligned, cognitively demanding, culturally responsive, and accessible Tier 1 learning, supported by common evidence and productive feedback cycles.

Objectives	Action Steps	Persons Responsible	Timeline	Measure of Success
1. Establish shared expectations for rigorous, inclusive Tier 1 instruction. Staff use a common language for rigor and can identify agreed-upon practices in planning, instruction, student tasks, and feedback.	- Translate the district definition of rigor and inclusive Tier 1 expectations into a concise MESMS instructional framework and walkthrough tool. - Calibrate administrators, coaches, department leaders, and educators using shared examples of student tasks and classroom evidence. - Provide job-embedded professional learning on grade-level tasks, discourse, checks for understanding, differentiation, UDL, and culturally responsive pedagogy. - Use short learning walks and feedback cycles to identify schoolwide strengths and next steps.	MESMS and District Administration	- Framework by October 2026 - Calibration and learning walks monthly from November 2026 through June 2028	100% of administrators and at least 90% of instructional staff accurately articulate the district definition of rigor - At least 85% alignment on initial calibrated walkthrough evidence, with improvement thereafter - Professional-learning artifacts and follow-up evidence show application in classrooms.

2. Students experience a coherent progression of grade-level standards, common learning expectations, and assessments that inform instruction.	• Complete grade-level and vertical reviews in ELA, mathematics, science, social studies/civics, and relevant electives using district review cycles. • Document priority standards, unit sequencing, common performance expectations, and transition points between grades 5-8 and receiving/sending schools. • Develop or refine common formative checks and standards-based scoring practices, including calibrated review of student work. • Audit materials and assessments for accessibility, cultural responsiveness, multiple entry points, and appropriate challenges.	MESMS and District Administration, content and special education teachers, and multilingual teacher	• Initial priority maps and gaps by January 2027 • Revision and implementation through June 2028	• 100% of identified priority courses maintain current curriculum maps and common checks • Team artifacts document at least one standards-based data cycle per quarter • Student outcome patterns improve from the fall 2026 baseline, including for identified subgroups.
3. Educators respond to evidence quickly, and students and families understand current learning, progress, assignments, and available support.	• Establish predictable grade/department data meetings using common protocols and disaggregated evidence. • Use i-Ready, MCAS, common assessments, classroom evidence, and course performance to plan reteaching, enrichment, and intervention. • Implement district expectations for learning	MESMS Administration, Counselors, Educators and supporting staff.	• Data routines by October 2026 • family communication expectations by November 2026 • quarterly review	• Teams document decisions and follow-up from at least one data cycle per quarter • Academic updates meet agreed-upon frequency and quality expectations

	look-aheads, assignment communication, grade updates, and progress reporting. Gather student and family feedback on the clarity and usefulness of academic communication and revise routines.			- Family feedback improves from baseline - Students receiving additional support demonstrate monitored progress.
Goal #2 - MTSS, Student Supports, and Readiness District alignment: South Hadley Public Schools will build a coherent PK-12 system of academic, behavioral, social-emotional, executive-functioning, and transition supports so students receive timely intervention, develop skills needed to succeed, and are consistently monitored as they move between supports, grades, and schools. MESMS Priority: Make the Student Assistance Team and WIN/intervention structures a coherent MTSS system with transparent decision rules, timely supports, progress monitoring, and attention to attendance, executive functioning, and transitions.				
Objectives	Action Steps	Persons Responsible	Timeline	Measure of Success
1. Implement a coherent schoolwide MTSS framework. Students are identified early and receive matched supports with clear goals, ample opportunities, and documented entry, review, exit, and follow-up decisions.	- Align the MESMS MTSS/SAT handbook, forms, roles, and meeting routines to the district framework. - Define entry and exit criteria for common academic, attendance, behavioral, SEL, and executive-functioning supports. - Inventory interventions, staff capacity, scheduling, and fidelity expectations across tiers. - Create brief student action plans and monitor students	MESMS Administration, Counselors, Educators and supporting staff.	- Framework and inventory by December 2026 - Implementation January 2027-June 2028	100% of students receiving Tier 2/3 supports have a documented need, goal, intervention, owner, review date, and outcome - Review timeliness and intervention completion improve each quarter

	after exiting Tier 2 or Tier 3 support.			Exit decisions include follow-up monitoring.
2. Strengthen data-team and progress-monitoring routines. Teams integrate academic, attendance, behavior, climate, and intervention evidence to make timely and equitable decisions.	- Hold weekly Student Support/SAT meetings and scheduled grade-level data reviews using a consistent agenda. - Audit referrals and access to supports for disproportionality and missed opportunities. - Communicate decisions and responsibilities to educators and families within established timelines. - What is available for teacher using	MESMS Administration, Counselors, Educators and supporting staff.	Audit of referrals by November 2026 Weekly SAT Meeting on-going through 26 - 28.	- Meeting records show decisions, ownership, and follow-up; time from referral to first review decreases from baseline - Progress-monitoring completion reaches at least 90% - Subgroup access and outcomes are reviewed quarterly.
3. Build executive-functioning, attendance, and transition supports. Students develop organization, study, self-management, and help-seeking skills, attend consistently, and experience supported transitions.	- Identify grade-span executive-functioning and study-skill needs and establish shared language/tools through Advisory and WIN. - Refine attendance early-warning and response practices, including family partnership, individualized plans, and attendance buyback where appropriate. - Strengthen grade 4 to 5, grade-to-grade, and grade 8 to 9 transition routines, including information transfer for students	MESMS Administration and other stakeholders.	- Needs assessment by October 2026 - supports launched by January 2027 - transition cycles each spring and summer	- Chronic absenteeism and course-failure rates improve from baseline - Targeted students show progress on individual attendance/support plans - Advisory implementation is consistent - Student and family transition feedback

	- receiving support. - Provide families with practical resources for routines, organization, attendance, and learning at home.			improves year over year.
Goal #3: Climate, Safety, Belonging, and Student Voice District alignment: South Hadley Public Schools will create predictable, inclusive, and responsive school environments so students feel safe, known, respected, and able to engage fully in rigorous learning, while concerns are addressed through clear follow-through and visible action. MESMS Priority: Make the Tiger Way visible in adult and student practice through consistent expectations, restorative and accountable responses, closed-loop concern handling, meaningful student voice, and stronger family partnership.				
Objectives	Action Steps	Persons Responsible	Timeline	Measure of Success
1. Establish consistent behavior, safety, and restorative response. Students experience predictable expectations and fair, timely, developmentally appropriate responses that protect learning and repair harm.	- Review school behavior, safety, bullying-prevention, harassment, MINGA hall-pass, attendance, and restorative-response practices against district expectations. - Teach, model, and reinforce a concise behavior matrix aligned to the Tiger Way in classrooms and common spaces. - Train staff in prevention, de-escalation, restorative conversations, documentation, reentry, and follow-through. - Review discipline and safety data monthly, including location, time, behavior	MESMS Administration and other stakeholders.	By the end of September 2026.	- At least 90% of staff report clarity about expectations and response procedures - Repeated incidents and exclusionary discipline decrease from baseline - Walkthrough and referral evidence show more consistent implementation - Subgroup disproportionality is reduced.

	type, response, recurrence, and disproportionality.			
2. Create a closed-loop concern-reporting and response protocol. Students, families, and staff know how to raise concerns, receive acknowledgment, and understand when the matter has been addressed or closed.	• Adopt the district process for reporting safety, bullying, behavior, discrimination, and other school concerns. • Define roles, acknowledgment and follow-up timelines, documentation requirements, escalation paths, and closure criteria. • Create age-appropriate student and family communication in accessible formats and languages. • Audit response records quarterly for timeliness, completion, patterns, and needed systems changes.	MESMS Administration, Counselors, Educators and supporting staff.	• Protocol communicated by the end on September 2026 • Ongoing Monthly through 2027	• 100% of logged concerns have an owner and status; at least 90% meet adopted acknowledgment /follow-up timelines • Closure is documented • Student and family survey confidence in reporting and follow-through improves from baseline.
3. Increase student voice, leadership, belonging, and family partnership. Students help shape school improvement and report stronger belonging; families have clear, varied opportunities to participate and influence decisions.	• Launch a representative student voice/action-response group connected to the School Council and school leadership. • Review climate and belonging data with students and identify one to three visible action priorities each year. • Expand student leadership through Student Council, NJHS, advisory challenges, peer support, clubs, and	MESMS Administration, Counselors, Educators, Club Advisors, Student Council MESMS PTO and SHEMPA	• Groups established by October 2026 • action-response cycle at least three times annually	1. Student membership reflects the school community 2. Each cycle produces a communicated action and response 3. Belonging indicators improve from baseline

	recognition aligned to character. Strengthen PTO and School Council participation through varied meeting formats, multilingual outreach, and feedback loops.			4. Family participation and feedback representation increase year over year.
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Goal #4: Special Education Coherence, Compliance, and Inclusive Access

District alignment. South Hadley Public Schools will strengthen special education coherence, compliance, and inclusive practice so students with disabilities receive timely services, consistent IEP implementation, meaningful progress monitoring, and full access to instruction and belonging across all schools.

MESMS Priority: Partner with district Student Services to strengthen compliance, communication, progress monitoring, inclusive scheduling, co-teaching, and shared ownership for students with disabilities

Objectives	Action Steps	Persons Responsible	Timeline	Measure of Success
1. Support the district special education audit and priority actions. MESMS provides accurate evidence, engages stakeholders, and implements high-priority district audit recommendations with clear ownership.	- Provide requested evidence on procedures, timelines, schedules, caseloads, staffing, services, communication, MTSS connections, inclusion, and student outcomes. - Gather staff, student, and family feedback in coordination with the district audit process. - Review findings with school teams and translate assigned recommendations into school-level actions, timelines, and measures.	MESMS Administration, Student Service, Educational Team Leader (ETL) and other service providers.	- In accordance with the district audit timeline - school action plan within 60 days of final recommendations	- Requested evidence is complete and timely, - Stakeholder participation is documented - All assigned high-priority recommendations have an owner, due date, status, and evidence of completion or progress.

	Report implementation progress to district leaders and School Council.			
2. Improve IEP implementation, service tracking, and progress monitoring. IEP services, accommodations, timelines, documentation, and progress reports are delivered reliably and concerns are addressed promptly.	- Implement districtwide service tracking, missed-service response, and timeline-monitoring procedures. - Clarify responsibilities for service delivery, accommodations, progress data, documentation, and communication among all providers and educators. - Review caseloads, schedules, and service-delivery capacity regularly; escalate barriers promptly. - Audit a representative sample of IEP implementation and progress reports each quarter and provide targeted feedback or training.	MESMS Administration, Student Service, Educational Team Leader (ETL) and other related service providers.	- Procedures and training by fall 2026 - monthly monitoring and quarterly audits through June 2028	- IEP and evaluation timeline compliance reaches or sustains 100% - Missed or modified services are documented and addressed according to district procedure - Progress reports use meaningful data - Accommodation implementation improves in walkthrough and audit evidence.
3. Strengthen inclusive practice, co-teaching, and shared ownership. Students with disabilities access grade-level learning, school programs, peer relationships, and belonging with coordinated support from general and special educators.	- Define schoolwide expectations for inclusion and review schedules and course access for unnecessary barriers. - Identify priority co-teaching classrooms and establish protected co-planning routines, role clarity, and	MESMS Administration, Student Service, Educational Team Leader (ETL) and other related service providers.	Priority placements and schedules reviewed each spring; co-planning and professional learning cycles	- Inclusive course and program access improves or is sustained - Targeted co-teaching teams meet agreed-upon

	evidence-based co-teaching practices. • Provide professional learning on IEP responsibilities, accommodations, UDL, specially designed instruction, behavior support, and co-teaching. • Use student work, progress-monitoring evidence, walkthroughs, and student/family feedback to assess access and impact.		throughout 2026-2028	co-planning expectations • Walkthroughs show shared instructional ownership • Students with disabilities demonstrate improved growth, engagement, and belonging from baseline.
4. Strengthen family communication and internal collaboration. Families receive proactive, understandable communication about services and progress, while school staff coordinate timely support and follow-through.	• Implement district expectations for proactive IEP and service communication, including notification when services are missed, delayed, or modified. • Establish an internal communication protocol among case managers, general educators, special educators, and related providers. • Track family concerns through response and closure and identify recurring themes. • Participate in district post-exit monitoring for students leaving special education, as applicable.	MESMS Administration, Student Service, Educational Team Leader (ETL) and other related service providers.	Protocols by November 2026; implementation and review throughout 2026-2028	• Communication timelines are met • unresolved concerns decrease • Family feedback on clarity and partnership improve • Internal records demonstrate timely collaboration and follow-through.
Projected Outcomes				

Priority 1: Improve Mathematics Achievement and Growth

Baseline

- 24.6% of students met or exceeded expectations.
- Median math SGP was 36.
- 54% of students demonstrated low growth.
- Only 25.2% met their individual progress targets.
- Grade 5 median SGP was 29.
- Grade 8 median SGP was 32.
- Students with IEPs: 6.5% met or exceeded expectations.
- High-needs students: 13.9% met or exceeded expectations.

Two-year goal

By spring 2028, MESMS will increase the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in mathematics from 24.6% to at least 35% and increase median SGP from 36 to at least 50.

Measure	2026 baseline	Year 1 target	Year 2 target
Meeting/Exceeding Expectations	24.6%	30%	35%
Median SGP	36	43	50
Students with low growth	54%	45% or lower	35% or lower
Students meeting progress targets	25.2%	35%	45%
IEP students meeting/exceeding	6.5%	11%	16%
High-needs students meeting/exceeding	13.9%	20%	26%

Major strategies

- Establish a consistent standards-aligned math instructional model across grades 5-8.
- Implement Illustrative Math in grade 5 and the adopted middle-school math curriculum with common pacing expectations.
- Protect time for grade-level instruction instead of replacing core instruction with remediation.
- Use worked examples, mathematical discourse, multiple representations, and frequent checks for understanding.
- Identify prerequisite skill gaps connected to upcoming grade-level standards.
- Provide common planning time focused on student work and instructional responses.
- Develop short intervention cycles for students who are Partially Meeting Expectations.
- Provide intensive, explicit intervention for students who are Not Meeting Expectations.
- Conduct learning walks focused on rigor, student thinking, and productive struggle.
- Prioritize grade 5 and grade 8 math coaching during Year 1.

Progress monitoring

- Common formative assessments every four to six weeks
- i-Ready diagnostic and growth data three times annually
- Unit assessment performance by standard
- Percentage of students moving from below grade level
- Student-work reviews during team meetings
- Quarterly intervention entry, progress, and exit data
- Learning-walk evidence of mathematical discourse and grade-level rigor

Priority 2: Strengthen Literacy Across the Curriculum

Baseline

- 32.5% met or exceeded expectations in ELA.
- Median ELA SGP was 45.5.
- Grade 6 median SGP was 34.
- ELA Reporting Category 3 was the weakest category in every grade.
- Male students trailed female students by approximately 13 percentage points.

- Grade 8 was the strongest ELA grade, with 42.6% meeting/exceeding and a median SGP of 59.

Two-year goal

By spring 2028, MESMS will increase the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA from 32.5% to at least 43% and increase median SGP from 45.5 to at least 55.

Measure	2026 baseline	Year 1 target	Year 2 target
Meeting/Exceeding Expectations	32.5%	38%	43%
Median SGP	45.5	50	55
Students meeting progress targets	37.0%	45%	52%
Grade 6 median SGP	34	43	50
Male students meeting/exceeding	26.1%	32%	38%
IEP students meeting/exceeding	9.3%	15%	21%

Major strategies

- Fully implement the adopted ELA curriculum and Bookworms with consistent expectations.
- Study successful grade 8 ELA practices and identify strategies that can be transferred to grades 5-7.
- Provide explicit instruction in written response, evidence selection, analysis, and revision.
- Strengthen vocabulary and comprehension instruction in science, social studies, and mathematics.
- Establish schoolwide expectations for students to read, write, discuss, and defend their thinking.
- Use common writing tasks and shared scoring protocols.
- Examine male student engagement, reading selection, task design, and classroom participation.
- Ensure students with IEPs receive both accommodations and explicit skill instruction.

- Align intervention with the specific reading or writing skill causing difficulty.

Progress monitoring

- Common writing tasks at least three times per year
- Curriculum-embedded assessment results
- i-Ready reading diagnostic and growth data
- Performance on constructed-response questions
- Student-work calibration across classrooms
- Reporting-category and standard-level performance
- Learning walks focused on student discussion, writing, and evidence use

Priority 3: Reduce Achievement Gaps Through Strong Tier 1 and MTSS Practices

Baseline gaps

- IEP/non-IEP gap:
 - ELA: approximately 30 percentage points
 - Mathematics: approximately 24 percentage points
- High-needs gap:
 - ELA: approximately 21 percentage points
 - Mathematics: approximately 23 percentage points
- Hispanic/White gap:
 - ELA: approximately 17 percentage points
 - Mathematics: approximately 15 percentage points

Two-year goal

By spring 2028, MESMS will reduce achievement gaps for students with IEPs, high-needs students, low-income students, and Hispanic students by at least 25% while increasing achievement for all students.

This goal should be measured by improving the performance of the focal groups—not by lowering or slowing the performance of comparison groups.

Major strategies

- Establish a consistent MTSS problem-solving process across all grade levels.
- Create student success profiles using MCAS, i-Ready, attendance, course performance, and behavior data.
- Review progress by student, standard, intervention, and student group.
- Strengthen co-planning between general and special educators.
- Define schoolwide expectations for accommodations and differentiated access.
- Audit intervention assignments to ensure students receive support matched to demonstrated needs.
- Use six- to eight-week intervention cycles with clear entry and exit criteria.
- Provide professional learning on scaffolding without lowering academic rigor.
- Monitor access to advanced coursework and grade-level tasks.
- Include family communication when students enter, change, or exit an intervention.

Progress monitoring

- Achievement and growth disaggregated by student group
- Intervention participation and success rates
- Fidelity of IEP and 504 accommodations
- Course failure and chronic absenteeism rates
- Percentage of students completing grade-level assignments
- Movement between i-Ready placement levels
- Student belonging and academic-confidence survey results