



H.W. Cowherd
Middle School

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Monday, September 21, 2026



SIP TEAM

Jacqueline Gibson, Principal
Anastasia Heimberger, Assistant Principal
Veronica Zamora, Assistant Principal
Christopher Arnold, Dean of Students
Marinel Betancourt, Front Office Clerk
Leslie Braunshausen, Science Teacher
Rachel Gerhard, Math Instructional Coach
Kaitlyn Gonzalez, Math Teacher
Carol Hekhuis, SpEd Instructional Teacher
Timothy Hollins, PPA/Support Staff
Payton Maher, SpEd Resource Teacher
Amy Maldonado, Social Studies Teacher
Eric Nielsen, Counselor



H.W. Cowherd
Middle School

Our Mission:

At H.W. Cowherd Middle School, we work together to ensure an **inclusive community** where everyone is **safe, valued, supported, empowered, and learning.**

Our Vision:

H.W. Cowherd Middle School is a **joyful, thriving** place where **teachers, families, and community partners** unite to celebrate **diversity**, personalize **learning** and nurture **confident, compassionate learners** ready to lead and succeed in a dynamic world.





OUR CURRENT REALITY

Academic Data	All Students	IEP	EL	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or More*	Asian*	Newcomer	Males	Females
Math Proficiency IAR	10%	1%	3%	8%	10%	11%	N/A	N/A	9%	11%	9%
Math Growth IAR	18%	11%	15%	18%	18%	25%	N/A	N/A	24%	16%	21%
iReady Math (K-8)	33%	10%	18%	30%	33%	39%	N/A	N/A	16%	34%	32%
Literacy Proficiency (IAR)	25%	2%	11%	20%	26%	29%	N/A	N/A	12%	22%	30%
Literacy Growth (IAR)	19%	17%	21%	23%	18%	25%	N/A	N/A	22%	19%	19%
iReady Reading (K-8)	32%	9%	14%	32%	31%	50%	N/A	N/A	16%	28%	37%

*Less than 10 students



EAST AURORA SCHOOL DISTRICT 131



OUR CURRENT REALITY



Culture Data	All Students	IEP	EL	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or More*	Asian*	Newcomer	Males	Females
Annual Daily Attendance (ADA)	91%	91%	92%	89%	92%	92%	N/A	N/A	92%	91%	91%
Chronic Absenteeism	26%	28%	23%	34%	25%	22%	N/A	N/A	22%	27%	27%
Consistent Attendance	74%	72%	77%	66%	75%	78%	N/A	N/A	78%	73%	73%
Referrals (%)	37%	42%	36%	52%	35%	25%	N/A	N/A	32%	47%	26%
School Belonging (Panorama)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

*Less than 10 students



EAST AURORA SCHOOL DISTRICT 131

OUR FOCUS ON LITERACY:



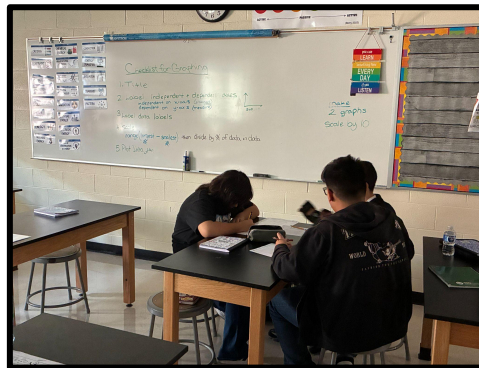
EAST AURORA SCHOOL DISTRICT 131

SMART GOAL:

By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, **H.W. Cowherd Middle School** will increase the percentage of students meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations in reading by 6% across all reported groups/ **demographics**, as measured by the Spring 2027 Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR), compared to Spring 2026 results.

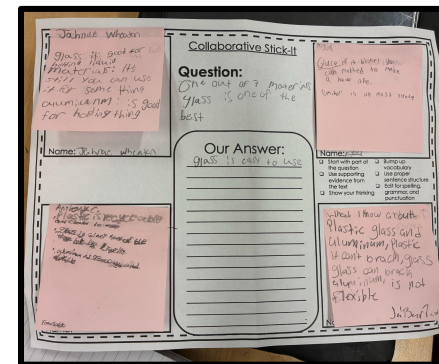
Priority Teaching Practice:

Classroom discussion techniques and academic discourse



Key Actions:

- **Strengthen literacy instruction across content areas, especially Tier I**
- **Use of PLCs and data**
- **Strengthen EL supports**
- **Improve inclusive instruction.**



OUR FOCUS ON NUMERACY:

SMART GOAL:

By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, **H.W. Cowherd Middle School** will increase the percentage of students meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations in mathematics by 6% across all reported groups/ demographics, as measured by the Spring 2027 Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR), compared to Spring 2026 results.



Priority Teaching Practice:

Classroom discussion techniques and academic discourse



Key Actions:

- **Strengthen math instruction, especially Tier I**
- **Use of PLCs and data**
- **Strengthen EL supports**
- **Improve inclusive instruction.**



OUR FOCUS ON A CULTURE FOR BELONGING: EAST AURORA SCHOOL DISTRICT 131

SMART GOAL:

By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, **H.W. Cowherd Middle School's discipline referral rate will decrease 9 percentage points from 37% to 28%** through the systematic restructuring of Tier 1 classroom environments and ensuring equitable behavioral outcomes for all student groups as measured by the Synergy SIS discipline dashboard.



Priority Teaching Practice:

Use of **culturally responsive proactive circles and de-escalation practices** to strengthen student-teacher relationships,

Teach, model, and practice **building-wide expectations** in order to strengthen student and staff culture of belonging,



Key Actions:

- **Strengthen family engagement**
- **Build consistent behavioral practices**
- **Provide targeted student supports**
- **Build staff capacity and inclusion**



OUR FOCUS ON FAMILY BELONGING:

SMART GOAL:

By the end of the 2026-2027 school year, **H.W. Cowherd Middle School's discipline referral rate will decrease 9 percentage points from 37% to 28%** through the systematic restructuring of Tier 1 classroom environments and ensuring equitable behavioral outcomes for all student groups as measured by the Synergy SIS discipline dashboard.

Key Actions:

- Tiered outreach process
- Family partnerships to support our ABCS





EAST AURORA SCHOOL DISTRICT 131

