MACARTHUR MIDDLE SCHOOL
STATE OF THE SCHOOL

BELIEVE

Build. Belong.

LOW AND SLOW

OCTOBER 2026

MACARTHUR MIDDLE SCHOOL
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OUR DIAMOND DOGS



Athena Kalaras
Teacher



Camron Nystrom
Prinicipal



Dina Trekas
Instructional Coach



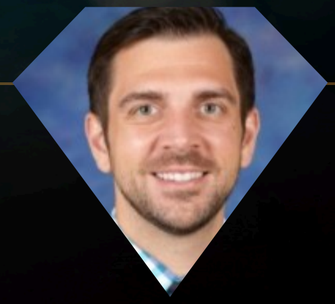
Lora Robertson
Teacher



Meghan Kevil
Teacher



Melissa Joffe
Teacher



Michael Kaper
Assistant Principal



Sam Alvaro
Teacher



Stephanie O'Connor
Teacher



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OUR PUPPIES

Adesayo Salako

Eliora Gbekou

Kara Moninski

Delaney Herling

Maya Nishandzhiev

Anastasia Chubata

Evelyn Moninski

Harrison Schile



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WHERE WE STAND ON THE PITCH

Official state results aren't public yet

MTSS Tier 1 Prevention

Three Years Ago

Planning for double periods of intervention across reading, math, and social emotional support.

Now

- Combined 7th and 8th grade Tier 2 reading support.
- Fewer kids need Tier 2 at all.
- Greater access to Tier 1 instruction and exploratory exposure.

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THE SEASON AHEAD

Preseason

Our foundation.
The things that do not change year to year.

This Season

This year's work, organized by the four strategic plan areas:

- student success,
- teaching and learning,
- family and community,
- facilities.

The Future

Where it leaves us for the rest of the year into next year.

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OUR APPROACH: LOW & SLOW



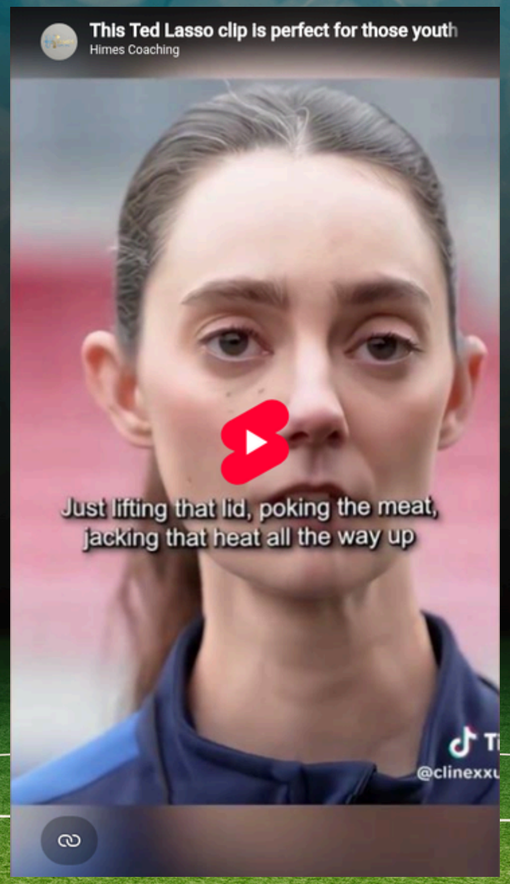
Ted Lasso, Season 4

“If you trust the process, keep the temperature nice and steady, add a little spice when necessary and a little sauce to keep it sweet, you got a good shot of ending up with something you're gonna be proud of.”

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POKE AND PROD PEOPLE EVERY FIVE MINUTES AND THEY GET A LITTLE CHEWY

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OUR APPROACH: LOW & SLOW



Ted Lasso, Season 4

"If you **trust the process**, keep the temperature **nice and steady**, add a little **spice** when necessary, and a little **sauce** to keep it sweet, you got a good shot of ending up with something you're gonna be **PROUD** of."

Hungry to learn more?

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PRACTICING OUR FUNDAMENTALS

1. Building a learning culture with vulnerability & reflection
2. Seeking diverse ideas & opinions
3. Focusing on discipline, hard work, & fundamentals
4. Connecting with people with both care & accountability
5. Daring experimentation for joy and meaning, not external validation

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PRACTICING OUR FUNDAMENTALS





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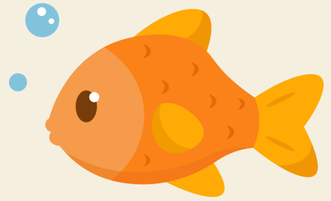
BELIEVE

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PRACTICING OUR FUNDAMENTALS

1. Building a learning culture with **vulnerability** & reflection
2. Seeking **diverse ideas** & opinions
3. Focusing on **discipline**, hard work, & fundamentals
4. Connecting with people with both **care** & **accountability**
5. **Daring experimentation** for joy and meaning, not external validation



BE A GOLDFISH

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OUR PLAYING FIELD

District 23 is a place where students are engaged, inspired, and empowered to collaborate, learn, and grow.

Student Success

Ensure ALL students are well rounded and emotionally and academically prepared for success in high school.

Teaching, Learning, & Innovation

Encourage a learning environment that emphasizes excellence and retains high-quality staff.

Family & Community Partnerships

Actively engage and communicate with all families to foster collaborative relationships that benefit student learning and understanding of district priorities.

Facilities & Financial Planning

Advance effective use of resources to support safe, learner ready facilities and to maximize student learning.

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THIS YEAR'S BUILDING GOAL

Common Assessment Practices

Use the shared language we built last year to sit down together with student work, calibrate our scoring, and adjust instruction based on what we see.

One Feedback Model, Three Strands

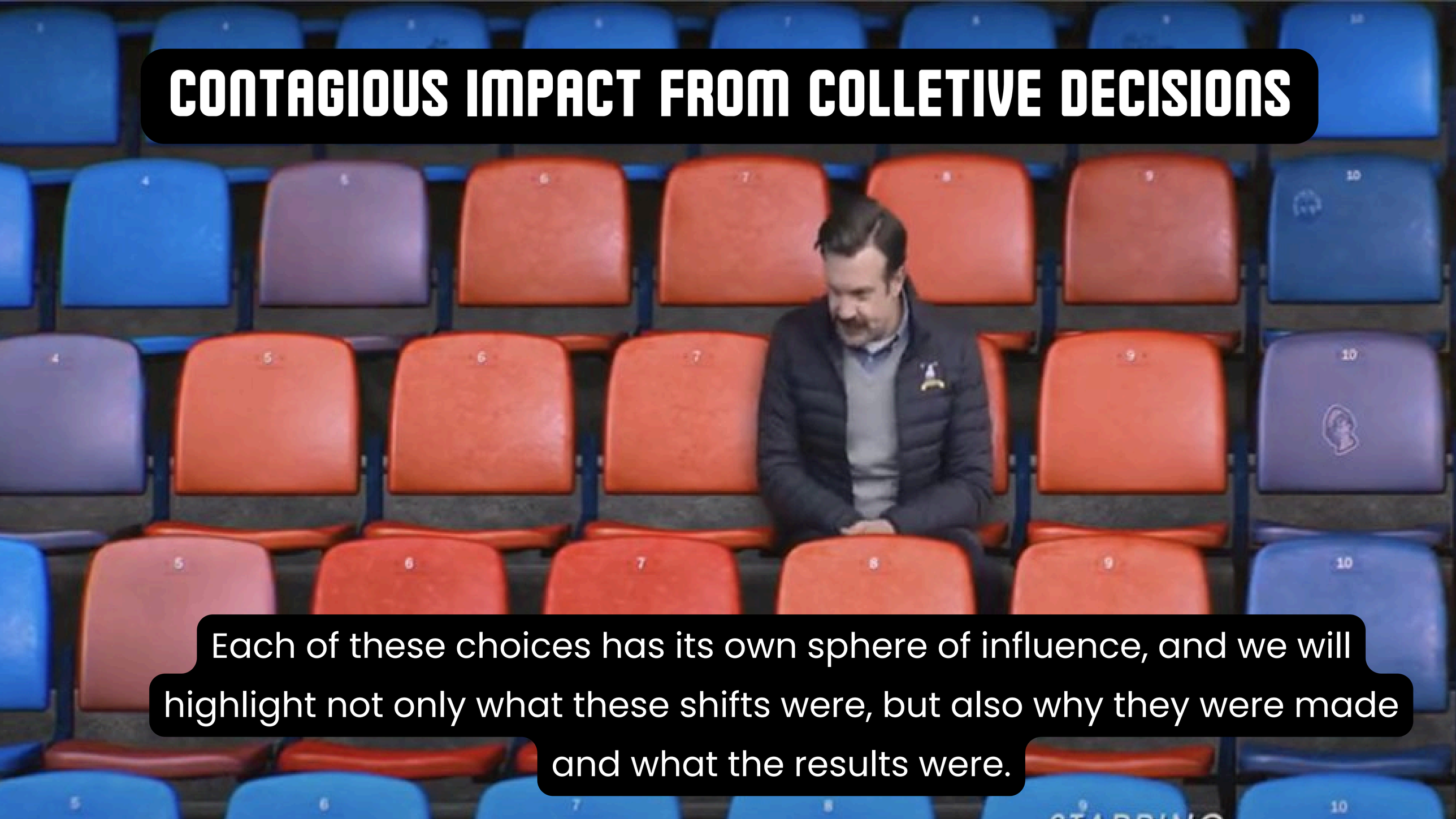
Same feedback structure for all but intentional separation on academic, behavior, and successful learner.

Teacher Empowerment

Protected time to build more teacher-led collaborative instructional planning.

Last year we built the language.
This year we use the language to look at student work together.

CONTAGIOUS IMPACT FROM COLLETIVE DECISIONS



Each of these choices has its own sphere of influence, and we will highlight not only what these shifts were, but also why they were made and what the results were.

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- 63 faculty members providing
- 524 students receiving developmental feedback in different areas of their functional performance

SEPARATING THE SCORE FROM THE BEHAVIOR

ONE FEEDBACK MODEL, THREE HONEST STRANDS



ACADEMIC FEEDBACK

What a student mastered.
Guided through priority standards and learning targets.



BEHAVIOR FEEDBACK

How they showed up.
Reported through the PRIDE rubric and our MTSS structure, living outside the gradebook.



SUCCESSFUL LEARNER FEEDBACK

Who they are becoming.
Reported through our Portrait of a Graduate work.



Whole Child Reporting brings all three signals into one conversation for a family.

STUDENT SUCCESS

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- 52 students within the rotation unified advisory
- 28 students in the leadership-driven multi-grade Mac PRIDE course
- More access to General Education peers and environments for 6 students

UNIFIED ADVISORY, BUILT TO LAST

ONE ADVISORY · ALTERNATING WEEKS · REAL INCLUSION

HOW IT'S BUILT

- Merged standalone unified programming into the core Second Step advisory, alternating weeks instead of a separate parallel structure.
- Unified PE partners on activity design, students give each other feedback.
- Leadership flips week to week: 8th graders model it, 7th graders learn it, then lead it themselves next year.

WHY IT MATTERS

- More authentic classroom time for our students with IEPs, not just the library with peer leaders.
- Built-in student-level succession planning, the same capacity building question the board is already asking about teacher leadership.



STUDENT SUCCESS

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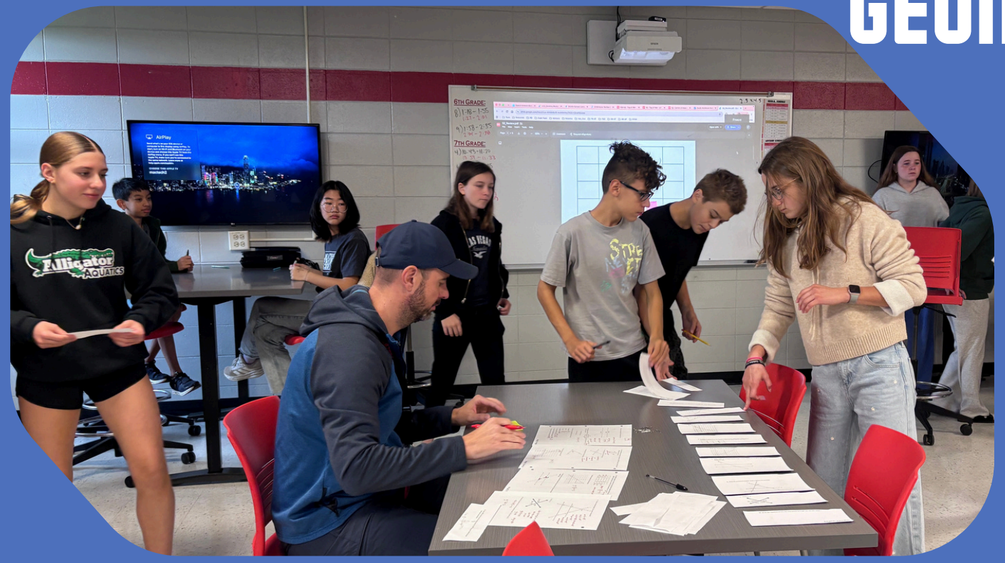
BELIEVE

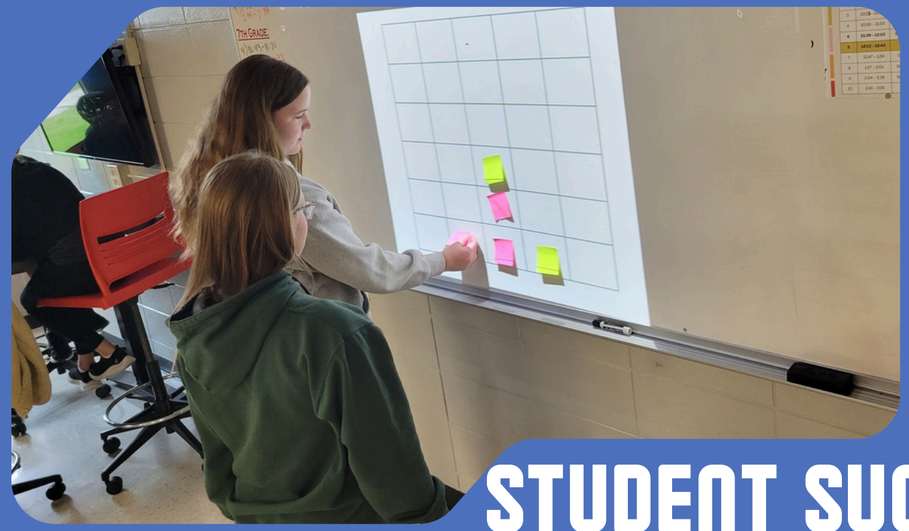
Build. **Belong.**



- 21 8th-grade students in Geometry
- 18 7th-grade students in Algebra
- Transition 1 section of Applied Tech to Geometry, incorporating Manufacturing / Construction

GEOMETRY COMES HOME





BUILT INTO STUDENT SCHEDULE

Replaces an Exploratory Course this year

LESS TRAVEL, MORE ACCESS

Removes travel time, coordination, seat limits, and family logistics burden

BUILDING THE PIPELINE

Adding Algebra to 7th grade offerings, monitoring 6th grade acceleration

STUDENT SUCCESS

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- 11 Exploratory and 8th grade math faculty members working together to collaborate and coordinate how to create space for students to gain multiple opportunities

THE LINEUP PUZZLE

Combine Spanish on a weekly rotation with VIM, keep Geometry in daily, along with PE

Double-accelerated kids still needed Algebra in their schedule, Geometry must fall in Exploratory period

Many of those students also have years of band, chorus, orchestra in their past along with Spanish

Still need to have a PE period, with Health Education

We have seen this before

- Last year, for instrumentation and performance group size, we combined 7th & 8th grade Band & Chorus. Limited peer lunch time for 8th graders.
  - Fixed in this year's schedule
- The new 7th grade algebra section prevents this exact conflict from recurring next year.

- *Some years we see a conflict coming and have a solution ready.*
- *Some years the fix creates a new bottleneck.*
- *Some years we cannot see a conflict coming until it arrives.*
- *Either way, we keep upgrading the answer.*

STUDENT SUCCESS

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- 10 TF working through the purpose of Advisory to maximize instructional minutes
- 34 Advisory Teachers shifting instructional minutes
- Uninterrupted 2nd Step Lesson for our 524 students

SECOND STEP FINDS ITS 40 MINUTES

THE PROBLEM

20-minute daily advisory wasn't enough time for Second Step lessons, had to stretch two to three days to land.

THE PROCESS

3 scheduling options.
Shared with staff, input gathered.
The building voted before we adopted one.

THE RESULT

One 40-minute Wednesday advisory
Trimmed a few minutes from Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.
No overall change in minutes

**But it does make for adjusted period sequence for 7th and 8th grade and lunches are later in the day

TEACHING, LEARNING, & INNOVATION

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- 63 faculty members providing
- 524 students receiving developmental feedback in different areas of their functional performance

TWO PROGRAMS, ONE MESSAGE

SECOND STEP MAPPED TO PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE



Folding in the language, messages, and themes to integrate the work and amplify the message

Second Step®

TEACHING, LEARNING, & INNOVATION

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FOCUSED COMMUNICATION

MONTH BY MONTH, CHARACTERISTIC BY CHARACTERISTIC



OCTOBER

Growth Minded and Resilient

In Advisory lessons and throughout the school day, look for students modeling Growth Mindset & Resilience





TEACHING, LEARNING, & INNOVATION

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- 13 brand-new faculty members joining the Marauders
- 4 Teams redefining their internal culture

ROOM TO BUILD



NEW HIRES

Each Team has multiple new staff, build into our learning.



ADVANCED ADAPTIVE SCHOOLS

A second round of training for team leaders and admin.

D23-PALOOZA

Intentional Relationship Building

TEACHING, LEARNING, & INNOVATION

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- $19.5K for Polar Plunge donations to both internal and external 82 plungers
- Over $10K for St. Baldrick's through both the head shaving event and donational raffles

POLAR PLUNGE THIS YEAR: OFFSITE

Raising money and awareness for Special Olympics

Last year Cool School Challenge (with Sullivan) onsite





SHAVING YOUR HEAD



St BALDRICK'S

Raising money and awareness for pediatric cancer research (March)

- Shaving Heads
- Hair Extensions
- Raffles

FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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- 25+ students meeting monthly
- Real input into real projects

PRINCIPAL ADVISORY

- Monthly meetings with students from across the building.
- Their input shaped the new gym floor design, wall displays, and building logo-ing.

AT THE KIDS' TABLE







FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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- 40 Unique vendors are coming to campus to enlighten 8th graders internally and externally on their future opportunities
- State and National exposure at 4 conferences last year, and planning 3-4 more this year
- 50+ staff not resting on our laurels and continuing to get at least 1% better

NO COPYWRIGHT ISSUES HERE







CAREER FAIR

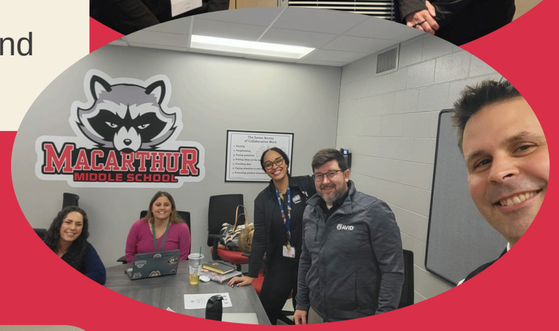
Aligned to District 214's own pathway program and electives, plus mock interviews and an elective night.



NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED

Presented at the AMLE conference. Other schools have visited and hosted alongside us.





MORE TO COME

Beyond the Banner: School-wide Inclusion to Create Belonging

Building Advisory into Ownership: Distributed Leadership



FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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Build. **Belong.**



- Over 180 students' family members with a lasting memory keepsake from their culmination of learning and experiences during their tenure in D23

PAYING IT BACK TO OUR FIRST TEACHERS



FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

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- 63 faculty members
- 524 students r
- All safe, secure, and informed

A SAFER, SECURE BUILDING

BUILDING ENVELOPE

New siding, windows, and doors around the entire building



NEW SECURE ENTRY

A double locked entry vestibule



INTERCOM REPLACEMENT

Beyond safety and communications, building in music as reward



FACILITIES & FINANCIAL PLANNING

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WHAT'S STILL ON THE PLATE?

MULTIPLE MULTI-YEAR INVESTMENTS, LANDING IN THE SAME SEASON

- Geometry coming home
- Advisory & Daily Schedule redesign
- Standards, Feedback, & Clarity work
- Onboarding & Capacity-building

WHAT WOULD TED or HIS MOM SAY?





Rebecca cannot get enough of the Kansas City barbecue.
There issauce on her shirt every time she eats it.
Wanting more, right now, is human.
The discipline is in not rushing it.



"You have to release the work at the right rate so that the organization can accept it."

Jeff Bezos

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Thank you for the partnership,
and for believing in what's possible
when everyone here shows up.

