



Middle School Success

Board Work Study Session

Course Planning Update

March 3rd

STRATEGIC ROADMAP



MISSION OUR CORE PURPOSE

By providing high quality educational opportunities, emotional support, and social development, Centennial School District prepares learners for excellence in their future.



VISION WHAT WE INTEND TO CREATE

Centennial School District is a welcoming environment where all students, staff, and families belong and will:

- Provide innovative, personalized, rigorous, and relevant educational opportunities for each student.
- Build and strengthen relationships and partnerships with the community to offer educational programs and opportunities for all.



CORE VALUES DRIVERS OF OUR WORDS AND ACTIONS

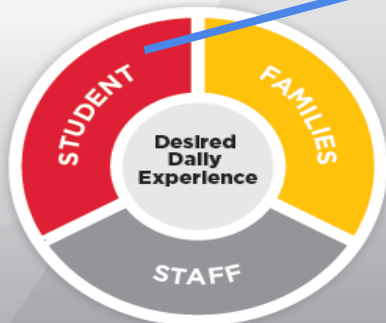
CONNECTING
Engaging students in meaningful ways with their school community.

ACHIEVING
Ensuring student success



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOCUS OF OUR IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

- Improving teaching and learning practices for student success and achievement.
- Increasing engagement, belonging, and strengthening the staff and student experience.



With input from our stakeholders, the plan includes the goals of providing an educational experience for students.

STUDENT

- I enjoy flexible learning and activity choices that meet my academic, emotional, and social needs.
- I have access to technology to support my educational needs.
- I am comfortable during passing time, lunch, and other times throughout the day.
- I enter a welcoming environment where I feel safe, accepted, and belong at school.
- My race and preferences are respected, acknowledged, and accepted.
- I have positive interactions and relationships with students and staff.

ACHIEVING

Ensuring student success through academic excellence in learning and teaching while supporting students in their growth and achievement.

PREPARING

Providing opportunities for academic excellence to prepare students for their future.

- student's school community.
- Staff provide attention and support to meet my student's needs.
- My student's school provides a relevant and rigorous educational experience.

- I am connected and feel like I belong to the Centennial community.
- I have a manageable workload and appropriate class sizes.
- My mental health needs are recognized and addressed.

Update on Middle School Success

- We did more research on what other middle schools are doing for similar courses. White Bear Middle School, Stillwater Middle School, and Mahtomedi Middle School.
- CMS teachers and administrators did site visits.
- CMS administrators had multiple meetings with staff to discuss the reasons for moving to a Middle School Success and not offering FAC courses.
- Amy Smalley from the Teaching & Learning Department is working with CMS administration on the creation of the Student Success course and documentation.

Review of Other Districts' Offerings and Findings

- The schools we have researched have found the need to provide student support through having a course that equip students strategies and skills to help them develop the skills necessary for academic success and positive social interactions.
- Student success in the new course will be determined by academic performance, student engagement, student feedback, and longitudinal data.
- Items covered from FACs - Personal Finance - 8th grade math, STEM - marketing, Health - Nutrition
- Potential FACs - Middle Schools Success, CMS after school clubs (Community Ed.), and summer programming.
- The goal is to enhance overall academic achievement, foster positive behavior, and increase students attendance.

What is the Role of Local School Districts in Academic Standards?

Per Minnesota Statute 120B.021, state standards are required in the following content areas:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Education
- The Arts* (*effective the 2024-25 school year, all districts must use the state arts standards)
 - a. *In Minnesota, public middle schools must offer at least two of the following five arts areas: dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts.***

Districts are required to offer all standards. Most of the state standards are achieved through the benchmarks. Schools must offer and students must achieve all benchmarks for an academic standard to satisfactorily complete that standard.

School districts must develop their own district academic standards in three content areas:

- Health
- World Languages, using current world languages standards developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
- Career and Technical Education

Staff Meetings

6th Grade Core Staff Meeting

Friday, February 7th

8th Grade Core Staff Meeting
10th

Monday, February

Union Representative Monthly Meeting
10th

Monday, February

7th Grade Core Staff Meeting
11th

Tuesday, February

Student Services Meeting
February 12th

Wednesday,

Special Education Department Meeting

Thursday, February 13th

Specialists and Elective Department Meetings Thursday, February 13th

All Staff Meeting
February 13th

Thursday,

Staff Meetings Continued

Building Systems Committee Meeting

Date TBD

Community Education FACS Club Meeting

Date TBD

CALC/Pines Meeting to bridge learning experiences

Date TBD

Parent / Student Interactions

Parent Meetings

- District Systems Accountability Meeting—January 23rd
- Parent Phone Calls (2) and Conversations—Week of January 27th
- District Parent Survey (Spring 2024)

Student Leadership Meetings:

- Student Leadership Meetings 6th, 7th, 8th grades—February 24th
- District Student Survey Link (Spring 2024)



6th Graders

First Semester Reflection: Now that you've had a full semester of middle school, **what has been the biggest change for you, and how did you handle it?**

Adjusting to Middle School:

What skills have helped you the most so far in middle school, such as staying organized or managing time?

Is there something you need to work on to make things easier?

Building Relationships:

Middle school often means meeting new people and making new friends.

How have you been able to connect with other students or teachers this year?

Managing Homework and Study Time:

How do you make sure you stay on top of your homework and classwork?

What tips could you give to other 6th graders who might be struggling?

Being able to have a planner
to write down my homework

I need to work on getting
my homework done during
class though.

There's a schoolology
calendar that helps me.
Something I could do is
writing stuff down like
homework.

Study for tests / take notes

Something I need to
work on is taking
stuff out of my
binder. When I'm
done with it

One skill was
staying organized
and communicated
keeping my spaces
organized and tidy.

1. skills that helped were reminders
from my mom or checking
e-mail
2. probably my organization
in my binder.

I think staying
organized is important +
because it will help
finding daily work +
homework very easily, so will
not get a bad grade = or a
missing work.

One skill that
helped me was memorizing

one skill is staying
organized, without it
you'd most likely have
way more missing
assignments

I would say that I needed
to work on not wasting
time and keeping my binder
clean.

Probably, the ability to
comprehend and file away
information

NO

Looking at the week at a
glance on Sunday nights
or Monday mornings

Clean my binder on 1 or 2
weekends a month

Some skills * that
have helped me through
middle school is being
organized. I don't think
I need to work on
on anything.

Site Visits

School District Partnerships
With Middle School Success Programs

Site Visit Team

Laurie Tangren, 6th grade Science teacher

Emily Biske, 7th grade Science teacher

Amy Smalley, District AVID coordinator

Pete Knoebel, Assistant Principal

Andrea Krueger, Assistant Principal

Guiding Questions For Site Visits:

- Could you walk us through some of the units / standards in your course?
- What specific skills / knowledge do you provide students opportunities to gain through this course?
- How do students feel about the course / have you done a student survey about the course?
- How do you engage students and structure your day/lesson plans?
- Do you incorporate project-based learning into your course?
- Have the benefits of this class impacted the learning of other subject areas?

Site Visits

Stillwater Middle School

- Middle School Success
 - (6, 7)

Mahtomedi Middle School

- Middle School Success (6,7,8)
- Skills for Life (7)



Stillwater Middle School
DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

Advisory	7:50 - 8:05 a.m.
Hour 1	8:09 - 8:58 a.m.
Hour 2	9:02 - 9:51 a.m.
Hour 3	9:55 - 10:44 a.m.
	8th A Lunch 9:58 - 10:16 a.m.
	PONY TIME 10:21 - 10:48 a.m.
	PONY TIME 9:55 - 10:22 a.m.
	8th B Lunch 10:22 - 10:48 a.m.
Hour 4	10:48 - 11:41 a.m.
	7th A Lunch 10:44 - 11:09 a.m.
	PONY TIME 11:14 - 11:41 a.m.
	PONY TIME 10:48 - 11:15 a.m.
	7th B Lunch 11:15 - 11:40 a.m.
Hour 5	11:45 a.m. - 12:34 p.m.

Core Academic Classes: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies (Full Year, Every Day)

Physical Education (Full Year, Every Other Day)

Middle School Success (Full Year, Every Other Day)

Music: Student Choice of Band, Choir, or Exploring Music 7 (Full Year, Every Other Day)

Health & Wellness (Semester One, Every Other Day)

Communications (Semester Two, Every Other Day)

Exploratory Class 1
Digital Art, Design &
Make II, Skills for Life, and
Spanish

Exploratory Class 2
Digital Art, Design &
Make II, Skills for Life, and
Spanish

Exploratory Class 3
Digital Art, Design &
Make II, Skills for Life, and
Spanish

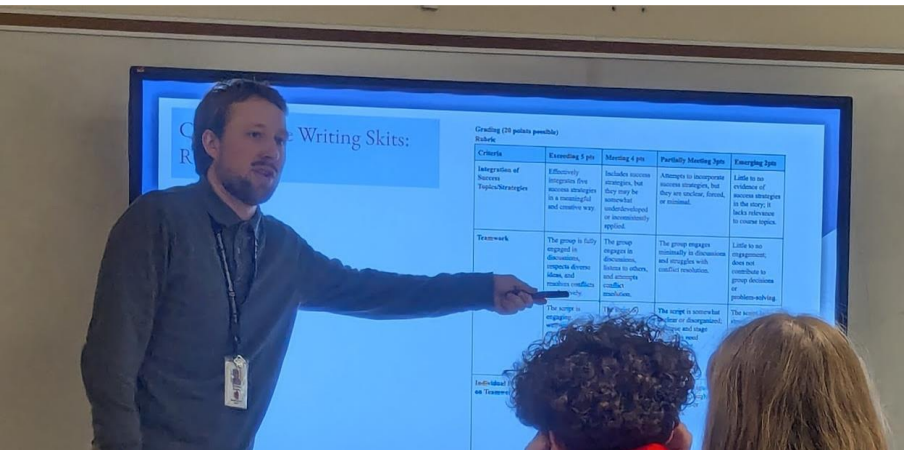
Exploratory Class 4
Digital Art, Design &
Make II, Skills for Life, and
Spanish

Students take a different Exploratory class each quarter. Class is held every day.



**STILLWATER
MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Artifacts from Stillwater Visit



Group Norms:

Appropriate Behavior Group Norms:

- Group members will not play games during work time
- Group members listen to what their other group members

Active Participation Group Norms:

- Group members will make sure everyone has input before decisions
- Group members will

Progress Monitoring Group Norms:

- Group members will make a plan before each work day
- Group members will assign responsibilities for HW

Flexibility Group Norms

- Group members will be open to new ideas
- Group members will work to compromise when they do not agree
- Group members will meet in the middle on decisions
- Group members will not be negative towards ideas they don't agree with

Examples on how to use MSS Strategies

Larry: Okay, guys, stop it! The next question we have for you two is which of those four choices would be a personality trait that a good leader has? A- Unprepared? B- Lazy? C- Optimistic? Or D- Indecisive?

Ariana: Easy peasy! A good personality trait for a good leader to have would be C, Optimistic!

Terry: Correct! 13 points for you!

Snape: Potter, can you tell me what empathy is?

Harry: I understand from your experience that empathy is...

Sigma: That's a time management strategy you can use to ensure you remember all the assignments!

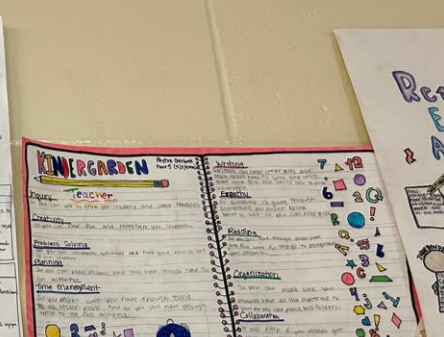
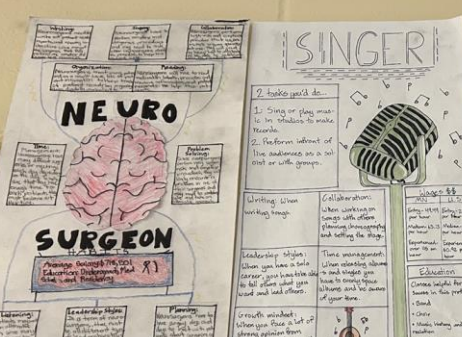
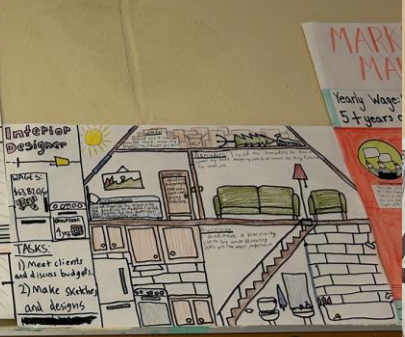
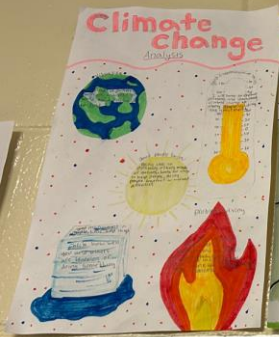
Bob: Time management helps you turn things in on time, complete assignments faster, and stop procrastination.

For all success topics/strategies/skills in your stories:

- Underline
- Bold

Encouragement Group Norms

- Group members will positively praise each other
- Group members won't use negative comments
- Group members will have a chance to share their ideas
- Group members will be positive and kind towards others



Behaviors of Successful Students

- Shows integrity
- Listens to others
- Be prepared
- Pays attention
- Trys hard
- Being on time
- Helps others
- Participating
- Don't play games
- Note taking
- Don't be the L-word
- Creative mind
- Builds good habits
- Calm
- Works during independent work time
- Don't push people
- Turn in HW on time
- Don't be disruptive
- do homework
- Stay on task
- NO GAMES!
- Help people learn.
- due to care

- stay organized
- help people
- laugh with em not at em
- No physical contact
- be considerate
- be positive

Characteristics of Successful Students

- hard working
- Helpful
- Inclusive
- Respectful
- Kind
- Organized
- Listens
- Focused
- Relentless
- Creative
- Friendly
- determined
- Brave
- generous
- Curious
- Polite
- Responsible
- Honest
- Optimistic
- trust worthy
- nice
- unique
- encouraging
- good attitude
- loyal
- confident
- quiet
- Respectful
- good decision maker

Stillwater

➤ Middle School Success

- 6th / 7th

Stillwater Middle School, 2-26-25

Reflections / Ideas

- Middle School Success - offered for past 8 years (*FACS was removed at that time*)
- Teachers Value and Respect this course; parents are grateful; students find it valuable
- Executive-functioning (Organization, Reflection, Study Skills, Time-Management)
- Collaborative, Project-based, Inquiry-based learning
 - **6th Grade Units:** Career exploration, SMART Goals, Digital Citizenship, Communication, Reflection, Personal Growth, Note-Taking, Study Skills, Organization, Time Management, Self-Advocacy
 - **7th Grade units:** Critical Thinking, Analyzing Data, Leadership Styles, Teamwork, Empathy, Financial Literacy, Career Exploration, Public Speaking, Presentations, Discussions
- Meet the Counselors - Counselor support with Career / Future Planning
- Topics for extension article readings/note-taking from subject-area courses (not isolated topics)
- Rubrics emphasize feedback on collaboration, leadership, success skills
- Project-based: students create real-world surveys, Shark Tank projects, Career Speakers, Famous Failure stories, collaborative writing, SMART goal tracking all quarter, Financial case study discussions "what would you do?", Brochure on organizational strategies for students
- Learning Log Portfolio - portfolio of skills learned, demonstrated learning / reflections

Mahtomedi

➤ *Skills for Life*

- *7th*

➤ *Middle School Success*

- *6th, 7th, 8th*

Mahtomedi Middle School, (March)

Reflections / Ideas

Skills for Life is a quarter long exploratory class for 7th graders. In skills for life we focus on using *WICOR strategies* writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading, and the act of creating a community of learners, while we learn and explore a variety of skills to help us now and in the future.

Each quarter is structured by 1 ½ week(ish) units:

1. Who am I? What are my interests? How do I learn?
2. Post Secondary Options
3. Career Exploration
4. Budgets
5. Sewing
6. Cooking

Each class follows the same structure and each week ends with celebrations and acknowledgements **organization**

A typical class:

1. Read the board and write in their planners
2. Take out their table tents (We use table tents throughout the quarter to mix things up, have icebreakers, and get to know each other better) **community of learners**
3. Planner checks, students receive stickers for appropriate planner use
4. Read Aloud
 - a. Each day we read a chapter from The Liberation of Gabriel King, a Maudehart Lovelace award recipient **reading**
 - b. We use the read aloud as an opportunity to do some pre-writing, reflecting, and sharing **writing and inquiry**
5. Lesson for the day.

CMS Middle School Success

Skills for Life and Learning

Updated Course Description

Middle School Success is an engaging, **project-based course** designed to equip middle school students with the essential academic and personal skills needed to thrive during this transitional period. Through hands-on, **collaborative learning experiences—including career-exploration, team-building and creative problem-solving activities**—students will develop strategies for organization, time management, note-taking, study habits, goal-setting, and self-advocacy.

In addition to learning how to maintain focus during lessons and practice self-reflection, students will strengthen their literacy and reading skills as they navigate texts from multiple content areas. Whether working together to tackle real-world challenges, expressing themselves through performance, or applying academic strategies in interactive projects, students will become active agents in their own learning. This course fosters independence, confidence, and the skills needed for academic success in middle school and beyond.

Centennial MSS Potential Curricular Units

Career-Exploration

Team-Building Problem-Solving

Learning / Leadership Styles

Financial /Marketing Unit - Shark-Tank

Cooking / Menu-planning

Growth Mindset / Famous Failures

Middle School Success - Units of Study

Organization

- Agendas, Google Drive, binders, checking grades, task-planning, time-management strategies, reflection tools, Campus / Schoology

Focused-Note-taking

- Variety of note-taking strategies

Smart Goals

- Self-Advocacy / Growth Mindset

Study-strategies

- Individual / group, graphic organizers, study strategies for multiple subject areas

Critical Reading Skills

- Text annotations, graphic organizers, chunking, vocabulary

Reading for Disciplinary Literacy

- How to read Science, Social Studies

Inquiry / Research Skills

- Process of using digital and print resources to learn about topics

Speaking / Communication

- Socratic Seminars, academic conversations norms

Community / Service Project

Group collaboration norms

Guest Speakers (Career-focused)

Exploring College / Career Unit

6th Grade Digital Portfolio

***Project-based experiential learning**

Course Communication: Staff and Families

After the March 3rd session, we will draft a communication for 5th grade families outlining the course description and key highlights.

Questions