



H.W. Cowherd
Middle School



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Monday, September 15, 2025



EAST AURORA SCHOOL DISTRICT 131

SIP TEAM

Jacqueline Gibson, Principal
Anastasia Heimberger, Assistant Principal
Veronica Zamora, Assistant Principal
Derrick Smith, Dean of Students
Jesus Barraza, PE Teacher
Rachel Gerhard, Math Instructional Coach
Kaitlyn Gonzalez, Math Teacher
Carol Hekhuis, Special Education Teacher
Rachel Jenkins, Social Worker
Jonathan Kuehl, Encore Teacher
Andrea Lopez, Dual Language Teacher
Jacquelyn Tupa, ELA Teacher



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



	All Students	IEP	EL	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or More	Asian	Newcomer	Males	Females
Math Achievement (MAP)	17.8%	5.7%	11.9%	12.8%	18.9%	NA	NA	NA	NA	20.3%	15.1%
Math Proficiency IAR (2024)	5.7%	1.9%	2%	1.8%	5.6%	NA	NA	NA	0%	5.1%	6.2%
iReady (K-8)	2.6%	1.4%	1.2%	3.2%	2.5%	NA	NA	NA	NA	3.6%	1.3%
Literacy Achievement (MAP)	21.8%	8.2%	9.6%	23.4%	22.4%	NA	NA	NA	NA	20.3%	23.5%
Literacy Proficiency IAR (2024)	15.3%	3.8%	3.9%	7.3%	16.1%	NA	NA	NA	0%	10.4%	20.1%

NA = <20 students





OUR CURRENT REALITY



	All Students	IEP	EL	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or More	Asian	New-comer	Males	Females
Annual Daily Attendance (ADA)	91.9%	90.7%	91.5%	87.9%	91.6%	89.7%	90.8%	92.8%	99.6%	91.1%	91.2%
Chronic Absenteeism	23.2%	25.6%	20.7%	37.1%	20.9%	NA	NA	NA	NA	24.6%	21.9%
Referrals	37.3%	19.3%	51.2%	36%	61.7%	1.6%	0.57%	0%	NA	62.9%	37.1%

NA = <20 students



OUR FOCUS ON LITERACY:

SMART GOAL:

By the end of the 2025–2026 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 2026 Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR), compared to Spring 2025 results.

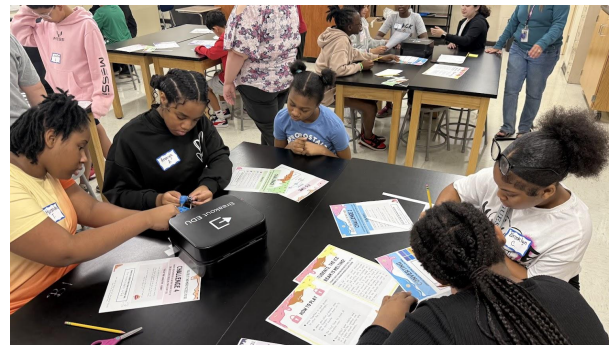
Priority Teaching Practice:

We are building the capacity for support and guidance of teachers in using strong **questioning** and **discussion strategies** in every classroom

- Teachers will be able to lead more interactive and student-centered lessons
- Understand how their students are learning
- Adjust their teaching to meet individual needs
- School leaders stay closely involved by giving meaningful feedback and support
- Students will take ownership of their learning:
 - Stay engaged
 - Build the thinking and communication skills they need to explain ideas
 - Solve problems together
 - Succeed on key assessments.

Key Actions:

- Color-Coded Cross-linguistic Connections
- Co-Teaching Models
- Questioning & Discussion Techniques
- Levels of Depth of Knowledge (DOK)
- Collaborative Learning



OUR FOCUS ON NUMERACY:



EAST AURORA SCHOOL DISTRICT 131

SMART GOAL:

By the end of the 2025–2026 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 2026 Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR), compared to Spring 2025 results.

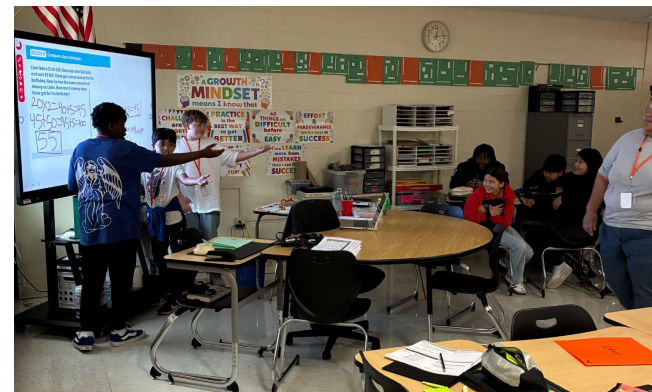
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OUR FOCUS ON A CULTURE FOR BELONGING: EAST AURORA SCHOOL DISTRICT 131

SMART GOAL:

By June 2026, H.W. Cowherd Middle School will increase student attendance to ensure that at least 95% of all students are present on an average school day, as part of a broader effort to foster a school culture of belonging, as measured by the average daily attendance for the school year.

Priority Teaching Practice:

We are intentionally using **questioning** and **discussion techniques** to foster a culture of belonging by building strong relationships, affirming identities, and engaging families as partners in learning, THEN students, staff, and families will feel more connected to the school community, AND school attendance will improve, reflecting a shared commitment to being present, engaged, and valued members of the school community.

Key Actions:

- Multilingual Communication
- SAIG groups and Behavior Academies (8 areas: Hands-Off, Check In/Check Out, Civility, Organizational Skills, Social Skills, Upstander, Motivation, Emotional Regulation)
- Meaningful Adult-Student Relationships for Connection
- Absence & Tardy Notifications
- Inclusive, Responsive Family Events
- Schoolwide Staff Focus on ABCs

	8/18-8/22	8/25-8/29	9/1-9/5	Average
Weekly ADA	97.2%	93.4%	93.5%	94.7%

