

# Strategic Plan Information and Advocacy Report



TO: Board of Education

FROM: Sarah Straka, Director of Instruction

DATE: January 4, 2021

RE: Information and Advocacy Report - Learning and Growth & Well-Being

## **OVERVIEW**

Board Goal I: Learning and Growth - We will graduate lifelong learners.

Objective A: Increase the percent of students "on grade level or higher" on state and local assessments among measured content areas.

- Indicator 3: Opportunities for progress-based grouping and advanced learning.

Board Goal II: Well-Being - We will provide support systems for our students and staff.

Objective C: Support and retain faculty and staff.

- Indicator 3: Professional development of staff.

## **INDICATORS**

### **Indicator 3: Opportunities for Progress-Based Grouping and Advanced Learning**

For general information regarding the District's Talented and Gifted Program Plan, please view the MHASD [Advanced Learners Program Guide](#). For most students, advanced learning options are embedded in the general education classroom with their peers. For some students, who are achieving at a level beyond that of their classroom peers, additional support and services are provided to challenge students and maximize growth. In addition to working with teachers in the classroom, students are encouraged or invited to participate in supplemental programs that are coordinated throughout the year.

Many of the supplemental programs are listed below. Even in a virtual environment, students are still participating. The current virtual nature of programming has allowed a wider net of students to participate that may have otherwise been unable to participate for several reasons (1) group sizes are not limited by physical space, (2) all students from the same grade level are on the same schedule leaving common meeting times throughout the day, (3) K-5 and 6-12 have different schedules allowing for time to be more evenly distributed and staff is not limited by travel time, and (4) virtual Wednesdays have been a great opportunity for students to access new programs.

## **Communication**

A positive outcome of the TAG Workgroup this summer was the desire for more regular communication to families from the Advanced Learning Department; therefore, the Advanced Learning Newsletters were started this year. In the past, most communication was via email or school newsletter. The Advanced Learning Newsletters are now created monthly with updates about programming, upcoming events, and resources for families. These newsletters are shared with the families of identified advanced learners and are also linked on the bottom of the main [MHASD Advanced Learning Page](#).

## **Elementary Advanced Learning Opportunities**

- [Noetic Learning Math Contest](#) is a semiannual problem-solving contest for elementary and middle school students. During the contest, students are given 45 minutes to solve 20 problems. On average 30 Mount Horeb students, from each grade 2-5, participate each year. This will take place in the spring and will be open to the students who are participating in Math Enrichment Groups.
- [Math Enrichment Groups](#) at the Intermediate Center currently focus on problem-solving using a variety of strategies, logic/reasoning, explaining mathematical thinking, etc.. These students are identified as benefitting from additional challenges beyond the classroom and students from grades 3, 4, and 5 have 30 minute sessions with their grade level cohort.
- [WordMasters Challenge](#) is a vocabulary competition based on completing analogies. Students meet with Christine Parmley during their afternoon to practice and participate: 29 students in grade 3, 34 students in grade 4, 25 students in grade 5.
- [Virtual Science Fair](#) will be offered to students in the 2nd quarter this school year. Students will be able to submit slideshows, pictures, or videos of a science project they've worked on to share with the school community.
- [Kindergarten and 1st Grade Viking Challenge](#) - These small groups are meeting Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday for a 30 minute small group session to replace one of their class small group times. During this time students work on challenging activities in math and reading. Students participating are currently performing well above grade level and this is a targeted differentiation opportunity for them.

## **Elementary and Middle School Advanced Learning Opportunities**

- [Student Leaders](#) - Another outcome of the TAG workgroup this summer was to develop student leadership opportunities. There are many middle and high school students who demonstrate leadership skills, and with our virtual platform, we have new ways to explore their potential and help them serve as leaders and role models for our younger students. Students were asked to sign up to work as student leaders if they were interested. A few examples of these connections that have been made are listed below. We currently have MS and HS students who are paired up with elementary students to work as tutors to help with work completion and practice skills. We have a writing group led by a high school student; she is teaching these aspiring writers about journalism, and they are currently working on an article for the *Mt. Horeb Mail*. We have a student who is meeting with a small group of 4th graders to play Math 24 each week.

- [Online Academy](#) (formerly known as WCATY - WI Center for Academically Talented Youth) is a collection of academic acceleration and enrichment programs for gifted and talented youth and now managed by Center for Advanced Academics. Previously, students could enroll in a WCATY program if the student's family was able to fund the tuition fee; however, the District now supports the tuition fee (\$225 per course) if a student meets Tier III advanced learning identification (98th to 99th percentile on the District assessment).
  - This year we are part of a grant that will pay for up to 10 students to take leadership based courses through the Center for Advanced Academics.
- [Future Problem Solvers](#) allows students to learn a six-step model which teaches critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and decision making. Students meet with Christine Parmley during the school day to practice and participate (students attend one class period/week): 13 students in grade 6, 6 students in grade 7, 7 students in grade 8. There are 41 High School participants this year as well.
- [Math 24](#) invites students to participate and practice Math 24 games. Tournaments will not be held outside of this district this school year. This takes place within classroom small groups or math enrichment groups.
- [Math Madness](#) - Instead of Math Team, this year the middle school students have the opportunity to participate in Math Madness, an online competitive bracket competition with schools across the country. Students are challenged with questions from the AMC (American Mathematics Competitions) Program. Students meet weekly for independent competition or collaborative inter-team competition rounds.
- [Writing Contests](#) - Fourth-grade students may participate in a haiku contest. Last spring, Christine Parmley led a team of staff, parents, and community members to create a new local writing contest for students in grades 3-8 called the Kindness, Courage, Respect Contest. This year we plan to hold another writing contest.

### **High School Advanced Learning Opportunities**

In middle and high school, these needs are met through differentiation, student placement, course selections, and scheduling. Students work with their school counselor to ensure a sequence of courses that are most aligned to students' individual interests/needs and chosen college and/or career pathways.

- Academic Decathlon
- Future Problem Solvers - This year one of Mt. Horeb High School's senior division FPS teams took first place in the International Conference! World Champions!
- Science Olympiad

### **Indicator 3: Professional Development of Staff**

As you can imagine, the 2020-2021 school year presented specific staff learning needs when thinking about and organizing professional development. "Just in time" and technology-focused staff development were the focus of the previous summer and continued to remain a focus when the 2020-2021 school year opened. Table 1 provides a summary of opportunities available to staff centering on the instructional shifts and tools needed to provide online, engaging instruction.

**Table 1: Professional Development Focused on Technology and Virtual Learning Supports**

Name of Training	Dates of Training	Training Focus
Blended Learning in a Virtual/Hybrid/F2F Environment	Learning Series August 4, 6, 12	Training on how to implement blended learning in a Virtual/Hybrid/F2F environment.
Various <a href="#">Viking Voyage Week</a> Activities	August 17-20	Training focused on applications and programs. Staff elect-in to participate in areas where they need additional training (e.g. Google Classroom, Google Forms, etc.). A couple training sessions were repeated during Inservice Week (e.g. Dreambox).
Inservice Opening Week	August 24-27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Planning and Pacing in a Virtual Environment</li> <li>● Student Engagement in a Virtual Environment</li> <li>● Building Relationships in a Virtual Environment (recorded)</li> <li>● Drop In Work Sessions with Interactive Tools</li> </ul>

Additionally, the District is continuing to support pre-identified cohorts of teachers as they roll-out digital learning. When digital implementation training started several years ago, cohorts had a prescribed two-year learning series: year 1 training focused how to embed the use of an interactive Chromebooks and its applications within the classroom and year 2 trainings focused on the SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition). These year 2 trainings were designed to provide teachers ways they can redefine a traditional task in a way that would not be possible without the technology. Table 2 provides the current cohort information.

The digital learning gap among staff members has reduced with the shift to virtual learning. All teaching professionals have had to fast forward through the fundamentals of digital implementation and our typical year 1 training topics. Additionally, staff members have undertaken independent learning opportunities and learned applications on their own as they integrate the tools within their instruction. Therefore, when possible, professional development is being provided to cohorts on specific technology tools such as Nearpod and in smaller chunks of learning (Table 2). As our teachers are online.

**Table 2: Technology Professional Development by Cohort**

Curriculum/Program	Dates of Training	Grade-Level of Staff Participants	Training Focus
Integrating Devices for Learner Achievement & Engagement - <b>YEAR 2</b>	August 2020 December 2020 Spring 2021	Cohort 2: All <b>Grade 6</b> Staff and Others Cohort 2: All <b>HS English, Social Studies, LMS</b>	Digital integration Practices
Integrating Devices for Learner Achievement & Engagement - <b>YEAR 1</b>	August 2020 November 2020 Spring 2021	Cohort 3: All <b>Grade 7</b> Staff and <b>MS WL</b> Staff, <b>HS Math</b> and <b>HS Science</b>	Digital integration Practices

Table 3 provides the curricular program or focus and accompanying training that staff participated over during the past calendar year. Care and consideration have been taken this year due to the

nature of virtual learning and staff members' capacity for additional learning. Opportunities have been identified and scheduled that directly pertain to staff instruction and implementation of curriculum and instructional practices this school year.

***Table 3: Curricular and Programming Professional Development***

Curriculum/Program	Dates of Training	Grade-Level of Staff Participants	Training Focus
Co-teaching and Co-planning Training and Coaching Support	Throughout School 19/20 and 20/21 School Year	Selected Staff at Varying Grade Levels	Understanding of co-teaching model and implementation
Bridges in Mathematics and Number Corner	June 2020	All Classroom Elementary Staff and Support Staff	Two day training on new elementary math program
NVCI Training	August 2020	Any District Staff Member That Needs Re/Certification	Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training
CPR Training	August 2020	Any District Staff Member That Needs Re/Certification	CPR and First Aid Training
CESA 2 New Teacher Project - Mentor Training	2020-2021	8 Staff Members	Year 1 Training - Two staff Year 2 Training - Six staff
Number Corner Coaching	Throughout 20/21 School Year	All Classroom Elementary Teachers	Observation of Virtual NC Lesson by MLC Coach and debrief with entire grade level

As you may know, the District has been making strides to promote a **professional learning community** structure for staff which is one of the three lenses of the [Administrative Strategic Plan](#). Each year, we look to send staff members to the PLC Institute. Unfortunately, with the limit on mass gatherings in Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin due to the pandemic, the institute was cancelled in each of these states. Therefore, for those that were slated to attend, a virtual PLC Professional Educator Portal was offered.

The information below outlines the current numbers of staff that have attended the PLC Institute over the past five years:

- Fall/Winter 2020: 5 Participants (5 teachers) - Virtual/Recorded
- Summer 2020: 18 Participants (17 teachers, 1 admin)
- Summer 2019: 24 Participants (18 teachers, 6 admin)
- Summer 2018: 44 Participants (38 teachers, 6 admin)
- Summer 2017: 11 Participants (8 teachers and 3 admin)
- Summer 2016: 11 Participants (all admin)

Fortunately, the PLC Institute will be coming back to Madison for the Summer of 2021. Principals will be reaching out to interested teachers during the months of December and January so that we may register for spots before they fill.