

Seattle Excellence Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP)

Denny International Middle School

Purpose

The Continuous School Improvement Plan provides an overview of the school, student outcome goals and a brief narrative description on how the school plans to collaboratively meet these goals over time. It is intended to offer families and community audiences an overview of improvement work aligned to the strategic plan and written in language that is accessible by a diverse audience.

Introduction

WHEN WE FOCUS on ensuring racial equity in our educational system, unapologetically address the needs of students of color who are furthest from educational justice, and work to undo the legacies of racism in our educational system by doing the following:

- Allocating resources strategically through a racial equity framework
- Delivering high-quality, standards-aligned instruction across all abilities and a continuum of services for learners
- Creating healthy, supportive, culturally responsive environments from the classroom to central office
- Directly and consistently working in partnership with families and communities who represent students of color who are furthest from educational justice; and
- Making clear commitments and delivering on them

THEN we will eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps and every student will receive a high-quality, world-class education.

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Seattle Public Schools Foundational Beliefs for Supporting Student Learning

In Seattle Public Schools, we understand that a shared vision of practice is essential to fostering the learning communities that each of our students and adults needs to thrive. This shared vision enables educators to work in concert to build their practice with a focus on student learning.

As such, we believe:

- 1) **Teaching is intellectually complex**, difficult and demanding work, and the development of skillful teaching requires deep collaboration and non-defensive self-examination of practice in relation to student results.
- 2) **By collaborating with families in authentic partnerships**, we create a path for students to reach their highest potential, engaging with families as the first and lifelong teachers of students.
- 3) **"Intelligence" is not a fixed, inborn trait**. All children come to school with cultural capital and intelligence, and all have the raw material to learn rigorous academic material at high standards. Therefore, our work is to **build students' academic mindset**
- 4) **By recognizing and cultivating the gifts and strengths of every student**, we can get each student to believe in themselves and deconstruct any of their own internalized stereotypes.
- 5) **Racism in our society exerts a downward force on the experiences and achievement of students of color that must be met with active countermeasures.**

Our commitment to these beliefs is the route to institutionalizing racial equity and fostering a context where each child receives what they need to develop to their full academic and social potential, and we make educational equity and justice the cornerstone of our system.

School Profile

Denny International Middle School is a wonderfully diverse learning community focused on high expectations and strong relationships with all of our scholars! Our diversity—racially and linguistically—is our greatest strength. The demographics of our 856 scholars are: Latinx 26.6%, Black 20.2%, Asian 12.1%, White 27.7%, Native American .5%, Multiracial 11.7%, Pacific Islander 1.2%, FRL 62%, IEP services 18.5%, current or recently exited EL 39.7%, homeless 6.9%, and 100% Loved, Highly Capable, and College Bound! Our entire school community is committed to the goal of providing an outstanding education for each scholar. Our school staff love our kids and the middle school age.

In all that we do, we center the learning experiences of African American males and other scholars of color currently furthest from educational justice. Our team has demonstrated a passion and capacity for this antiracist work. We will build upon our previous successes and partnerships, doing so with urgency and a constant drive towards innovation. The work we do every day—for the benefit of our scholars and in partnership with families whom we are honored to serve—is the work of educational, racial, and social justice in our democracy.

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Priorities and Measurable Goals

Middle School Focus Goal: 7th Grade Mathematics

Priority Goal:

For the 2022-23 school year, at least 42% of 7th grade scholars of color currently furthest from educational justice will meet or exceed standard on the Math Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Target Goal #1:

For the 2022-23 school year, at least 60% of African American/Black scholars will meet or exceed standard on the Math Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Target Goal #2:

For the 2022-23 school year, at least 60% of Latinx scholars will meet or exceed standard on the Math Smarter Balanced Assessment.

Safe and Welcoming Environment Goal

Priority Goal:

For the 2022-23 school year, our average daily attendance % will be at or above district average.

Target Goal:

For the 2022-23 school year, our average daily attendance % for our African American male scholars will be at or above our school average.

Supplementary Goals

We will reduce the number of out-of-school suspensions from the of 2018-19 total of 151 to a 2022-2023 total of 133 or less.

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High Quality Learning Experiences

Educate the whole child through high-quality instruction and learning experiences that accelerate growth for students of color who are furthest from educational justice, with an intentional focus on African American males.

To achieve educational justice, Seattle Public Schools (SPS) strives to provide safe learning environments, curriculum that incorporates a student's life experiences and culture, and instruction delivered by high-quality, culturally responsive educators. Unfortunately, many students from certain ethnicities have not historically experienced equitable opportunities for all or part of their educational journey (including African and African American, Asian Pacific Islander and Pacific Islander, LatinX, and Native American students). These students are our priority – with an intentional focus on African American males.

School-wide Systems and Structures (MTSS)

MTSS offers the potential to create the alignment of systems necessary for all students' academic, behavioral, and social success. In addition, MTSS promotes needed systematic change through intentional design and redesign of services and supports that quickly identify and match the needs of all students. MTSS is an integrated, comprehensive framework that focuses on CCSS, core instruction, differentiated learning, student-centered learning, individualized student needs.

At Denny, our MTSS system starts with teachers using school-wide Tier 1 strategies. As the next level of MTSS, our EWI (Early Warning Indicator) meetings, which occur after school, every other week, on Mondays for 7th grade, Tuesdays for 8th grade, and Thursday for 6th grade, are prepped for by the grade-level administrator, facilitated by the Team Leader, and followed up on by the grade-level counselor. At these meetings, approximately five scholar names are selected to be presented based on attendance, behavior, and/or course performance data. All the scholar's teachers and representatives from City Year, CIS, and other support services attend to efficiently discuss each child's strengths and current areas of needed support. An EWI plan of action is created, including specific next steps with identified point-people and timelines. This plan is then monitored and reviewed until the concern has been alleviated. After EWI plan implementation, and after tier 1 and tier 2 interventions have been attempted, if the concern remains, one additional next step could be a referral to our MTSS Team.

Our MTSS Team meets weekly and includes all our support specialists: grade-level counselors, grade-level administrators, school psychologist, mental health lead, nurse, special ed consulting teacher, prevention/intervention specialist, as well as representative from major CBO partnerships. At this level, scholars with complex needs are presented and new ideas are discussed, and new steps are added to the EWI plan. Possible Tier 3 level interventions include: Referral to the SPS Tier 3 Team, referral for a King County Wrap Team, increased mental health support with coordination of providers, referral for IEP services, connecting

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additional support for homelessness and other factors, or coordination of multiple state and CBO agencies with one clear plan

Goal: Update all teachers and team members on the resources, point people, and protocols that we use to serve our scholars. We will do this to empower our team members to become better advocates and improve the effectiveness and results of our Early Warning Indicator meetings and intervention recommendations.

In addition, we are pleased to have a new MTSS Tier 2 and Tier 3 coordinator position. This person will be integral to keeping all individualized plans and system on track to success and keeping communication flowing on all levels.

Gap Closing Practices and Special Services

Seattle Public Schools is committed to eliminating opportunity gaps to ensure access and provide excellence in education for every student.

Delivering high-quality, standards-aligned instruction across all abilities and a continuum of services for learners is a core element of Seattle Excellence. Our Theory of Action is guided by the principles of “Targeted Universalism.” Our universal goal is every Seattle Public Schools’ student receives a high-quality, world-class education and graduates prepared for college, career, and community. Targeted Universalism holds that targeted and differentiated efforts are required to meet the needs of specific student populations, so every student meets the universal goal.

By focusing on students of color who are furthest from educational justice, especially African American males, we will make the greatest progress toward our collective vision. We believe that an intentional focus on African American males will ultimately benefit every student.

The culture of Denny International Middle School is centered on achieving racial equity, creating opportunities and supports, and celebrating the success of our scholars currently furthest from educational justice. We do this by striving to infuse culturally responsive practices into all that we do. As a school, we have also welcomed into our building, developed ourselves, or partnered with different district and community groups to offer racially and linguistically specific and culturally affirming classes and leadership programs for our scholars.

In order to differentiate plans for scholars being served through special education, we offer a full-service model with a range of levels of service. This range in service allows us to be responsive to individualized goals and needs.

Our English Learners academic growth is highly prioritized by offering a research-based ELL literacy service model, a Dual Language program, and a school-wide focus on language acquisition best practices.

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Our advance learners are served through placement in their appropriate math level, including options for one- or two-year advancement; through our Readers/Writers Workshop model; and through differentiation and advanced language learning options.

At Denny International Middle School, thanks to the partnerships we have developed, we are currently employing the following strategies and partnerships to address the academic and non-academic needs of our scholars:

- Our City Year team provides case management for scholars identified as demonstrating risks for attendance, behavior, or course performance. Scholars are mentored and provided with academic support in classrooms and after school daily.
- Communities in Schools provides a full-time staff member to provide intensive case management and family outreach for a caseload of 40 scholars, who are identified as demonstrating risks for attendance, behavior, or course performance. Scholars are provided with academic and social/emotional wrap-around support.
- To enhance the classes that we are able to offer our scholars, we have a seven period schedule. As a key element of this schedule, our literacy teachers teach a two-period Language Arts/Reading block. This extra reading period is designed to give scholars additional in-school literacy time to build a solid foundation of literacy skills, to address specific learning needs, and empower our scholars as passionate readers and writers.
- After school math and literacy support is available three to four days per week for each grade level. This extended time is tied directly to what was taught during the school day. As a part of our school-wide standards-based grading system, during this time, scholars receive individualized instruction from their core teachers and tutors, prior to taking “re-take” assessments to demonstrate increased proficiency for each standard.
- Denny continues to partner with Seattle Parks and Recreation to provide after school academic learning and culturally-affirming enrichment and mentoring opportunities. Our CLC includes after school options Monday through Friday from 2:45 to 4:30. Programs offered are based on both identified academic need and scholar interest. Programs that are taught by Denny staff and community partners are motivating for scholars and support them in coming to school daily.
- In order to increase the amount of learning time for our scholars, Denny partners with Seattle Parks and Recreation to provide extended year math and literacy learning opportunities with Break Academies and our own comprehensive summer school, the Westside Scholars Summer Academy.

Practices and Strategies

We will recognize and serve the academic, social, cultural, emotional, and behavioral strengths and needs of students, providing high-quality, culturally responsive instruction, curriculum, and social-emotional learning supports delivered by educators who set high expectations, so students graduate ready for college, career, and community.

Whole child education goes beyond a focus on academic achievement. When educators focus on educating the whole child, students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. In Seattle Public Schools, this

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means that we appreciate and serve the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral strengths and needs of students, which we believe comprise the needs of the "whole child."

High-quality instruction is focused on student-centered learning and achievement, intentional about student engagement, and aligned to standards with consistent and appropriate feedback.

At its foundation, culturally responsive education means that students are in an environment where they have the individual safety and comfort to learn within a classroom that has a common culture that is respectful of all backgrounds.

At Denny International Middle School, monitoring the progress of our scholars' academic learning is done using formative assessments, classroom-based summative assessments, interim or benchmark assessments, and our state's annual summative assessment. This is done with a specific focus on the results for our African American males and other scholars currently furthest from educational justice.

We collaboratively analyze these results in many ways, ranging from a quick hallway conversation to a facilitated all-staff meeting with a protocol. This analysis is done at the individual scholar level, the racial and programmatic subgroup level, for a whole grade, and the all-school level, as appropriate.

We develop action plans based on this collaborative analysis with specific goals, with identified point people, and with a timeline included. These plans are reviewed and adjusted to make sure we are on the path to success in grade-level subject-matter team collaboration and through our MTSS system.

Safe and Welcoming Environment

Students thrive in healthy, safe, engaging, supported, and challenging environments in which they can to learn to their full potential. Instruction must be high-quality, culturally responsive, focused, and aligned to standards for students to develop as independent learners.

Student voice should be evident, and students must be seen and celebrated for their authentic selves. Significant increases in academic outcomes for students furthest from educational justice are possible when social, cultural, emotional, and behavioral needs of students are met by educators that share an unconditional belief in the potential of every student they serve.

At Denny, we have co-developed a list of best practices for online teaching and learning lesson planning, including fostering a welcoming environment, engaging practices, and including an optimistic closure. Collaboration time and PD time are dedicated for departments and grade-level teams to collaborate on the development of these lesson plans. Additionally, we will meet our school culture goals by continuing to focus on strong Tier 1 implementation and thorough use of our MTSS multi-tier systems online. Furthermore, we will continue to address to scholar climate through advisory, while we implement tiered

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attendance and engagement strategies for identified scholars. To monitor our progress towards meeting our goals, we will use and analyze the Online Platform Utilization Report.

Inclusive and Authentic Engagement

Partner with students, families, and communities who are furthest from educational justice by conducting inclusive and authentic engagement.

We will proactively and consistently work in partnership *with* students, families, and communities to identify needs, determine solutions, and support the implementation of the initiatives that will best meet the needs of students of color who are furthest from educational justice. We will use culturally responsive ways to engage so we build trusting relationships and empower the voices of those who can help us meet these needs.

Family and Community Goals

Priority Goal:

In response to the SPS family survey questions, the percentage of Black/African American families who respond favorably will increase from 76% to 85%.

The percentage of Latino/Hispanic families who respond favorably will increase from 83% to 85%. Note: SPS average is 66% overall; DIMS average is 71% overall.

Target Goal:

100% of Black/African American and Latinx families new to Denny will be offered a home visit.

Plans for Family Engagement

At Denny International Middle School, we want to establish authentic, two-way partnerships with families and with our community. In our efforts to do so, we will design our plans around what is best for families of African American males and other scholars currently furthest from educational justice. Everyone gains if Denny staff and families work together to promote high achievement by our children. Neither home nor Denny staff can do the job alone. Families play an extremely important role as children's first teachers. Our goal is forming a school-home partnership that will help all scholars to succeed.

In order to form this partnership, we will offer flexible meetings, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and provide transportation, childcare, or home visits. Throughout the 2020-21 school year, we will offer family engagement opportunities—specifically to get feedback and hear ideas from our families—in the following ways:

1. Home visits in August

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2. Conferences after the second and third quarters
3. PTSA meetings held bimonthly
4. Neighborhood outreach meetings; for example, the Denny South Park and Highpoint meetings
5. The “Parent Cafes” held in Spanish/English and Somali/English
6. Our East African Family Day held on a Saturday
7. Our African American Family Night

We will evaluate the success of our efforts through evaluation forms filled out by our families and through the analysis of the SPS Family survey.