

William Diamond Middle School
School Improvement Plan 2015 -2016
End of Year Update

Site Council Members:

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Goal	Implementation	Update
<p>Goal 1: If teachers expand their use of student data to discuss student progress and select effective instructional strategies, then all students will achieve at higher levels.</p>	<p>Diamond faculty will continue to use department and content meetings (“PLCs”) to work on elements of standards-based curriculum design:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aligning curriculum to the Common Core Standards • determining “power standards” (most essential standards) • designing units and lessons • creating/finding/revising pre- and post-assessments • creating embedded formative assessments 	<p>Departments focused their energies in this area over the course of the year, with the particular focus differing from department to department or grade to grade. While this work is always being further refined, departments have largely identified their most essential standards. They are now working on collaboratively designing units and lessons to teach those standards and/or on creating effective assessments to measure students’ progress towards them.</p>
	<p>Diamond faculty will focus in particular on the question: “How do we know what students are learning?” We will partner with Maureen Kavanaugh, our district’s Director of Planning and Assessment, to learn more about best practice in formal and informal measurement. We will use our learning to design and revise our measurement tools.</p>	<p>We did not end up focusing on this question during Faculty Meeting time, but departments worked on building their pool of assessments. The World Language Department worked with Ms. Kavanaugh as part of their curriculum review, and continued to work on assessment design throughout the year. Several members of the Social Studies department and the leadership team took her assessment course. The English, Social Studies and Science departments worked together on tools to evaluate argumentative writing. This question was also embedded in our school-wide child study work, as we looked more closely at individual students in need.</p>
	<p>Diamond staff will continue to develop their expertise in the use of technology to support learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Diamond faculty will receive support, tailored to their self-identified learning needs. • Baseline website features presented to faculty will be in place on all team and teacher websites by September 2015. • In grade 8 we will launch a 1-1 IPAD pilot. Every student in grade 8 will receive an IPAD to use all year (home and school). Students and involved faculty will receive additional training. Clear guidelines for IPAD use and responsibilities will be created and shared with students. 	<p>Throughout the year, Diamond faculty received coaching (as individuals or teams) from our school-based Instructional Technology Specialist.</p> <p>We successfully implemented our plan to update our Team and teacher websites; all Teams now have a Team website with a common look and common features (including an easy to find homework feature).</p> <p>We successfully launched our 1-1 Grade 8 iPad pilot. All students had the use of a personal iPad for the whole school year, and both students and staff received training in its use. Clear guidelines for use were shared and enforced throughout the year. We are looking forward to extending the pilot to include grade 7 next year.</p>

Goal	Implementation	Update
<p>Goal 1: (continued)</p> <p>If teachers expand their use of student data to discuss student progress and select effective instructional strategies, then all students will achieve at higher levels.</p>	<p>Diamond will continue to develop and refine its child study and support process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Leaders, administration and guidance will continue to explore ways to most effectively use Team Meeting times – for child study and other valuable team business. • Teams will continue to explore the most effective ways to take notes, including using district google accounts. • The Diamond Child Study Team will revise Child Study Guiding Questions, and a clearer process will be outlined. • This process will be shared with faculty by November 2015. • Professional development in <i>Teaching All Kinds of Minds</i> will be offered to additional faculty. • Teams will continue to explore formal and informal use of <i>TAKOM (Teaching All Kinds of Minds)</i> protocols, as an aid for understanding student learning needs and identifying potentially effective strategies. • “Child Study Oversight Team” will continue to meet. It will clarify its role in the Child Study process, and help to refine the process in general. • A new approach to general education intervention will be piloted. Guided Study, Learning Center and Reading Support will be collapsed into one program: Guided Learning. This will be implemented by a two-person team. They will be tasked with assessment, support design and delivery, and collaborating with general education colleagues. • Math intervention will be offered 2-4 times weekly for students in need. • We will offer Diamond Extended Day for METCO students. We will also offer an invitational Homework Support Club for non-METCO students. We hope to integrate the two programs next year. 	<p>Diamond made significant progress on developing its child study system this year, but significant work remains to be done. Each Team dedicated at least one meeting weekly to discussing children and their progress, and many Teams were able to use this time with increasing efficiency. Teams are all now using the same format to take notes on children, and the googledoc tool has allowed off-team teachers to be able to read these notes and/or add to them.</p> <p>We realized that we were not trying to develop a child study process, but instead a child study system, and we now have the framework. There are multiple teams involved, with a variety of functions. A schematic graphic to explain the system was designed. This was shared with all faculty in small groups, to allow for questions and feedback.</p> <p>Two additional round of <i>Teaching All Kinds of Minds</i> training took place this year; 66 faculty members (classroom and support teachers, school counselors and social workers, administrators, and the school psychologist) have now had the initial round of training. TAKOM teams were identified for each grade level, and several profiling sessions were held to help identify strengths and needs for children of concern.</p> <p>The “Child Study Oversight Team” (now known as the “Child Study Advisory Group”) met monthly to begin to oversee this new system, and to find improvements. Next year it will be tasked with helping to improve clarity for faculty members.</p> <p>The Guided Learning Program is up and running, and making a difference for students in need. It has successfully combined the missions previously covered by 3 other support systems into one more flexible system.</p> <p>We continued to offer math intervention during the school day, and we offered an extended day 4X weekly to support homework completion for METCO students. We also expanded our general homework support club to 4 days weekly.</p>

Goal	Implementation	Update
<p>Goal 2: If we increase student pro-social behavior and resiliency, and reduce sources of unhealthy student stress, then student academic performance and well-being will improve.</p>	<p>Diamond will continue to develop its community-building and pro-social skills development programming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A planning team (administration, guidance, social work and faculty) will meet over the spring and summer to lay out the goals for Diamond’s pro-social activities and programs. • The planning team will then use these outlined goals to create a coherent programming road map for next year. • This road map will include current programming (speakers from MA Aggression Reduction Coalition [MARC]; social events; community-service events; assemblies; district-wide prevention programs; student leadership training opportunities), as well as new programming. • ICE block (a weekly 45 minute block) will allow faculty and students to engage in continued community-building activities and enrichment opportunities, designed to focus on the needs of the “whole child”. • The Student Council will continue to serve as a structure for building leadership and community, and for planning events/initiatives. 	<p>While we continued to grow our pro-social and community-building programming, the road map did not get completed this year. (Construction planning and implementation of the ICE & TIE pilot took up significant bandwidth this year; the Guidance Curriculum Review was extended a year, and we wanted to wait for this planning to finish before designing the roadmap.) There are plans for a summer working group to focus on moving this plan forward.</p> <p>We continued with our current programming and also piloted additional events: community service events (food drive, Crayons for Kids, clothing drive), grade-level Socials, leadership trainings, classroom lessons, and assemblies (Diamond-designed or facilitated by outside presenters, such as MARC or Sister Soldier).</p> <p>We continued to explore the possibilities of our whole school ICE block. We ran informal social skills groups, and offered opportunities for various forms of student leadership (running an offering, planning community-building events, or finding ways to improve our Diamond culture). Our enrichment and extension options grew even more robust, and students were usually able to get into a 1st or 2nd choice for each 6-week module.</p> <p>The Student Council was vibrant and active this year. Students from all grades were represented, and they met regularly over the course of the year. They planned social events and spearheaded our charitable endeavors.</p>

Goal	Implementation	Update
<p>Goal 2: (continued) If we increase student pro-social behavior and resiliency, and reduce sources of unhealthy student stress, then student academic performance and well-being will improve.</p>	<p>Diamond will continue to refine its student pro-social skills and behavioral support systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Smooth Sailing Team” (admin /guidance/ psych /social workers/nurse) will meet twice weekly to identify worrying situations and design interventions for students in need. • Smooth Sailing Team will continue to partner with district consultants to improve its knowledge/skill base, and to find effective intervention strategies. • Smooth Sailing Team will collaborate with the Child Study Triage Team to clarify the overlapping functions of the two teams. • Diamond will digest the results of the Youth Behavior Risk Survey administered to students in grades 7 and 8 in the spring of 2015. This information will be used to inform both our health curriculum and our pro-social programming. 	<p>The Smooth Sailing Team functions well, and is effectively using a team approach to design appropriate interventions for students with emotional and behavioral needs.</p> <p>The Smooth Sailing Team continued to refine its practice, and partnered regularly with district leadership; it sent members to various trainings this year, and aligned with district best practice (including the use of protocols and procedures).</p> <p>The Smooth Sailing Team did clarify its mission in the Diamond child study system, and the difference between this mission and that of the “Child Study Triage Team”. As a result, the SST (Smooth Sailing Team) meets only once a week this year.</p> <p>An Executive Summary of the Youth Behavior Risk Survey results for middle school was shared with the School Committee, parents (Parent Night), and faculty (Faculty Meeting). The results have already begun to inform our pro-social programming.</p>

Goal	Implementation	Update
<p>Goal 3: Work with faculty, community, Facilities department, and architectural team to ensure that future space needs are effectively addressed</p>	<p>Diamond administration will meet regularly with Architectural Design Team to ensure understanding of Diamond's programs, culture and history, and teacher and student needs.</p> <p>Diamond administration will coordinate with the Central Office administration and Facilities to plan and conduct meetings with faculty and parents, to share information and gather input, as needed.</p> <p>Diamond administration will work with Architectural Design Team to design the best teaching and learning space possible.</p> <p>Diamond and Clarke administration will partner closely to ensure the continuation of the high quality learning experiences of our middle school students, regardless of any future growth in student body.</p>	<p>Diamond and district-wide administration met regularly with architectural design team to communicate the needs of the building and its varied programs.</p> <p>Information was shared with key stakeholders through a number of venues: Faculty Meetings, parent coffees, parent and community presentations, district website, School Council meetings and notes, and small group working sessions.</p> <p>The design for the Diamond construction and renovation plans has been completed.</p> <p>Diamond and Clarke administration have worked together closely to ensure clarity of communication during the design process.</p>

Goal	Implementation	Update
<p>Goal 4: If we communicate effectively, the Diamond community will be better able to support students toward their academic and pro-social goals.</p>	<p>Diamond’s community norms will continue to guide our work together.</p> <p>Administration and Faculty Teams will continue to explore the use of technology to enhance communication (Faculty Update, notes in google, shared documents in google, team and teacher websites...).</p> <p>School leadership will make being a regular presence in classrooms and at meetings a priority, in order to support the work, open lines of communication, and provide more regular feedback.</p> <p>Principal will explore the use of Twitter to communicate more regularly with the community about Diamond life.</p> <p>School will work on clarifying for families the different communication channels available to them.</p>	<p>We referenced our norms regularly, in building consensus around the new model for intervention (RTI) blocks and in our daily work. They also guided our interventions with students.</p> <p>Faculty Update was used to share important logistical information, thereby freeing up Faculty Meeting time for other work/discussion. Teams and faculty used our Google tools regularly to share information and engage in collaborative work.</p> <p>School leadership (department heads, assistant principals and principal) were out in the school and in classrooms; this will remain a focus going forward.</p> <p>Principal did not use Twitter this year.</p> <p>School used various vehicles to share information about the available communication channels: Principal’s Notes, Principal coffees, Parent Night for incoming 6th grade families, Back to School night.</p>