

# A.W. Coolidge Middle School

*Perseverance, Accountability, Respect, Teamwork*

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Sarah Marchant, Principal  
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**To:** Coolidge Community Members  
**From:** Coolidge School Council  
**Re:** Coolidge School Improvement Plan  
**Date:** June 26, 2018

The Coolidge School Council is proud to share information about our Coolidge School Improvement Plan. Please see below for more information about the School Council and the back of this sheet for a summary overview of the School Improvement Plan goals that have been our focus for the 2017 – 2018 school year.

## **What is School Council?**

A school council is a representative school building-based committee composed of the principal, parents, teachers, community members and sometimes students, and is required to be established by each school pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 59C.

## **What does a School Council do?**

The law outlines four major areas of responsibility for councils. School councils are to assist principals in:

1. Adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards.
2. Identifying the educational needs of students attending the school.
3. Reviewing the annual school building budget.
4. Formulating a school improvement plan.

## **Who is on the Coolidge School Council?**

The Coolidge School Council for 2017-2018 included: Sarah Marchant, Principal, Co-Chair; Marcellus Koster, Parent, Co-Chair; Brienne Karow, Assistant Principal; Eric Castriano, Teacher; Michael Maday, Teacher; Christine Magoon, Parent; Rick Nazzaro, Parent; Pooja Parsons, Parent; and Theresa Wiggins, Parent.

## **How does a school decide on a School Improvement Plan goal?**

It is important that the schools in our district align their work with the District Improvement Plan, but individualize the goals of our specific building plans so that the needs of our particular building are being met. For example, a focus area of both Coolidge and the district is to work to narrow the achievement gap of our high needs population. There is also a focus on Intervention and Support in both the district and Coolidge plans. While we share these goals, what this looks like in each building might be a bit different.

## **How can I find out more information?**

View the full Coolidge School Improvement Plan here:

[http://reading.k12.ma.us/coolidge/files/4915/3003/2961/School\\_Improvement\\_Plan\\_DRAFT\\_2017-2018\\_10-15.pdf](http://reading.k12.ma.us/coolidge/files/4915/3003/2961/School_Improvement_Plan_DRAFT_2017-2018_10-15.pdf)

**Coolidge School Improvement Goal 2017 – 2018:** Coolidge will continue to narrow the achievement gap through the implementation of structures that better support student learning as well as through the ongoing use of data to inform decisions regarding student needs.

*During the 2017-2018 school year, this goal will be met through: the introduction of a formal Advisory Curriculum, the implementation of an Intervention and Support (What I Need/ “WIN”) block, an increase in differentiation in 7<sup>th</sup> grade math, and the implementation of a formal Student Support Team (SST) process. These will be combined with our ongoing use of student data, tiered supports and interventions, and positive feedback and reinforcement. (In alignment with District Goals A - E)*

### **Why this goal?**

Our teachers know our students best, and all members of our community want to help all students achieve to their maximum potential. To maximize academic achievement, students need to feel safe both behaviorally and emotionally, and structures need to be in place to support their academic and emotional development. The goal regarding “narrowing the achievement gap” is ongoing. This year, we wanted to create structures to better support students in their learning and social-emotional curriculum in order to narrow the gap.

### **Within the goal, we had four main focus areas:**

- **Focus Area A: Social-Emotional Growth and Advisory**

*In collaboration with Parker Middle School and the “Facing History and Ourselves” organization, we will develop a curriculum and structure within which teachers will work with students in small Advisory groups. As a result of this curriculum and structure, students will increase their sense of identity (self/ Advisory/ school/ community), increase empathy and understanding for others, build connectedness (student to student; student to teacher), and decrease incidents of unkindness and bullying. (In alignment with District Focus Areas A & D)*

- **Focus Area B: Intervention and Support**

*To create the structure within the school day in which we will implement a “What I Need” opportunity for students who have demonstrated, through various criteria, a need for Tier 2 intervention and support (in areas such as: mathematics, social-emotional, and executive functioning). To implement these supports, to track student progress within, and to adjust supports and student groupings to meet student needs. (In alignment with District Focus Areas A, B, C, & D)*

- **Focus Area C: Math Differentiation**

*In order to best challenge and support all students in mathematics, we will provide the structures, professional development, collaboration time, and resources to support increased differentiation and co-teaching in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade math classes and beyond. (In alignment with District Focus Areas A & C)*

- **Focus Area D: Student Support Team**

*In order to help all students best access the curriculum and express their knowledge, we will use a formalized SST process so as to provide accommodations and supports to students who are struggling. If a special education referral is ultimately made (by team or parent), SST data will help to define areas of strength and weakness. (In alignment with District Focus Areas A - E)*

### **Why these focus areas? And what progress was made on these?**

- **Focus Area A** was established to provide an aligned middle school social-emotional Advisory structure and curriculum for all students. Structurally, all students across both middle schools were part of an advisory group with whom they meet for 60 minutes per week, consisting of one adult and between 12-14 students per group. The administrative team collaborated with Facing History and Ourselves to create curriculum resources that were utilized by the Advisory teachers. All students participated in Advisory lessons which included topics such as identity, community, responsibility, bias, hate symbols, teambuilding, goal setting, and stress reduction. By increasing feelings of connectedness, community, identity, and responsibility, students built feelings of empathy and ownership of community, and by doing so, reduced unkindnesses and bullying.

- Focus Area B is an area being worked on across the district. Every year we work with all students to help them to grow and to reach their greatest potential. While we have structures in place to support students who need extra help, only a few occur within the school day and many of those structures require students and teachers to work together outside of the school day. We determined that we needed more time within the school day to create opportunities for support and intervention so that all students can access this time, rather than just those who can attend school beyond the school day. We therefore created the “What I Need” period that offset the Advisory meeting time. During this time, students who need Tier 2 support in areas such as math, executive functioning, mindfulness, social-emotional guidance, and instrumental practice were able to receive extra help. Students who did not require Tier 2 support were working on Organizing and Reading in a larger group setting.
- Focus Area C was a goal created due to our ongoing need to build the capacity of our math teachers to meet the needs of students with varied math abilities. This was a higher priority this year relative to years past due to the collapse of levels in 7<sup>th</sup> grade math from three levels to two, therefore creating a more heterogeneous group than in years prior. The math teachers worked diligently to utilize various differentiated instruction techniques. Yet this goal did not get the professional development support that we had intended, so it will continue to be a goal as we continue to work to build teacher capacity with differentiated instruction and inclusionary practices.
- Focus Area D was a goal created so that we have a more formal process in place to gauge student needs, to measure those needs, to create interventions for those needs, and to track data to quantify progress. This is Year 2 of a two-year goal/process. In year 1, we built the capacity of teachers to utilize our DCAP accommodations to more flexibly work with students and to address their individual needs, as well as to track interventions that teachers and teams were utilizing when students need support. In year 2, we implemented a Student Support Team to create a “think tank” in which students who were struggling beyond the teacher and team efforts were provided additional interventions and support. As a result of this two-year effort, we now have streamlined processes for supporting students and tracking interventions, a formal process in place when teachers think students need more help, and a formalized SST process for helping those students. By building teacher capacity with the utilization of accommodations and interventions, and implementing the SST process, we have not only strengthened our teaching staff with providing students what they need, but we have also decreased the number of special education referrals from our teaching staff relative to years prior.

### **What does the future hold for this goal?**

The overarching goal of reducing the achievement gap remains in our school and district as an ongoing goal. We are proud of the work we have completed in our focus areas, all of which are meant to support the overarching goal regarding the narrowing of the achievement gap. That being said, we know there is more work to be done, including:

- In Focus Area A, we are utilizing summer hours for staff to work on the creation of Advisory resources that align with soon-to-be created grade-level focus areas. We will continue to utilize FHAO resources, including lessons, books and videos. We will utilize other resources, such as the ADL, Challenge Day, and Mindfulness activities to create curriculum that better matches our student needs. We will continue to integrate social-emotional learning opportunities for our staff so that they are best able to understand student needs, including building capacity in the areas of Mindfulness, Trauma-sensitive teaching, and Inclusive Practices.
- In Focus Area B, we would like to expand how we utilize WIN as well as Team Time for interventions and support. We are looking to expand further to include more literacy, executive functioning, and social-emotional supports, as well as to provide more opportunities for those students who might be mentors to others or who are ready for more challenges.
- Focus Area C will remain a goal for next year. We will be training one math teacher in Inclusionary Practices, and will work to provide PD for all math teachers around Differentiated Instruction and with the differentiation of assessments.
- Focus Area D will no longer be a focus area, as it is a structure that is now part of our routines.