

York Suburban Middle School



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2014-2015

Quality Assessment Report

Submitted by: Dr. Scott T. Krauser, Principal

Introduction

The 2014-2015 school year was a year of change for the York Suburban Middle School (YSMS). The teachers welcomed two new positional changes to the administrative team; Dr. Scott T. Krauser moved from assistant principal to principal, and Dr. Todd D. Monos joined York Suburban as the new Assistant Principal.

The new administrative team and staff maintained the commitment to academic excellence and high expectations for all students by providing the necessary learning environment for young adolescences to grow and develop, thus bridging the critical educational span between elementary school and high school.

This report will highlight the actions and strategies conducted by each of the departments within the Middle School. Each department serves as a critical factor for the overall success of YSMS. These departments positively influence both the academic performance measures mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the living culture created at YSMS. I invite you to please visit York Suburban Middle School's [School Performance Profile](#) website for accurate quantitative data reporting of our school performance measures and reach out to a YSMS staff member or student and ask them to describe the culture of PRIDE found in the halls of YSMS for qualitative data reporting.

English Language Arts (ELA) Department

Goals:

- Evaluate and revise current ELA curriculum to insure alignment with PA Core Standards.
- Maintain a consistent writing curriculum in grades 6-8.
- Develop a grammar progression to incorporate the updated PA Core Standards.

English Language Arts Curriculum and Instruction

- Reading Literature
 - The McDougal Littell Literature Books and the Grammar for Writing Books are the approved textbooks used throughout grades 6-8. This series along with teacher created materials are aligned with the updated PA Core Standards.
 - New types of questions were included in the latest version of the PSSA. There were two part questions which require students to select more than one answer at times. Also, Text Dependent Analysis prompts are included that require students to analyze a text with greater depth. With these changes an emphasis was placed

on creating questions that would help prepare students for new expectations. This included revising the Text Dependent Analysis prompts that were more rigorous and forced students to utilize knowledge about academic vocabulary. Also, students were given more opportunities to answer two part questions which required them to find text support for answers.

- Writing and Grammar
 - Jane Schaffer Writing continues to be used as a framework for writing at the middle school level. The framework is used for Text Dependent Analysis, Informational Writing, and Argumentative Writing.
 - With updated PA Core Standards there was a need to emphasize narrative writing was taught and practice this form of writing throughout the school year.
 - The new state rubrics incorporate grammar when writing in all modes including Text Dependent Analysis. With this addition to the rubric, grammar instruction was reevaluated. The use of the Grammar for Writing book and workbook became a part of many middle school English Language Arts classrooms. The ELA teachers are utilizing the Grammar Progression K-12 that was created to ensure that all skills are being covered.
 - The English Language Arts department continues to utilize consistent academic vocabulary from grades six to eight in terms of writing and grammar. This consistency has created a stronger writing program where students meet with a high rate of success.

- PSSA Practice
 - Coach books were purchased for use to help gauge the content that students needed to be taught in order to meet the updated PA Core Standards. The Coach books were used in different capacities at each grade level.
 - Study Island benchmarks were administered three times throughout the year to track progress, and to make instructional decisions about content that needed to be reviewed or re taught to students. This information was also useful in helping to revise the curriculum to be sure that the essential information is contained in the map.

Reading and Writing Across Curricular Areas

- English Language Arts goes beyond one department as the content areas and unified arts teachers embrace Core Six strategies to continue to strengthen the reading and writing skills of all middle school students.
- Many English Language Arts teachers were key players in the staff development of the Core Six. Content area teachers were educated on reading and writing strategies,
- Content area teachers were given instruction on utilizing the Text Dependent Analysis framework. The Text Dependent Analysis format or other forms of writing were incorporated into various content areas as well as unified arts.

Instructional Practices

- Co-taught ELA expanded to all three grade levels. The focus for the ELA co-taught program was placed on the lower achieving population of students. These courses were taught by regular education English Language Arts teachers and Learning Support teachers.
- A co-teaching handbook was created to help define the model within the middle school to help better meet the needs of low achieving students. These models were shared out with all Learning Support teachers in the middle school and the high school.
- In order to properly place students in co-taught settings the Reading Specialist at both the elementary buildings and the middle school building collaborated to assess and place students in the courses for ELA that they would meet with the most success and growth.
- Teachers in the middle school and in the high school had the opportunity to observe one another and dialogue about curriculum as well as instructional strategies which will lead to a better transition from the middle school to the high school.
- Students who had areas of weakness in reading and writing were organized into various ELA prep classes which were instructed by English teachers in all grade levels, The purpose of these classes was to provide students with additional instruction in reading and writing. The PSSA data as well as the Benchmark data was utilized to create lessons that would best meet the needs of this population of students.

Special Education Program

The York Suburban Middle School special education program focused on the following areas throughout the 2014-2015 school year:

- **Writing** – each grade level focused on instructing the students and building independence with the writing of text dependent analysis while embedding the Jane Shaffer writing model. The students demonstrated the ability to write with a clear focus and to support their ideas by using concrete details (quotes) from the text.
- **Implementation of IEPs by birth dates** – In the past all IEPs, unless the student was a new student to the district, had their IEPs written and parent conferences were held each spring. This year the learning support teachers began writing IEPs and conferencing with parents around the time of the student's birthday. The change in time of writing the IEPs allowed the teachers to write an IEP and implement an IEP that the teacher wrote instead of writing an IEP for another teacher to implement. The teachers were also able to focus on a smaller number of students at a given time instead of a large number of students at one time in the year. The other positive change to the implementation of writing IEPs by birth dates was that regular education teachers and special education teachers were not being pulled from classrooms for multiple days to attend IEP conferences, many of the conferences were being held prior to the start of instructional classes.
- **Co-Teaching** - This year Dr. Krauser wrote and received a grant for co-teaching. Through this grant the co-teaching pairs were able to receive planning time to develop lessons and begin to build a collegial relationship. The lesson planning was to focus on implementation of co-teaching models and the use of co-teaching strategies to use in the co-taught classroom. This year there was a co-taught sixth grade math and co-taught

sixth grade ELA class. In the seventh grade there was the same co-taught pairing, math and ELA. In eighth grade there was a co-taught math class, co-taught science, and two co-taught ELA classes. There has been an increase of co-taught classes implemented at the middle school with a co-taught handbook being created along with training provided to the regular education and special education teachers on the best practices for co-teaching.

- **Technology** – In eighth grade co-taught classes, the students used their chromebooks on a daily basis. They have become proficient in the use of schoology and google classroom. They also used and practiced how to organize their google drive. The sixth grade co-taught math class implemented the daily use of schoology and math videos that focused on the specific needs of each student. The technology that was used in the sixth grade math classroom allowed the teachers to individualize their instruction.
- **Transition Planning** - This year the eighth grade learning support teacher observed high school classes in order to learn what a typical day was like for a high school student. Other teachers from the middle school and high school observed classes in the different buildings in order to gain insight into the needs of the students. The eighth grade learning support teacher met with the special education department from the high school to discuss next years incoming freshmen and to plan class placements for those students. In February the eighth grade guidance counselor and eighth grade learning support teacher meet with each eighth grade student that had an IEP and their parents to discuss high school scheduling. All of these events were done in order to ensure a smooth transition to the high school for students with IEPs. Also, the sixth grade learning support teacher met with the fifth grade learning support teachers to discuss next year's sixth grade students with IEPs. This was done to allow for a smooth transition for the students from elementary school to the middle school.

Mathematics Department

The York Suburban Middle School mathematics department continued the task of aligning the current mathematics curriculum to the Pennsylvania Core Standards and increasing the depth of knowledge of both instructional strategies and assessment. Common unit assessments were revised in order to align to the new standards. Several members of the department also continued their work on developing a successful co-teaching model to best meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body.

Some highlights from this year include:

- Adoption of updated Common Core Middle School Mathematics textbook and workbook series
- Course outlines and instruction completely aligned to the PA Core Standards
- Formative assessment and Study Island Benchmark analysis at each grade level to assist students in bridging the gap from PA Legacy Standards to the increased demands of the PA Core Standards
- Development of multi-step, scaffolded, constructed response questions to provide students with exposure and to increase stamina for these question items
- Increased depth of knowledge in classroom instruction, assignments and assessments
- Revision of previously written common unit assessments to include increased opportunity

for constructed response items, multi-step questions, and higher level thinking.

- Emphasis on co-teaching model in sixth, seventh and eighth grades to continue to reach underserved students
- Nearly 100 students in seventh and eighth grade were eligible to take the Keystone Algebra 1 Exam in May

Social Sciences Department

Goals for the 2014 -15 school year include:

- continuing to support the ELA needs of our students
- increasing the levels of Depth of Knowledge in our curriculum
- incorporating current event issues into our curriculum as is appropriate

Continue supporting ELA needs

- Reinforce Reading Apprenticeship strategies in our instruction
- Support Writing in SS curriculum
 - Implement the “No Excuses Grammar” as requested by ELA
 - Continue to use Jane Shaffer model in our writings
- Increase use of non-fiction reading in the SS content area
 - Increase length and level of readings offered to students to build stamina
 - Create questions that model those found on the PSSAs
 - Require Text Dependent Analysis (TDA) as students respond to readings
- Use Study Island data to evaluate student needs
 - Set up classes in Study Island
 - Review Study Island sample questions and mirror in our classrooms
- Reflect upon Core 6 strategies and add to our instructional tool bag
 - Identified and shared Domain Specific Vocabulary
 - Had dialogue where we could expand upon Core 6 strategies

Increase levels of Depth of Knowledge

- Increase higher levels of questioning in our classrooms
- Attempt to include Socratic Seminars in our classrooms
- Evaluate our common assessments for levels of questions
- Evaluate Big6 projects for DOK

Incorporate Current Issues/Events into curriculum

- Incorporate more current issue discussions within our classrooms
- Include reading of current event articles within our content

Science Department

Three Year Goals:

- Create a high performing curriculum which prepares students for achievement and the 21st century.

- All teaching resources & curriculum documents will be digitized and accessible from any location

Goals for 2014-2015

- Transform Curriculum Placemat docs to Google Drive as dynamic documents linked to curriculum resources.
- Migrate student resources from Moodle to either GDocs or Schoology to begin implementation in the 15-16 school year.
- Create grade level planning resources in Google Drive as dynamic documents linked to the department timeline, curriculum resources, and instructional strategies.
- Create a formal curriculum revision based on collected data. (placemats)
- Initiatives:
 - 8th Grade: Approached Study Island in a more application perspective; incorporated more vocabulary into formative and summative assessments
 - 7th Grade: Through the SLO, all students were tested regularly three times a year on the Biological Sciences. The results were reviewed and re-taught to show growth and/or mastery. Students completed all biological science assignments on Study Island throughout the year.
 - 6th Grade: Continue to develop like experiences and continue to reinforce practice question/answer via study island

World Language Department

- The World Language Department worked together as one high school/middle school department. The past two years of traveling have been good for the department and have become very united. Collaboration has assisted in creating uniformity within the classes. Collaborative SLOs and PDTs assisting with this goal.
- The department continued to work on creating more common assessments at all levels to ensure that students are evaluated more evenly throughout the year. The midterm and final exams were a big emphasis, a focus on making them more content broad and student friendly was accomplished. In addition, all students now receive the same midterm and final exams.
- This was also the second year 8th graders progressed through Spanish 1 in only one year, so the department continued to focus on “perfecting” preparation for Spanish 2.

Supplemental Programs

Emotional Support and Alternative Education (EP2 & T.I.P.)

The York Suburban Middle School Emotional Power Program (EP2) and the Trojan Intervention Program (T.I.P.) both addressed the following focus areas during the 2014-2015 school-year:

- Emphasis on strengthening student-teacher relationships building-wide to foster improved student motivation and promote positive classroom culture.

- Emphasis on the encouragement of trusting and respectful teacher-teacher relationships building-wide to support colleagues and enhance target population academic performance.
- Celebration and recognition of student accomplishments-
 - High percentage of students included in general education classes
 - Increased number of students achieving honor roll status and improved academic performance
 - Student participation and qualification for extra-curricular activities
- Implement and monitor necessary middle school program procedures
- Continue support for teachers, parents, and students of program participants
- Began to problem-solve “consistency throughout transitions” to and from middle school in an attempt to grow and enrich each program district-wide

Unified Arts

During the 2014-2015 school year, the unified arts team has been focusing on:

- Collaboration with core teachers - cross curricular activities.
- Student Learning Objectives centered on Text Dependant Analysis – rigorous writing occurred throughout all Unified Arts classes.
- Integration of common core problem solving strategies. (STEM based)
- Utilizing STEM concepts to promote problem solving and critical thinking skills.
- Utilizing backwards by design/ understanding by design to develop learning objectives and activities to drive instruction.
- Incorporating history concepts and diversification of cultures in activities
- Developing social and cooperation skills
- Focus on student awareness and responsibility by using self monitoring techniques

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

CHIPS (Caring Helpers Igniting Peer Success)

- Eighth grade students expressing a desire to participate in a peer-mentoring program spent a few days of training to prepare for a year of supporting fellow students and teachers.
- Following the workshop trainings, the CHIPS were prepared to: serve as tour guides for new students, to act as section mentors for new students, to assist students with daily organization and/or studying, to assist with the REACH program, and to assist the fifth grade orientation.

REACH (Reaching Expectations and Climbing Higher) Program

- The AM REACH program continued during the 2014-2015 school year. The AM REACH program was designed as a proactive measure intended to assist students with organizational and study skills concerns. Each student in the AM program was assigned to a mentor. As students met with success, they exited the program and were placed on a monitor status.
- In addition to the services of AM REACH, students met with their guidance counselors in

a weekly luncheon club. During this luncheon, the counselors reviewed the student's academic progress and offered encouragement to motivate the student's academic performance.

- The PM REACH program began the first quarter of the school year and included students from grades 6, 7, and 8 who were at-risk of failing their current grade placement. PM REACH was available two afternoons a week from 3:00- 4:00. Middle School staff assisted students by helping them complete outstanding assignments and homework, organize notebooks, and study for quizzes and tests.

After School Homework Club

- The homework club met 3 times a week from 3:00- 4:00 pm. This program is open to all students who wanted to complete their homework before going home or who needed assistance with content material. The club was organized and supervised by teachers.

Clubs

- Teachers volunteered to host a variety of club options for students throughout the school year. Students selected a club of their choice and participated in the club activity one day of the six day cycle. The club topics were varied and met the social needs of the students.

BUILDING LEVEL COMMITTEES

All Hazard School Safety Program

- The safety committee continues to oversee the student and staff safety needs. The committee continues to revise and update the emergency evacuation plan, hurricane and tornado plans and the shelter in-place plan for students and staff.

Olweus Anti-bullying Program or P.R.I.D.E.

- While academic achievement was the primary focus of the middle school staff, social skills needs were not neglected. To address the social pressures and challenges middle school students faced, all students participated in the PRIDE, anti-bullying program.
- Three year spiraling curriculum is implemented one day a cycle for the entire school year. Students attended two assemblies and were assigned to an Alliance group. Each Alliance group was composed of 10-12 students in grades six, seven, and eight. The Alliance group met once a cycle and was facilitated by a teacher trained in class meetings. Social skills topics were discussed in the class meeting format.

G.O.T. PRIDE

- This school wide effective behavior support (SWEBS) committee continued the positive behavior supports for the entire school. Students are recognized for Giving Respect, Outstanding Effort, and Taking Responsibility.

STUDENT SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

PSO

The Parent Support Organization continued to be an important part of our total school program. The subcommittees of the PSO provided assistance and support for many areas of the middle

school programs. The organization hosted a sixth grade ice cream social and the end of the year carnival (Fun Day). In addition to sponsoring activities for students, the PSO assisted with the band, library, fund raising, and hosting of school events.

Student Council

Student Council continued to be a service-oriented organization.

- Under the advising of two staff members, student council organized activities such as: school dances, the magazine fund raiser, charitable drives, and the eighth grade dinner dance.
- Student council also positively supported students through academic endeavors with incentives promoted throughout the whole school.
- Student council also contributed funds for the student lounge and to the American Red Cross, Dollars for Scholars, York Wildlife, and Animal Rescue.

In summary, quality assessment at the middle school level goes beyond providing an excellent core academic program. The Middle School staff has developed diverse programs that are developmentally responsive to early adolescent needs. The team concept and teacher committee structures continue to be an excellent avenue to address both issues. This school year was filled with numerous successes and accomplishments.