

LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN - 2020-2021
Elementary ♦ Middle ♦ K-8 ♦ HS ♦ Programs

School Name: Dr. An Wang Middle School

Principal: Matthew C. Stahl

School-Site Council Members: Matthew C. Stahl, Katie Mahoney, Jillian Maguire, Kellianne Grady, Lisa Moisakis, Alison Kuzara, Tina Novo, Joannie Grillakis, Coralie Cote, & Matt LeLacheur

School Mission

The Dr. An Wang Middle School strives to ensure that our students are motivated and empowered to reach their full academic and social potential.

School Vision

The Dr. An Wang Middle School embraces a rigorous, dynamic, and diverse academic environment, which develops curiosity, love of learning, and a deep sense of personal accountability. We model our core values of **participation, respect, integrity, dedication, and empathy** through our daily practices. Our goal is to ensure that our students are motivated and empowered to reach their full academic and social potential.

Core Values/Commitments

P.R.I.D.E.

Participation Respect Integrity Dedication Empathy

School Strategic Objectives and Initiatives

Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration

Collective, distributed leadership structures and practices are apparent throughout the school building in the form of an active, well-represented instructional leadership team, grade-level, and vertical teams. Administrators and staff members are jointly committed to and have assumed shared ownership and collective responsibility for improving student achievement.

Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction – Engaged Learning

One of the top priorities moving forward as a result of current circumstances is deepening the Social/Emotional work done with by implementing an engaging, rigorous, and relevant program to meet the increased social, and emotional needs of each student.

School leadership will continue to identify a clear instructional focus and best practices that address clearly identified, student-specific instructional needs. The school will review effective practices developed and implemented during Remote Learning and will work to establish them into daily practice.

Administrative observations lead to constructive, teacher-specific feedback, supports, and professional development regarding developing effective practices and implementing the new practices developed and implemented during Remote Learning.

Student-Specific Supports and Instruction to All Students

Administrators and staff will assess the social and emotional needs of the students utilizing the DESSA assessment system. Individual supports for students will be developed and implemented to support students returning to school with increased social and emotional concerns.

Administrators and teachers use a variety of ongoing assessments (formative, benchmark, and summative) to frequently and continually assess instructional effectiveness and to identify students' individual academic needs (e.g., content or standard-specific academic needs) in order to provide student-specific interventions, enrichment, and supports.

School Climate and Culture

Provide human and financial resources to support high quality, engaged learning and social/emotional support for students as they return to school.

Ensure two-way, respectful communication, with families, and the LPS community.

Establish a culture of shared responsibility and shared leadership among administration and staff members throughout the building.

Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration

- Bi-Weekly Leadership Team Meetings
- Weekly Teacher Team Meetings
 - Content Teams
 - Grade-Level Teams
- Weekly Admin Team Meetings
 - Special Education
 - Curriculum & Instruction
 - Student Support
- Constant visibility of Admin Team
- Authentic shared decision-making with staff with a focus on developing shared accountability throughout the school
- Professional Development designed, implemented, and run based on specifically identified needs from the staff

Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction – Engaged Learning

- Coaching focused on best practices designed and implemented during Remote Learning
 - Individual classroom/teacher coaching
 - Team coaching
- Design & implement intervention strategies focusing on the learning loss during pandemic
- Evaluation process:
 - Data analysis (including social/emotional data)
 - 3-6 Evaluative Observations with Constructive Feedback
 - Conferences
- PD offered based on needs identified by staff
 - Summer - Curriculum Adjustments
 - Fall - SEL
 - Winter - Coaching
 - Spring - Technology
- PD offered based on data analysis of school's needs
 - Fall - Remote Learning Strategies & SEL
 - Winter - Cultural Learning & Equity
 - Spring - Cultural Learning & Equity

Student-Specific Supports and Instruction to All Students

- Individual & team coaching sessions
- Benchmarks
 - iReady
 - F&P Testing
 - WaR analysis
 - Lexia
 - Raz Kids
- Supports Outside of Classrooms for Students
 - Tutoring
 - MCAS Academies
 - 30 Day MCAS Challenge
- Summer Book Grab
- Chronic Attendance Incentive Program
- Add staff member to focus on addressing increasing social/emotional and mental health needs of our students

School Climate and Culture

- Assessment and identification of mental health concerns as students return to school in person
- Targeted interventions for identified mental health needs & concerns
 - Weekly Advisory sessions focused on SEL incorporating Second Step for all students
 - Groups led by Social Workers for identified students to develop strategies for students with regard to SEL
- Reward Based Incentives
 - PRIDE Tickets
 - Weekly PRIDE Prize Drawings
- Progressive Consequence Structure
- Consistent Implementation of Expectations for Students

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○ Summer - Data
Analysis

School Data Profile

Figure 1:

2020 Official Accountability Report - Dr An Wang School

Organization Information	
DISTRICT NAME Lowell (01600000)	TITLE I STATUS Title I School
SCHOOL Dr An Wang School (01600345)	GRADES SERVED 05,06,07,08
REGION Coastal	FEDERAL DESIGNATION -

Accountability Information *

Overall classification	Not requiring assistance or intervention
Reason for classification	Substantial progress toward targets
Progress toward improvement targets	Accountability percentile
56% - Substantial progress toward targets	34

*The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education did not issue school, district, or state accountability determinations for the 2019-20 school year due to the cancellation of state assessments and school closures related to COVID-19.

As demonstrated in Figure 1, Wang School made “Substantial Progress Towards Targets” in 2018-2019, which was the last accountability assessment of the school by the state. This was a drop-off from our designation of “Meeting Targets” from the 2017-2018 school year. Based on our internal evaluations of student academic progress, Science remains our biggest area of concern, with ELA and Math still seemingly demonstrating relative strengths. The analysis is more challenging this year in isolation without district or state averages as a comparison, but it seems evident that our students are still demonstrating a relative strength in ELA and Math when compared to Science. However, our data analysis has identified a significant spike in mental health and attendance concerns among our student population. As of February 2021, our Social Workers and Administrative Team have made over 140 home visits to address these concerns during the 2020-2021 school year, which is over a 600% increase from 2019-2020 school year (23 home visits in all of 2019-2020). While our Chronic Attendance rate has fallen to 13% during the 2020-2021 school year (as of February), it is an increase from 2019-2020 at the same point when we were at 9.56%. These are two areas that are priorities for us moving into the 2021-2022 school year.

Based on our data review, the school has decided to maintain the academic focus established in 2020-2021 and continue addressing the following school goals with some instructional approach revisions and a new goal with regard to technology incorporation for our academic growth & progress during the 2021-2022 school year:

ELA Goal: Students will continue to learn and apply close reading strategies to improve their ability to evaluate, compare, and make connections to all types of text with an emphasis on non-fiction. In addition to our traditional approaches, a new focus will be helping students be able to demonstrate these skills in a digital learning environment utilizing a variety of instructional platforms.

Math Goal: Given access to real-world application problems, particularly involving fractions, students will learn to utilize close reading strategies to increase their ability to understand what a question is looking for, determine a strategy to accurately solve the problem, justify their reasoning, and persevere in order to defend their responses. In addition to our traditional approaches, a new focus will be helping students be able to demonstrate these skills in a digital learning environment utilizing a variety of instructional platforms.

Social Studies Goal: Students will learn and apply close reading strategies for informational text and also improve their ability to evaluate, compare, and make connections to all types of text with an emphasis on non-fiction. In addition to our traditional approaches, a new focus will be helping students be able to demonstrate these skills in a digital learning environment utilizing a variety of instructional platforms.

Science Goal: Given access to real-world application problems and an improved understanding of grade-level academic vocabulary, students will learn to apply close reading strategies for informational text to show an understanding of the text and an ability to connect their understanding to new situations in a well organized and thoughtful written response. In addition to our traditional approaches, a new focus will be helping students be able to demonstrate these skills in a digital learning environment utilizing a variety of instructional platforms.

Technology: Given the learning situation during the spring of 2020 and the majority of the 2020-2021 school year, the goal for our school will be to seamlessly incorporate new and effective practices with regard to digital learning and literacy within all content areas. The goal will be to establish high levels of equity, excellence, and empowerment among the students with regard to 21st century skills of critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication. All students, regardless of ability, should be actively engaged in designing, creating & inventing, discussing ideas, and applying their skills to help close the “digital divide” by eliminating systemic barriers and providing equal access to knowledge, skills and opportunity.

Social-Emotional Goal: Students will be provided a number of supports throughout the year to help them understand and learn to feel empathy towards their peers, manage their emotions more completely, take personal accountability for their actions, but also learn to set and work towards positive, personal goals. In addition, for those students

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suffering with significant and documented mental health issues, they will learn to access the support provided at the school to help them effectively navigate each school day. The school will also implement screening techniques and assessments to evaluate the level of mental health concerns students are coming back to school with after the pandemic and subsequently designing interventions to address any identified needs or concerns.

Reflection on Current Practices

1. What are your current efforts in targeting school improvement? How can you leverage these efforts when determining school priorities?

While our work during the 2021-2022 will continue to focus on the academic priorities outlined, the breadth of our work will expand to incorporate more explicitly instructional strategies and mental health support structures. The situation with regard to Remote Learning that began in the spring of 2020 and extended throughout most of the 2020-2021 school year has exposed our teachers to a wide range of new and effective instructional practices. While these discoveries were made out of necessity during Remote Learning, one of our goals will be to take the best and most impactful practices incorporated during Remote Learning and incorporate them into our daily practice. This will bring digital literacy to the forefront of our instruction, modernize our approaches, and better equip students to be successful beyond the walls of our classrooms. In addition, clearly the situation with regard to the pandemic has caused mental health concerns to spike among not only our students body, but also among our families and even staff. Our work in 2021-2022 will also explicitly incorporate SEL instruction, structures, and supports to identify, assess, address, and support these concerns helping our entire school community to be able to effectively navigate every school day.

2. What progress is your school making towards academic goals? What is data saying the priorities should be? Where there is not desired progress, what is holding up momentum that should be addressed?

Wang School made steady growth from 2015-2018 moving from the 34th percentile in the state to the 38th percentile in the state based on student achievement scores. In 2019, Wang School slipped back to the 34th percentile causing us to reassess our work and adjust our goals. During the 2019-2020 school year our school's priorities shifted to focus on building Remote Learning strategies and supporting our students as they lived through the pandemic. As a result, the specific academic data became more challenging to identify and our growth in those areas became more heavily weighted in qualitative data. With that in mind, the academic focuses for the school have remained consistent and are outlined in the goals contained within this Improvement Plan. However, in reviewing the qualitative data from the spring of 2020 and the bulk of the 2020-2021 school year has exposed that our instructional practices are ready to be updated and adjusted to address more 21st century skills within our students. Many of these practices were developed out of necessity during Remote Learning, but those effective and more modern practices will be the foundation for our instructional adjustments moving forward to better equip our students for the modern world outside of our classrooms. In addition, the qualitative data has exposed that our students are now dealing with significantly more mental health issues that will need to be addressed in our school design moving forward. Utilizing the district-led initiative of DESSA to identify concerns will be a first-step in this process, but the work done in the weekly Advisory with the students will be the most important in addressing these concerns. Incorporating effective practices that have worked in the past coupled with resources provided such as Second Step, the teachers will not only incorporate approaches to address these concerns with students collectively, but also identify those that need more individualized support and interventions.

3. Where are students making the greatest academic gains and why? The least academic gains and why?

Since 2015 our students have demonstrated not only incredible growth, but exemplary results and proficiency levels with regard to their writing in ELA. We have achieved averages in our ELA writing that have exceeded state averages over the last few years. In addition, our math results have historically been incredibly strong and have become even more stronger in the last few years outpacing state averages in the majority of standards in the upper grade-levels. While we believe this level of growth has continued through the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, the metrics to definitively say that are a bit more challenging without the typical data we usually use to analyze our growth. We continue to believe that the strength of our school comes from the flexibility given to teachers and the ownership they take in what they implement in their classrooms and throughout the school. When given certain parameters or guidelines, our staff has demonstrated that they are not only willing, but comfortable and confident in their ability to build instructional approaches and make curricular adjustments that maximize student learning.

This has been on full display since our building closed in the spring of 2020 and our staff went to work redesigning their approaches for Remote Learning. They did not "sit around and wait" for a solution to be given to them, instead they began building approaches and experimenting with ideas to find out what worked and what didn't. We often described our work in the spring of 2020 as "building the airplane" as we were flying. In the following school year (2020-2021) we implemented many of those approaches and have had a reasonable amount of success, based on qualitative data and parent feedback, during Remote Learning.

Based on our qualitative analysis and the limited quantitative school-wide data we have been able to collect, our students continue to make gains in ELA and Math particularly, with Social Studies benefitting from the strengthening writing skills over the course of the year. The reason for this continued success, in our opinion, is a direct result in the accountability our staff takes and the flexibility they are allowed to have with regard to designing not only their own classroom lessons and instruction, but in overall structures and systems throughout the school. That level of flexibility will continue to be a part of our school design moving into the 2021-2022 school year and our hope is that we continue to see the same level of accountability among our staff moving forward. These are the key elements that we believe have allowed Wang School to continue to move forward through Remote Learning and we believe that these will be the key elements that will allow us to take all of the best practices we have learned in the last calendar year during Remote Learning to make our daily practice even more effective in the future.

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Monitoring Progress - Process Benchmarks <i>What will be done, when, and by whom</i>					
<u>Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration</u>	Person Responsible	Aug 2021	Dec 2021	June 2022	Status
Bi-weekly Leadership Team Meetings	Entire Staff				
Weekly Teacher Team Meetings (Content, Grade-Level, etc)	Teaching Staff				
Weekly Administrative Team Meetings (SPED, Student Support, Curriculum & Instruction)	Admin Team				
Constant Visibility of Admin Team	Admin Team				
Authentic Shared Decision-Making with Staff	Admin Team				
PD Throughout the Year - Teacher Led PD Based on Needs Identified by Staff	Entire Staff				
<u>Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction – Engaged Learning</u>	Person Responsible	Aug 2021	Dec 2021	June 2022	Status
Individual & Team-Based Coaching Sessions	Literacy Specialist				
PD Offered Based on Data Analysis of School's Needs	Admin Team				
Evaluation Process for Staff	Principal & AP				
PD Throughout the Year - Teacher Led PD Based on Needs Identified by Staff	Entire Staff				
<u>Student-Specific Supports and Instruction to All Students</u>	Person Responsible	Aug 2021	Dec 2021	June 2022	Status
Individual & Team-Based Coaching Sessions	Literacy Specialist				
Benchmark Assessments	Coaches				
Academic Supports Outside of Classrooms for Students	Admin Team				
Summer Book Grab	Literacy Specialist				
Chronic Attendance Incentive Program	Assistant Principal				
<u>School Climate and Culture</u>	Person Responsible	Aug 2021	Dec 2021	June 2022	Status
Reward Based Incentives	Admin Team				
Progressive Consequence Structure	Principal & AP				
Consistent Implementation of Expectations for Students	Entire Staff				
Assess and Identify High-Level Mental Health Concerns Among Students (and Staff)	Social Worker & Entire Staff				
Proactively Address Student Mental Health Needs	Social Worker & Entire Staff				

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Measuring Impact			
<i>Changes in practice, attitude, or behavior when the initiative is having its desired impact. Desired Targets.</i>			
Leadership, Shared Responsibility, and Professional Collaboration	Person Responsible	Date	Status
Bi-weekly leadership team meetings will be driven by agendas drawn from the specific needs of the school from all of the teams in the building (instructional, team, and admin)	Entire Staff		
Weekly teacher meetings will focus on curriculum & instructional decisions at each grade-level	Teaching Staff		
Weekly administrative team meetings will focus on overall school issues including curriculum, staffing decisions, student management, attendance (student and staff), and resource management	Admin Team		
Administrators will be constantly visible in the hallways of the school daily to aid in the management of the building and make themselves available for consultations with staff when needed	Admin Team		
Admin, teachers, and staff will all have an authentic shared decision-making authority via one of the leadership structures in the design of the school	Admin Team		
PD throughout the year will be designed and implemented by staff based on the specific needs of the staff	Entire Staff		
Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction – Engaged Learning	Person Responsible	Date	Status
Individual coaching sessions with teachers and team-based coaching sessions will be scheduled throughout the year covering all of the content areas.	Literacy Specialist		
PD will be designed and offered to staff based on the specific needs of the building after data analysis	Admin Team		
Evaluation process for staff will provide feedback about instruction and begin with a comprehensive data analysis meeting of the individual teacher's classroom and continuing with 3-6 observations on each teacher	Principal		
PD will be designed and offered to staff based on the specific needs of the building identified by staff input and observations	Entire Staff		
Student-Specific Supports and Instruction to All Students	Person Responsible	Date	Status
Individual coaching sessions with teachers and team-based coaching sessions will be scheduled throughout the year covering all of the content areas.	Literacy Specialist		
Benchmark assessments will be administered to track and monitor student achievement/growth in all content areas (iReady, Lexia, WaR, RaZKids, F&P, Unit Assessments, etc)	Coaches		
Academic support systems and structures will be designed and implemented outside of typical classroom for students who are struggling including tutoring, MCAS Academies/challenges, and small group instruction	Admin Team		
Summer Book Grab to help all students take home reading material over the summer	Literacy Specialist		
Chronic attendance incentive program to help entice students to be in school as often as possible	Assistant Principal		
School Climate and Culture	Person Responsible	Date	Status
Reward based incentives for all students in the building to help recognize and reward excellent behavior among the students (PRIDE tickets, PRIDE weekly winners, etc)	Admin Team		
Progressive consequence structure where the disciplinary consequences increase with subsequent and or consistent behavioral issues	Principal & AP		
Consistent implementation of expectations for students will be established at Orientation Day and reinforced over the course of the school year to ensure consistent language and approaches are being utilized throughout the entire school	Entire Staff		
Utilizing district-organized tools, staff will assess and identify high-level mental health concerns among students (and staff)	Social Worker & Entire Staff		
Proactively address student mental health needs including freeing up the Principal and AP to proactively work with students through reward incentives and/or behavior plans throughout the building, provide training for teachers to effectively build relationships within their classrooms, design and implement a wide-variety of after school programs to meet the needs/interests of the students, and continue to develop Advisory content to help respond to and support the needs of the students in each classroom.	Social Worker & Entire Staff		