

# Conner Middle School Improvement Plan

## About Conner Middle School

Conner Middle School is located in Hebron, Kentucky, near the Greater Cincinnati International Airport. Our student body consists of nearly 1200 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students from both rural and suburban settings. Our free and reduced population is approximately 30%.

Conner Middle has a long history of high academic achievement and consistently finishes in the top 10 percent of all Kentucky middle schools on state testing and in the top five in NKY. This year, we achieved assessment scores placing us at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or above and achieved the status of School of Distinction and School of High Growth for which we are very proud. This success is due to supportive parents and community, hard-working students, and a fantastic teaching staff (including 8 National Board Certified Teachers) who hold high expectations for our students. In 2013, 2014, and 2015, Conner Middle School was selected as a top ten school in Kentucky for students and staff based on our TELL survey results. We agree....Conner Middle School is an awesome place for students to learn and for teachers to work!

At Conner Middle School, we consider ourselves a progressive school with teachers and leadership, who strive to meet the needs of our next generation learners. We realize the future for our students will require them to have an educational foundation that is focused on problem solving, cooperation, mathematics, technology, science and engineering. With this in mind, we are constantly evolving our practices in the classroom, as well as providing opportunities to students outside of the regular school day. Beginning in January 2016, we began our full implementation of one-to-one technology with all of our 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. All students in our building now have a Google Chromebook to utilize as part of their learning...anytime...anywhere.

During the 2016-17 school year, we implemented personalized learning. The online platform allows students to become the drivers of their education through goal setting, planning for learning, and determining when they are ready to demonstrate mastery of concepts. Furthermore, our students deepen their understanding of the content through authentic problem/passion/project based learning (PBL). The PBL projects are designed as a hands-on approach to learning where students begin with an overarching problem to solve and then research and collaborate to produce a solution to the problem. It is our goal to have the majority of the projects be "authentic", meaning the product created/developed isn't something that goes in the trash when it is finished. Some examples of our current authentic projects are: The Bee Project - maintaining the health of our bee hive, harvesting, marketing, and designing labels for the honey produced; Sustainability Project - researching behaviors of our chickens, learning how to protect them from predators, designing a protective environment for the animals, monitoring their health and egg production, and learning about the best ways to feed and care for them; and the Parks Project - collaborating with the Boone County Parks Department to design and present ideas for parks for middle school age students.

Another addition to the 2016-17 school year was the implementation of daily world language. All students have a Rosetta Stone account and spend a minimum of 90 minutes a week learning a second language, with Spanish for 99% of students. Students can work on RS wherever they have access to the internet and are able to dive deeper if they so choose. The district goal is for students to be fluent in at least one second language by the time they reach high school. We are working to make a second language a regular part of our culture.

Student engagement is a priority at Conner Middle. We encourage and support our students to get involved in the MANY extracurricular activities including: Archery, Basketball, Volleyball, Cheerleading, Track & Cross Country, Ski Club, Science Club, Math Club, History Club, Colts Care, Pokemon-Yugioh Nintendo Club,

Spanish Club, Yearbook, School Play, Speech and Drama, National Junior Honor Society, Student Council, Pizza and Pages Book Club, etc. Our three newest extracurricular activities are Archery, Track and the Colts Care (leadership group focusing on helping others through random acts of kindness) with combined membership of over 400 students. Through our club and team offerings, students have ample opportunities to get involved, demonstrate leadership and make a positive difference in the world.

In addition to our strong academic and extracurricular programs, Conner Middle School has one of the best music programs in the state. We are the only middle school in Northern Kentucky to offer three different music programs to our students: choir, orchestra and symphonic band. Additionally, we offer advanced orchestra, jazz band and chamber choir for our many gifted musicians. All three of our programs have scored distinguished and distinguished plus (highest ratings) at every musical festival in which they have played for the past five school years. Both our choir and band programs have led demonstration clinics at state music conferences for teachers across the state. Our band has been recognized at the national and international levels.

We are proud of our school and our rich tradition of success. We would like to thank our students, parents, and the community for your continued support. Go Colts!

### **Mission**

We are a CUSTOMER SERVICE organization dedicated to preparing students for college, career, and life through personalized mastery learning, authentic problem/passion/project-based experiences, the arts, and a strong focus on the four C's of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning (communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking).

**Goal 1: Improve literacy and numeracy instruction in our building. We will increase Proficient/Distinguished percentages as indicated below while reducing Novice/Apprentice by the same percentages.**

- 6<sup>th</sup> Reading will reach 70% proficiency or better (STAR - Fall 57%, Winter - 62%)
- 7<sup>th</sup> Reading will improve from 68.7 to 71.7% (STAR - Fall 58%, Winter - 68%)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Reading will improve from 66.4 to 69.4% (STAR - Fall 54%, Winter - 65%)
- 6<sup>th</sup> Math will reach 56% proficiency or better (STAR - Fall 34%, Winter - 45%)
- 7<sup>th</sup> Math will improve from 61.8 to 64.8% (STAR - Fall 41%, Winter - 52%)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Math will improve from 56.6 to 66% (STAR - Fall 48%, Winter - 57%)
- 6<sup>th</sup> Writing will reach 58.9% proficiency or better
- 8<sup>th</sup> Writing will improve from 32.1 to 50% (32.1% Proficient/Distinguished as 6th graders)
- 6<sup>th</sup> Lang Mech will reach 57.9% proficiency or better

### **Strategy/Activities**

1. All staff will receive ongoing training for effective writing in the classroom.
  - a. All SS teachers will utilize a minimum of four DBQ five paragraph essays embedded in their units/projects that have students reading primary and secondary sources, writing claims (assertions/thesis statements); using evidence from the sources to support the claim; working on the commentary/explaining of the evidence; and working on conclusions as part of the writing plan
  - b. All science teachers will implement one TCT Task in the 16-17 school year and a minimum of three TCT tasks in the 17-18 school year and beyond. The TCT tasks will be embedded in

science units/projects with writing as a major component of demonstrating effective science skills and practices.

- c. All staff will be trained in providing effective feedback to move learners forward. Training will include:
    - i. Writing effective prompts
    - ii. Analyzing and providing effective feedback
    - iii. Utilizing technology (i.e. Google Docs) to provide frequent, effective feedback
    - iv. Utilizing rubrics, student reflections, and feedback to grow students as writers
  - d. Writing will be a part of daily instruction (note taking, summarizing, reflecting, etc.).
  - e. Writing will be a primary component of all PBL projects.
  - f. We will provide targeted intervention to move students forward as learners.
2. We will utilize PLCs to analyze data for each student and teacher to provide appropriate supports for all.
  3. We will utilize PLCs to ensure effective curriculum and assessment development (ensure alignment with KCAS, CCR, and 21st Century Skills), instructional planning, and strategies for intervention in the classroom.
  4. Common assessments will be utilized and analyzed by all grade level content groups. Teachers will differentiate instruction to provide students support in reaching mastery (80%+) on each assessment.
  5. Utilize five key strategies for conditions of learning to optimize formative assessment as outlined by Dylan Wiliam's book, *Formative Assessment*:
    - a. Clarifying, sharing, and understanding goals for learning and criteria for success with learners;
    - b. Engineering effective classroom discussions;
    - c. Developing questions, activities, and tasks that elicit evidence of student learning;
    - d. Providing feedback that moves learning forward;
    - e. Activating students as owners of their own learning;
    - f. Activating students as learning resources for one another.
  6. Support all students (high achievers, average performers, and struggling students) by utilizing a Personalized Learning approach. Personalized Learning calls for a data-driven framework to set goals, assess progress, and ensure students receive the academic and developmental supports they need to succeed. Students are active participants in their education and drive their own success. Lessons are meaningful because content is applied to authentic, real-life situations. Students connect their daily decisions, actions and behaviors to their long-term goals.
  7. We will develop authentic PBL (project/passion/problem based learning) projects to provide students the opportunity to apply their learning to real life contexts. All teachers will use the Cognitive Skills Rubric as the cornerstone of each project.
  8. We will develop tuning protocols to ensure that each project meets our minimum standards.

**Goal 2: We will reduce Novice scores in our building in all academic categories.**

- 6<sup>th</sup> Reading will be less than 13% (STAR - Fall 25%, Winter - 20%)
- 7<sup>th</sup> Reading will drop from 13.8 to 10.8% (STAR - Fall 19%, Winter - 13%)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Reading will drop from 12.6 to 10.6% (STAR - Fall 23%, Winter - 18%)
- 6<sup>th</sup> Math will be less than 10% (STAR - Fall 26%, Winter - 15%)
- 7<sup>th</sup> Math will drop from 7.2 to 6.2% (STAR - Fall 16%, Winter - 12%)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Math will drop from 10.9 to 8.9% (STAR - Fall 18%, Winter - 14%)
- 6<sup>th</sup> Writing will be less than 15%
- 8<sup>th</sup> Writing will be less than 17% (23.8% Novice as 6th graders)
- 6<sup>th</sup> Language Mechanics will drop from 19 to 16%
- 8<sup>th</sup> Social Studies will drop from 4.1 to 3.8%

## **Strategy:**

1. We will utilize STAR assessment data as a screener to identify students that are predicted to score Novice on KPREP. These students will be provided a daily intervention (personalized to individual needs) with their progress monitored throughout the year. Progress monitoring will occur monthly.
2. Data determination meetings will occur regularly to adjust interventions for individual students.
3. Language Arts, Math, and Rtl teachers will work with students to set STAR growth goals and discuss progress after each assessment. We will utilize the Persistence to Graduation Report and other tools to help identify students in need of intervention so we can remove barriers to their learning and success.
4. Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers on utilizing metacognitive strategies in the classroom to model thinking.
5. Provide teachers with professional learning regarding co-teaching best practices, continuous co-teaching classroom improvement, and student supports.

## **Goal 3: Through innovative teaching and learning structures, we will provide our students with personalized learning experiences layered in difficulty to meet each child's needs. Furthermore, students will learn strategies to become self-directed learners prepared for any challenge set before them.**

1. We will maintain our one-to-one student to technology in all classrooms.
2. Each child will have a mentor with whom they will meet at least bi-weekly.
3. We will build a curriculum for our students that is differentiated in difficulty to challenge all students.
4. We will layer our curriculum with "authentic" problem/passion/project based learning to allow students to deepen their understanding of curricular concepts.
5. We will teach our students to become self-directed learners (i.e. set goals, make a plan for learning, and to understand that, with effort, they can achieve anything they desire).
6. We will apply skills-based grading and mastery learning for all students.
7. We will provide students access to our curriculum anytime and anywhere they have access to the internet.
8. We will increase opportunities for all students to participate in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) learning and programs, including but not limited to FIRST LEGO League, robotics, digital art/music design, and other advanced programs.
9. We will integrate 21st century skill development in all instructional areas to include creativity, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, compassion, challenge, character, choice, cultural competence, and community connections.
10. We will provide all students the opportunity to explore a second language and make language a part of our culture.
11. We will continue to improve/expand our PBIS program so that our school is a positive place to work and go to school.

## **Goal 4: We will work with parents so that they are informed decision makers in this school.**

1. We will engage parents in dialogue on how to improve our school.
  - a. Survey parents several times a year
  - b. Invite parents to serve on leadership committees
2. We will provide parents with opportunities to learn and understand the latest research in education and career prospects so they can make informed decisions with their children.

3. We will provide all students and their parents with career pathway information related to their Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) to support career and academic advisement in order to help students make good elective choices. Consider using community mentors assigned during ILP development. Optimize the use of career exploration tools, such as Kentucky Unbridled Careers.
4. We will provide training to parents so that they can better understanding their child's learning platform.