

Programs

Goal 4: Focus K-8 program development and implementation on preparing our students to maximize our *K-12+* program options.

What Went Well

A guiding principle for our K-8 program is to develop the systems, structures and frameworks that provide our students with *opportunity and access* to intellectual, academic and social mobility. Creating the conditions for our K-8 students to enter 9th grade able to read critically, write effectively and understand math both conceptually and fluently is the core of what we do.

Our implementation of *i-Ready* provides the necessary normative data to allow our teachers and administrators to use students' and district data to inform decision making. On a macro-level, triangulating our normative *i-Ready* data with our state test results and our classroom data allows for the appropriate allocation of resources and services to program areas of need. On a micro-level, *i-Ready* measures individual student growth and gaps in student learning. Our ability to target individual student needs in a personalized and automated way allows us to meet students where they are and focus on their growth rather than academic discrepancies. The use of a common progress monitoring tool like *i-Ready* also gives teachers, counselors, interventionists, and special educators a common set of criteria when collaborating to address students needs.

The ability to understand the academic performance of our students on such a granular level lends itself well to high impact child study teams that can support individual students who are at-risk or who are experiencing learning difficulties. A development from our Friday weekly planning meetings in grades 6-8, our implementation of data informed child study meetings, which include our grade level teachers, building administrator, and guidance counselor provides both a platform and process for monitoring all of our students, not just those on the high performance and at-risk extremes. Leveraging our upcoming Friday virtual day planning time to extend this variation of child study to both K-5 and 9-12, is a current priority as we plan to close the 2020 goal year.

Through our early work with *i-Ready*, state test data, and child study we have been able to identify systematic gaps in our curriculum. The implementation of the K-8 Core math program, although in its early implementation phase is providing both a common language and required resources for our K-8 teachers in our math program. The vertical alignment of a guaranteed and viable math curriculum, which aligns with the individualized and personalized nature of *i-Ready* provides the foundation for strong student growth and achievement in the STEM fields. With the importance of STEM skills as we progress through the 21st century, our ability to target student growth and achievement in these areas, especially math, which is at the core and foundation of STEM is paramount.

Limitations

Through our first three goal reports we have worked hard to limit, if not completely exclude the impact of the pandemic and school closure on our 2020 Goals. While no one could predict a pandemic, we take pride in our ability to flexibly adapt to changing circumstances. That said, this year our three program limitations as described here have been impacted by the school closure. Without the school closure, other factors outside the pandemic could have reasonably included all three on this list.

1. ***Use of Interventionists as Classroom Teachers:*** Staffing changes brought on by the pandemic required the temporary transfer of interventionists and support teachers to classroom roles. As noted both in goal #3 and above, our intervention and special education programs are essential to our *opportunity and access* vision. Moving forward, our concern is the implication of expected revenue shortfalls from state aid, relatively low local tax revenue and the ever-expanding costs of CMAVTS on our ability to maintain our intervention program when our temporary staffing model returns to something closer to normal.

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2. **Closing the Closure Gap:** Collectively, our teachers have done a masterful job, closing the anticipated learning gaps from an extended time away from school. Our ability to utilize our modified daily schedule and our Friday planning day to adapt and adjust has been extraordinary. Introducing several new concepts from prior year instruction while also reviewing the content that preceded from the prior year has been a significant challenge, yet one our teachers have met with skill and grace.
3. **Introducing New Programs and Software During a Pandemic:** While the implementation of Core Math to K-8 and upgrading our students management system from MMS to Focus were necessary and will have a long-term positive impact on the district, doing so during a pandemic has been an added layer of work and stress. The full-scale implementation of Blackboard (3-12) and SeeSaw (K-2) was not a program goal prior to the pandemic. As such, the technology to deliver our curriculum has for several months become more of a focus than our actual teaching and learning of that curriculum. While necessary in our current climate, the same time, resources and energy spent on the development of our intervention programs, cooperative learning programs, **and success and connection** student engagement programs are our collective passion and priority. The pausing of this work has had negative implications for the energy and enthusiasm of our administrative team.

Moving Forward

In spite of our spending summer and the first 8 full weeks of school working to stabilize our virtual cyber school, we are well positioned our District Level focus to long-term planning. Lessons learned from our experiences with cyber learning internally and with our external partners can be leveraged for high value as we plan for 2021 and beyond.

1. **Weekly Child Study K-12:** We are fortunate to have our current schedule to establish and entrench best practices into our daily and weekly routines. A unique value of our schools is our passionate and relentless focus on individual student growth and achievement. Our administrative team, counselors, and teachers will continue to develop and evolve this program for students both in-person and online.
2. **Scheduling Systematic Interventions:** As we gain a deeper understanding and comfort level with i-Ready and the triangulating of data, it will be essential that we systemize the academic, socio-emotional, mental health and physical health interventions for our students to grow and achieve. Our data can inform our decisions, but can only be useful if in fact used to develop the necessary student supports.
3. **Professional Development:** Consistent with our goal to provide professional development for our administrators, creating a robust professional development programming focusing on interweaving 21st century teaching skills including learning management systems and teaching in the block will add value beyond their costs. Professional development planning and development could be a primary focus of the recommended District Shared Decision-Making Team.
4. **Vocational Education:** Work with our community partners and colleagues at Luzerne to expand knowledge and access to the opportunities available through vocational education. A primary focus here should be developing a junior-senior partnership with Luzerne County Community College for students who would like to remain Panthers, but who would also like to learn a trade.