

VOA High School: 2020-21 School Improvement Plan

Every school in Minneapolis Public Schools is required to develop, implement, and monitor a school improvement plan (SIP). The following plan sets the goals that our school community is working to achieve and identifies the specific strategies or activities that will help us reach those goals together. If you have questions or comments about our improvement plan, please reach out using our main telephone number listed below.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

School Name: VOA High School
School Number: 419
Grades Served: 9th Grade - 12th Grade
Principal: Wendy Smith
Phone: (612) 375-0700
Fax: (888) 657-3562
Street Address: 924 19th Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55404

School staff involved in SIP planning or progress monitoring:

Wendy Smith, Director
Morgan Shaffer, Teacher
Kris Bulander, Teacher
Brianna Sauter, Counselor
Jo Abraham, Teacher and PBL Lead
Johnny Hedgepeth, Teacher
Tara Tappe, MH Therapist
Betsy Walter, School Social Worker
Adrian Waters, Plus Case Coordinator
Nicholas Mattson, Teacher
Martha Williams, Resource Teacher
Jennifer Owens, Student Engagement Lead

Other staff, families, or community members involved in SIP planning or progress monitoring:

Kate Ronald, Other Staff
Katie Perzel, Community Member
Don-Minika Mitchell, Community Member
LaDontae Broussard, Community Member

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GOALS

Together, our school is working to achieve the following goals.

Graduation goal: By 2022, the Seven-year graduation rate for all students will increase from 48.6 to 78%.

Graduation goal: By 2022, the Four-year graduation rate for all students will increase from 5.3% to 35%.

Retention goal: By 2021, the percentage of 10th and 11th grade students enrolling before October 1st who are still enrolled by the end of the academic year will increase from 0 to 25% (10th grade) and from 57% to 75% (11th grade).

Retention goal: By 2021, the number of 12th grade students enrolling before Oct 1 who are still enrolled or graduated by the end of the academic year will increase from 73% in 2020 to 75% in 2021.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

To reach our school improvement goals, we will utilize the following evidence-based strategies.

Other Strategy: Provide school to future connection via career exploration and CCR skill development, making school relevant and increasing the value of education for students

Description: School to Future connection will be an emphasis in every PBL block class but will primarily be fostered during VOA High School's FOCUS period. This scheduled course is designed for flexibility, promoting student choice and providing a wide range of experiences designed to lead students to post high school success. It is an expanded advisory with opportunities for enrichment, recovery, SEL, College & Career skill development and relationship building with peers and staff. All VOA HS staff target this period to provide experiences which support students' learning and personal growth. Now in it's third year, it has improved school culture and led to a higher amount of graduates and increased student engagement. When on-site this provides time for students to visit colleges and trade sites, host speakers, take on school leadership initiatives and participate in LEAP and Work Based Learning. Staff have requested more education and support systems be put in place to help improve students' transferable skills. They also want time for keeping and tracking data related to their students individual goal attainment and future planning. They want to improve upon their coaching skills they learned last year and want to collaborate to come with ideas for promoting student growth and resilience. This extended period of time is also ready for mental health push-ins from our licensed staff to educate students, remove stigmas and shame around MH diagnosis and

therapy. In addition this year, due to our ESSA designation for graduation rate, during our extended FOCUS advisory, "credit-ready" eligible grads will be grouped and receive weekly, scheduled supports for college and career exploration, mentoring and guidance counselor attention in addition to regular advisory aspects and credit-earning choices. Licensed Mental Health professionals will contribute resources and ideas for students making future plans so they are able to build a support network. During remote learning, there will be continued efforts to make Focus viable and continued one to one student coaching, both on-site and virtually. We continue to explore best practice for how to achieve good student connections and this is a challenge heading into this school year.

We have selected this strategy for the following reasons: This strategy supports our graduation and retention goals. Credit-ready eligible grads will interact with others with their same eligibility status for at least 6 hours a week when on-site. These same students will be receiving intensive one on one support and education from designated adults to help them envision future goals and formalize next steps after graduation, as well as learn about careers and post-secondary options. Non-eligible grads in FOCUS classrooms will work on positive transferable skills and receive coaching. To students it will feel that they have help in future decision making as well as support from their peers. They will be motivated and have a reason to come to school and finish their education. Families will feel like they have a partner in getting their students to the finish line and someone helping their child pick a path for the future. Teachers and support staff will feel like they have something relevant to work on with students that will have lasting impact. They will also gain more experience and education about future possibilities for our students and be able to share this information in all of their classes. The transfer of this work to remote learning will be required of all staff.

Other Strategy: Promote literacy in all content areas at VOA HS through the use of standardized reading strategies, individualized student reading interventions, and ESL whole group support

Description: Our VOA HS Lead Teacher/reading specialist and ESL teacher will cooperatively work with teachers to develop a literacy and language development focus for all lessons. The Lead Teacher will introduce relevant strategies, provide planning support, observe teacher use of strategies in classrooms whether on-site or virtual. She will expand upon the school-wide use of standardized tools and practices so every student experiences continuity, fidelity and rigor while receiving reading support. The Lead teacher will provide one-on-one student interventions for struggling readers and also collaborate with the ESL teacher to provide whole group supports to VOA language learners.

We have selected this strategy for the following reasons: This strategy supports our graduation and retention goals. We have selected this goal for three reasons. The first being the desire to keep literacy a prime focus during our Project Based Learning classes. The move to hands-on learning will not be a step away from text based learning by students. The second is because reading skill improvement encouraged in every class makes the coursework more accessible. The third is because VOA HS has a higher than average EL population than other alternative sites in Minneapolis and providing these supports is essential to their success. In the building or when completing remote learning courses, students will be engaged with reading during their school day. Struggling readers will have a place and time to work on skills with a qualified teacher that does not require them to miss classes. In the classroom, teachers will be actively teaching skills to make students better readers and providing leveled text and scaffolds discreetly. Teachers will feel like they have the necessary skills to promote better comprehension and can expect more from students in the way of their core learning. Students will have reading as part of an expected routine, they will engage with reading related to topics they are choosing. They will have the necessary supports to understand what they are reading. Families will be excited to see their students having success in text heavy classes.

Other Strategy: Increase our capacity to support our students' diverse PBL efforts through partnerships, improved technology, text library and tools.

Description: Now that PBL is an embedded into our school programming there is a continued need to have the space, supplies and expert know how to support diverse projects, process and products. Included in this is the need for technology and software that allows us keep up with the marketplace, tools that allow for project making, whatever the project may be, supporting texts of every kind to allow students to become experts and gain insight into new worlds and finding and employing experts/professionals in the community who can educate and mentor our students.

We have selected this strategy for the following reasons: This strategy supports our retention and graduation goals. Our students' authentic learning needs to be cultivated in a culture of productivity with the right tools to support their educational goals. We must be ready to provide whatever it is when a student identifies what they need to make their learning real. In the classroom and out, students will be collaborating with each other and their teachers to learn together and talk through what is needed for their plans to be successful. Students will work alongside professionals in and out of the classroom to receive skills related to their projects of choice. Teachers will feel like facilitators and rely on experts, texts and hand-on

experiences to educate the students. Teaching looks like collaborative problem solving and students will feel confident they have skills to design and execute their project. There will be excitement and ownership about what they are doing. Families will be impressed when they see students' accomplishments and hear about their learning along the way.

Other Strategy: Supply students with motivating access points to mathematics by relating content to career and technical fields while offering targeted support to improve student understanding of Algebraic concepts.

Description: All teachers are challenged with increasing student's exposure to math concepts, specifically targeting skills to support achievement in Algebra.

School-wide visuals, math student recognition, weekly engagement with math outside of math classes along with linking math concepts to career and technical trades will all be supporting students' comfort and confidence with numbers and math concepts. PBL classes and interdisciplinary units will allow time for the introduction of career and technical applications for core content math skills being acquired by students. Math classes will provide a holistic approach, tying standards to real world application. Career exploration resources will be utilized to get students exposure to job environments where math skills are required. PBL projects with math components may require experts to be invited in to enhance the learning experiences. A variety of processes, projects, products and programming will allow for all students to connect math skills to future possibilities for career and college.

We have selected this strategy for the following reasons: Historical ACT, MCA and MAP data revealed that almost 75% of students taking these tests had Algebra as their lowest strand score. We imagined this would be a good place to dig in and provide students with opportunities to learn and practice the underlying skills so they could be more successful in their Algebra classes. This strategy supports both of our graduation goals. VOAHS will show it is invested in growing math minds. Classrooms and hallways will visually present evidence of math learning. Classroom process, regardless of content area will include math learning in some form. Instruction will be planned with math pathways and CTE bridges. Teachers will learn alongside students what trades are possible with math proficiency. Teachers will take on math learning at a level they can execute with confidence. Students will feel more immersed in math language and process and gain familiarity and confidence. Families will be glad students have college and career options because the school provided skills education to support their gaps in math education.

Other Strategy: Create an engagement support system for every

student during remote learning

Description: All support staff work is being aligned behind the existing RTI process to make sure students and families have access to the supports they need to be successful with remote learning. A key role is the Student Engagement Lead, whose work has pivoted from PBIS school-wide effort, specific classroom supports and on-site student behavior response to tracking and supporting every student/family from the time they begin the school year. This work spans from enhancing data systems for accessibility and readability by all staff, and allowing internal records to be live and up-to date daily, to creating an entry point for new students so they and a family member may sign up for support services and practice using digital tools before ever being assigned to a Google Classroom or enrolled in digital curriculum. The Student Engagement Lead will also orchestrate supply/work pick up and delivery, coordinate all supports services such as ALC+, clinical MH, family conferences, outside of school resources via the SSW, teacher intervention plans, ongoing technology tutorials and daily help-desk type responses and education, etc.

We have selected this strategy for the following reasons: The Spring revealed a need to articulate and organize every effort coming from the VOA HS to students and their families to help with academic and engagement success. Using a single person/role as a point of contact and to do triage when handling the wide range of concerns/needs families and students came to us with, and then working within the school to develop engagement plans to support the student and their families was identified as the best way to allow for quick response and organized support. Focus teacher roles as mentors and advisors has been boosted to include delivering family academic and engagement progress reports weekly and to be the point person for identifying students struggling to achieve or stay engaged.

PROGRESS MONITORING

Throughout the year, teams of administrators, teacher leaders, and other staff will track how we're doing with putting our school improvement strategies into place to improve student outcomes and achieve equity.

We will use best practices from implementation science to ensure we're successfully completing each step of the installation and implementation process. As we work through this process with each of our strategies, we'll set a goal for what successful implementation looks like, and we'll make sure we're giving staff the training, resources, and support they need to meet that goal. We'll check in on a regular basis with whether we're meeting those goals and will communicate out our progress to our staff and larger school community.

At the end of the year, we'll complete an Annual Evaluation to reflect on how we did

with implementing our school improvement strategies, which will include looking at student outcome data to see if we're making progress toward achieving our school improvement goals.

If we determine that our school improvement strategies or improvement process is not helping us make progress toward our goals, we will work with our stakeholders to change course, because we are always striving to make sure that every student in our school is successful.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Family and community members can contact our school's main telephone number with any questions or comments about our improvement plan and progress. In addition, there are a number of ways that family members of any MPS student can be involved in school improvement, including: participating in Site Council, reaching out to a school's principal or assistant principal(s) directly, and attending parent-teacher conferences. We look forward to working with you this year!