

Monument Valley Regional Middle School School Improvement Plan 2015-2016

The Mission of Monument Valley Regional Middle School

In cooperation with parents and the community, the Monument Valley Regional Middle School will provide all students a safe environment in which:

- Personal and academic excellence is promoted and celebrated.
- Student responsibility for learning is developed and expected.
- All people value and exercise respect and responsibility.
- A spirit of inquiry is recognized and fostered.
- An enthusiasm for life-long learning and community service is instilled.

Overview

For the 2015-2016 school year Monument Valley Regional Middle School continues to focus on engaging all of our students in learning, moving further into curriculum integration across grades and subjects. The differentiated instructional model promotes attention to every child for learners to be as successful as possible. It is based on a process that matches deliberate instructional planning with data on achievement and growth to target teaching and interventions for all students. Curriculum development and implementation will emphasize student engagement and promote critical and creative thinking. We encourage students to expand the limits of their knowledge and abilities. The intended outcomes will adhere to our core values about teaching and learning, with specific focus on academic and social-emotional growth and success.

The core working group to make this intricate work successful and support all students is the teaching team. The entire faculty collaborates in reviewing our teaching practices and examining student learning and growth. We ask each other if students are achieving or exceeding the standards, what to do when students struggle and what to do when students need a diversity of approaches and inspiration. It is this deliberate, collegial work that allows us to reach all students.

In addition to explicit work in implementing rigorous instruction, we will continue adjusting and documenting our curriculum based upon high standards, using data from student performance within the curriculum to inform instructional decisions and tiered intervention, and examining how to engage students in activities that fuel their passions for life-long learning. We will also continue to involve children and adults in making healthy choices about life through our Exploratory program, Advisory and Restorative Practices programs in each grade, and engaging parents as volunteers and partners in supporting children's development from elementary to high school and their teenage years. We firmly believe that strengthening learning habits through these efforts will have a cumulative constructive impact on the community as a whole.

School Data

Relevant school data on demographics, achievement and accountability can be found in our DESE school profile:

<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/general.aspx?topNavId=1&orgcode=06180310&orgtypecode=6&>

The profile provides data on students, teachers, assessment, accountability and the comparative performance of similar schools in the state. The metrics are essential to understanding changes and development in our school over time as well as comparing performance and distribution of resources within a district. The metrics are consistent for all Massachusetts schools and district.

School Improvement Goals and Outcomes

Instruction

Focus: Teaching All Students

Process: How we meet the dreams and needs of each and every learner.

Goal: Teachers have the information they need to adjust and modify instruction to teach at each student's [Zone of Proximal Development](#).

Action Areas:

- Student Support Team: Successful support of students struggling to be a constructive and engaged member of the community.
- Grade Teams: Use available information to identify high-needs cases, implement support and intervention, and monitor progress.
- Sub-Group Populations: Planning to support students and close learning gaps for Special Education, English Language Learners and Low Income students.
- PowerSchool: Source for demographic and academic information as well as screening and progress monitoring, performance assessments and qualitative information on health and other affective aspects.
- Screening and Progress Monitoring in grades 5-6: Monitor student growth in Reading, Writing and Math for all students.
- Screening and Progress Monitoring in grades 7-8: Monitor student growth in Reading and Math for students significantly below proficiency.
- Advisory: Every student known well by one or more adults.
- Restorative Circles: A forum to develop connections between students.

Key Points

- We will continue the development of the instructional model at the core of our continuous improvement. Last year we tuned the practice of tiered instruction as educators and teaching teams. This year we need to develop best practices in teaching through instructional coaching and peer collaboration.
- We know enough about students, the curriculum and how we teach to tailor instruction to student learning needs.
- We will only know if students are learning while we are teaching if we monitor their growth and progress. Our work this year is to follow students and what we do when we know they need support or interventions. Teaching teams will

continue to get better at being Professional Learning Communities: groups of educators who reflect on student learning to inform their practice.

- Teaching is a team effort.

Curriculum

Focus: Performance Assessments

Process: How we engage students in meaningful learning.

Goal: Every unit of instruction at Monument Valley has a performance assessment that is or ends the learning cycle.

Action Areas:

- English: Writing. Students will bring four pieces of writing to a published draft. The production process will include brainstorming and generating ideas, development of craft and skills, rough draft review with peers and self, final drafting review for form and conventions, and publishing to share with audience.
- Social Studies: Research Process. Students will complete four research projects that focus on topic development, the use of evidence from texts, and developing a concluding argument. They will use specific research methods to develop a research question, identify resources from a variety of media and make connections to contemporary issues through historical lenses.
- Mathematics: Mathematical Thinking. Students will use the Standards of Mathematical Practice to analyze their own mathematical thinking in four projects across a variety of topics. The focus will be on understanding and persevering in problem solving, developing and justifying quantitative and abstract reasoning, and attending to precision in solving problems and communicating solutions.
- Science: Laboratory and Field Study Reports. Students will complete four laboratory and field study reports that show an understanding of experimental design, analysis of data and how to draw conclusions from experimental results. The focus of the reports will be on generating scientific questions and hypotheses, developing rigorous experimental methods, collecting and analyzing data, and drawing conclusions from results that point to further research.
- Foreign Languages: Proficiency in the target language. Students will demonstrate mastery of a foreign language through performances and written work. Students produce and participate in a market as if they are in a foreign country and purchasing items and food in the target language. Students also read several short and long texts written by native speakers in the target language, retell and discuss. The focus is on speaking and listening to stories to reach proficiency, while transferring spoken literacy to reading and writing with understanding.
- Art, Music and Design: Creating artifacts to develop process, skills and a personal creativity. Students create various art, music and design pieces that span the development process for intensely personal and abstract to collaborative and relevant to making connection with the core academic curriculum. These classes epitomize performance, as the units themselves are the projects and the process is the assessment.

- **Health and Physical Education:** Reflecting on healthy life. The focus of units in our health and physical education program is on developing a consciousness of what it means to be healthy, both physically, emotionally and mentally, as well as an individual and part of a group. Health asks students to practice difficult and new situations that are central to life development as they transition from being children to teenagers. Students are expected to integrate new information and understanding into relevant opportunities to role play and share safe practices. Physical Education asks student to move beyond the rules and skills to work as teams or support each other's individual development.

Key Points

- A Performance Assessment is student centered. It is composed of performance tasks and activities designed to simulate or replicate important real-world challenges.
- Authentic assessments ask students to use knowledge in real-world ways, with genuine purposes, audiences, and situational variables.
- Alignment through the grades is essential to spiral content and skills from elementary to high school. Each core subject area has a Curriculum Map that builds year to year so students benefit from a coordinated program.
- All students can learn through the curriculum. Our charge is to align and adapt teaching to the learning needs of students. This requires a team effort and flexibility. All students are given the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of skills and content in ways that complement their learning process.
- Learning goals for students need to be done in collaboration between the educators on the teaching team and the student, including parents if necessary.
- Backwards design allows us to ask the important questions of our world and answer them with engaging activities and performance assessments.

Assessment

Focus: Rubrics

Process: How we know all students are growing.

Goal: Periodic Performance Assessments are evaluated by a rubric that is aligned within a class, across a grade and through the years to chart growth.

Action Areas:

Departments will develop rubrics that measure the values of each program. The rubrics apply to the several Performance Assessments produced by students throughout the year. The criteria allow students to chart their growth through the year, but also from year to year. They also provide the teachers with artifacts to review so instruction can develop, align and become more rigorous in reaching our ideals for the students.

- English
- Social Studies
- Mathematics

- Science
- Art, Music and Design
- Health and Physical Education
- Foreign Languages

Key Points

- A Rubric describes the performance criteria for an authentic task. It allows a student to understand if their performance is proficient, masterful or below proficiency. It can be used by a student to plan and reflect on their performance and for peer-to-peer review. It is also an essential tool for a teacher to give feedback and evaluate a student's mastery of learning goals.
- It is important to use assessments that tell us something about how we are teaching and how students are learning. Assessments that are tied to the curriculum help us determine what resources particular students need or how we need to adapt the curriculum.
- We have a diverse student body, and we need to measure student growth and achievement using multiple measures that paint the broadest and deepest picture of learning.
- Performance Assessments are the way to understand if students are meeting the outcomes of our units of study. Performance Assessments are differentiated and are assessed using rubrics aligned across grade teams and from year to year.
- We will learn how to design engaging and important performance assessments through looking at student work and analyzing rubric data for growth.

School Culture

Focus: Restorative Practices

Process: How we know every student well.

Goal: Students will recognize the value of a healthy community, celebrate their own and other's contributions, and develop skills to become engaged and positive citizens of our school and the world.

Action Areas:

- Advisory: Every student is in a group of peers that learns how to listen to each other and talks about what is important to them. Advisory is a weekly session that expects the entire school community to stop and reflect, to see and hear each other, to heal and to enjoy our company. It is a way to be deliberate about building a caring and thoughtful community. Every adult in the building has an advisory group, sharing and leading the students.
- Restorative Circles: Students and adults use the circles and protocols to address disruptions and violations to community norms. We move from consequences as the only outcome to "making things right" as the goal of healing community.
- Student Leadership: Student Council is a more rigorous group of student representatives. They have training specific in community service and communication. Student Mentors experience a similar training with a focus on

- active listening and building relationships. All leaders are in advisory groups that develop and hone leadership skills.
- Parent Mentoring: After three years of development and training we have a focused and capable group of parent volunteers who support leadership, mentoring and social-emotional learning for our students.

Key Points

- Restorative Practices are a framework for building community and for responding to challenging behavior through authentic dialogue, coming to understanding, and making things right.
- Middle school is a journey where students transition from being children to teenagers. We want to guide students through the journey so they learn to be independent, caring, and safe while building passion about their world.
- We want shared ideals for our community, our families and our professionals. This takes careful, deliberate work to craft shared values and actions.
- Learning is a community effort and we need to collaborate with parents to ensure student success. Clear and efficient communication is essential to collaboration.