Utah Spotlight:  
Inspiring Educators  
October 2021

Ensuring High Levels of Learning

Driven by a Clear Purpose

With the intent of creating a highly effective school, the Washington Fields Intermediate School leadership and faculty, established a clear driving purpose for their work. They identified their purpose to be to “ENSURE high levels of learning for EVERY student.” Once the school was clear on their purpose, the school staff executed a series of strategic steps to help make their purpose a reality; this is what the school refers to as “The Charger Process.”

The first step in the Charger Process involved the faculty and staff collaboratively working together to identify specific collective commitments that would guide their work and help them achieve their purpose. The collective commitments fell into six focus areas: Assessment, Climate, Culture, Instruction, Extra Time and Support, and Leadership (see example in upper right corner). Within those six focus areas, four emerging themes surfaced: rigor, relationships, readiness, and resiliency.

Once the collective commitments were established, the work of the Charger Process began. The Charger Process is grounded in the elements of professional learning communities (PLC) and incorporates many of the essential components needed to provide a personalized, competency-based learning system. The steps of the Charger Process include:

- Step 1: Identifying the Essential Standards/Skills
- Step 2: Establishing Shared Clarity/Agree Upon Proficiency
- Step 3: Developing Common Measures of Proficiency
- Step 4: Assessing for Learning
- Step 5: Evidence of Learning
- Step 6: Providing Extra Time and Support by Target Skill

“It became abundantly clear to us that if we were to meet the varied learning needs of each of our students in this ever-changing educational landscape, it would require creativity, innovation, and a clear, focused process to ensure ALL our student learn at high levels.”

Washington Fields  
Intermediate  
Washington County SD

Principal: Bob Sonju

School Demographics

Total Enrollment: 883 students
- 15% of students with limited income
- 11% of students with a disability

ADA Compliant: 10/19/2021
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Step 1: Identifying the Essential Standards/Skills

In grade-level teams, teachers worked collaboratively to provide curricular priority by identifying which Utah core standards are essential to know, important to know, and nice to know. The essential standards then become what teachers will explicitly teach, monitor progress, and collect evidence of student proficiency to assess competency.

Step 2: Establishing Shared Clarity and Agree Upon Proficiency

Teacher teams take each essential standard and gain shared clarity about the critical elements and defining characteristics of that standard. Using the Clarity Model (see image to right), they work together to articulate the learning targets, specific skills, question stems, and academic vocabulary that are critical to student understanding.

Step 3: Developing Common Measures of Proficiency

Next, teacher teams take each of the learning targets and decide what grade level proficiency looks like. Once proficiency is defined, the team works to define the characteristics of being above proficient, approaching proficient, and minimally proficient.

|-----------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------------------|

Step 4: Assessing for Learning

Teacher-teams create and administer common formative assessments that align with the defined proficiency expectations in step 3.

Utah Spotlight

The goal of the Utah Spotlight is to offer Utah educators inspiring stories of educational strategies that impact student learning in dramatic ways, and importantly designed to encourage and support educators in enriching their own practice. It is an opportunity to shine a light on inspiring and engaging practice in education with ideas worth spread.
Step 5: Evidence of Learning

Based on the evidence submitted by the student, the teams evaluate and assign a level of proficiency level on each specific target. This proficiency level is used to determine which student’s need extra time and support to achieve proficiency and which students require extended learning opportunities. Each team communicates the student’s proficiency level to students and their families.

- **4 = Beyond proficiency**
  The student understands at an IN DEPTH level and can teach it or apply it to the world.

- **3 = Proficiency**
  The student understands and is PROFICIENT in a majority of demonstrations of the concept.

- **2 = Approaching proficiency**
  The student demonstrates SOME knowledge and understanding of the concept but lacks proficiency in key areas.

- **1 = Minimal understanding**
  Has NOT YET demonstrated an understanding of the concept and requires continual support.

- **NE = No Evidence**

Step 6: Providing Extra Time and Support by Target Skill

If a student is not demonstrating proficiency, the teacher-team, instructional aides, and other staff provide immediate, targeted time and support with varying degrees of intensity to ensure that each student achieves proficiency. Utilizing their assessment data, teacher-teams will identify which students need extra time and support, which need extensions and which teaching practices were most effective.

Special thanks to the Washington Fields Intermediate School Vision Team who took the time to share their tremendous efforts to achieve the school’s purpose:

- Bob Sonju, Principal
- Jaye Brackett, Vice Principal
- Sheline Miller, Learning Coach
- Maren Powers, LA 7
- Rebekah Foster, Counselor
- Thal Wright, Counselor
- Gabrielle Hasenbeck, STEM
- Kristin Mansell, Science 7
- Ezra, Student Ambassador
- Rockwell, Student Ambassador
- Teagan, Student Ambassador
- Brittny, Instructional Assistant

Student Learning Results

So what does this mean for student learning outcomes? As evidenced by their 2020-2021 RISE proficiency levels, Washington Fields is outperforming in every summative assessment in comparison to the other schools in their district and the state. (see table below).

### 2021-2022: Where Next?

Even with the current success rates WFIS is experiencing, they are not relenting. This year, the faculty and staff are engaging in strategic, intentional work to refine and extend their practices. Implementing such robust instructional practices requires ongoing refinement, reflection, and development. From onboarding new teachers to refining the common formative assessments and proficiency measures, there is always room for continuous improvement. When you speak to any WFIS educator, it is clear they passionately believe in the school’s purpose and work diligently to grow in their practice to achieve that purpose. When speaking to any of their students, one can’t help but sense their enthusiasm for what they are learning, where they are in their journey toward proficiency, and what to do if they need help. The faculty, staff, and students are truly inspiring. For an example of what they are currently working on to achieve their defined purpose to “ensure high levels of learning for EACH student”, see the school’s focus areas on the following page.
# Washington Fields Intermediate

## Faculty 21-22 Focus

### Academic Rigor

**How**
1. Clarity on essentials
2. Defined proficiency levels (4)
3. All instruction, assignments, & assessments AT/ABOVE grade-level
4. Student self-assessment

**Monitor**
1. Standards wall/Class visuals
2. Rubrics in each target area
3. Frequent "Rigor Audits"
4. Support classes-essentials

### Teaching Feedback

Student learning is directly impacted by the quality of daily teaching in the classroom.

**Monitor**
"Fast Five" Feedback
1. Engagement
2. Teacher location
3. "What are you learning?"
4. "How will you know when you've learned it?"
5. "What will you do if you struggle?"

### Focused Collaboration

Collective knowledge is key to our work. Vertical articulation is essential as students move through our school.

**Monitor**
Evidence Questions
1. "Which essentials have been learned?"
2. "What evidence do you have?"
3. "What are the specific names of the students who didn't?"
4. "What evidence do you have that your team is providing extra time and support?"

### Schoolwide Expectations

Students need clear, structured, and supported expectations as a foundation to academics.

**Monitor**
1. School-wide behavior data
2. Student surveys
3. Teacher surveys
4. Parent feedback

### Literacy

Literacy is the key to ALL content areas.

**Monitor**
1. School-wide reading assessments
2. Literacy checks

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**Ensure** High Levels of Learning for EVERY one of OUR Students