

Marshalltown Community School District

MCSD Newsletter

Fall 2011

Strategic Action Plan 1

A comprehensive roadmap for success looking at where we are, where we want to be, and how we're going to get there.

Readers with Influence 5

The Young Adults' Choices grant has brought thousands of new books into Marshalltown High School and Miller Middle School, while giving students the power to influence national reading lists.

Breaking Barriers 7

Now in its third year, the \$5.4 million Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative is connecting students with resources for success in the classroom and at home.

Message from Dr. Wade



Thank you for taking time to read the MCSD Newsletter. This publication is filled with information about great programs in our schools, as well as plans for how we continue to improve our schools and increase student achievement.

Through programs like Safe Schools/Healthy Students and Young Adults' Choices, Marshalltown Schools are being recognized at a national level. They are just a few examples of the many great things going on in our District. I hope you'll enjoy learning about these programs and about other unique opportunities in future newsletters.

Thank you for your continued support of Marshalltown Schools.

Mauri Wade

Mission

The mission of the Marshalltown Community School District is to nurture students to become intellectually and personally empowered for citizenship in a changing world.

Vision

Marshalltown Community School District will prepare all students to be successful learners, earners and citizens by ensuring all schools are safe and organized to promote student academic achievement.

Marshalltown Community School District will be the district of choice.

We will be recognized as unmatched for our increases in achievement for all students through progressive practices and continuous improvement.

We will support the economic development of the area and be a source of pride for all members of the student body, staff, families and community.

We will be acknowledged for preparing all students for success in a global community by providing a challenging course of studies taught by knowledgeable staff in a safe environment.

Values

Foundational

- All students can learn and succeed at high levels
- Learning starts at birth and is a lifelong process
- Education is the shared responsibility of the individual, home, school and community

Instructional

- High expectations supported by engaging and effective instruction lead to high achievement
- Schools must structure learning activities that lead to increased student self-control and responsibility

Climate

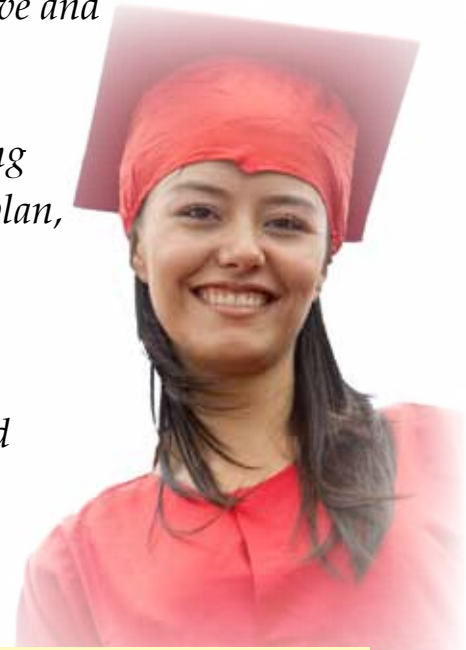
- Every person has a right to a positive, safe and supportive learning environment
- Every person must be valued and treated with dignity, respect and fairness
- Learners build self-esteem through belonging, academic success and competence as a learner

Strategic

2011-2015

This plan is a comprehensive framework of objectives, strategies and actions designed to meet our goal of a safe, supportive and successful school district.

We're already implementing many components of this plan, and will regularly share updates and progress. We have a strong vision for Marshalltown Schools, and with this plan and your support with will make it a reality.



Action Plan Components

Goal - Our overall plan and vision for Marshalltown Schools

Objective - Different components of our goal; What meeting our goal would mean.

Indicator - What we will see when objectives are met.

Strategy - Steps to accomplishing our goals.

Action - How to implement the strategies.

Task* - Breakdown of each action.

*Tasks for each action in the plan can be viewed online at www.marshalltown.k12.ia.us/plan.html

Action Plan

Primary Goal | Successful Students

Increase Student Academic Achievement

Objective 1.1: Increase academic performance

Indicators:

- 1.1.1 Increase the percentage of students exiting district provided pre-school with age-appropriate skills as determined by The Creative Curriculum assessment.
- 1.1.2 Increase the percentage of full academic year students in grades 4, 8 and 11 (total group and disaggregated subgroups) who score proficient (at or above the 41st percentile) in reading and math as measured by the Iowa Assessment.
- 1.1.3 Increase the percentage of full academic year students in grades 4, 8 and 11 (total group and each disaggregated subgroup) who score advanced (at or above the 90th percentile) in reading and math as measured by the Iowa Assessment.
- 1.1.4 Increase the year-to-year growth of full academic year student cohorts for grades 4, 8 and 11 in reading and math as measured by the Iowa Assessment using National Standard Scores.

Objective 1.2: Increase readiness for further education and employment

Indicators:

- 1.2.1 Meet or exceed the state target of a 95% graduation rate.
- 1.2.2 Increase the percent of students demonstrating success in college as indicated by the National Student Clearinghouse.
- 1.2.3 Increase the percent of students achieving National Career Readiness Certification.
- 1.2.4 Increase the percent of students demonstrating readiness for college level coursework as indicated by ACT or COMPASS.
- 1.2.5 Increase the percent of students enrolled in Advanced Placement, Post Secondary Enrollment Options and concurrent enrollment courses.

Secondary Goal | Supportive Schools

Ensure Schools are Safe & Organized to Promote Student Academic Achievement

Objective 2.1: Reduce incidents of disruptive behavior

Indicators:

- 2.1.1 Decrease the number of in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions and expulsions.
- 2.1.2 Decrease the number of incidents resulting in an office referral.
- 2.1.3 Decrease the number of students involved in a physical altercation during school.
- 2.1.4 Decrease the percent of students in grade 6, 8 and 11 who report being bullied as measured by the Iowa Youth Survey.

Objective 2.2: Improve student engagement

Indicators:

- 2.2.1 Meet or exceed the state target of 95% average daily attendance.
- 2.2.2 Increase the percent of student classroom engagement as measured by the Instructional Practices Inventory (IPI).

Strategies & Actions on the next page.

Glossary of Terms

The Creative Curriculum

A comprehensive and sound curriculum including research, content, environment, teachers, children and families. It focuses on interest areas, with continuous assessment.

Iowa Assessment

Replacing the the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and Iowa Test of Education Development, the Iowa Assessment has taken a K-12 approach with an emphasis on tracking student growth and providing information on student learning along the way.

The Iowa Assessment is aligned to the Common Core for mathematics and language arts with the science aligned to the Iowa Core Curriculum. The Common Core has not been developed for science.

National Standard Scores

A scaled score is a conversion of a student's raw score on a test to a common scale that allows for numerical comparison between students. Scaled scores are particularly useful for comparing test scores over time, such as measuring semester-to-semester or year-to-year growth of individual students.

National Student Clearinghouse

A non-profit organization that tracks post-secondary enrollment at 3,300 U.S. colleges and universities.

National Career Readiness Certificate

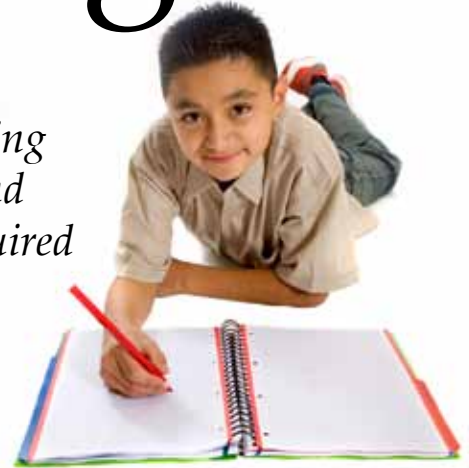
A certification issued by ACT and based on the WorkKeys assessments that measure essential workplace skills and is a reliable predictor of workplace success.

Instructional Practices Inventory

The IPI process is a set of strategies for profiling student engagement on six categories. This data helps teachers assess and enhance their teaching process to increase engagement and with it student achievement.

Strategies

Five steps to achieving our district goals and the action steps required to accomplish them.



Strategy One | Quality Instruction

MCS D will design & deliver curriculum, instruction, assessment & interventions that support the district's long-term strategic goals & objectives

Action 1.1: Create, maintain and articulate a curriculum fully aligned with content standards.

Action 1.2: Create assessment systems that provide specific and timely information about student learning.

Action 1.3: Develop a standards-referenced system for delivery of instruction and monitoring of student learning.

Action 1.4: Implement a responsive instruction and intervention system to address the academic needs of all students.

Action 1.5: Provide Extended Learning Program (ELP) services to increase student achievement for highly able students.

Action 1.6: Provide programming for students with disabilities to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps.

Action 1.7: Assure a service delivery model for English language learners that will increase student achievement and close achievement gaps.

Action 1.8: Strengthen Career and Technical Education programs to increase student achievement, promote graduation and support planning for education or employment beyond high school.

Strategy Two | Safe Schools

MCS D will provide a safe & supportive learning environment

Action 2.1: Ensure the safety and security of all district facilities.

Action 2.2: Implement a system to support social and emotional development.

Strategy Three | Superior Staff

MCS D will employ staff with knowledge & skills necessary to meet the learning needs of all students

Action 3.1: Maintain a human resource system and processes capable of meeting staffing needs of a diverse district.

Action 3.4: Implement a clearly defined performance evaluation process aligned to district expectations, and the Iowa Teacher and School Leadership Standards.

Action 3.2: Attract and retain high quality staff.

Action 3.5: Develop and implement a district staff incentive program that includes recognition and added compensation for significantly increased student achievement.

Action 3.3: Provide professional development necessary to ensure the learning needs of all students are met.

Strategy Four | Strong Partnerships

MCS D will collaborate with parents, community & business leaders to support increased student achievement

Action 4.1: Identify and promote opportunities for parent engagement.

Action 4.4: Research, develop and implement educational choice options to meet student and community needs and interests.

Action 4.2: Promote partnerships with community agencies and organizations.

Action 4.5: Implement a plan for ongoing communication with internal and external audiences.

Action 4.3: Promote business and education partnerships.

Strategy Five | Sound Investments

MCS D will improve student achievement through efficient stewardship of district resources

Action 5.1: Promote continuous improvement through alignment of district policies, plans and handbooks with the strategic action plan.

Action 5.4: Ensure student and staff access to technology necessary for increased academic achievement.

Action 5.2: Implement a data-informed and results-driven process for decision making within the district.

Action 5.3: Identify funding priorities and allocate resources for attainment of district goals.

Explore the Plan

The Strategic Plan is comprehensive. To learn more details - including the tasks for each action listed above, visit the Strategic Action Plan web page:

www.marshalltown.k12.ia.us/plan.html



The Young Adults' Choices program has brought thousands of new books to MHS & Miller, giving students access to new & popular titles & making them

Readers with Influence

Every year the International Reading Association publishes a list of new books most popular among a select group of middle school and high school students. Since 2009, that influential group of readers has included students in Marshalltown Schools.

High School teacher librarian Sue Inhelder, who coordinates the project. "The opportunity to offer current, quality young adult literature to our students – in massive quantities – has been a librarian's dream come true!"

In 2009-2010 the schools received 383 titles. In 2010-2011, 620 new titles (five copies of each) arrived, putting 3,165 recently published books into students' hands – a value of more than \$40,000.

"Some of the books we have received are not yet available at book stores," Inhelder said. "Seeing the look on students' faces when they see a new title they have been waiting for is priceless."

This fall the schools will receive three copies of each new title. The list currently consists of 454 titles, but Inhelder expects that number to grow as the IRA continues taking submissions through the end of the year.

YAC doesn't just put new books into the hands of Marshalltown students; it also asks their opinion on what they read. After reading a YAC title, students vote on their favorites.

The votes from Marshalltown and the four other regions are combined to create an annual reading list. Last year Marshalltown submitted more than 4,000 votes.

"The number of books read and ballots our students submitted in the last two years speaks volumes as to the effect access to new and quality literature offers young adults," Inhelder said.

The program's popularity is clearly evidenced by not only the number of votes, but by the number of students seen reading YAC on a daily basis.

"The students in my Reading Strategy class could hard-



A wide variety of books are available through Young Adults' Choices.

Every other year the IRA selects one school in each of its five regions to participate in the Young Adults' Choices Program, which develops annotated lists of new books that young adults enjoy reading and helps educators find books that encourage youth to read.

In 2009 Marshalltown Community School District, in partnership with BCLUW Schools, was selected over all the applicants in Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming.

"The Young Adults' Choices grant has been rewarding for me as a librarian in many ways," says Marshalltown



Marshalltown High School Teacher Librarian Sue Inhelder shows off the books received in year one of the three-year program.

ly wait until more new books arrived," said Dr. Barb Perry. "They shared favorite titles with each other and talked enthusiastically about them."

The enthusiasm for reading is seen at Miller Middle School as well.

"I see students reading YAC books often in my room," said Cheri Reed, a language arts teacher at Miller. "Having the Young Adults' Choices books increases students' selection to a larger variety of literature. Students enjoy them."

Through her role as YAC Team Leader, Inhelder was able to attend the annual conference of the IRA in May 2011, where she was able to display two students' video book trailers about winning YAC titles. Bryton Bills and Taylor Weber created a book trailer for *Incarceron* by Catherine Fisher and Melissa Earney and

Katie Huseman created one for *Low Red Moon* by Ivy Devlin.

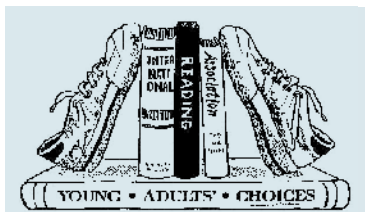
Once students have read and evaluated the books, the school is able to add them

to their permanent collection.

"The value of the books added to our libraries far exceeds our annual budget," Inhelder said. "We could never update our collection in such a manner."

The greatest benefit of YAC has building enthusiasm and passion for reading.

"With so many fiction and non-fiction titles from which to select, students read more, and their reading comprehension increased," Perry said. "A few students even indicated that their attitude toward reading was positively affected by having access to such a variety of high-quality materials."



To see the reading list shaped by Marshalltown students visit:

www.reading.org/choices

"I sincerely appreciate the new books to read. It gives me more choices to pick from and I enjoy reading them."

**Kyla Hernandez
8th Grade, Miller**



Safe Schools
Healthy Students

Breaking BARRIERS

Marshalltown's Learning Supports Specialists have many roles, but their most important one is connecting students & families with the tools & resources for success

"It's important we do anything and everything we can for the students."

Angela Pelham
Learning Supports Specialist
Rogers Elementary

For the 10 Learning Supports Specialists in Marshalltown Schools, there is no such thing as a typical day. Day-to-day, building-to-building their roles bend and shift according to student needs. No matter where they are or what the task is at hand, their work across the district is connected by a common thread: helping students succeed.

"We do everything and anything we can to work with barriers students might have and overall increase learning," said Angela Pelham, Learning Supports Specialist (LSS) at Rogers Elementary.

The LSS are part of the larger Safe Schools/Health Student Initiative, a \$5.6 million grant focused on creating safe and supportive school environments. As the grant enters year three of five, there are many projects and programs going on within the schools and throughout the community geared toward getting kids to school and helping them achieve.

"Even though the school district holds the funds, this is truly a community initiative," said Matt Tullis, SSHS project coordinator. "We collaborate in order to support all students. Safe Schools/Healthy Students is not an isolate program or curriculum. It involves many areas."

Among the programs implemented through the grant are Life Skills Training in grades 5-8, Aggression Replacement Training in grades 5-12 (small groups), and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The District also performed a security audit and will soon begin installing surveil-



Matt Tullis
Program Director

lance equipment at Miller Middle School and Marshalltown High School.

In Year 2 the District hired 10 LSS and developed student support teams in each building. Each team is charged with identifying students who need additional support.

“The ultimate goal is to put students in a better place in order for increased learning to occur,” Tullis said.

For Pelham and the other LSS, this work can take many forms. Sometimes it means sitting next to a student and modeling good behavior. Other times it’s connecting students and their families with community agencies, or resources at the school.

The most important role of the LSS is to serve as a bridge between families and the school, to build strong connections between people, resources, and learning.

“It’s all about relationships, building and connecting relationships and school,” Pelham said. “Students sometimes don’t feel that connection [to school].”

To build those connections the LSS make many home visits, talking to parents about ways to help their student achieve and taking proactive steps to address issues before they become barriers to learning. These can be anything from attendance and transportation to family issues and social/emotional concerns.

“The idea is that the first contact isn’t when there’s trouble,” Pelham said.

These regular visits help families feel at ease with the LSS and establish a strong relationship with the school. During conferences LSS reached out to families to encourage participation. At Rogers Elementary last spring conferences saw 100 percent participation.

While school is in session only nine months of the year, the work of the LSS continues all 12 months. In the summer they continue to make home visits and strengthen the family connections. At registration time they tracked down kids who weren’t signed up and made sure they were ready for school in the fall.

Through it all, they remain flexible to student and family needs.

“I’m available when parents can be available,” Pelham said.

As Pelham and the other LSS continue working with students and their families, Tullis says the District will work on strengthening the referral system that identifies students needing learning supports.

“The bottom line is that we want to be sure students get to school, get along while they are there, and ultimately achieve,” Tullis said. “By the end of the grant period we want to show how, as a result of our efforts, the system has improved.”

Learning Supports Specialists

Ashley Wiegand

Anson Elementary

Molly Holl

Fisher Elementary

Heidi Williams

Franklin Elementary

Jason August

Hoglan Elementary

Angela Pelham

Rogers Elementary

Eric Hunerdosse

Woodbury Elementary

Jeraco Grossman

Lenihan Intermediate

Claire Hanken

Miller Middle School

Amanda Lieberg

Marshalltown High School/MLA

Tyler Slagle

Marshalltown High School/MLA

SSHS Community Partners

Substance Abuse Treatment Center Unit of Iowa (SATUCI)

Mid-Iowa Community Action

Marshalltown Police Department

Juvenile Court Services

Area Education Agency 267

Center Associates Mental Health Center
Community Y

Center for Safe Schools & Communities

Iowa Parent Information & Resource Center

Marshalltown Community Schools
317 Columbus Drive
Marshalltown, IA 50158

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