Pollard Middle School
School Improvement Plan
September 2021 - June 2024
Needham Public Schools

Presented to the Needham School Committee: **February 1, 2022**

School Council Members:

Tamatha Bibbo, Principal and Co-Chair
David Blake, Teacher
David Dussault, Teacher
Nirmal Keshava, Parent
Caterina Krug, Parent
Maura Lia, Teacher
Lisa Mancino, Teacher
Karen Mullen, Community Representative
Leelah B Murstein, Student
Claudia Pape, Parent and Co-Chair
Max Shoemaker, Student

Updated 1/24/2022

Pollard Middle School Statement of Purpose

We dedicate ourselves to cultivating academic excellence, civic responsibility, and the
personal growth of each member of our community.

We Know*:*
Students enter Pollard Middle School at a critical phase of their development. They experience rapid physiological and emotional changes, an emerging sense of self, and an increased need for self-assertion. Cognitively, middle school students move from concrete toward abstract thinking. Middle school students strive for self-acceptance and a sense of belonging which shapes their behavior and perceptions. Healthy connections with adults and peers are crucial. Adult recognition reinforces students' sense of worth and their ability to balance extreme and competing developmental needs.

We Believe:
➢ All students can learn, and it happens at varying rates through multiple learning styles.
➢ Active learning requires taking risks, and mistakes are valuable for learning.
➢ Learning through a broad-based curriculum and exposure to different perspectives is integral to educating the whole child.
➢ Learners should feel safe, cared for, and valued.
➢ Learning requires a partnership between school, home, and the community.

We Work To Provide:
➢ A student-centered curriculum that is experiential, interdisciplinary, and exploratory.
➢ A staff that plays multiple roles in fostering student growth as they share knowledge, serve as role models, and respond to each individual's needs.
➢ A middle school environment that stresses civic and global awareness and each student's role as a member of a family, a community, and society at large.

We Strive To Develop:
➢ Creative and critical thinkers.
➢ Confident and open-minded risk-takers.
➢ Responsible and thoughtful decision-makers.
➢ Articulate and reflective communicators.
➢ Collaborative and socially conscious contributors to the community.

The Improvement Process:
Pollard Middle School is committed to an improvement process that addresses both the short and long-term needs of all students in their middle school years. Our *School Improvement Plan*, which is aligned with the *Needham Public Schools' District Goals*, establishes requisite strategies and actions that manifest themselves through our work and priority areas to support student achievement. We believe that it is necessary for staff, parents, students, and community to be involved and to work together in this process.

<u>Needham Public Schools</u>

<u>MISSION:</u> A school and community partnership that creates excited learners, inspires excellence, & fosters integrity.

<u>VISION:</u> Preparing ALL Needham Public Schools students to be:

- Creative Thinkers and Problem Solvers;
- Communicators and Collaborators;
- Socially and Culturally Responsive Contributors;
- Responsible and Resilient Individuals;
- Empowered Learners

<u>CORE VALUES:</u>

- Scholarship
- Community
- Citizenship
- Personal Growth

POLLARD CORE VALUES:

All members of the Pollard community will be curious, confident, and independent learners; act with compassion, integrity, and inclusivity; and strive for personal growth.

NEEDHAM STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

1. All Students Are Drivers of Their Own Learning

1A) Incorporate opportunities for student choice, independent learning, & personalized pathways

1B) Provide structures & experiences that enable student efficacy, leadership, and voice

1C) Teach students the content & skills necessary for them to grow personally and academically.

2. All Students Experience Integrative Teaching & Learning

2A) Extend interdisciplinary teaching and learning practices Pre-K to 12

2B) Embed Portrait Competencies, Technology, Inclusive Practices, SEL, and Equity into all curricula and instructional practices

2C) Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate knowledge and skills through multiple means of expression.

3. All Students Learn & Grow Within Adaptable Environments

3A) Support and design classroom models and environments that foster collaboration & innovation

3B) Provide time, schedules, and spaces that promote learning objectives

3C) Complement instruction with accessible learning beyond the classroom, within the community, and in partnership with families.

4. Infrastructure Supports Needs of All Students

4A) Provide staffing, facilities, and budget resources aligned to district priorities

4B) Implement a recruitment, retention, and development process for staff growth and diversity

4C) Establish a professional learning structure supporting equity and the Portrait vision.

School Goals	Strategic Priority	Action Steps/ Strategies Employed	Person(s) Responsible	Impact on Students/ Ways to Measure Success	Timeline
1. Maintain an environment in which staff and students' diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths and challenges are respected, affirmed and celebrated, honored, by ensuring equitable and culturally responsive teaching and learning.	1A, 1B, 1C 2B 3C 4B, 4C	• Investigate curricular choices, instructional practices, communication, etc. • Include cultural proficiency focus in curricular and advisory instruction. • Complete an inventory of lessons/ maps of what exists -(curriculum map) Dedicating 10 hours of PD to affirming our LGBTQ student experience. • Ensuring our policies and practices support our students.	PATM	• Students will thrive in a culturally responsive classroom/ school environment. Cultural proficiency creates a community of acceptance, affirmation, and safety for all students. **(Communicators & Collaborators; Socially & Culturally Responsive Contributors; Responsible & Resilient Individuals; Empowered Learners)**	June 2024
2. Determine and expand special education and regular education co-teaching model as a Tier 2 & 3 intervention.	1A, 1C 2B 3A, 3B 4C	• Explore and define the co-teaching model in specialized programs. • Enhance our co-teaching and inclusion support model. • Coordinate expectations among all departments. • Contract coaching consultant to support adult learning.	PATM	• Students' learning community will be inclusive and differentiated to support diverse learners. **(Creative Thinkers & Problem Solvers; Communicators & Collaborators; Socially & Culturally Responsive Contributors; Empowered Learners)**	June 2023
3. Incorporate and align the recommendations, competencies, and goals from Portrait of a Needham Graduate (PONG).	1B 2B 4C	• Communicate and imbed the competencies for all students. • Self-identify strengths and areas of growth/ opportunities. • Conduct gap analysis and develop learning opportunities where needed. Align all curricular/ instructional strategies to PONG.	Teachers	• Students will be provided opportunities to learn, practice, meet and assess the key competencies. **(Creative Thinkers & Problem Solvers; Communicators & Collaborators; Responsible and Resilient Individuals)**	June 2022

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4. Pilot an "elective unit" in ELA for 8th graders based on student interest.	1A	• ELA teachers design markedly different but still standards-based units of study for 8th grade ELA • The ELA department ensures smooth logistics and clear objectives • At the end of the pilot, solicit student feedback regarding skills acquisition, accessibility, and engagement • Convene as an ELA department to determine any necessary revisions	ELA dept. Head & Teachers	• Students will take responsibility for actions, self-advocate, adapt to change, and engage in self-directed learning by having choice and agency over the content they pursue in ELA for five full weeks. **(Responsible and Resilient Individuals; Empowered Learners)**	June 2022
5. Formalize equity-centered curricular and instructional practices in all disciplines.	2B 4C	• Professional learning focused on equity • Alignment to ensure consistency and intentionality of the work. • Maintain and communicate equity team and determine focus • Differentiate PD for staff	Middle Level Cabinet Equity Team	• Students will see themselves positively represented in our curriculum and instructional practices. The intentional and interwoven work will provide students with a sense of affirmation and celebration of their cultures. **(Communicators & Collaborators; Socially & Culturally Responsive; Responsible and Resilient Individuals; Empowered Learners)**	June 2024

School Goals	Strategic Priority	Action Steps/ Strategies Employed	Person(s) Responsible	Impact on Students/ Ways to Measure Success	Timeline
6. Assess the current state of interdisciplinary opportunities and Expand to ensure access and opportunities.	1A, 1B, 1C 2A, 2B, 2C 3A, 3B, 3C 4A, 4B, 4C	• Investigate interdisciplinary opportunities • Using Project Based Learning (PBL), design at least 1 opportunity/year • Collaborate and partner with the community. • Identify resources and needs, including PD. • Investigate required and non-required classes across both grade levels. • Solicit student feedback regarding electives. • Introduce American Sign Language and the Deaf Community (ASL) as a new course offering. • Identify needs and make recommendations for elective rotation/trimester class enhancements.	Principal, PATM, Teachers	• Students will have an opportunity to engage in a project based learning in an interdisciplinary way. • Students will have an opportunity to enroll in more elective classes, thus exposing them to additional opportunities to learn valuable skills in a variety of disciplines. **(Creative Thinkers & Problem Solvers; Communicators & Collaborators; Socially & Culturally Responsive Contributors; Responsible and Resilient Individuals; Empowered Learners)**	June 2024
7. Explore and implement the efficacy of restorative practices/ circles.	1A, 1B, 1C	• Introduce the use of circles with each advisory on one cluster (2021-2022) • Discuss/receive feedback from teachers and students on how to use circles in the future • Organize PD for the entire staff on the use of circles based on feedback • Create circles for teachers to use in extended advisories and/or when situations arise in the building	Assistant Principals	• Students will have an opportunity to experience the power of using circles as part of regular classroom practice. • In circle, students will practice respect, empathy, problem solving, self regulation, self awareness in an environment designed to promote equality and opportunities for shared leadership •**(Creative Thinkers & Problem Solvers; Communicators & Collaborators; Socially & Culturally Responsive Contributors; Responsible and Resilient Individuals; Empowered Learners)**	June 2023

School Goals	Strategic Priority	Action Steps/ Strategies Employed	Person(s) Responsible	Impact on Students/ Ways to Measure Success	Timeline
8. Enhance school-home communication and family/ caregiver partnerships.	3C	• Identify needs and make recommendations to enhance partnerships • Determine new mechanisms to reach all families with feedback and real time updates • Explore efficacy of student-led conferencing/ portfolios K-12	Principal and APs	• Students will be able to self assess and develop metacognitive skills. • Families will gain a closer relationship with schools and build trust in the structures and systems **(Communicators & Collaborators; Socially & Culturally Responsive Contributors; Responsible and Resilient Individuals)**	June 2024
9. Define and determine counseling models (using MTSS).	1A 2B 4C	• Professional learning focused on tiered levels of counseling services. • Alignment to ensure consistency and intentionality of the work from grade 7-12. • Establish, maintain, and communicate criteria for tiered levels of counseling services for all students • Differentiate PD for staff around tier 1 classroom responses for student needs • Collaborate with district-level professionals around counseling strategies at all Needham Public Schools	PATM, SpEd., Guidance	• Students will be able to self assess and develop metacognitive skills. • Families will gain a closer relationship with schools and build trust in the structures and systems • Staff will continues to support all students with their mental health and well-being **(Creative Thinkers & Problem Solvers; Communicators & Collaborators; Socially & Culturally Responsive Contributors; Responsible and Resilient Individuals; Empowered Learners)**	June 2023

Glossary

American Sign Language (ASL): A complete and organized visual language that is expressed by facial expression as well as movements and motions with the hands.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS): A framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that each and every student receives a high quality educational experience. It is designed to support schools with proactively identifying and addressing the strengths and needs of all students by optimizing data-driven decision-making, progress monitoring, and the use of evidence-based supports and strategies with increasing intensity to sustain student growth.

Pollard Administrative Team (PATM): Principal; 2 Asst. Principals; ELA, math, science, social studies, special education, and literacy coordinators.

Professional Development (PD): Adult to earn or maintain **professional** credentials such as academic degrees to formal coursework, attending conferences, and informal learning opportunities situated in practice. It has been described as intensive and collaborative, ideally incorporating an evaluative stage.[1]

Project Based Learning (PBL): A teaching method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects.[2]

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[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Professional_development
[2] https://www.pblworks.org/what-is-pbl