(Adapted from <u>Breaking Ranks In The Middle, 2006</u>)

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Recommendation 19: Each school will identify a set of <u>essential learnings</u> - in literature and language, mathematics, social studies, science, and the arts- in which students demonstrate achievement in order to advance to the next level

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Establish standards of learning through conversations about the purpose of the school, so the school can develop rigorous standards for student achievement to be assessed in multiple ways	The school is in the process of identifying or revising its vision and mission statements relative to standards for student achievement. Multiple assessments are in the beginning stages.	The school has a curriculum council that regularly reviews standards for student achievement. The vision and mission statements have been recently reviewed or revised. Rigorous standards against which student work can be assessed reflect multiple approaches.	The school has a curriculum council that regularly reviews standards for student achievement. The review is ongoing and systematic and reflects rigorous standards against which student work can be assessed.	
Foster interdisciplinary planning and teaching that allows for the essential learnings to be taught across disciplines and through interdisciplinary projects.	There are interdisciplinary units or clear connections at each grade level that are co-operatively planned and coordinated.	Interdisciplinary units at each grade level are co-operatively planned and coordinated or there are clear connections across the curriculum. Exploratory subjects are included.	Thematic based integrated units and projects feature understanding of important concepts, development of essential skills and application to real-world problems	
Align coursework and standards with state and national standards.	Standards and benchmarks exist in core areas of literature and language, mathematics, social studies, science and the arts.	The standards and benchmarks are aligned with Connecticut curriculum frameworks (where they exist).	The standards and benchmarks are aligned with Connecticut curriculum frameworks (where they exist). Rubrics are used in all curriculum areas and students know what is expected of them.	
Vertically align essential learnings from kindergarten through high school.	There are opportunities for vertical alignment of essential learning.	The school has representation on curriculum committees that establish essential learning vertically. Benchmarks for progressing from one level to the next are in the developmental stage.	The school has a curriculum council that regularly reviews essential learning vertically. Clearly established benchmarks are used to advance students from one level to the next.	
Establish student-led conferences	Some teachers or departments are exploring student led conferences to demonstrate achievement.	Student-led conferences are being used for reporting student progress in most content areas to demonstrate student achievement.	Student-led conferences are the norm for reporting student progress in all content areas. A protocol has been developed for the conferences and portfolios are used. Parents are included in the process.	
Define learning goals. Set clear expectations. Assess and revise goals as needed	The school is in the process of defining learning goals, setting clear expectations and assessments.	Learning goals have been established in most core areas and the arts. There is a clear process or timeline and evidence of student goals.	Each student has a Personal Plan for Progress that is reviewed often and allows students, within reasonable parameters, to design their own methods for learning in an effort to meet high standards.	
Provide professional development to help staff create and articulate essential learnings. Measure achievement against those learnings.	Essential learnings training sessions have been provided to district teachers.	Teachers can demonstrate proficiency in creating and articulating essential learnings and measure achievement against those learnings.	A collaborative culture of learning communities is evident in the school. Self-directed professional development focuses on essential learnings and measures of achievement against those learnings.	

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
Recommendation 20: Each school will present <u>alternatives to tracking</u> and ability grouping.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Use heterogeneous grouping at the school, grade, and class levels that includes ELL and special education populations.	The school groups heterogeneously in all PE and exploratory classes.	Students are heterogeneously grouped in some subject areas within a team, PE and exploratory classes.	All students are heterogeneously grouped in all subject areas and PE and exploratory classes on all teams.	
Consider looping of students and teachers.	Looping exists between guidance support staff and students, and administration and students.	Looping exists between staff and students at each grade level within interdisciplinary teams and may include FL and special ed teachers.	All students and staff loop on all interdisciplinary teams which may include FL, special ed, exploratory subjects, support staff and administration.	
Consider use of multiage classes.	The school is exploring the use of multiage classes.	Multiage classes exist in PE and elective and or unified arts classes, and in special education classes.	Multiage classes are part of the team concept involving all academic areas and all exploratory subjects.	
Create interdisciplinary teams.	There are interdisciplinary teams at each grade level that are cooperatively planned and coordinated.	Interdisciplinary teams at each grade level are cooperatively planned and coordinated and may include FL, Sp. Ed, and exploratory subjects.	Thematic based integrated units, including exploratory, FL, and spec ed are part of instruction.	
Provide time for remediation, enrichment, and support.	Exploratory classes are offered at each grade level. Remedial support is offered within the school day to special needs students.	All students take part in exploratory classes and all are given scheduled time within the school day for remediation, academic support and/or enrichment.	The school includes exploratory subjects and team time for support, enrichment and remediation by extending the school day or year.	
Create a mechanism to combat parent misconceptions.	Newsletters Parent groups Parent volunteers	Newsletters Parent groups Team/parent meetings Parent handbooks Parent volunteers School websites Teacher web pages Administrative web pages Parenting workshops and presentations	Newsletter Parent groups Parent volunteers School websites Teacher web pages Administrative web sites Column in local newspaper List Serve to reach parents quickly Grades accessible to parents via the internet Administrator and teacher email	

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Recommendation 21: The school will reorganize the traditional department structure and foster the use of teacher teams provided with ample common planning time to <u>integrate the school's curriculum</u> to the extent possible and emphasize depth over breadth of coverage.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Use interdisciplinary teaming. Create team-based integrated units.	Teams exist but minimal evidence of interdisciplinary units/teaching.	Teams exist, meet daily, and have moderate evidence of interdisciplinary units/teaching.	Teams exist, meet daily and teach an extensive number of interdisciplinary units.	
Promote the integration of literacy across content areas.	Reading and writing strategies exist but minimal coordination among content teachers exists.	Reading and writing strategies exist and are consistently used by some content teachers.	Reading and writing strategies are well articulated and consistently used by all content teachers.	
Examine skills, strategies, and common benchmarks that are necessary across content areas and disciplines.	Minimal use of common benchmarks, skills and strategies identified or used across the disciplines.	Moderate use of common benchmarks, skills and strategies identified and used across disciplines.	There is extensive use of common benchmarks, skills and strategies identified and used consistently across disciplines. The benchmarks skills and strategies emphasize depth of knowledge.	
Create student teams and keep them together all day.	Student teams exist, but mix extensively with other teams.	Student teams stay together for most of the day, but mix somewhat with other teams.	Student teams stay together all day long in their interdisciplinary team.	

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Recommendation 22: The content of the curriculum, where practical, will connect to <u>real-life applications </u>of knowledge and skills, and will extend beyond the school campus to help students link their education to the future and to the community.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Use a variety of methods to make real-life connections between school and the larger world. These include project-based learning, integrated coursework, student-led conferences, field trips, and exhibitions to the community.	Students participate in projects designed to connect them to the community. School trips may include students, parents, and community members.	The school is using the community as a classroom, and discussing how to engage the community in providing resources and support.	The school provides students with opportunities to develop citizenship skills, uses the community as a classroom, and engages the community in providing resources and support. Community based projects make authentic connections between school and the outside world.	
Get to know the students so you will know their histories and where the gaps are, and can build on student knowledge and experiences.	Each teacher instructs and delivers their curriculum based on the priorities of their academic department. Emphasis is not placed on the specific physical, psychological, social, and developmental needs of the young adolescent.	Teachers are working towards developing a common culture focused on integrated instruction and developing a strong understanding of each of their middle level students and individual needs.	The school is organized into teams with teachers working together to provide a cohesive and coordinated curriculum. Teams develop meaningful learning experiences that reflect the required standards and help students make necessary connections within and across content areas. Quarterly integrated thematic units are developed and implemented across teams.	
Use authentic learning activities, for example, write a letter to the editor and have it published rather than doing a writing "exercise"; run a mock business; plan a family vacation or day trip.	Students are instructed through conventional means using direct/whole group instruction. Drill, practice, and worksheets constitute the majority of instructional activities. Students are assessed via quizzes, tests, and traditional projects.	Alternatives to whole group instruction, drill and practice, and traditional student assessments are being explored. Opportunities for students to use portfolios and authentic learning activities are being reviewed.	Students have the opportunity to develop and apply their knowledge in meaningful ways to discover and demonstrate their competence much as a practitioner of that field might do. Students also have the opportunity to participate in real-life college experiences through summer enrichment programs. The program offers valuable mentoring experiences for middle school students and paying jobs for high school students.	

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Recommendation 23: The school will promote <u>service programs</u> and <u>student activities</u> as integral to an education, providing opportunities for all students that support and extend academic learning.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Form partnerships with local community groups.	Identify community groups and conduct conversations about cooperative projects.	Work with community groups on field trips, special projects or after school programs.	Implement program with community groups to embed cooperative projects in the core curriculum.	
Ensure that activities and service programs are tied to the curriculum and goals of the school.	Identify curriculum goals that could be tied to service programs and activities in all core subjects.	Plan specific lessons that involve activities and service programs in all core subjects.	Design course curriculum that integrates activities and service programs in all core subjects.	
Define educational objectives and determine criteria for assessment.	Identify overall criteria for curriculum goals that are tied to activities and service programs.	Identify specific student behaviors that can be evaluated objectively on these criteria.	Implement strategies - rubrics, surveys, etc., that measure attainment of these criteria.	
Evaluate all school activities in terms of the support they provide for your school's broader learning objectives.	Identify activities and service programs that can be linked to learning objectives in the curriculum.	Design a process - rubric, surveys, etc., that can be used to evaluate student participation in activities and service programs tied to curriculum goals.	Implement the process to evaluate students' participation in activities and service programs and make adjustments based on this information.	

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Recommendation 24: Teachers will design high-quality work and teach in ways that engage students, cause them to persist, and, complete work that results in student satisfaction and acquisition of knowledge, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, and other abilities.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Use existing programs and materials designed to engage students, give teachers release time to develop new programs or adapt existing ones.	Some teacher time is dedicated to searching out and using materials that are designed to engage students in meaningful learning.	Teacher time is often dedicated to searching out and using materials that are designed to engage students in meaningful learning.	Regularly scheduled teacher time is dedicated to searching out and using materials that are designed to engage students in meaningful learning.	
Provide development for teachers in engaging instructional practices. Teachers' understanding of the concepts of engagement and their commitment to using these concepts are critical.	Structure created for appropriate Professional Development. Administration and teachers plan for high quality instruction that goes into lesson planning.	Continued Professional Development to support differentiated instruction. Adequate resources are provided. Teacher groups begin practice and implementation using appropriate assessment.	Differentiated instruction taking place in all subjects. Professional Development & resources continues. Appropriate challenges and rigor provided for all.	
Encourage teamwork among teachers.	Common planning time is used to streamline common tasks, plan field trips, coordinate tests and homework and review student progress.	Common planning time is used to improve the teaching-learning process through professional development and teacher sharing.	Common planning time is primarily devoted to professional learning communities that are designed to improve teaching and learning through the development of common benchmark assessments, peer-observation, dialogue about the learning process and professional development.	
Use real-life community issues to construct hands-on activities that articulate and demonstrate state/national standards while engaging students in the discovery process.	School has little core curricula that reflects national standards. The core curricula offer few opportunities for students' hands-approach when learning new concepts. There are no connections/collaboration with outside agencies and organizations to provide academic and social support.	School has some core curricula that reflect national standards. The core curricula offer some opportunities for students' hands-approach when learning new concepts. There are no courses/programs that connect school to real world/work skills. There is some collaboration with outside agencies and organizations to provide academic and social support and enrichment.	School has rigorous core curricula that reflect national standards and offers ample opportunities for students' hands-approach when learning new concepts. There is significant collaboration with outside agencies and organizations to provide academic and social support and enrichment.	
Adopt cooperative learning activities, peer-to-peer mentoring, project-based learning, use of rubrics, weekly work, and plans.	Cooperative learning groups are occasionally employed as are cross-curricular activities. Rubrics for setting standards and monitoring progress are in the formative stages.	Cooperative learning and cross-curricular activities are frequently utilized. Rubrics for setting standards monitoring student progress are often used.	Cooperative learning is regularly used, as is peer review of student work and project based learning. Rubrics are used to set standards and monitor progress.	

Curriculum units have personal meaning for students and foster a sense of possibilities for what students can do with those learnings.	Curriculum units are age appropriate and high interest resulting in a high degree of engagement.	Curriculum units are age appropriate and high interest resulting in a high degree of engagement. They are often interdisciplinary or integrated with other disciplines	Curriculum units are age appropriate and authentic. They are often interdisciplinary or integrated with other disciplines. Students engage in hands-on, real-life learning experiences that feature critical thinking and higher order problem solving skills.	
Establish nonnegotiable scope and sequence. Provide staff development for all teachers on language development and on cultural and disability issues.	Scope and sequence for determining essential learning in all subjects is being developed. All teachers are being trained in language development and cultural and disability issues.	Scope and sequence for determining essential learning in all subjects has been developed. Several teachers are skilled in language development and cultural and disability issues.	All teachers use a common scope and sequence with frequent benchmark assessments in all content areas. All teachers are skilled in language development and cultural and disability issues.	
Provide opportunities for students with special needs to demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways, depending on their readiness, interest, and learning profiles.	Modifications are provided for students with special needs based on the IEP.	Modifications for students with special needs extend beyond assessment to teaching strategies and learning activities.	Students with special needs can demonstrate mastery of content and concepts in alternate ways based on their learning profiles and abilities.	

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Recommendation 25: Teachers will know and be able to use a variety of strategies and settings that identify and accommodate <u>individual learning needs</u> and engage students.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Provide in-depth and ongoing professional development on accommodating different learning needs.	Teachers have been exposed to differentiated instruction through professional development	Teachers have been exposed to differentiated instruction through professional development, and are beginning to use DI strategies	All teachers are engaged in ongoing professional development in differentiated instruction and routinely use DI strategies in their classrooms.	
Hire, train and retain master teachers to work with staff on new skills	Master teachers assist administrators in identifying skills needed to improve instruction	Master teacher leaders coach colleagues in developing and using new skills.	Master teacher leaders coach colleagues in developing and using new skills. Release time is provided .	
Team teachers to support differentiated instruction.	Special education para-educatiors are in the classroom to support special education students.	Special education teachers and para-educators work with regular education teachers as needed.	Regular and special education teachers routinely team teach to meet the needs of all students	
Provide time and support for peer observation and feedback so teachers can learn from each other.	New teachers are routinely observed by veteran colleagues to improve instruction.	Teachers, as well as administrators, participate in "walk-throughs"	Time is routinely provided for peer observation and feedback by and for all teachers to improve instruction.	

Provide opportunities for students and teachers to assess what learning modalities best suit each learner.	Teachers are familiar with the different modalities for learning and use multiple modes in instruction.	Teachers are familiar with the different modalities for learning and use multiple modes in instruction. Furthermore, they test each student and adapt instruction	Students, as well as teachers, are aware of their own best learning modality and work to capitalize on strengths and remediate weaknesses	
Provide time for reflection and for integration of ELL, IEP, and GT services.	ELL, IEP, and GT services are available for needy students.	ELL, IEP, and GT services are regularly used for needy students.	ELL, IEP, and GT services are skillfully scheduled to provide maximum benefit.	
Use special education, ELL, and gifted education teachers to model instructional practices and as resources/mentors for mainstream teachers.	Teachers with advanced training in ELL, SPED and gifted education are available to regular education teachers for consultation.	Teachers with advanced training in ELL, SPED and gifted education present workshops for regular education teachers.	Teachers with advanced training in ELL, SPED and gifted education routinely model instruction for regulation teachers.	

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment
Recommendation 26: Each teacher will have a broad base of <u>academic knowledge</u>, with depth in at least one subject area.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Hire only qualified and certified teachers.	All teachers are certified and highly qualified for the content area in which they are teaching.	Middle level teachers demonstrate a knowledge of concepts, principles, theories and research about young adolescent development. They use this knowledge to provide all young adolescents with learning opportunities that are developmentally responsive, socially equitable and academically rigorous.	Middle level teachers demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of concepts, principles, theories and research about young adolescent development. They use this knowledge to provide all young adolescents with learning opportunities that are developmentally responsive, socially equitable and academically rigorous.	
Encourage teachers to stretch their current knowledge in an area of interest in their discipline and pursue advanced degrees and certification in different subject areas.	All teachers have met the minimum requirements in their teaching areas. Some teachers are pursuing advanced degrees and/or multiple certifications.	Many teachers have begun to deepen and expand upon their current knowledge in their respective certification area. Numerous teachers have advanced degrees and/or multiple certifications.	Teachers participate in professional development, collegial study groups, and summer workshops to expand their knowledge and understandings of teaching and learning in their content area. Teachers possess advanced degrees and/or multiple certifications.	
Provide ongoing, job-embedded professional development for content area teachers.	Professional development is offered in a uniform format for all teachers at the same time. A variety of topics are offered during the school year.	Professional development is tailored to the specific needs of each content area teacher. Teachers have a choice of what they may select to participate in on the professional development days.	Professional development is consistent with the teacher's Professional Learning Plan and district goals. It is continuous throughout the school year, embedded, and provides opportunities for self-reflection to promote growth.	
Encourage active participation in professional discipline-specific associations.	Some teachers are members of professional discipline- specific associations. These teachers benefit from presentations and curricular conversations related to their certification area.	Many teachers within the school are active members of professional organizations. They actively contribute to curriculum related projects which strengthen their teaching skills. These educators share their experiences with their peers within the school.	Most teachers are active, contributing members of professional discipline – specific associations. They are involved, reflective practitioners in professional learning related to their certification area. They may also be presenters and facilitators of these associations.	

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Recommendation 27: Teachers will be adept at acting as coaches and facilitators to promote more <u>active involvement of students</u> in their own learning.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Provide teachers with training in facilitation and coaching.	Teachers are being trained in facilitation and coaching to promote active student involvement.	Facilitation and coaching is occasionally used to maximize active involvement of students in their learning.	Facilitation and coaching is the predominant mode of teaching and learning to maximize active involvement of students in their learning.	
Use integrated coursework, project-based learning (with student choice of projects), and service learning to engage students.	There are several opportunities for students to experience inter-disciplinary units of study throughout the year.	Integrated coursework and project-based learning is employed to engage students.	There are many opportunities for integrated coursework, project-based learning (with student choice of projects), and service learning to engage students.	
Require student portfolios and student-led conferences and exhibitions to the community.	All students regularly share their work with peers, the school and community.	All students compile a portfolio of best work or create a demonstration project to demonstrate skills and abilities.	All students compile a portfolio of best work or create a demonstration project to demonstrate skills and abilities. Students set goals and regularly assess their progress through student led conferences.	
Adopt existing programs, such as the College Board's Spring Board program, that are designed to promote active learning.	The school is exploring programs that will promote more active learning.	The school employs one or more proven programs that promote active learning.	The school employs one or more proven programs that promote active learning. Students are involved in designing, as well as carrying out their lessons.	
Train teachers to be guides rather than lecturers.	Classes are student centered as opposed to teacher centered.	Classes predominantly focus on students as workers and teachers as facilitators. The emphasis is on learning, not teaching	Classes predominantly focus on students as workers and teachers as facilitators. Students learn independently, work cooperatively and teach each other.	
Use student team approaches similar to those in science labs.	Students are often paired with others to facilitate peer support for learning.	Students receive training in assuming various roles (facilitator, timekeeper, recorder, etc.) in teams or cooperative learning groups.	Learning partnerships and cooperative learning teams and problem solving groups are reflective of the way adults approach problem-solving in the world of work.	
Provide students with choices in studies and assessments, and develop curriculum based on those choices.	Curricula is developed with age-appropriate interests of students in mind	Students are occasionally consulted regarding curriculum content.	Interest inventories and frequent benchmark assessments drive curriculum development. Independent study is a frequent option.	

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Recommendation 28: Teachers will <u>integrate assessment into instruction</u> so that assessment is accomplished using a variety of methods that do not merely measure students but become part of the learning process.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Use pre-assessment and formative assessment to guide instructional planning.	Pre-assessment and formative assessment occasionally guides instructional planning.	Pre-assessment and formative assessment often guides instructional planning.	Pre-assessment and formative assessment regularly guides instructional planning.	
Use assessment as a further opportunity to teach.	Assessment is used as a further opportunity to teach.	Assessment occasionally spurs opportunities to extend supplement learning.	Assessment often spurs opportunities to extend supplement learning.	
Shift perceptions and practices of assessment from judging to supporting and advancing learning.	Supporting and advancing learning are more important than judgments.	Students' work is most often assessed relative to progress, new skills and abilities.	Assessments require students to "explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self-assess."	
Use student portfolios and conduct periodic evaluations of them with the student.	All students regularly share their work with peers and learn self assessment skills.	All students compile a portfolio of best work or create a demonstration project to demonstrate skills and abilities. Each student has an adult advisor/mentor to support their learning.	All students compile a portfolio of best work or create a demonstration project to demonstrate skills and abilities. Students set goals and regularly assess their progress through student led conferences.	
Create small-scale diagnostic assessments to evaluate student learning and weaknesses, and modify instruction accordingly.	Use exists of small-scale diagnostic assessments to evaluate student learning and weaknesses, and modify instruction are in the formative stage.	Small-scale diagnostic assessments and frequent checking for understanding to evaluate student learning and weaknesses modify instruction daily.	Small-scale diagnostic assessments and frequent checking for understanding to evaluate student learning and weaknesses modify instruction throughout all lessons.	
Use programs that contain supplementary materials to focus on identified student weaknesses.				
Provide extra staff development in the use of assessment as a diagnostic tool.				
Include interactive "student centers" and evaluate students based on their individual skills and abilities.	Individualized interactive learning opportunities are available for remediation.	Individualized interactive learning opportunities are available for remediation, supplemental learning and advanced study.	Learning opportunities include interactive tutorials and "student centers" to evaluate students based on their individual skills and abilities.	
Align classroom assessment rubrics with state assessment rubrics.	Teachers use rubrics to assess student works.	Teachers are trained in the development of rubrics and are familiar with state assessment rubrics.	Classroom rubrics are seamlessly aligned with state assessment rubrics.	
Encourage students to generate questions using their familiarity with rubrics and state standards.				
Use backward planning in designing units.	Curriculum designers are familiar with the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework for improving student achievements.	Some units reflect a backward design that delays the planning of classroom activities until goals have been clarified and assessments designed.	Most units reflect a backward design that delays the planning of classroom activities until goals have been clarified and assessments designed.	

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Recommendation 29: Recognizing that schooling is a continuum, educators must understand what is required of students at every stage and <u>ensure a smooth transition</u> academically and socially for each student from grade to grade and from level to level.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Communicate regularly with elementary schools, high schools, and institutions of higher education.	Some communication exists among administration, teachers, and support staff between elementary and high schools. Staff is somewhat familiar with the curriculum, assessments, and organization for students before and after their respective grade level. Few processes, like shadowing students, student visitations, orientations, etc., are evident.	Significant communication exists among administration, teachers, and support staff between elementary and high schools. Staff is very familiar with the curriculum, assessments, and organization for students before and after their respective grade level. Some processes, like shadowing students, student visitations, orientations, etc., are embedded in school's culture.	Extensive communication exists among administration, teachers, and support staff between elementary and high schools. Staff has extensive knowledge about the curriculum, assessments, and organization for students before and after their respective grade level. Many processes like shadowing students, student visitations, orientations, etc., are embedded in the school's culture.	
Participate in vertical teaming strategies, and include principals in this communication.	Teachers meet occasionally to articulate curriculum, scope and sequence, and assessments between grade levels and include principals in the communication. Principals and counselors meet sporadically with counterparts in the elementary and high schools to address instructional issues.	Teachers meet often to articulate curriculum, scope and sequence, and assessments between grade levels and include principals in the communication. Principals and counselors meet occasionally with counterparts in the elementary and high schools to address instructional issues.	Teachers meet regularly to articulate curriculum, scope and sequence, and assessments between grade levels and include principals in the communication. Principals and counselors meet regularly with counterparts in the elementary and high schools to address instructional issues.	
Reach out to parents while children are still in elementary school.	Middle school staff reaches out to elementary parents by arranging some activities such as: orientation sessions; attending elementary PTA/PTO meetings; and making available newsletters, handbooks, curriculum guides, websites, and other school information.	Middle school staff reaches out to elementary parents by arranging many activities such as orientation sessions; attending elementary PTA/PTO meetings; and offering newsletters, handbooks, curriculum guides, websites, and other school information.	Middle school staff reaches out to elementary parents by actively promoting extensive middle level activities through: orientation sessions; attending elementary PTA/PTO meetings; and by promoting middle level newsletters, handbooks, curriculum guides, websites, and other school information.	

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Recommendation 30: Schools will develop a strategic plan to make technology integral to curriculum, instruction and assessment, accommodating different learning needs and helping teachers individualize and improve the learning process.

Strategy	Emerging Middle School (1-2)	Progressive Middle School (3-4)	Exemplary Middle School (5-6)	Score
Develop partnerships with businesses to provide technology support.	Communication exists between School District and Businesses regarding Technology Issues. PTO/Parent Groups and Local Business support School Technology.	There is a District-wide Strategic Technology Plan and a plan to seek Technology Support Locally and Nationally (from business). Staff is aware of Grant Possibilities, Companies, Businesses.	The district is fully integrated with a Strategic Technology Plan and coordination of technology. Local businesses and corporations are included in technology planning and committees. A plan is developed for shared technology support between schools and businesses to include professional development, technology hardware and software.	
Provide ongoing training for teachers to integrate technology into the curriculum.	Staff is aware of PD Workshops in Technology. Shared Time for Curriculum Development Using Technology PD Curriculum Integration of Technology	Staff awareness of PD Workshops in Technology Shared Time for Curriculum Development Using Technology PD Curriculum Integration of Technology Train Teacher Experts to Work with Integration within Schools	Coordination of Technology Create Professional Development System in Individual Schools that support the district technology plan. Teachers as Experts to Fellow Teachers Financial Support for PD Teacher Incentives for PD District provides time/monies for integrating technology into curricula.	
Encourage teachers to use available technologies as they develop lesson plans.	Some teachers occasionally use available technology in instruction and assessment.	Some teachers regularly use available technology in instruction and assessment.	The majority of teachers regularly use available technology in instruction and assessment.	
Write grant proposals to various companies (e.g., Microsoft and Apple) to fund technology initiatives.	Individual teachers write Grants for Technology Proposals.	There are school-wide efforts to write Grants for Technology Proposals	There is evidence of a district-wide culture for grant writing Technology proposals.	
Create a technology team and develop a technology plan; participate in programs based on computer technology.	Technology Support for School System	Technical Support for each School Teachers/Staff Technology Teams Professional Development for Staff Mapping Curriculum	District-wide Strategic Technology Plan District-wide coordination of Technology School-based Technology Teams School-based Technology Support School based PD in Technology Commitment to time for Technology PD	