Executive Summary - Worcester East Middle School
Sustainable Improvement Plan – 2021-22 School Year

The 2020-2021 school year was one full of challenges and obstacles, yet we were able to make headway in many key areas. As a school, we noticed great improvements in the areas of teacher collaboration; the use of technology and multiple modes of presentation; communication amongst staff; and multiple opportunities for professional learning. Due to the changes in school and the challenges of remote instruction, teacher teams had to come together and work collaboratively to create engaging lessons in new formats. Departments meet twice a week by grade level to curate resources, create assignments, activities, and assessments, and share successes so that all students could access the curriculum. Professional development was embedded in these meetings as well as in other formats such as asynchronous modules, small PLCs and book studies. High quality professional learning became a critical focus for our staff. Our staff came together this year to ensure student success both academically and emotionally. October 9 PD Day  Clarity Book Study/PDThe Distance Learning Playbook

Additionally, we saw improvements in SEL support and resources for all students through our student support services. Teacher teams met weekly with guidance, school adjustment counselors, and administration to discuss student concerns, both academic and social emotional. We were able to utilize our in building clinician and Student Health Center to reach out to students in need. Student clubs were able to be started and meet remotely once a week. Any student who wished to participate in these activities were encouraged to do so. ADVISORY FLYER

Finally, we note the adaptability, perseverance and flexibility of both teachers and students during a chaotic school year. Our mode of instruction changed; our daily schedule changed; our use of technology changed; our mode of instruction changed again. Despite all of these changes, we made it through! We adapted and moved on seamlessly. We all persevered and showed up daily. We were flexible when resources weren’t available or we had to change plans on the fly. While many people feel that students and teachers missed out this year, we can easily look back and see what we have gained. Based on a schoolwide survey of all our students, seventh and eighth graders reported that they felt safe, they felt cared for, and they felt that there was an adult in the building they could reach out to if they needed to.
School Profile

Worcester East Middle School (WEMS) serves as the middle school for the North Quadrant in the Worcester Public Schools. The school was opened in 1922 and remains in the original building. The school started out as a neighborhood junior high school, serving students from the immediate area, including Grafton St., Dorchester St., and Vernon Hill. but has expanded to include students from other neighborhoods and sections of the city.

WEMS serves approximately 737 students in grades seven and eight. Forty-seven percent of WEMS students are Hispanic, 22 percent are African American, 26 percent are white, and five percent are Asian. Twenty-five percent of students are categorized as English Language Learners and 21 percent receive Special Education services. Eighty-nine percent of WEMS students are classified as high needs by DESE. (Demographics based on 2020-2021 enrollment)

WEMS students belong to one of ten teams. A typical team will have subject area teachers - English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, Social Studies - plus a Special Education teacher for inclusion students. Between 80 and 110 students belong to teams that serve both regular education and inclusion students. ELL students are part of all teams. Teachers loop with their students. For the 2021-2022 school year, they teams are as follows:

- Grade 7 / 8 team academic support team: All Stars
- Grade 7 / 8 team social/emotional support team: Rising Stars
- Grade 7 teams: Scholars, Zenith, Olympians, and Voyagers
- Grade 8 teams: Phoenix, Adventurers, Challengers, and Explorers.

There are approximately 80 teachers who work in the building. Core content teachers are assigned to a team. We also employ two Spanish teachers, two reading teachers, two numeracy teachers, one creative writing teacher, and one AVID teacher. There are four ELL Teachers who work with all teams; twelve Special Education teachers; and ten enrichment teachers. Students take the following enrichments for one quarter:

- Grade 7: Physical Education, Drama, Art, and Health
- Grade 8: Physical Education, Art, Music, and English Seminar

Our vision for WEMS is tightly aligned with the goals of the Worcester Public Schools:

- Provide a supportive, safe, and orderly learning environment that emphasizes relationships marked by a mutual sense of respect, acceptance and inclusiveness for all, and our sense of responsibility to each other.
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- Work collaboratively to create and sustain rigorous, standards aligned instruction that improves students’ skills in literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication to prepare them for global citizenship.
- Engage with families and higher education, business, and community partners to develop and enhance opportunities for all students.
- Enhance professional collaborative structures that promote expertise and examples from within the school.

Our Vision for our Students

Our vision for our school begins with our students. Every WEMS student will feel safe and respected. Teachers will implement school-wide practices with fidelity that support our students’ academic, social/emotional, and behavioral development. Students will become invested in our school and find a welcoming home within their teams.

Our system of behavioral expectations will encourage students to internalize the impact of their words and actions in such a way that they become positive, productive, contributing community members. A supportive school climate and respectful school culture will result in greater student achievement.

At WEMS, students will be immersed in a variety of challenging collaborative learning experiences. Throughout each day, students will engage in productive struggle around higher order thinking tasks. Teachers will continually assess, formally and informally, student understanding, adapting instruction and providing timely support to maximize student growth and achievement. Those students with learning gaps will receive additional instruction to accelerate closing the gap with their peers. Teachers will recognize and encourage student effort, and students will regularly celebrate their achievement.

Our Vision for our Families

WEMS staff will continue to create an open and mutually respectful partnership between the homes and our school. We will provide a comprehensive system of responses to support all students and their needs. We will provide our parents and guardians with multiple opportunities to engage with our students, teachers, staff, and administrators in our school.

Our Vision for our Teachers

WEMS will be a collegial community of respected, supported, reflective, effective educators that collaborate with and learn from each other. Teachers will embrace a learner mindset and participate in a system for monitoring and enhancing classroom-based instruction that includes frequent observations, prompt teacher feedback and two-way conversations, teacher-to-teacher peer observation and sharing of best practices, and targeted coaching as needed. There will be transparent, open, and timely communication across all staff, fostering a sense of teamwork and inclusion.

All WEMS teachers, administration, and leadership teams will participate in a coherent system of teaming structures that will positively impact student achievement. This will include all teachers throughout grade levels and vertical content teams as well as administration and leadership teams. These collaborative groups will actively monitor the implementation of essential improvement strategies, practices, and resources to attain an increased level of student achievement for all students.

Key Improvement Strategies
Our approach is focused on improving the quality and delivery of core content, standards-based classroom instruction as defined by the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. We will utilize the WPS High Quality Teaching And Learning document to help guide and shape this work. Additionally, we will look through the lens of culturally responsive instructional practices and pedagogy; Universal Design for Learning (UDL); Blended Learning, Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) practices, and Differentiated Instruction.

It is our goal to provide all our students with instruction that is rigorous, aligned to grade level standards, student-centered and exhibits a culture of high expectations for all students. This includes providing instruction that actively and intellectually engages students in learning activities that directly relate to our identified, evidence based instructional practices. Best Practices
### Turnaround Practice #1: Leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration

The school has established a community of practice through leadership, shared responsibility for all students, and professional collaboration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Key Areas for Improvement</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue to improve the use and effectiveness of common planning time (CPT) and teacher collaboration.</td>
<td>1. Consistent use of data cycle.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Include Inclusion/SPED teachers in content based CPT.</td>
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### Strategies and Actions (specific and timebound)

1.1 Create a schedule that allows inclusion teachers, SPED teachers, administration, and coaches to meet with grade level, department based teams twice weekly.
   - Create, share, and follow a schedule by the first week of school.

1.2 Review protocols, roles, and materials for CPT and ensure they are used with fidelity.
   - Create and share mutually agreed upon protocols, norms, and roles for CPT. Share with the whole staff to have consistent expectations for CPT. Complete by the first week of school.

1.3 Teach data cycle protocol to groups to be used monthly at meetings.
   - Share and teach the data cycle template with each department by the end of September.
   - Create and follow a schedule for use. (Monthly)

1.4 Implement quarterly CPT surveys for all to take to reflect on CPT and adjust practices as needed.
   - Send out surveys at the end of each quarter to gather information on CPT meetings, topics, protocols, and use of time. Results will be analyzed at ILT and practices will be adjusted as needed.

1.5 Administer pre and post assessments in the areas of “response to text” and math standards that are indicated as high needs areas (STAR/MCAS/Common Assessment) to all students.
   - Identify high areas of need based on summative data points.
   - Create meaningful pre and post assessments in ILT that all students will take.
   - Administer pre assessment prior to the end of Q1; administer post assessment prior to the end of Q2.

1.6 Utilize data cycle with ILT members to look at assessment data and determine next steps
   - Look at data 1-2 weeks after administration and identify areas of success and areas of high need. Create plan for instruction to address areas of need with all students.

1.7 Incorporate Second Step lessons monthly to address areas of student social emotional needs.
   - Utilize School Adjustment Counselors and School Guidance Counselors to select appropriate lessons biweekly to add to morning announcements based on areas of need.
**Turnaround Practice #2: Intentional practices for improving instruction**

The school employs intentional practices for improving teacher-specific and student-responsive instruction.

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<tr>
<td>Improve core instruction (e.g. lesson planning that focuses on student engagement, differentiated opportunities for learners, student choice)</td>
<td>Embed PD at CPT that focuses on engagement; include Differentiated Instruction and UDL to address this area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster instructional coherence for writing between ELA and History content areas</td>
<td>Create anchor documents that can be used within both ELA and History; create opportunities for ELA and History teachers to collaborate on planning, teaching, and scoring with SRSD.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategies and Actions (specific and timebound)**

2.1 Provide departments targeted professional development in the areas of Student Engagement; Differentiated Instruction; and Student Choice.
   - Present monthly at department CPT on these topics using teacher leaders from within the departments.

2.2 Expand upon existing standards-based lessons to further develop opportunities for engagement, Sheltered English Immersion (SEI), DI, and UDL/choice.
   - Share exemplary lessons monthly at CPT; incorporate time monthly for teachers to expand upon lessons to add these elements.
   - Continue to use the PLC+ Playbook for strategies and best practices
   - Incorporate strategies from Clarity for Learning during PD and CPT.

2.3 Create anchor charts of common language, common strategies, and common expectations during CPT based on learning from PD.
   - Create a common language of terms that pertain to lesson plan and lesson format.
   - Create and share exemplary lessons.
   - Implements instructional rounds to see strategies in action.

2.4 Utilize checklist for rounds to monitor implementation of strategies
   - Incorporate during monthly rounds conducted during department CPT.
   - Analyze results during ILT and use data to determine next steps in PD.

2.5 Provide opportunities for ELA and History teachers to determine mutually agreed upon expectations for writing during the first department meeting in September.
   - Collaborate on determining what anchor charts, templates and terms will look like to create a shared language.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turnaround Practice #3: Student-specific supports and instruction to all students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school is able to provide student-specific supports and interventions informed by data and the identification of student-specific needs.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Our Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Key Areas for Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop robust support to students through teaming (Looping, alignment of SPED)</td>
<td>Establish inclusion teachers schedules to align with one specific grade level department (ie., grade 7 math)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve capacity for ELL and SPED teachers to collaborate with teaching clusters</td>
<td>Create a CPT schedule so that inclusion teachers can attend department CPT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continue to collaborate with the district ELL Coach.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Strategies and Actions (specific and timebound)**

3.1 Create a schedule that allows for one teacher to “specialize” in a specific grade level content area.
- Inclusion teachers will attend CPT with these departments as well as have the opportunity to work with the department head and coach in that discipline.
- Provide training opportunities for these teachers within the department they are working to allow for further content knowledge.

3.2 Create opportunities for teachers to form strong relationships with students and learn their strengths and areas of need.
- Have core content teachers loop with their students.
- Move from four sections of classes to five sections to allow for smaller class sizes.

3.3 Provide high quality and aligned professional learning opportunities on high leverage strategies for ELL students.
- Have the district ELL coach present to and work with teams on sheltered English immersion (SEI) strategies.
- Use teacher leaders from the ELL department to share how school-wide strategies work for their students at monthly staff meetings.
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Turnaround Practice #4: School Culture and Climate
A safe, orderly, and respectful environment for students and a collegial and collaborative culture among teachers.

Our Strategic Objective
Continue to build family and community engagement.
Improve classroom and behavioral management and continue to foster school wide behavioral norms.
Ensure students have expanded opportunities to participate in school decision making.
Provide a safe and supportive environment for all students, with a specific focus on the academic, social/emotional, and behavioral development of our Hispanic and Multi-race, non-Hispanic population.

Key Areas for Improvement
Utilize clusters to foster community engagement with events such as bingo nights, cluster breakfast opportunities, family nights, and career fairs.
Provide professional development to support teachers’ use of collaborative problem solving.
Develop our student council to foster student voice.
Increase academic achievement as evident in progress reports and quarterly grading.
Increase the attendance rates for students.
Reduce the amount of discipline infractions and suspensions (out of school and in school) for students.
Continue to have faculty/staff and administrators participate in professional development opportunities geared toward collaborative problem solving; addressing the social and emotional anxieties that students present with; and equity and access for our students and families.

Strategies and Actions (specific and timebound)

4.1 Utilize clusters to host various family and community events.
   - Have each team host at least one family event by the end of the second quarter.
   - Host at least 3 school wide community events by the end of the year.

4.2 Embed professional development on Tiered Systems of Support and Collaborative Problem Solving for all teachers.
   - Introduce MTSS and CPS to all staff and continue to share portions of it with teacher teams.

4.3 Continue use of the student council as a representation of student views, have a strong student voice that represents all our students, and foster student agency.
   - By the end of the first few weeks, select student representatives from each team.
   - Have monthly meetings with the student council members.

4.4 Provide greater support for our Hispanic and Multi-race, non-Hispanic students as a means to increase academic performance and decrease the rate of discipline infractions and suspensions that this population of students’ experiences.
   - Collaborate with community partners to establish programs for students.
     - Latino Education Institute-ENLACE Program
     - Holy Cross College-Latin after school program
     - Girls on the Run

4.5 Continue to actively use leadership and teaming structures to support SEL, culture, and student support.
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- Utilize data points (grades, attendance, discipline infractions, suspensions) as a means to not only identify students who present with concerns that negatively impact learning, but also to establish a rapport with students and families with the goal of providing the most appropriate supports to ensure the academic, social/emotional, and behavioral growth of students.
- Ensure that faculty/staff and administration continues to participate in professional development as a means to support the development of an inclusive setting for all stakeholders.
- Continue to establish structures for communication with families and the community to support the teaching and learning at WEMS so that families view themselves as partners in the learning process (Family nights-Ice cream social, Bingo night, KYSN, Job Fair etc.)
### Benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Measurement/Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By the first week of school, a schedule for CPT that includes SPED, administration, and FICs will be created and shared. (1.1)</td>
<td>Measurements include CPT schedule; CPT agendas and minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By September, all staff will have a shared understanding of the protocols, roles, and procedures for CPT. (1.2, 1.3)</td>
<td>Measurements include CPT agendas with published protocols and norms and roles; CPT minutes that include discussion of these; slides that have been created to define these items. We plan to use already established norms, roles, and protocols with some modifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By August, a daily schedule will be in place that allows for Inclusion teachers to be aligned to a grade level discipline. (3.1, 3.2)</td>
<td>Measurements include master schedule, teacher schedules.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the end of each quarter, all staff that participate in CPT meetings will complete a CPT evaluation. (1.4)</td>
<td>Measurements include results of CPT survey; analysis done at ILT and with department heads and admin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the end of the academic year, each cluster will have held at least one family event. (4.1)</td>
<td>Measurements include flyers and invitations to events; sign in sheets from events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the end of the academic year, we will have held at least 3 family-community events. (4.1)</td>
<td>Measurements include flyers and invitations to events; sign in sheets from events.</td>
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<tr>
<td>By the end of September, ELA and History teachers will create agreed upon anchor charts and expectations for SRSD. (2.3)</td>
<td>Measurements include copies of anchor charts and SRSD resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By the end of each quarter, content teachers will have received new PD modules on the topics of DI and UDL. (2.1, 2.2)</td>
<td>Measurements include PD calendar, copies of modules and accompanying materials.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Academic Targets

The Academic Targets from 2019-2020 will again be used for the 2021-2022 school year as the primary academic target. Please see the chart below for specifics:

**Worcester East Middle School: Targets for selected student groups, all tested grades (composite).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>2019 Targets</th>
<th>2020 Targets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Used for 2021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>488.3</td>
<td>490.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Needs</td>
<td>486.4</td>
<td>488.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>484.1</td>
<td>485.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>489.7</td>
<td>491.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>All Students</td>
<td><strong>481.9</strong></td>
<td>483.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Needs</td>
<td><strong>480.5</strong></td>
<td>482.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>478.4</td>
<td>479.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>480.6</td>
<td>482.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>All Students</td>
<td><strong>484.3</strong></td>
<td>487.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Needs</td>
<td><strong>481.9</strong></td>
<td>484.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>480.8</td>
<td>483.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>484.0</td>
<td>486.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The STAR Assessment will be used as an additional academic target. We will use the district set targets to measure growth on these assessments. We anticipate getting this information from the Office of Assessment and Accountability in the late summer/early fall.

Additionally, we will use any district based assessments to measure student achievement. (SRSD, Common Assessment) and anticipate getting the timelines and details for targets at the start of the school year.

School Determined Targets:

1. Students identified as “High Needs” will show improvement by at least 10 points on the Math and ELA MCAS.
2. Student performance on the district wide SRSD Common Assessments will increase from Fall to Spring by at least 5 points (20 point rubric)
3. Students will increase their scores on quarterly math assessments, reaching a score of 80% or higher by the last assessment.
4. Staff will understand and utilize the Collaborative Problem Solving System to decrease the school suspension rate by 10% from the 2019-2020 school year.
5. Daily attendance for students will be at least 95% each day for the 2021-2022 school year.
6. At least 50% of our families will participate at family and community events during the school year.