



Turnaround Plan Template

District: Watertown

School: Watertown Middle School

Academic Year: 2019-2020

Date Finalized: June 27, 2019

Section I: Executive Summary

Watertown Middle School (hereafter WMS) serves a diverse community northwest of Boston, Massachusetts comprised of 560 students in grades 6-8. Founded in 1922 and rooted in the historic traditions of the Commonwealth, WMS seeks to provide an excellent education – one that promotes equity and fosters caring and collaborative relationships. Our dedicated faculty and staff provide an intimate ratio of approximately 10 students to every teacher. As a school with 20+ languages spoken under our roof, we are proud of our diverse population and have a strong tradition of community service.

WMS, in partnership with families and the community, provides a supportive and challenging learning environment in which every student feels safe, respected, and valued. As a place for transition, the middle school nurtures the development of self-esteem and the unique emotional, social, ethical, and academic growth of each student.

The central goals for WMS in the 2019-20 school year are to improve overall student academic performance and to close achievement gaps between the general student population and subgroups in the school. All improvement strategies are geared to achieve that end: developing teaming structures that foster ownership of student results across disciplines; promoting distributive leadership among staff; facilitating data analysis; focusing on data to improve instructional practices geared towards closing achievement gaps; and implementing a *new* school-wide social-emotional curriculum.

Successful achievement of our central goals will be measured by the following metrics: improved student Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores in math, English, and science; students' achievement of stretch growth or grade-level proficiency as measured by i-Ready diagnostics in both reading and math in grades 6-8; close examination of common assessment data; implementation of protocols for critically examining student work; reduced behavior referrals, and improved attendance.

Central to the success of our ambitious improvement plan is the focus on the middle school turnaround strategies. By targeting our improvement plan to WMS' specific needs, we will concentrate our energies and dedicate the necessary time to achieve our aims. Specifically, these include having cluster teams utilize structured common planning blocks to analyze data as a routine element of practice. Additionally, our district Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) will focus specifically on inquiry, research, and development of school-wide improvement strategies. Staff will self-select one of five Professional Learning Teams: School Culture Team, Advisory Team, Data Team, English language arts (ELA)/Social Studies Curriculum Development Team, and a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Team. Finally, providing professional development (PD) in analyzing and using data to inform instruction, effective co-teaching strategies, creating standards-aligned curricula and meaningful assessments, social-emotional learning (SEL) training in Responsive Classroom and Kingian non-violence, higher-order thinking strategies, and differentiated instruction methods are all part of our strategic plan to achieve our goal.

Section II: Stakeholder Engagement

The Instructional Leadership Turnaround (ILT) team includes teachers, coordinators, and school and district administrators convened in mid-January 2019. First, we began by analyzing MCAS data in all grades and subject areas, parsing subgroup data from the larger aggregate and discussing the trends and concerns these data revealed. We then examined i-Ready diagnostic data for reading and math in grades 6-8, comparing these results to the general trends in MCAS. From our observations, we utilized the Fishbone protocol to determine what appeared to be the root causes of under-performing student performance on these assessments. Using the “Back to the Future” protocol, we explored instructional and student achievement goals for the future and the means to achieve them.

After examining MCAS and i-Ready data and determining potential root causes as an ILT group, we presented the same data and protocols, as well as an ILT progress report, to the entire faculty in March 2019. At that faculty meeting, all of the teachers -- after examining the same MCAS and i-Ready data previously examined by the ILT -- were able to engage in the same Fishbone protocol and provide their feedback regarding root causes of WMS students’ areas of need.

Independent of the ILT, the School Site Council began their own assessment of the current state of the school and their vision for its future. The School Site Council, including parents, teachers, and the principal, is annually responsible for the creation and updating of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). They began work on the SIP in February, bearing the school’s Turnaround status in mind as they undertook this work. Data were exchanged between both groups in order to provide coherence. The Council meets monthly and continues to serve as both a resource and a monitoring group.

During their data-gathering visits in March 2019, SchoolWorks met with a variety of focus groups, including teachers, administrators, parents, and students. Each group was asked a variety of questions about their experiences in the school and was able to give frank, informational feedback. SchoolWorks incorporated their responses into the final **School Quality Report (SQR)**, which was shared and discussed during the two full professional workshop days in May 2019. On those two PD days, a variety of subject and grade level teachers, curriculum coordinators, and the principal closely examined the report, using those findings to further determine root causes and potential strategies for improvement, which were included in the final turnaround plan.

The faculty was given the SchoolWorks report at the final faculty meeting of the year and provided their feedback. This laid the foundation for the collective work that will begin in earnest in the Fall.

At three different points during the school year 2018-2019, a presentation was made to the Watertown School Committee by Principal Donna Martin. In the Fall, the presentation consisted of a review of the 2018 MCAS results and a preliminary discussion of how WMS would address the deficits shown by the MCAS results. In March 2019, Assistant Superintendent Dr. McGuinness and Principal Martin conducted a presentation regarding the turnaround planning taking place at WMS. In May 2019, Principal Martin, along with two other School Site Council members, presented the SIP for 2019-2021. At all three meetings, several School Committee members asked questions and provided feedback toward school improvement and turnaround planning at WMS.

For next year, utilizing the already-existing structure of WMS School Site Council meetings, but expanding these to include additional stakeholders in the turnaround process, we will meet at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year, thus ensuring ongoing engagement with all involved constituents in the turnaround process. These extended meetings will be dedicated to examining the

outcomes of implementing the various facets of WMS' turnaround plan. Teachers will be surveyed for qualitative and quantitative feedback during the year regarding their PD and the new turnaround practices. Parents will additionally be given opportunities for input through a survey, membership on the site-based council, and ongoing parent-teacher organization (PTO) meetings.

Section III: Envision the Future

Watertown Middle School (WMS) envisions an environment in which the needs of the whole child are met and in which students are challenged, yet supported, by the entire community. This long-term vision for success dovetails with the larger Watertown Public Schools Improvement Strategy, which states: “If we...[f]ocus on inclusively educating all students to their full academic, social, and emotional potential...promote high expectations and authentic learning...[f]oster caring and collaborative relationships among and within schools, families, and community members...then we will inspire and empower students to explore and shape the world around them.”

At WMS, we will ensure that our students are held to high academic expectations through adherence to curricula that are aligned to State standards. Support for learning will come from shared, consistent behavioral and academic expectations across the school, as well as instruction provided by highly qualified teachers. We will leverage the expertise of multiple teachers through effective co-planning and co-teaching, thereby positively affecting all students’ learning. Outside of the classroom, teachers will collaborate using data to enhance pedagogy and reflective teaching practice. Pedagogical PD will focus on common policies in the classroom (e.g., standards-based grading, cohesive homework policy), as well as implementing methods of teaching, such as Project-Based Learning.

As part of improving teacher collaboration, we will also create common practices around data use and interpretation so that we may accurately monitor student progress and adjust teaching practices accordingly. These data will come from common assessments in the classroom, MCAS, and i-Ready reading and math diagnostics, as well as non-academic data, such as attendance and discipline. During common planning time, same-subject teachers will meet to look at student work and calibrate grading practices.

We envision a sense of compassion, openness, and collegiality in the adult community as we support one another in our united cause of reaching all students every day, every class. We support a consistent, enforced attendance policy. To develop long-term success, we require high standards where students demonstrate mastery and maturity. We believe students can achieve any task with perseverance and a growth mindset. We will implement positive mental health practices and strategies to support students who struggle with anxiety and anger control. At WMS, students are excited to learn and teachers are excited to teach; here, ‘kindness prevails.’ All students are empowered to seek and receive the help they need, rather than relying on an adult to do so for them. We envision improved student support for social pragmatics and social coaching to positively affect students in and beyond the classroom. WMS students are cognizant of their strengths and weaknesses, feel comfortable seeking help, do not fear being stigmatized, and receive enrichment when they are looking to be challenged. Empowerment over their social-emotional learning builds ownership and advocacy for a successful turnaround plan.

At WMS, we envision a classroom in which all students are actively engaged in productive, noisy classroom interactions, and where high expectations and academic performance are the norms. We envision students working in small groups with teachers monitoring performance to ensure understanding. We see students knowing their individual strengths and weaknesses and having self-set goals for achievement. We will find a way to offer all students the opportunity to take

enrichment classes. We will consistently provide appropriate support for all students to learn every day.

At WMS, we envision a redesign of our PD model, returning to the practice of workshop-based PD, focusing on teachers' needs and providing strategies and resources immediately transferable to the classroom. Utilizing two new instructional coaches, we envision teachers varying their repertoire of teaching strategies and gaining the desire and confidence to take risks in the classroom without fear of failure. To learn from each other laterally, we envision opportunities for peer observations on a regular basis. We also envision a schedule-supported structure for co-planning and co-teaching, so that teaching partners may effectively use data to leverage each other's strengths.

WMS believes that creating a strong, collaborative, student-centered professional culture is vital to helping all students succeed. We will maintain a culture in which students are seen by all educators as more than an accumulation of standardized test scores. Along with this vision, educators will recognize that students have strengths and weaknesses in many areas, and that focusing on building upon strengths promotes a school-wide growth mindset. To support broader collegiality, educators will be encouraged to work collaboratively whenever possible. This will include peer-to-peer classroom observations and collaborations with educators in other districts. Educators will be encouraged to assume positive intentions both of their peers in school and of every student and family regardless of the level of family engagement. Additionally, we envision a school climate in which all subjects are valued – not simply those tested by MCAS. Giving students the opportunity to take a wide variety of classes in different subjects will show our commitment to this value. Finally, we feel it is necessary that educators and students come to school every day with a sense of urgency and professionalism to reach their highest potential. We expect educators to see this as important business every day, and approach challenges with a sense of optimism that, together, we can all get the work done.

WMS recognizes the importance of family engagement and its impact on student achievement. We envision a consistent way of communicating feedback to parents and students about our high standards and our progress toward those standards. In order to fully achieve this, we welcome families of all backgrounds and languages to be a part of our school culture. We also envision our continued work with student-led conferences; this has been an effective way for students to take ownership of their educational experiences, thus increasing their potential for high achievement.

Section IV: Analysis of Assets and Challenges

For each turnaround practice, a root-cause analysis was completed. This root-cause analysis included looking at the following data: student attendance; enrollment by race; ethnicity and gender; subgroup participation rates on MCAS; accountability and achievement for all subgroups on the 2018 MCAS; and data from the SQR conducted by SchoolWorks, LLC in March 2019. This analysis resulted in identifying assets and challenges in the following areas and was essential in developing key strategies in the following section.

KEY ASSETS

Although WMS has been designated as being in turnaround status, there are many assets that the school will build from to leverage strengths. One asset is the strong foundation the school already has established in terms of the fourth turnaround practice around school culture and climate. Both staff and students described the school as a friendly and collegial place, and staff value collaboration among teams. Both students and staff described relationships as important and strong throughout the school community. Many teachers have strong relationships with students and families and are skilled at the relational aspect of teaching and learning. Because the fourth turnaround practice is foundational to support the other three turnaround practices, WMS is primed for this work.

The school's schedule can also be seen as a key asset. Content teachers have two periods every day to plan (preparatory time) and meet with their cluster team (common planning time). As teachers value collaboration, cluster meetings do occur on a regular and consistent basis.

Resources are a major asset at WMS. First, in terms of human resources, the school has 12 special educators, 2 full-time and one half-time reading specialists, 3 English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, 3 guidance counselors, 1 school psychologist, and 1.5 social workers. There are also two clusters (teams of teachers) of content teachers for every grade level, a department of foreign language teachers, and a full specialist department. Material resources include 1-1 Chromebook technology for every student, access to intervention programs such as IXL, i-Ready, Imagine Learning, Fountas & Pinnell's Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), and the availability of text to speech.

The school's social-emotional resources are also assets. Teachers meet with the guidance team once a week to discuss struggling students. WMS not only has 3 guidance counselors, 1 school psychologist, and 1.5 social workers on staff, but they have strong SEL resources to support struggling students. These resources include regular meetings between teachers and guidance counselors; a historic, school-wide focus on SEL; and teachers who offer supportive learning environments in the classroom.

CHALLENGES

While the school does have many strengths to leverage for the work of the turnaround plan, WMS also faces multiple challenges, which should be kept in the forefront as this work continues over the next three years. Although some aspects of the schedule are key assets, other pieces are challenges to overcome. For example, ESL and special education co-teachers often do not have common planning time with the teachers with whom they co-teach or support. This is a missing link in terms of being able to support students effectively and in the best way possible. The current structure for vertical teaming is also challenging. Departments are led by curriculum coordinators who also carry teaching caseloads at the high school. Vertical teams meet monthly in a large group that includes 6th through 12th grade teachers. Often at the middle school, one common planning time a week is

dedicated to content work at a grade level led by a curriculum coordinator, but this is not always consistent.

Supporting teachers is also a challenge at the school. Teachers consistently reported that they are overwhelmed by the PD offered by the district and often feel like they are just attending trainings or learning about multiple initiatives. Teachers have also not been evaluated on a consistent and regular basis. School leaders reported they had not been in classrooms often and curriculum coordinators, who also evaluate, are short on time because of their teaching caseloads and they work in a different building. Teachers reported that they wish they got more feedback, especially from content leads. The lack of observations in classrooms, feedback, and evaluations seems to have become the norm at the middle school; it presents a challenge when breaking out of the current model.

Another challenge is the lack of systems and structures to support struggling students at WMS. Currently there is no MTSS or a school-wide data culture. There is a block called “content support block” that supports students who need help; however, the lack of clear expectations and purpose for the block of time, as well as the number of enrichments offered to students taught by teachers at this time, make the block more of a study hall or homework completion period than one that provides intervention or support.

One of the main challenges the school faces – more broadly – is a lack of vision, values, or expectations. The principal is just concluding her first year as principal at the school and spent the year building relationships and trust before embarking on turnaround. There are no common school-wide expectations for students, nor are there shared expectations for teachers in terms of instruction and classroom practices. This will likely be a challenge moving forward; the school requires teachers to reflect on, and change, their teaching practices in their classrooms.

Section V: Strategic Objectives & Initiatives Aligned to Turnaround 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.

Given the assets and challenges described in Section IV, the school has identified the following strategies to promote leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration to accelerate learning:

- Develop teaming structures that promote distributed leadership and ownership of the school's turnaround plan.
- Determine an instructional focus (IF) for the 2019-20 school year.
- Provide PD and training around IF and key instructional strategies throughout the school year.

More detail on the strategies for turnaround practice 1 are provided below.

Develop teaming structures that promote distributed leadership and ownership of the school's turnaround plan.

WMS will develop new teaming structures to support the work of the turnaround plan in addition to enhancing and making current teaming structures more effective. The changes in teaming structures will include the establishment of an ILT. The ILT will include both building administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers from all grade levels and content areas. The ILT will be responsible for leading the work of the school's turnaround plan. Planning and development work will begin in the summer of 2019 with the determination of an IF for the year and creation of a strategic plan for how to roll out the IF, provide PD to staff, monitor the effectiveness of the IF, and determine how best to support staff throughout the process. The ILT will meet twice a month for an hour each meeting to strategically carry out the turnaround plan by collaboratively planning, facilitating, and running the school's monthly faculty meetings and four district early release PD days on IF and other key improvement strategies.

Additional teaming structures will include the use of PLTs throughout WMS. PLTs will focus specifically on inquiry, research, and development of next year's school-wide improvement strategies. PLTs will meet once a month for approximately 75 minutes. Teachers and faculty will self-select into one of five PLTs: School Culture Team, Advisory Team, Data Team, ELA/Social Studies Curriculum Development Team, and an MTSS Team. These teams will be described in detail in the following sections of this turnaround plan. PLTs will enable the entire school community to be involved in the development and direction of the school's turnaround plan and progress by distributing the work necessary among the faculty.

Determine an instructional focus (IF) for the 2019-20 school year.

Once the ILT is fully formed and has met, the first order of business will be determining an IF for the 2019-20 school year. The ILT will, as a team, read the SQR from March 2019 and use it and the Classroom Visit Tool (CVT) data to determine an IF in the domain of Purposeful Teaching. This IF will drive all PD for the year. The ILT will develop and provide this PD throughout the year during faculty meetings and early release PD days, and they will also monitor its effectiveness throughout the year. More specifically, using an observational tool designed or determined by district and school

leadership with the input of the ILT, the ILT will monitor the effectiveness and impact of the IF. This will be discussed in greater detail in the strategies for the second turnaround practice.

Provide professional development (PD) and training around the instructional focus (IF) and key instructional strategies throughout the school year.

After the ILT has determined WMS's IF for the year, the ILT will work to strategically develop PD sessions and support to be provided to teachers and faculty throughout the school year. This strategic planning will begin during the summer of 2019 and continue throughout the year. PD will include any learning and training the faculty needs to incorporate the use of the IF in their classroom practice. Trainings can be developed and facilitated by the ILT or researched by the ILT and facilitated by outside vendors, depending on the IF and funding. PD can be differentiated for staff according to experience, expertise, content, or grade level. The ILT will not only facilitate PD, but also monitor its effectiveness throughout the year through different measures. These measures include staff surveys and feedback, as well as the classroom observation tool. ILT will survey the staff on a quarterly basis using a self-created survey designed to monitor the learning and needs of faculty members in terms of the IF and key strategies linked to the focus. The observation tool will be used to determine the level of impact the IF is having in the classroom on students. ILT members will, in small teams, use the classroom observation tool quarterly and report back to staff any patterns and trends they are noticing in terms of impact and effectiveness of the IF in classrooms evidenced by the data collected with the observation tool.

Turnaround Practice #2: Intentional practices for improving instruction

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

Given the assets and challenges described in Section IV, the school has identified the following strategies for improving instruction to accelerate learning:

- Determine an instructional focus (IF) for the 2019-20 school year.
- Conduct regular observations (leaders and the ILT) to monitor instruction and ensure the IF is being utilized by all teaching staff using an observation tool.
- Formalize current cluster teaming structures and meetings to regularly share best practices, look at student work and data, and collaborate in content-based teams around the IF.
- Add instructional coaches to the staff and implement a strategic restructuring of curricular programming.

More detail on the strategies for turnaround practice 2 are provided below.

Determine an instructional focus for the year 2019-2020 school year.

As referenced in the above section, the ILT will determine an IF in the summer of 2019. This IF will define high-quality instruction at WMS, share expectations for instructional best practices, as well as guide the turnaround planning and strategic work of the ILT. See Turnaround Practice 1 for greater detail.

Leaders and ILT will conduct regular observations to monitor instruction using a standardized observation tool and ensure the IF is being utilized by all teaching staff.

As discussed in the first turnaround practice, the ILT will develop or investigate existing classroom observation tools to use in regular observations of classroom instruction. This observation tool should encompass all aspects of instruction. However, the ILT will focus their quarterly observations on the elements that pertain to the IF and key improvement strategies. Quarterly observations will be tracked in a database (any identifying information, such as teachers' names and room numbers will be removed) and the ILT will report out patterns and trends to staff around the IF within one week of the observations, either in person at PD sessions or via email. The ILT will also utilize this formative observational data to differentiate and strategically plan PD sessions.

In terms of leaders using the observation tool, both the principal and assistant principal will use this tool with the ILT quarterly (as members of the ILT). However, leaders will also use the observation tool to conduct weekly observations of classrooms. Leaders will use the full observation tool – not just focus on the elements of the IF – to monitor a more “whole picture” view of teaching and learning at WMS. These observations will not be evaluative. Instead, they will be about gathering data, monitoring all classroom instruction, and giving regular and consistent feedback to teachers. Leaders will meet together weekly with instructional coaches to share observational data, feedback, plan out the following week's observations, and help determine teacher-specific coaching supports.

Formalize current cluster teaming structures and meetings to regularly share best practices, look at student work and data, and collaborate in content-based teams around the IF.

One asset that the school will build on are the current cluster teaming structures. There are two clusters per grade level at WMS. Each cluster meets daily for one period during their common planning time; teachers also have one preparatory period per day that is separate from their cluster's common planning time. Currently, cluster meetings are not formalized and each team runs their meetings differently and independently. While teachers collaborate frequently, there is not currently a focus on student progress and effective instruction school-wide or in teams. By formalizing cluster meetings to share best practices, look at student work and data, and truly collaborate on teaching and learning, WMS teachers will assess the effectiveness of their own instructional practices and begin to modify instruction to meet the needs of their students.

A formalized and structured schedule would include the following meetings each week:

1. *Cluster Social-Emotional Meeting with Guidance:* Clusters currently meet with guidance each week to discuss struggling students or any other issues guidance may be aware of with individual students. This meeting will now focus on student data, including reports on attendance, referral data, and academic data. Meeting minutes will be recorded and emailed to school leaders for accountability and communication purposes, as well as shared with all team members.
2. *Cluster Meeting with ESL/Special Education Co-Teachers and Specialists:* Currently there is no set time in the schedule for co-teaching teams to meet, or inclusion of special education and ESL teachers to meet with content teachers. This would change. Teachers would collaborate, plan, and adjust instruction based on student data and observations to provide more differentiated instruction to all types of learners twice a week. School leaders and coaches will be responsible for setting the agendas and leading these meetings during which teachers would bring the current and following week's lesson plans to this meeting to reflect on the current week, look at formative assessment data, and use the data and reflections to adjust the following week's plans.

These meetings will serve as one method to support teachers in becoming fluent on the use of student data. These meetings will focus on the content support block and, based on student data, how effective each class is during this block and the regrouping of students. Students can, and should, be moved into different classes during this time, depending on their individual and group needs at the time. Groups will be more fluid and teachers will teach and support students on standards with which they are struggling at the time. Meeting minutes will be recorded and emailed to school leaders for accountability and communication purposes, as well as shared with all team members.

3. *Cross-Cluster Department Data Meeting (by content area)*: Teachers will meet with their grade-level content area peers and an instructional coach to compare student work and data. Data can include formative assessments, summative assessments, i-Ready, MCAS, ACCESS, writing or constructed responses. Teams will use various protocols to analyze data. Instructional coaches and school leaders will be responsible for planning the agendas and facilitating these meetings.
4. *Cross-Cluster Curriculum Meeting (by content area)*: A second time in the week, grade-level content area teachers and an instructional coach will meet with a focus on curriculum development and planning. Teams should focus on creating common assessments (including both summative and formative assessments), sharing lesson plans, and receiving feedback using protocols. Instructional coaches and school leaders will be responsible for planning the agendas of these meetings.
5. *Cluster "Business" Meeting*: This would be the time during the week that teams meet as a cluster and develop their own agendas around any logistical items that need to be discussed and planned. Meeting minutes will be recorded and emailed to school leaders for accountability and communication purposes, as well as shared with all team members.

Add instructional coaches to the staff and implement a strategic restructuring of curricular programming.

Strategic decisions and changes have already occurred at WMS in terms of additional staff and programming. First, next year the school will have two instructional coaches as opposed to one; one coach will focus on ELA and social studies, and the other on math and science. Instructional coaches will hold non-evaluative roles and be primary supports for teachers in terms of instructional practices and pedagogy. Coaches will work closely with administration to determine teachers who are in need of support based on observational data. They will conduct coaching cycles with teachers which include observations and feedback in debriefs, modeling instruction in classrooms, co-planning, curriculum development, and data analysis. Coaches will also be responsible for planning and facilitating cross-cluster content meetings (as described above).

In terms of strategic restructuring of curricular programming, school and district leaders made the decision to split the humanities course into ELA and social studies, instead of continuing to have it as a combined, double-block class. This decision was made based on de facto tracking in math and science as a result of the double humanities block, inequity in scheduling for special education and ESL students, and also on declining ELA, math, and science scores on the MCAS, observational data from leaders, scheduling difficulties at the school level and district level in terms of department

meetings, and classroom observation data from the SQR performed by SchoolWorks, LLC in March 2019. Support will be ongoing for ELA and social studies teachers in terms of developing curriculum to be implemented in the 2020-21 school year that is both rigorous and standards-based. The instructional coach will lead two common planning time meetings per week focused on curriculum development and data analysis. ELA and social studies teachers will also be given the opportunity to join the ELA or social studies PLTs to provide extra time throughout the year to examine the standards and develop rigorous units, using the district-wide expectation Understanding by Design framework and common assessments.

Turnaround Practice #3: Student-specific supports and instruction to all students

The school is able to provide student-specific supports and interventions informed by data and the identification of student-specific needs.

Given the assets and challenges described in Section IV, the school has identified the following strategies to improve student-specific supports and instruction to all students to accelerate learning:

- Continuously examine a variety of data sources (i-Ready, Atlas, MCAS, benchmark assessments, daily formative assessments) to inform Tier 1 instruction for all students.
- Ensure that all teachers are consistently using data (i-Ready, Atlas, MCAS, formative assessments) during content support block to effectively support struggling students.
- Collaborate with partners (Statewide System of Support [SSOS]) to research and develop an MTSS to be implemented school-wide in the 2020-2021 school year.

More detail on the strategies for turnaround practice 3 are provided below.

Continuously examine a variety of data sources (i-Ready, Atlas, MCAS, benchmark assessments, daily formative assessments) to inform Tier 1 instruction for all students.

While the school has some data sources to identify individual student needs, there is not currently a system or structure consistently used to collect data or analyze it on a regular basis. For the 2019-20 school year, instructional coaches and school leaders will work to develop a system for housing data and sharing it with all staff members. Staff will continuously collect, examine, and analyze data (from both summative and formative assessments) in weekly grade-level content meetings, as well as in cluster meetings with special educators and ESL teachers. Teachers, teams, and coaches will work to incorporate this data analysis into lessons and unit planning, as well as adjustment to practice in order to provide student-specific interventions and support inside the classroom.

The data PLT will also be an integral part of creating a school-wide data culture at WMS. During the 2019-20 school year, the data PLT will meet to research systems and structures for collecting and analyzing data, elicit feedback from staff, and determine the system and structure to implement for the 2020-21 school year that will lead to lesson planning and classroom practices that routinely use data to enhance instruction based on individual needs of students in the classroom and systematically supports the tiered intervention system that will also be implemented in 2020-21.

Ensure that all teachers are consistently using data (i-Ready, Atlas, MCAS, formative assessments) during content support block to effectively support struggling students.

While the school is not yet ready to implement an MTSS in 2019-20, the content support block is a block of time that currently exists in the schedule and has the potential to be more effective and impactful on student learning than it currently is. As teachers will be examining and analyzing data on a weekly basis with their clusters and content teams, one-week-a-month cluster meetings with special educators and ESL teachers will be dedicated to discussing the content support block.

Students should fluidly move between groups based on individual needs, as shown in the data, and teachers will reinforce and support students in standards-based practice.

School leaders will observe in content-support classes on a regular basis. They can incorporate this into their weekly observations using the observation tool. School leaders will also provide feedback to teachers on what they are observing during this period, specifically around what tasks students are completing and standards to which they are linked.

Collaborate with partners (SSOS) to research and develop an MTSS to be implemented school-wide in the 2020-21 school year.

WMS will spend the 2019-20 school year researching and learning about MTSS before determining how they will implement a version of one of these systems in the 2020-21 school year. The MTSS PLT will be primarily responsible for the research, learning, developing, and training the staff on a middle school MTSS model that best suits the students of WMS. This group will research MTSS models, but also will determine how the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) and the school's General Education Team (GET) process fit into this system. They will work to create a systematic, school-wide tiered intervention process and programming that provides students with the supports they need to achieve. This work includes looking at the school's current structures and resources (e.g., scheduling, staff, time).

Turnaround Practice #4: School Culture and Climate

A safe, orderly, and respectful environment for students and a collegial and collaborative culture among teachers.

Given the assets and challenges described in Section IV, the school has identified the following strategy to further enhance a positive school culture and climate to accelerate learning:

- Creation of a School Culture PLT
- Formation of an Advisory PLT.

More detail on the strategy for turnaround practice 4 is below.

Creation of a School Culture PLT

In addition to the other PLTs described in previous turnaround practices, WMS will form two additional teams to maintain and enhance a positive school culture: the School Culture PLT and the Advisory PLT. The School Culture PLT will be responsible for developing school-wide expectations through the use of a Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS) or other research-based system. The team will develop expectations and elicit feedback from staff and students during this process to increase buy-in for implementation in the 2020-21 school year. Other work of the School Culture PLT includes creating and sharing a common behavior rubric that links to the school-wide expectations and more explicitly lays out consequences for students, staff, and parents in terms of student behavior. This PLT will also review and analyze student referral data and attendance on a monthly basis and use the data to help inform their work throughout the year. WMS will also begin implementing the Responsive Classroom program. Twenty teachers will receive training and will work with the standing SEL committee to train the rest of the staff and monitor the use of the program and its effectiveness by surveying both staff and students throughout the year.

Formation of an Advisory PLT

The Advisory PLT will develop and pilot lessons and units for a future advisory period in the 2020-21 school year. This advisory period will serve as a proactive social-emotional support for all students at WMS. Some of this work already exists from a PLC that met this year; however, more work needs to be done collaboratively in terms of creation of advisory lesson plans or researching and piloting the existing middle school advisory curriculum (potentially in homeroom or content support). This team will also determine the logistics of advisory – where, when, and how often it will meet, who will teach it, how students will be grouped. A major part of this team’s work will be eliciting feedback from students through a common and regular survey, and reflecting on, and revising, the piloted lessons or curriculum.

Section VI: District Systems

Three-Year Budget/Financial Plan

SY2019 - 2020

- Hire 2 full-time instructional coaches (literacy/SS and math/science)
- Additional PD specifically designed to promote co-teacher's effectiveness and to support evidence-based inclusive practices (Year II).
- Additional 0.5FTE Reading Specialist
- Provide stipends/contract for ILT Turnaround Team
- Provide stipends/contract for restructuring humanities model/aligning the new social studies standards (Summer 2019 - SY'20)
- SEL training in Responsive Classroom Year I (four-day intensive, Summer 2019; ongoing SY 20)
- All students grades 6-8 will have i-Ready licenses; use i-Ready diagnostic, progress monitoring, intervention (Year I)
- Hire consultants from Teaching and Learning Alliance (TLA) to conduct an onsite literacy needs assessment
- Purchase Lucy Calkins *Writing* Units of Study starting with grade 6
- Hire consultants from TLA to provide coaching/professional development using Units of Study
- Teaching and Learning Alliance will continue to partner with the district to provide professional development and in-class coaching. Coaching sessions will begin in the late Fall/early winter and occur approximately once a month. TLA will also provide PD on early release PD days for all WMS staff.

SY2020 - 2021

- All students grades 6-8 will have i-Ready licenses; use i-Ready diagnostic, progress monitoring, intervention (Year II)
- SEL training in Responsive Classroom Year II (Four-day intensive, Summer 2020; ongoing SY 21)
- Additional PD specifically designed to promote co-teacher's effectiveness and to support evidence-based inclusive practices (Year III).
- Purchase Lucy Calkins *Writing* Units of Study into grades 7 & 8
- Purchase Lucy Calkins *Reading* Units of Study across grades 6
- Hire consultants from TLA to provide coaching/professional development using Units of Study

SY2021 - 2022

- All students grades 6-8 will have i-Ready licenses; use i-Ready diagnostic, progress monitoring, intervention (Year III)
- Purchase Lucy Calkins *Reading* Units of Study for use in grades 7 & 8
- Hire consultants from TLA to provide coaching/professional development using Units of Study

In order to facilitate the WMS turnaround plan, the Watertown Public School district will support the plan in the following manner:

- Two new coaches have been hired to work with teachers and support needed adjustments in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. One coach will be math/science, and the other will be literacy/social studies. During common planning time meetings, they will help teachers with using

data to drive instruction, and they will be in classrooms with teachers and students to model lessons and pedagogy. Additionally, they will run professional development sessions.

- Next year, WMS will have an additional .5 reading specialist, for a total of 3.5 FTE. This will allow smaller and more focused class sizes, as well as push-in support for struggling readers.
- Next year, WMS will have an additional .5 social worker, for a total of 1.5 FTE. This will allow for additional support for the students in our therapeutic classroom.
- WMS will have a new model for teaching ELA and social studies (SS) next year. In the past, in grades 7 and 8 there has been a humanities model, and the subjects have been taught in a somewhat blended fashion. However, due to inequity for ESL and special education students as a result of scheduling the humanities classes, the content will be taught next year as two separate ELA and SS classes. Through time, resources, and professional development, the district will support the creation of new curriculum as a result of this reorganization. Part of this restructuring will also include the updating of the new social studies curriculum to align with the new State standards.
- In school year 2018-19, WMS expanded the co-teaching model, pairing special educators with specific content area specialists. Initial feedback from staff indicated that they need additional support so that this is successful in its aims to close achievement gaps. SY2019-20 will see additional PD specifically designed to promote co-teacher's effectiveness and to support evidence-based inclusive practices.
- Department meetings occur one time a month after school and have traditionally been held with grades 6-12. In order to facilitate keeping the focus on the middle school curriculum development and alignment horizontally and vertically within the school, most department meetings will be held with grades 6-8 only.
- Throughout the year, PD at the middle school will be focused on aspects of the turnaround plan, including analyzing and using data to inform instruction, co-teaching strategies, effective and meaningful assessment, SEL training in Responsive Classroom and Kingian non-violence, higher-order thinking strategies, and differentiated instruction methods. Much of the faculty meeting time (one Wednesday after school a month) will be dedicated to PD opportunities.
- An Instructional Leadership Team will be formed in summer 2019 and include 10 teachers across grades and disciplines. This will be a stipended team supported by the district.
- On one Wednesday a month after school, PLTs meet, per the district's direction. Beginning in 2019, middle school teachers will have a choice of the following PLTs: School Culture PLT, Advisory PLT, Data PLT, ELA/Social Studies Curriculum Development PLT, and a MTSS PLT.
- All students grades 6-8 will have i-Ready licenses. Teachers will continue to receive PD and support in the use of i-Ready as a diagnostic and instructional tool, which was not implemented with fidelity during the 2018-19 school year. Furthermore, teachers and students will use the data generated from i-Ready to have data chats and set individual learning goals for students.
- In addition to a SchoolWorks site examination, WPS/WMS has engaged the services of the TLA to conduct an onsite needs assessment as well. Scheduled for Fall 2019, this assessment will entail classroom observations and an examination of curriculum materials and resources and sessions with a cross-section of staff serving as a focus group. This additional feedback will also provide valuable information to be used as part of WPS' ongoing work in vertical alignment, articulation, and continuity of curriculum and programming. TLA has been serving as consultants to the elementary schools in the district for two years and is poised to extend those services to the middle school as we look to expand our use of the Calkins Reading and Writing Units of Study across grades K-8.

Section VII: Goals, Benchmarks, and Progress Monitoring

The process that the Watertown Public Schools and Watertown Middle School will use to monitor the impact of the strategies will continue to be developed over the course of the 2019-20 school year. The process will include establishing the following mechanisms and consistently using them to monitor the impact of strategies and instruction in the school.

Mechanisms for monitoring impact and growth will include:

- **Agendas and meeting minutes** will be collected for all versions of cluster meetings, PLT meetings, and ILT meetings, and reviewed by district and school administration.
- **Work products** will be collected from cluster meetings and PLTs. They can include shifts in groupings for content support, and progress made toward PLT goals.
- **Survey data** will be collected from students and staff on the IF, as well as piloted advisory lessons. This will reflect student and staff perceptions on key improvement strategies.
- **Data from a standardized observational tool** will be used by the ILT, as well as district and school leadership to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the school's IF and key strategies.
- **Results from the 2019 administration of the DESE's Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) annual student survey** will be used as a baseline for growth and student benchmarking.
- **Reading and Math i-Ready data** will be used to track and monitor individual student academic growth and to determine student need in Tier 1 classroom instruction as well as placements and planning in tiered content support blocks.
- **MCAS and ACCESS** results will serve as measurable student achievement goals and data
- **Discipline referral data, suspension and attendance data** will all be tracked and monitored throughout the entire year. The administrative team, along with the School Culture PLT will review the data monthly and, when necessary, develop action plans.

Turnaround Practice #1: Leadership, shared responsibility & professional collaboration

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

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| Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) for Student Achievement | We will meet or exceed accountability targets as set by DESE for all students and the lowest-performing student's group. |
| Interim Benchmarks for Teachers/Practitioners | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By the end of August 2019, the ILT will be established and will have determined the instructional focus (IF) and key improvement strategies for the 2019-20 school year. 2. By October 2019, 100% of teachers will be able to identify the IF and will have received PD on the IF and key improvement strategies. |

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Staff members will be surveyed after every faculty meeting and PD session to determine perceptions, understandings, and needs on the IF. 4. By September 2019, 100% of faculty will be members of one PLT for the 2019-20 school year. By October 2019, all PLTs will have defined their purpose and specific focus for the year. By January 2020, all PLTs will submit work products and plans for the remainder of the year to administration for feedback. By June 2020, 100% of PLTs will have presented their work to the staff and all teachers will have given feedback on the work of all other PLTs. |
| <p>Interim Benchmarks for Students</p> | <p>Students will be surveyed quarterly and results will show at least 10% growth each quarter on the following three components of focused instruction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My teachers explain a learning objective for every lesson. 2. My teachers hold me accountable for the learning objective. 3. My teachers explain and convey the content I am learning clearly and in a way I understand. |

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| <p>Turnaround Practice #2: Intentional practices for improving instruction The school employs intentional practices for improving teacher-specific and student-responsive instruction.</p> | |
| <p>Measurable Annual Goals (MAGs) for Student Achievement</p> | <p>We will meet or exceed accountability targets as set by DESE for all students and the lowest performing students’ group.</p> |
| <p>Other MAGs 3 required by statute:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student acquisition of 21st century skills 2. Development of college readiness 3. Developmentally appropriate child assessments from pre-kindergarten through third grade, if applicable | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 50% of students demonstrate a mastery of life and career skills through participation in school-sponsored extracurricular career readiness and volunteer activities. 2. The percentage of students scoring Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on ELA MCAS will rise from 2019 to over 50% in 2020. The percentage of students scoring Meeting or Exceeding Expectations on Math MCAS will rise from 2019 to over 60% in 2020. 3. N/A; the school is a middle school |
| <p>Interim Benchmarks for Teachers/Practitioners</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By October 2019, 100% of teachers will have been observed using the classroom observation tool at least one time and leaders will have a baseline for the IF to measure growth. |

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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. By January 2020, there will be 15% growth from the baseline in September 2019 on the classroom observation tool in IF. 3. By June 2020, there will be 15% growth from January 2020 data on the classroom observation tool in IF. |
| Interim Benchmarks for Students | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By December 2019, at least 50% of students will demonstrate growth (or a higher level of mastery on standards) on the i-Ready reading assessment. By March 2020, at least 65% of students will demonstrate growth (or a higher level of mastery on standards) on the i-Ready reading assessment. By June 2020, at least 80% of students will demonstrate growth (or a higher level of mastery on standards) on the i-Ready reading assessment. 2. By December 2019, at least 50% of students will demonstrate growth (or a higher level of mastery on standards) on the i-Ready math assessment. By March 2020, at least 65% of students will demonstrate growth (or a higher level of mastery on standards) on the i-Ready math assessment. By June 2020, at least 80% of students will demonstrate growth (or a higher level of mastery on standards) on the i-Ready math assessment. 3. The percentage of students reporting Always True or Mostly True will rise by 20% in each of the following components of the VOCAL survey: instructional environment, relationships, and participation. |

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| Turnaround Practice #3: Student-specific supports and instruction to all students | |
| The school is able to provide student-specific supports and interventions informed by data and the identification of student-specific needs. | |
| MAGs for Student Achievement | We will meet or exceed accountability targets as set by DESE for all students and the lowest performing students' group. |
| Interim Benchmarks for Teachers/Practitioners | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 100% of teachers will examine and analyze student data and work on a weekly basis during common planning time as evidenced by meeting minutes and agendas. 2. Observational data will show 15% growth from the baseline in September 2019 growth in differentiated instruction/ instructional strategies on the classroom observation tool. 3. By June 2020, the MTSS PLT will have developed a plan for a school-wide systematic approach to providing and monitoring Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention supports to students. |

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| <p>Interim Benchmarks for Students</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each quarter, there will be a 15% decrease in the number of referrals to special education. 2. Each quarter, 80% of ELL students will show accelerated progress toward their customized benchmarks. 3. Each month, the school will reduce suspensions by 25% as compared to the prior year, for all categories of infractions and student groups. 4. The percentage of students reporting Always True or Mostly True will rise by 20% in each of the following components of the VOCAL survey: cultural competence, participation, and relationships. |
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| <p>Turnaround Practice #4: School Culture and Climate A safe, orderly, and respectful environment for students and a collegial and collaborative culture among teachers.</p> | |
| <p>MAGs for Student Achievement</p> | <p>We will meet or exceed accountability targets as set by DESE for all students and the lowest performing students' group.</p> |
| <p>Other MAGs <u>7 required by statute:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parent and family engagement 2. Building a culture of academic success among students 3. Building a culture of student support and success among school faculty and staff 4. Student attendance, dismissal rates, and exclusion rates (a measure is needed for each of these three items) 5. Student safety and discipline 6. Student promotion and dropout rates 7. Graduation rates (high schools only) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By November 2019, at least 75% of families will have had a welcome/orientation phone call or email correspondence with a school staff member. 2. By November 2019, 100% of students will have created an academic goal for the year. These goals will be posted around the building and also recorded by homeroom teachers for reflection after each report card. 3. In addition to the benchmark articulated in Turnaround Practice 1, in Spring 2020, all PLTs will present their work for the year, and the faculty will provide feedback and guidance to school leaders and the ILT on the direction of the turnaround plan for 2020-2021. 4. Student attendance will raise to 90% from 82.1%. Dismissal rates will drop from 19% to 10%. Student exclusion rates will drop from 3 % to 1%. 5. In the Spring 2020, the School Culture PLT will present and elicit feedback from staff and students on the behavior rubric and school-wide expectations for the next school year. WMS will also track all discipline data during the 2019-20 school year and the School Culture PLT will set a goal about reducing referrals for the 2020-21 school year in the Spring 2020. |

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| | <p>6. Our current student promotion and dropout rates will be maintained as all students are currently promoted and no students drop out of WMS.</p> |
| <p>Interim Benchmarks for Teachers/Practitioners</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By November 2019, 100% of faculty will have contacted families for non-disciplinary reasons via email or phone. 2. In Spring 2020, all PLTs will present their work for the year, and the faculty will provide feedback and guidance to school leaders and the ILT on the direction of the turnaround plan for 2020-21. 3. By September 2020, 100% of faculty will have joined an PLT with the purpose of providing feedback and guidance to school leaders and the ILT on the direction of the turnaround plan for 2020-21 and promoting shared ownership. |
| <p>Interim Benchmarks for Students</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By June 2020, the average percentage of students with 5 or more tardies will decrease from 30% to 15%. 2. By June 2020, the number of discipline referrals will decrease from 707 referrals in 2018-19 to 500 referrals in 2019-20. 3. By June 2020, the student attendance rate will meet or exceed 90%. 4. The percentage of students reporting Always True or Mostly True will rise by 20% in each of the following components of the VOCAL survey: mental health environment, discipline environment, physical safety, emotional safety, and bullying/cyber-bullying. |