Utah Spotlight: Inspiring Educators

Ensuring High Levels of Learning

Driven by a Clear Purpose

With the intent of creating a highly effective school, the Washington Fields Intermediate School leadership and faculty, established a clear driving purpose for their work. They identified their purpose to be to "ENSURE high levels of learning for EVERY student." Once the school was clear on their purpose, the school staff executed a series of strategic steps to help make their purpose a reality; this is what the school refers to as "The Charger Process."

The first step in the Charger Process involved the faculty and staff collaboratively working together to identify specific collective commitments that would guide their work and help them achieve their purpose. The collective commitments fell into six focus areas: Assessment, Climate, Culture, Instruction, Extra Time and Support, and Leadership (see example in upper right corner). Within those six focus areas, four emerging themes surfaced: rigor, relationships, readiness, and resiliency.

Once the collective commitments were established, the work of the Charger Process began. The Charger Process is grounded in the elements of professional learning communities (PLC) and incorporates many of the essential components needed to provide a personalized, competency-based learning system. The steps of the Charger Process include:

- Step 1: Identifying the Essential Standards/Skills
- Step 2: Establishing Shared Clarity/Agree Upon Proficiency
- Step 3: Developing Common Measures of Proficiency
- Step 4: Assessing for Learning
- Step 5: Evidence of Learning
- Step 6: Providing Extra Time and Support by Target Skill

"It became abundantly clear to us that if we were to meet the varied learning needs of each of our students in this ever-changing educational landscape, it would require creativity, innovation, and a clear, focused process to ensure ALL our student learn at high levels."

Charger Collective Commitments: ASSESSMENT

We commit to providing students with **multiple opportunities and a variety of ways** in which to demonstrate their learning.

We commit to create and deliver common formative assessments that allow teachers to use the results to: identify needs by the **"student and skill"** and to:
1) Identify students who have met proficiency
2) Identify students who need extra time/support
3) Identify and share best teaching practices impact a student's learning.

We commit to using **assessments as a tool FOR learning** and not simply a score in the gradebook.

We commit to creating assessments that **evaluate student skill and knowledge development** and not just memorized facts.

Washington Fields Intermediate
Washington County SD

Principal: Bob Sonju

## School Demographics

Total Enrollment: 883 students

- 15% of students with limited income
- 11% of students with a disability

Ensuring High Levels of Learning

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Step 1: Identifying the Essential Standards/Skills

In grade-level teams, teachers worked collaboratively to provide curricular priority by identifying which Utah core standards are essential to know, important to know, and nice to know. The essential standards then become what teachers will explicitly teach, monitor progress, and collect evidence of student proficiency to assess competency.
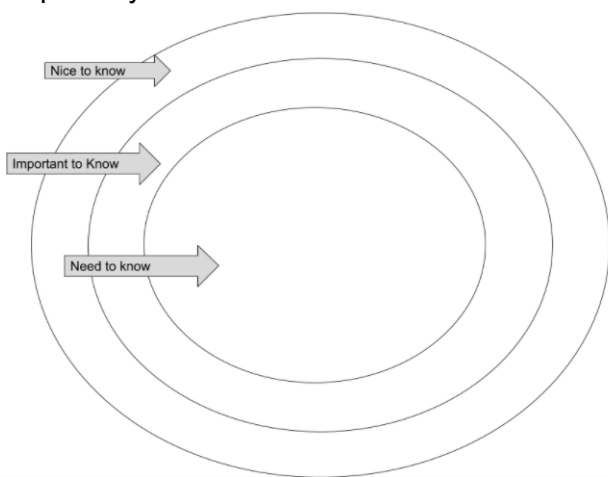
Step 2: Establishing Shared Clarity and Agree Upon Proficiency

Teacher teams take each essential standard and gain shared clarity about the critical elements and defining characteristics of that standard. Using the Clarity Model (see image to right), they work together to articulate the learning targets, specific skills, question stems, and academic vocabulary that are critical to student understanding.

Step 3: Developing Common Measures of Proficiency

Next, teacher teams take each of the learning targets and decide what grade level proficiency looks like. Once proficiency is defined, the team works to define the characteristics of being above proficient, approaching proficient, and minimally proficient.

Learning Target	4 Above Proficient	3 Proficient	2 Approaching Proficient	1 Minimally Proficient

Step 4: Assessing for Learning

Teacher-teams create and administer common formative assessments that align with the defined proficiency expectations in step 3.
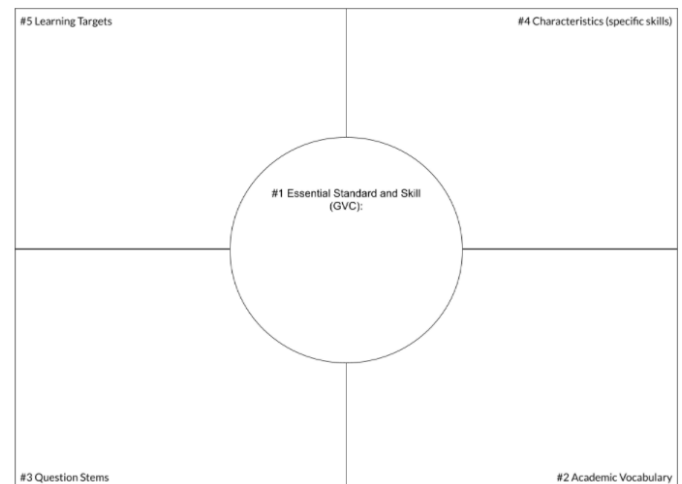
Step 5: Evidence of Learning

Based on the evidence submitted by the student, the teams evaluate and assign a level of proficiency level on each specific target. This proficiency level is used to determine which student's need extra time and support to achieve proficeincy and which students require extended learning opportunities. Each team communicates the student's proficiency level to students and their families.

4 = Beyond proficiency
The student understands at an IN DEPTH level and can teach it or apply it to the world.

3 = Proficiency
The student understands and is PROFICIENT in a majority of demonstrations of the concept.

2 = Approaching proficiency
The student demonstrates SOME knowledge and understanding of the concept but lacks proficiency in key areas.

1 = Minimal understanding
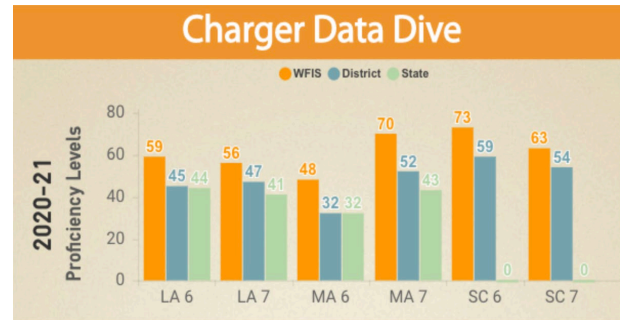Has NOT YET demonstrated an understanding of the concept and requires continual support.

NE = No Evidence

Step 6: Providing Extra Time and Support by Target Skill

If a student is not demonstrating proficiency, the teacher-team, instructional aides, and other staff provide immediate, targeted time and support with varying degrees of intensity to ensure that each student achieves proficiency. Utilizing their assessment data, teacher-teams will identify which students need extra time and support, which need extensions and which teaching practices were most effective.

Student Learning Results

So what does this mean for student learning outcomes? As evidenced by their 2020-2021 RISE proficiency levels, Washington Fields is outperforming in every summative assessment in comparison to the other schools in their district and the state. (see table below).

Charger Data Dive

Legend: WFIS, District, State

	LA 6	LA 7	MA 6	MA 7	SC 6	SC 7
WFIS	59	56	48	70	73	63
District	45	47	32	52	59	54
State	44	41	32	43	0	0

(2020-21 Proficiency Levels)

2021-2022: Where Next?

Even with the current success rates WFIS is experiencing, they are not relenting. This year, the faculty and staff are engaging in strategic, intentional work to refine and extend their practices. Implementing such robust instructional practices requires ongoing refinement, reflection, and development. From onboarding new teachers to refining the common formative assessments and proficiency measures, there is always room for continuous improvement. When you speak to any WFIS educator, it is clear they passionately believe in the school's purpose and work diligently to grow in their practice to achieve that purpose. When speaking to any of their students, one can't help but sense their enthusiasm for what they are learning, where they are in their journey toward proficiency, and what to do if they need help. The faculty, staff, and students are truly inspiring. For an example of what they are currently working on to achieve their defined purpose to "ensure high levels of learning for EACH student", see the school's focus areas on the following page.

Special thanks to the Washington Fields Intermediate School Vision Team who took the time to share their tremendous efforts to achieve the school's purpose:

Bob Sonju, Principal
Jaye Brackett, Vice Principal
Sheline Miller, Learning Coach
Maren Powers, LA 7

Rebekah Foster, Counselor
Thal Wright, Counselor
Gabrielle Hasenbeck, STEM
Kristin Mansell, Science 7

Ezra, Student Ambassador
Rockwell, Student Ambassador
Teagan, Student Ambassador
Brittyn, Instructional Assistant

Washington Fields Intermediate

Faculty *21-22* Focus

ACADEMIC RIGOR

ALL students need access to grade-level standards. Some sub-groups are significantly behind.

HOW
1. Clarity on essentials
2. Defined proficiency levels (4)
3. All instruction, assignments, & assessments AT/ABOVE grade-level
4. Student self-assessment

MONITOR
1. Standards wall/Class visuals
2. Rubrics in each target area
3. Frequent "Rigor Audits"
4. Support classes-essentials

TEACHING FEEDBACK

Student learning is directly impacted by the quality of daily teaching in the classroom.

HOW
1. Weekly observations
2. Monthly shared feedback
3. Teach, assess, and provide targeted time and support on essentials

MONITOR
"Fast Five" Feedback
1. Engagement
2. Teacher location
3. "What are you learning?"
4. "How will you know when you've learned it?"
5. "What will you do if you struggle?"

FOCUSED COLLABORATION

Collective knowledge is key to our work. Vertical articulation is essential as students move through our school.

HOW
1. Content TEAM collaboration min. 50 minutes per week.
2. Vertical TEAM collaboration min. 50 minutes every two weeks
3. Charger Collaboration Focus

MONITOR
Evidence Questions
1. "Which essentials have been learned?"
2. "What evidence do you have?"
3. "What are the specific names of the students who didn't?"
4. "What evidence do you have that your team is providing extra time and support?"

SCHOOLWIDE EXPECTATIONS

Students need clear, structured, and supported expectations as a foundation to academics.

HOW
1. Consistent training
2. Reinforcement of appropriate behaviors

MONITOR
1. School-wide behavior data
2. Student surveys
3. Teacher surveys
4. Parent feedback

LITERACY

Literacy is the key to ALL content areas

HOW
1. Consistent literacy training
2. Strategies taught and modeled in each classroom
3. Build reading stamina through practice

MONITOR
1. School-wide reading assessments
2. Literacy checks

ENSURE High Levels of Learning for EVERY one of OUR Students