

PUSD Approach to Excellence Mid-Year Report
Due Date Feb. 6, 2008

Approach to Excellence Strategy: Middle School Reform Team	
Project Manager: Felicity Swerdlow	Date: February 3, 2008
Expectations/Scope: <p>The purpose of this team is to create a consistent, comprehensive, coherent, effective and engaging middle school program in PUSD that provides a strong foundation for ALL students to achieve academic and personal success. A representative Middle School Reform Team (MSRT) made up of middle school principals, assistant principals, counselors, teachers and district staff is working collaboratively to achieve this goal. Students, parents, and community will have input into the plan. The PUSD Middle School Reform Plan recommendations will be presented to the PUSD School Board on April 22, 2008, for adoption at the May 13 Board Meeting.</p> <p>The Middle School Reform Plan is a part of the Secondary Reform initiative, an integral part of the 5 year Vision for PUSD. This plan will have a very important role to play as the community is engaged in creating a clear articulation of what a successful PUSD graduate looks like.</p> <p>(See attached MSRT Deliverables)</p>	
Strategies Implemented: <p>(See attached MSRT Timeline)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two major documents are guiding the work of the MSRT - <i>Taking Center Stage – Act 2</i> (California Department of Education) and <i>Breaking Ranks in the Middle</i> (National Association of Secondary School Principals).• During regular meetings MSRT participants have examined and continue to examine research and data on successful model schools.• Overarching schemata for the Middle School Reform Plan has been developed.• The MSRT is developing PUSD guiding principles for middle school reform. The draft guiding principles have been shared with District middle school and K-8 faculty.• Two principals and Director of Secondary Curriculum are participating in California League of Middle Schools’ (CLMS) Principals to Watch program, reviewing research around and visiting high-performing middle schools.• A significant cohort of MSRT members is registered to attend the California League of Middle Schools conference at the end of February, where the official <i>Taking Center Stage – Act 2</i> will be launched.• Meetings are scheduled with school site parent groups (SSC, ELAC, PTA) and DELAC.• Meeting planned for all parents and community members to share MSRT Plan.• Conversations with district Communication Director about press coverage and Community Forum on MSRT Plan.	

Data Collected and Analyzed:

- Student achievement data at each site serving middle school students.
- Academic Performance Survey (APS) for SAIT and QEIA Schools (Wilson, WMS)
- Taking Center Stage Self-Study
- Middle School Faculty Response sheets to MSRT Plan

Data Analysis Results:

Consistent findings across the schools included:

- Overall low academic performance.
- Persistent achievement gaps among certain subgroups.
- The need to revisit master schedule in light of research on middle school student needs. The importance of building a master schedule to serve the needs of students and not adults.
- The need to reduce class size.
- The need for well implemented research-based interventions in English and Math.
- Inconsistent implementation of advisory and other strategies to personalize education for students.
- Varied quality of after-school programs.
- Limited college and career/technical education opportunities.
- The need for increased parent involvement and outreach.

Mid-Year Changes:

No major changes to the Middle School Reform Plan are needed as the initiative has so far successfully implemented intended activities within the proposed timeline. (See attached Timeline and Deliverables.)

Support Needed:

- Reassurance by Executive Leadership and the Board that PUSD will prioritize resources and support for the implementation of the plan, including, for example, recommendations to reduce class sizes.
- Support in convening parents and community members and providing continuous outreach and communication about the Middle School Reform Initiative.
- An understanding of how this initiative will support recommendations around grade configuration.