

Converse **M**iddle **S**chool

School **I**mprovement **P**lan

2011 – 2012



**Special thanks to the members of the CMS School Council for their time and assistance in the development of this plan-
and especially for their continued support of our efforts to maximize the success of every student.**

CMS Goal 1: Maintain the Team Model/Middle School Concept

Supports Goal 1 of the District Improvement Plan: To enhance teaching and learning to improve student achievement and well being.

Root Causes/Reasons	Instructional Change Objectives	Sample Activities	Resources Needed	Time Line/ Person Responsible
<p>To provide critical safety nets for students during the developmental years between elementary school and high school.</p> <p>To provide for improved communication with students and between school and parents/guardians.</p> <p>Reasonable class size and Team Leaders are essential elements of the team concept.</p> <p>Continue to provide Unified Arts classes for all students as an essential element of ‘middle school’.</p>	<p>Continue to provide a safe and supportive school environment to support and assist all students as they navigate the critical developmental period in their lives between grades 5-6-7.</p> <p>Continue to build on positive Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) as determined by DESE with the focus on maximizing the success and achievement of all students.</p> <p>Providing Unified Arts classes for all students are essential to help our students become well rounded citizens, provide them an exposure to lifetime pursuits, and promotes a background for appreciation.</p> <p>Teams and Team Leaders provide additional ‘safety nets’ for students and facilitate improved communication between school and parents/guardians.</p> <p>Continue to focus on improving the transfer of student data as students’ transition between grades 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, between schools and within Converse Middle School.</p>	<p>Students and staff will be organized into teams.</p> <p>A Team Leader will be assigned to each team.</p> <p>Unified Arts class will remain in place for all students.</p> <p>Class size will be reasonable.</p> <p>Continue to improve the flow of student information as students transition between grades and schools.</p>	<p>Appropriate funding to support reasonable class size, unified arts, and team leaders for all students.</p>	<p>Administration All Staff</p>

CMS Goal 2: Continue work with the District and School Assistance Center (DSAC) utilizing their student data and resources to identify areas in need of improvement and to target/unified professional development accordingly. The following DSAC/DESE resources will be utilized with CMS staff in this process. Supports Goal 1 of the District Improvement Plan: To enhance teaching and learning to improve student achievement and well being.

Root Causes/Reasons	Instructional Change Objectives	Sample Activities	Resources Needed	Time Line/ Person Responsible
<p>To effectively utilize the resources available to CMS through the DSAC and DESE to both support improved instruction and maximize student success and achievement.</p>	<p>Continue to build on the professional learning community at Comverse Middle School</p> <p>Facilitate conversations between staff focused on improving student success and instructional practices.</p> <p>Continue to build on skills to better review and analyze student MCAS and student growth percentile data.</p> <p>Through more extensive student data analysis and with support and assistance from the DSAC data, Math and ELA specialists we will identify specific/targeted professional development needs and resources to improve instruction and student success.</p>	<p>Utilize the following resources and supports available from both the DSAC and DESE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learning Walkthroughs (building a professional learning community) -Conditions for School Effectiveness Self-Assessment -DSAC data specialists -DSAC Math and ELA Specialists -District Analysis and Review Tool (DART) -Performance Improvement Mapping -School and District Profiles -Student Growth Percentile resources -Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning -Characteristics of Standards-Based Mathematics Classrooms -Mathematics Learning Community: Professional Development Curriculum Materials -<i>Tiered Instruction: Grounding Document and Self-Assessment Instrument</i> 	<p>Continued support and resources from DSAC and DESE.</p> <p>Funding for targeted professional development.</p>	<p>Administration All Staff</p>

CMS Goal 3: Begin the implementation of the new Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts & Literacy (Grades Pre-Kindergarten to 12) and the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics (Grades Pre-Kindergarten to 12) through planning, discussion, and training with CMS staff. Supports Goal 1 of the District Improvement Plan: To enhance teaching and learning to improve student achievement and well being.

Root Causes/Reasons	Instructional Change Objectives	Sample Activities	Resources Needed	Time Line/ Person Responsible
<p>The new Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts & Literacy (Grades Pre-Kindergarten to 12) and the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Mathematics (Grades Pre-Kindergarten to 12) have just recently been made available.</p> <p>CMS teachers, guidance counselors, and administration need to be provided the necessary support to become familiar with the new frameworks</p>	<p>Provide all staff with the resources and support necessary to begin the process of implemented the new Curriculum Frameworks.</p> <p>Modify existing Palmer Public Schools Curriculum Guidelines for grades 5, 6, and 7 in each subject area.</p> <p>Effectively implement the new Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks so each teacher's instruction is fully in line with them to improve student success and learning.</p>	<p>Training and support by the DSAC data, Math and ELA specialists.</p> <p>Visit other schools to learn about programs and strategies that may be effective at Converse.</p> <p>Professional learning discussions organized by subject areas to assist in effective implementation of the new Frameworks.</p>	<p>A copy of the new Massachusetts standards for each teacher, guidance counselor and administrator.</p> <p>Continued support/resources from the DSAC.</p>	<p>Administration All Staff</p>

CMS Goal 4: Identify appropriate formative assessments for use with the new Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in both English Language Arts & Literacy and Mathematics.

Supports Goal 1 of the District Improvement Plan: To enhance teaching and learning to improve student achievement and well being.

Root Causes/Reasons	Instructional Change Objectives	Sample Activities	Resources Needed	Time Line/ Person Responsible
<p>We will need effective formative assessment tools to insure student progress and success as the new Frameworks are implemented.</p> <p>We need a resource that can be used to assess student progress periodically through-out the school year to insure they are making effective progress in learning as measured against the new Frameworks.</p>	<p>Teachers will have the resources necessary to regularly assess student progress as measured to the new Massachusetts Frameworks.</p> <p>Administrators will be able to more effectively oversee the formative assessments, monitor results to insure students are making effective progress, implement necessary supports for students that are struggling, implement necessary supports for teachers including necessary professional development.</p> <p>Student progress as measured by the formative assessments will be shared with students and parents as a measure of their progress with the new Frameworks.</p>	<p>Quarterly (or more frequently) assessment of student progress.</p> <p>Parent meetings, as needed, to review student progress as measured, in part, by the formative assessments.</p>	<p>Purchase of a new computer based formative assessment (ex. STAR Enterprise).</p> <p>Professional development / training for all teachers in the effective use of the new assessment tool.</p>	<p>Administration All Staff</p>



2010 - 2011 CMS Academic Goals

The following academic goals were developed using the PIMS process and data from the 2010 Spring MCAS. These goals will be implemented at CMS during the 2010 - 2011 school year.

School-wide Initiative:

Goal 1: To increase student competency in answering ELA, math, and science open response questions resulting in a minimum 3% CPI increase (aggregate and subgroups) in each subject area at each grade level.

Subgroups/Remediation Initiative:

Goal 2: To provide subject specific remediation to all students who comprise a subgroup and/or scored in the warning category on a 2010 MCAS exam resulting in a minimum 3% CPI increase (subgroups) in each subject area at each grade level.

Subject Specific:

(Language Arts/Reading)

Goal 3: To increase students' ability to identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the characteristics of different genres with an emphasis on S15 Style & Language resulting in a minimum 3% LA CPI increase (aggregate and subgroups) at each grade level.

(Math)

Goal 4: To increase students' understanding of number sense, the building block for all other math, resulting in a minimum 3% math CPI increase (aggregate and subgroups) at each grade level.

(Science)

Goal 5: To increase students' retention of key science concepts and science vocabulary, with an emphasis on Earth & Space Science, resulting in a minimum 3% science CPI increase (aggregate and subgroups).

Goal 1: To increase student competency in answering ELA, math, and science open response questions resulting in a minimum 3% CPI increase (aggregate and subgroups) in each subject area at each grade level.

Rationale: Open response questions comprise a substantial percentage of the maximum points possible (20% - 30%) on all MCAS exams (subject and grade). While CMS has closed the gap significantly between our performance and the state’s performance, students must continue to receive direct instruction and practice in open response strategies for math, science, and language arts.

Target Group: All students

- Data Analysis:**
- 2010 Grade 5 CMS LA OR 51% - State 53%; CMS Math OR 61% - State 67%; CMS Science OR 49% - State 54%
 - 2010 Grade 6 CMS LA OR 50% - State 55%; CMS Math OR 62% - State 64%
 - 2010 Grade 7 CMS LA OR 58% - State 58%; CMS Math OR 71% – State 67%

Root Causes	Instructional Change Objectives	Sample Activities	Resources Needed	Timeline/Responsibility
<p>Insufficient emphasis on need for passage specific vocabulary and level of detail/evidence necessary.</p> <p>Insufficient modeling of open response answers at all grade levels.</p> <p>Lack of consistency in scoring open response questions using the MCAS standards and rubrics.</p>	<p>Teachers will increase the number, frequency, and variety of open response questions administered to students.</p> <p>Teachers will provide consistent open response feedback to students using the MCAS standards and rubrics.</p> <p>Teachers will instruct students in strategies (underline, highlight, use of quotes, etc.) to include more details and better passage or content-specific vocabulary in answers.</p>	<p>Students will identify (star, highlight, list) evidence, details, and vocabulary they plan to include in their open response questions.</p> <p>Students will compare their open response answers with available state exemplars.</p> <p>Students will be exposed to open response questions on a regular basis (weekly practice and on assessments).</p>	<p>State rubrics and open response exemplars</p>	<p>Timeline: 2010-2011 School Year</p> <p>Responsibility: All subject area classroom teachers and specialists</p>

Goal 2: To provide subject specific remediation to all students who comprise a subgroup and/or scored in the warning category on a 2010 MCAS exam resulting in a minimum 3% CPI increase (subgroups) in each subject area at each grade level.

Rationale: Students in a subgroup historically score lower than the aggregate on MCAS exams. Students who have scored in the warning category on a 2010 MCAS exam have already failed to demonstrate MCAS success and are at risk of scoring the Warning category on future MCAS.

Target Group: Subgroups, Students on Individual Student Success Plans

Data Analysis:

- 2010 Grade 5 CMS LA Spec Ed 58.7, State 63.1; CMS Low Income 75, State 72.7; CMS Math Spec Ed 52.9, State 54; CMS Science Spec Ed 61.5, State 62.3
- 2010 Grade 6 CMS LA Spec Ed 64.2, State 65.8; CMS Math Title I 65.8, State Title I 67.8
- 2010 Grade 7 CMS LA Spec Ed 71.4, State 68.9; CMS LA Title I 81.3, State Title I 79.5

Root Causes	Instructional Change Objectives	Sample Activities	Resources Needed	Timeline/ Responsibility
<p>Evidence suggests that low-income students, ESL students, and special education students enter school with gaps in the language development, math skills, and background knowledge needed for school success.</p> <p>Lack of awareness of which students make up the Low Income subgroup.</p> <p>Despite services offered, many struggling students fail to stay for extra help or tutoring.</p> <p>Difficulty finding time in schedule to provide remediation/supplemental services in all subject areas.</p>	<p>Teachers will provide additional practice and remediation for students not experiencing school and/or MCAS success.</p> <p>Teachers, guidance, and administration will use Testwiz to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and form appropriate instructional groups based on the data analysis.</p> <p>Teachers, guidance, and administration will meet regularly to monitor the progress of at-risk students.</p> <p>CMS will use Title I funds to purchase appropriate tutoring software for use both during the school day and after-school (software will replace PLATO which is no longer compatible with our school's computers).</p>	<p>Students will continue to utilize X block and homeroom to maximize time devoted to additional curriculum practice.</p> <p>Teachers, guidance, and administration will make frequent phone calls home (or other forms of school to home communication) encouraging targeted students to stay for extra help.</p> <p>Students will select appropriate leveled readers using STAR data.</p> <p>Students will be encouraged to utilize all available academic software (CMS Lab Programs and internet-based programs).</p>	<p>Purchase of tutoring software and other supplemental materials</p> <p>Testwiz for data analysis (already available)</p> <p>Reinstatement of late bus (possibly in collaboration with Cougars' Den)</p>	<p>Timeline: 2010-2011 School Year</p> <p>Responsibility: All subject area teachers and specialists; guidance and administration to assist with school to home communication and data analysis</p>

Goal 3 (Language Arts/Reading): To increase students’ ability to identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the characteristics of different genres with an emphasis on S15 Style & Language resulting in a minimum 3% LA CPI increase (aggregate and subgroups) at each grade level.

Rationale: Students must understand the characteristics of different genres and how authors write for a variety of purposes and audiences in order to answer both multiple choice and open response questions. Standard 15 Style and Figurative Language is particularly challenging for middle school students because literary elements such as mood, figurative language, etc. are abstract concepts for adolescents.

Target Group: All English and reading students

Data Analysis:

- 2010 Grade 5 CMS below state by the following -7% Fiction, - 5% Poetry, -4% Nonfiction, -3% Genre, -2% Style and Figurative Language
- 2010 Grade 6 CMS below state by the following -6% Poetry, -4% Myth, -3% Fiction, - 3% Nonfiction, -2% Style and Figurative Language
- 2010 Grade 7 CMS below state by the following -2% Drama, 0% Style and Figurative Language and Nonfiction, +1% Fiction

Root Causes	Instructional Change Objectives	Sample Activities	Resources Needed	Timeline/Responsibility
<p>Insufficient classroom instruction devoted to an understanding of audience and purpose.</p> <p>Evidence suggests that current curriculum is rich in fiction but weak in the genres of nonfiction, poetry, and drama.</p> <p>Students struggle to identify examples of figurative language, mood, etc.</p> <p>Lack of vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment (introduce, reinforce, mastery) on Standard 15.</p>	<p>Teachers will introduce texts of various genres to increase students’ understanding of genre characteristics.</p> <p>A reading curriculum will be developed to insure that all LA standards are adequately addressed.</p> <p>Teachers will provide students with multiple examples of figurative language, changes in mood, etc.</p>	<p>Students will identify elements and characteristics of various genres.</p> <p>Students will utilize graphic organizers to help identify text features and figurative language.</p> <p>Students will utilize the “POEM” strategy – paraphrase, observe, elements, and meaning – when working with poetry.</p> <p>Students will identify mood and tone and provide specific and relevant details in their answers.</p>	<p>Most resources are already available.</p> <p>Professional development committee support of curriculum work in the area of reading.</p>	<p>Timeline: 2010-2011 School Year</p> <p>Responsibility: Reading and English teachers, specialists, and administration (to support curriculum development)</p>

Goal 4 (Math): To increase students’ understanding of number sense, the building block for all other math, resulting in a minimum 3% math CPI increase (aggregate and subgroups) at each grade level.

Target Group: All math students

Rationale: Number sense, the building block for all other math, is defined as an intuitive feeling for numbers and their various uses and interpretations. Number sense also includes the ability to compute accurately and efficiently, to detect errors, and to recognize results as reasonable. Students with number sense are able to understand numbers and use them effectively in everyday life. While CMS has made major gains in the area of number sense (evidence – positive gains in MCAS scores, teacher observation), many students still struggle with basic operations, fractions, problem solving, estimating, etc.

Data Analysis:

- 2010 Gr. 5 Number Sense CMS 70%, State 71% (difficulty with factors/multiples, whole numbers and decimals; strength with place value and compare/order numbers)
- 2010 Gr. 6 Number Sense CMS 72%, State 68% (difficulty with mixed numbers; strength with fractions and adding and subtracting integers)
- 2010 Gr. 7 Number Sense CMS 61%, State 62% (difficulty with rational numbers and compare/order; strength with scientific notation)

Root Causes	Instructional Change Objectives	Sample Activities	Resources Needed	Timeline/Responsibility
<p>Lack of mastery of math facts.</p> <p>Lack of real life experience with fractions, percentages, and other representations of numbers.</p> <p>Lack of that intuitive feeling for numbers necessary for recognizing patterns, errors, and reasonable answers.</p> <p>An inability to apply math skills and operations to multi-step, application problems.</p>	<p>Teachers will provide students with multiple representations of numbers (decimals, fractions, mixed numbers, etc.).</p> <p>Teachers will collaborate on strategies to improve number sense.</p> <p>Teachers in all subject areas will create/utilize opportunities for students to see how math is utilized in daily life, careers, etc.</p> <p>CMS will explore ways it can provide better opportunities for parents to learn about simple ways they can incorporate number sense into their everyday family routines (tips in quarterly newsletter, Title I Math Night, etc.).</p>	<p>Students will complete quarterly assessments to insure they are meeting grade level benchmarks.</p> <p>Students will apply math operations and other math skills to multi-step, application problems on a weekly basis.</p> <p>The school newsletter will include tips for developing student number sense.</p>	<p>Supplemental math materials (focusing on basic skills and operations, not to be in conflict with Everyday Math already in place)</p> <p>Use of Title I and possible grant funds to reinstitute a Math Night</p> <p>Time devoted to development of grade level quarterly assessments</p>	<p>Timeline: 2010-2011 School Year</p> <p>Responsibility: Math teachers and specialists; all classroom teachers to assist in expanding students’ awareness of math in the world; administration to support school to home math connections</p>

Goal 5 (Science): To increase students' retention of key science concepts and science vocabulary, with an emphasis on Earth & Space Science, resulting in a minimum 3% science CPI increase (aggregate and subgroups).

Target Group: All science students

Rationale: In science, students are expected to remember in detail specific science concepts taught over several school years. Students must be able to read and respond to questions rich in content specific knowledge and vocabulary. Students appear to have a significant amount of difficulty retaining Earth & Space Science knowledge.

Data Analysis: 2010 Grade 5 CMS Science 64%, State 67%, Earth & Space CMS 54%, State 61%
2010 Grade 8 PHS Science 50%, State 62%, Earth & Space PHS 23%, State 59%

Root Causes	Instructional Change Objectives	Sample Activities	Resources Needed	Timeline/Responsibility
<p>Lack of vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment in the science curriculum (Grades 3 – 10).</p> <p>Not enough time to cover current grade standards and review previous year concepts.</p> <p>A significant amount of Earth and Space Science is taught in non-testing years.</p>	<p>Teachers will review/reinforce content and vocabulary on a monthly basis through the use of science periodicals, software, and MCAS practice questions.</p> <p>Teachers and administration (Grades 3 – 10) will work collaboratively to identify key science standards, curriculum gaps, and overlaps in standards taught.</p>	<p>Students will review science content through the use of science periodicals, videos, software, and MCAS practice questions on a monthly basis.</p> <p>Students will compare their open response answers with available MCAS exemplars.</p>	<p>Time for administrators and teachers at the elementary, middle, and high school to participate in updating the science curriculum.</p> <p>Continued access to National Geographic student magazines, science videos, online streaming, etc.</p>	<p>Timeline: 2010-2011 School Year</p> <p>Responsibility: Science teachers; school librarian to collaborate on periodicals, supplemental material, etc.; administration to facilitate and support curriculum work</p>