



100 DAY REPORT

Principal Jesse McMillan

*Entry Plan findings from the
22-23 school year*

INTRODUCTION



Dear Members of the Westfield Middle School Community,

As I shared with you when I joined the Westfield Middle School community, my primary goal between January through June was to listen and learn. The entry plan began with intentional and purposeful meetings with students, caregivers, faculty and staff, district administrators, collective bargaining groups, and local educational partners. While there was a significant amount of dialogue with each group, I asked the same key questions with all stakeholders:

1. What should I know about WMS and its community?
2. What is going well and should be continued?
3. What are challenges and areas of growth?

First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone who participated in this process. Without you, I would not have been able to gain a complete picture of our school community. I am especially grateful for the relationships that I developed throughout my first six months.

My ultimate goal was - and is - to maintain open and honest communication with all members. While the introductory listening and learning tour is complete, it is imperative to note that I always welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss ideas, concerns, or personal stories. Listening and learning is always ongoing.

The following report highlights the observations and key findings resulting from the many interactions, meetings, and events for which I participated. I look forward to acting on the information in this report for the benefit of all Westfield Middle School staff and students.



INITIAL IMPRESSIONS



The community sentiment is positive and supportive of our schools and our educators. In a significant number of the entry plan meetings, an emerging theme was the overall dedication of Westfield educators.

Nearly everyone I spoke with also communicated pride of being a part of the Westfield community. Many district parents, community members, and faculty/staff have been in the Westfield community since childhood and/or raised their children in our schools. Stories of positive and caring relationships between and among members of the Westfield Public Schools were echoed by all stakeholders.

Despite budgetary concerns, which are a topic of conversation in many communities throughout the Commonwealth due to outdated funding formulas, the district and City of Westfield are committed to meeting our students' needs.

Westfield Public Schools and the greater community is rooted in tradition. There is a need and desire to enhance our students' educational experience that will prepare them for our advancing world, but we must find a way to do this while also respecting the identity of our educators, schools, district, and community.

EXPECTATIONS FOR YOUR PRINCIPAL

Just as I will have expectations for faculty and staff, students, and families, the Westfield community has expectations of me as your principal. I am grateful for the many conversations that assisted me in understanding your priorities based on previous experiences. The following expectations were most commonly voiced from all stakeholder groups:

STABILITY

COMMUNICATION

VISIBILITY

**STUDENT
SUPPORT**

- **Stability:** The school community has expressed its need for a committed, long-term principal due to the significant turnover in administration.
- **Communication:** The school community expressed a need for honest, transparent, and ongoing communication about current events, teaching and learning, processes and protocols, safety, needs of the school, and positive outreach about students, to name a few.
- **Visibility:** The school community expressed a need for a principal who is visible throughout the building with students and faculty/staff, as well as in the community.
- **Student Support:** The school community expressed a need in developing and re-developing consistent student-centered systems and structures that support their academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and physical well being.

EMERGING THEMES - STRENGTHS

Based on data analysis, document review, individual interviews, observations, and multiple meetings, Westfield Middle School has the following strengths:

- **Middle School Model:** The new Westfield Middle School was established in 2018 when the former North Middle School and South Middle School were reconfigured. Educators shared the strength of implementing a team-based model. The middle school team model is the foundation for a strong learning community characterized by a sense of family, as students and teachers on the team become well acquainted, resulting in an increased feeling of safety and support. Educators especially appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with a small group of colleagues, all of whom share the same students.
- **Dedicated Educators:** Teachers, support staff, and administrators are deeply committed to the school community. Many employees live in town and/or attended Westfield Public Schools themselves; therefore, they embrace the culture and traditions. There is a great deal of institutional knowledge among faculty and staff due to their long-term commitment to the school and district. As a result, faculty and staff have strong connections with many stakeholders. Although there is a wide range of experienced and newer employees, there is a strong willingness to collaborate with others, leading to strong teams of teachers.
- **Resources:** The district and school has invested a significant amount of time, energy, and funding into selecting and implementing high-quality, developmentally appropriate curricula. While there is a learning curve with new curriculum materials, educators are satisfied with their materials and their ability to collaborate both horizontally (across same grade level) and vertically (across both grade levels). In addition, educators are satisfied with the personalized instruction provided by the iReady diagnostic assessments, as well as the new technology, such as TouchViews.
- **Autonomy:** The concept of educator autonomy refers to the professional independence of teachers and administrators in schools, especially the degree to which they can make autonomous decisions about how they approach teaching and learning in their environments. Educators report feeling that they have the professional respect where their expertise and opinions are valued.

EMERGING THEMES - AREAS OF GROWTH

Based on data analysis, document review, individual interviews, observations, and multiple meetings, Westfield Middle School has the following areas of growth:

- **Consistent Expectations:** Seven principals have taken the helm of WMS over the past ten years, each with their own style, priorities, and expectations. While the assistant principals, teams of teachers, and specialists each have their own set of appropriate expectations, there has not been a building-wide approach to identifying and implementing expectations, resulting in opportunities for problem behaviors to occur. The pandemic had an impact on this, too. Continuity and consistency are necessary and there is a strong desire from the staff to streamline and unify schoolwide practices. It will be imperative for faculty/staff and administration to work together during the implementation phase.
- **Depth of Initiatives:** The best interests of students and educators are always in mind when making decisions and educators appreciate this. However, the school community reported that there have been several initiatives over the past several years, which are necessary, but they reported the feeling of only scratching the surface with certain topics versus delving deep.

- **Communication:** While there are several strategies for communication and some educators communicate regularly with caregivers, the school community reported a need for an increase in positive communication and outreach from both teachers and administrators instead of only hearing from the school when there is a concern or issue. In addition, educators reported a need for increased communication from building administration, specifically as it relates to student support.
- **Facility Appearance:** Westfield Middle School was remodeled in 1998 and there have been some major technological improvements; however, there have been limited physical improvements and enhancements since this date. It was reported and observed that we have several dedicated custodians, but the approach to maintaining the facility is inconsistent.
- **Instructional Practices:** We have many talented and experienced educators at WMS, but there is an inconsistent approach to instructional delivery, differentiation, and utilization of resources. There is a need to expand opportunities to identify the best high-leverage instructional practices and implement them throughout the building. A clear definition and shared expectations of student engagement and differentiated instruction would promote varied instructional strategies and modalities to engage students in active learning, all while still maintaining teachers' autonomy.
- **Sense of Identity:** While there are many long-term educators, strong relationships throughout the building, and a recent re-branding of the school, Westfield Middle School school lacks a cohesive identity and larger sense of community. With a stronger identity about who we are and what we believe in, we will then be able to create a short-term and long-term vision of where we see ourselves going.

IMMEDIATE COMMITMENTS

- **Academic Achievement:**
 - We will embrace a growth mindset and ongoing learning to reflect on our practice.
 - We will implement a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning to ensure students' needs are met, and these systems will be clearly communicated to the schools community.
 - We will create an Instructional Leadership Team of administrators and teachers to review current assessments, analyze data, and develop plans for the utilization of data throughout the school, allowing opportunities for distributed leadership.
 - We will implement high-leverage instructional strategies that will be implemented throughout the building by all educators.
 - We will analyze and revise the daily schedules and responsibilities of building administrators to ensure there is dedicated time to be present in classrooms supporting our teachers.
 - We will utilize team meetings, collaborative meetings, staff meetings, and monthly PLCs to focus on teaching and learning.
- **Culture and Climate:**
 - We will continue to heal from the past, focusing on new opportunities to grow.
 - We will create a shared mission and vision that encompasses our values and beliefs.
 - We will have clear expectations that lead to an optimal environment for students and staff.
 - We will create rituals and traditions that are fun for students and teachers.
 - We will work towards building positive attitudes and relationships among all school staff that support the work of effectively working and learning together.
 - We will systemize structures for celebrations of students and staff.
 - We will continually assess our culture and climate and make improvements, as needed.

SUMMARY

My commitment to Westfield Middle School - and Westfield Public Schools - is building on the rich traditions and practices, while providing continuous improvement in all areas.

We have an incredible opportunity to create a strategic plan, which will enhance the educational experience for all of our students, as well as the working environment for our faculty and staff. My expectations are to create opportunities for innovation and excellence, provide care and transparency for all stakeholders, and to align our daily work to our vision and mission.

Our students only have one chance for a quality middle school education and I do not take this responsibility lightly. However, my leadership will only be effective by maintaining collaborative partnerships with staff, caregivers, and community members. Due to your support and collaboration, we have already been able to celebrate some small wins at Westfield Middle School, and I firmly believe that we have a strong foundation and are set up for success. Let's propel ourselves forward.

As always, I look forward to celebrating our strengths and finding new ways to grow and improve together. Education is about lifelong learning and we must embrace this. I am excited for the 2023-2024 school year and I am proud to be your principal!

Yours in education,



Jesse McMillan
Principal

