

**Wilmette District 39:
Community Review Committee**

**2021-2022
Audit Report**

Part 1: Auditors & Report Organization

Names of Auditors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Virginia Reising, McKenzie Parent Representative ● Rizwan Syed, Romona Parent Representative ● Tom Hunter, MTSS Coordinator ● Lisa Anderson, Romona Elementary Assistant Principal
Title of Audited Report:	Cultivating Growth Minded, Resilient Students
Date of Audited Report:	2014-2015
Date of Audit:	March 2022
Total Pages of Report:	26
Total Pages of Body of Report:	17
Total Pages of Appendices:	2
Table of Contents:	Part 2: Topic Selection & Overview of Recommendations (1 page) Part 3: Adoption and Implementation of Each Recommendation (5 pages maximum) Part 4: Closing Audit Remarks Appendixes
CRC Members Listed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Julie Adrianopoli, Central Parent (CRC President) ● Amanda Doblin, McKenzie Parent (CRC Vice President) ● Beth Alpert, Romona Parent (CRC Secretary) ● Annette Beitel, Harper Parent ● Ali Bleecker, Harper Parent ● Laura Smith, Harper Parent ● Erica Blake, McKenzie Parent ● Jessy Ferdman, McKenzie Parent ● Carolyn Gilbert, Central Parent ● Matthew Pietrafetta, Central Parent ● Lisa Schneider Fabes, Central Parent (CRC Past President) ● David Lerner, Romona Parent ● Andy Schaefer, HMS/McKenzie Parent ● Barbara Perce, HMS Parent ● Libby Steigmann, HMS Parent ● Rebecca Boyd Nagel, WJHS Parent ● Kathryn Hartrick, WJHS Parent ● Barbara Ungar, Central Teacher ● Emily Wingels, Central Teacher ● Tracey Parent, Central Intervention Specialist ● Sarah Brazee, McKenzie Teacher ● Gwen Faulkner, McKenzie Teacher ● Karen Pampush, Romona Teacher ● Eric Resis, Romona Teacher ● Alene Frost, HMS Social Worker ● Sonya Morgan, HMS Social Worker ● Sarah Prouty, HMS School Psychologist ● Jenny Rosene, WJHS Teacher ● Heather Glowacki, Romona Principal ● Becky Littmann, Central Principal ● Lori Naumowicz, WJHS Asst Principal ● Dave Palzet, WJHS/HMS Principal ● Melanie Horowitz, Administrator for Curriculum & Instruction ● Ray Lechner, Superintendent ● BOE Representatives
Total # of Recommendations:	6
Report Category:	Social/Emotional Learning

Part 2: Topic Selection & Overview of Recommendations

The Community Review Committee (CRC) “serves in an advisory capacity to Wilmette Public Schools District 39 Board of Education to research specific topics that will lead to improvements in teaching, learning or managing the District’s operations” (Wilmette Public Schools District 39, 2022, Community Review Committee section, para. 1). Among the recommendations made by the 2015-2016 CRC, which were adopted by the District 39 Board of Education, was that future CRCs conduct audits of its reports three years after their completion. The purpose of this audit report is to gauge whether recommendations set forth in the 2014-2015 CRC Report entitled, “Cultivating Growth Minded, Resilient Students” were adopted. This report was audited by the 2018-2019 CRC; however, that CRC elected not to use the agreed upon rubric designed by the 2016-2017 CRC. Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic has shifted additional focus on Social Emotional Learning needs for students. The auditing of the 2014-2015 report dovetails nicely with the 2021-2022 topic of “Building Responsive Social-Emotional Learning through Strengthening Parent-Teacher Communication and Increasing Parent Understanding of and Engagement in SEL Instruction.” Due to these reasons, the 2021-2022 CRC decided to audit “Cultivating Growth Minded, Resilient Students.” This was an exception due to the circumstances of the time - future CRCs should resume the three year cycle.

Part 3: Adoption and Implementation of Each Recommendation

As part of the audit, the auditors studied the Superintendent's Response to the Community Review Committee (CRC) Report (dated August 24, 2015), 2016-17 Community Review Committee Audit Report (dated May 22, 2017), 2018-2019 Community Review Committee Audit Report (dated May 20, 2019), as well as District 39's Strategic Plan 2021-26.

Audit subcommittee members included Lisa Anderson (Assistant Principal Romona School) and Tom Hunter (MTSS Coordinator D39) who have knowledge of D39's adoption and implementation of the recommendations. In addition, the auditors worked with CRC committee members Katie Lee (D39 Administrator for Curriculum and Instruction) and Kelly Jackson (Principal Highcrest Middle School), who also have knowledge of D39's adoption and implementation. Furthermore, Virginia Reising, (McKenzie Parent Representative), Rizwan Syed (Romona Parent Representative), and Gail Schnitzer Eisenberg (Central, Member-at-Large) worked to audit the previous recommendations for the 2015 report.

The audit rubric indicates that recommendations focused on strategy should be scored on a scale of 1 to 3 in five categories. Recommendations focused on implementation are not to be scored because implementation is the purview of the faculty and administration. The auditors determined that five of the six recommendations from the 2014-2015 CRC Report were heavily focused on strategy, and therefore able to be scored.

Based on the current audit, the following conclusions were made regarding the six overarching recommendations from the 2015 report:

1. Expand and further implement the Characteristics of Successful Learners (CSLs) framework to include non-cognitive factors

This recommendation was not scored because it focuses so heavily on implementation. This does not mean that the district does not value the Characteristics of Successful Learners framework. In fact, many elements of them show up in the strategic plan as part of the D39 Portrait of a Scholar. These non-cognitive factors have been highlighted as an important part of being a D39 student.

2. Prioritize the development of executive functions for all students

In the superintendent's initial response to the 2016-2017 CRC report, Dr. Lechner accepted all three sub-recommendations. These included, 1) "continue to invest in programs designed to boost effective executive functioning and refine those programs, as needed, to ensure effectiveness," 2) "expand the reach of programs to support early development of executive functions in elementary students," and 3) "provide all stakeholders with training and resources to build their knowledge and capacity to develop executive functions at school and home." As a

result of this audit, it was determined that the current strategic plan captures supporting development of executive function in all three sub recommendations. To support the students' transition to Highcrest Middle School and the increased demands on executive functioning that correspond with the move, 4th grade students are provided direct instruction on the Schoology platform before being required to utilize the program independently in 5th-8th grades. There have also been parent information nights to help students develop executive functioning strategies. However, this requires support because it requires parents to participate in these parent nights.

3. Build parent awareness about CSL/non-cognitive factors

D39 has largely moved away from the term CSL/non-cognitive factors; however, the same tenants are now referenced as Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). The district has structured social-emotional instruction using the framework developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), often referred to as the CASEL competencies. The district provides information and resources on the D39 website and have made SEL an important component of D39 education. Furthermore, there are regular presentations to both staff and families related to SEL topics guided by the CASEL standards. The district also adopted the recommendation of adding student learner behavior to report cards. This continues to be reported out today on report cards.

4. Re-evaluate school start times

School start times for all schools except the Wilmette Junior High School remained the same. The school start time was shifted at Wilmette Junior High to start later at 8:25 am.

5. Re-evaluate and monitor the D39 homework policy

The district homework policy was referenced in the 2017 superintendent's report as having been previously established. There are currently resources online for parents and the homework policy is embedded in curriculum presentations. Additionally, schoology functionality allows teachers to see what other homework assignments have been assigned on a given day. Despite online resources and schoology functionality, implementation falls short because there is no student feedback regarding feelings about homework.

6. Build stakeholder awareness about emerging best practices to cope with academic anxiety/stress

The district collects information on all students' SEL status through bi-yearly universal screeners. For grades Pre-K through 2nd grade, a teacher report (DESSA) is used. For grades 3 through 8, a student self-report (Panorama MESH) is used to gain student perspectives. The results of these screeners lead to direct interventions and instruction for individuals and groups of students. Addressing issues of anxiety and stress has been an increased area of focus over the past several

years as D39 has engaged parents more in learning strategies on how to cope with these issues. The district also has led presentations regarding SEL for parents. However, there is not currently an adoption of “warning signs” for parents. There is also no reference to strategies related to reducing teacher stress.

Part 4: Closing Audit Remarks

In general, audit reports exist in a vacuum. Years after the initial authors have moved out of District 39, others come in and review what happened to their recommendations. With that in mind, this year’s recommendations were prophetic in the sense that they emphasized the importance of factors outside of academics for student success. The current CRC was uniquely positioned to highlight the impact of these non-cognitive factors coming out of a period of uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The audit committee was pleased to see that the work and recommendations developed years ago related to non-academic Characteristics of Successful Learners are a continued focus through the district’s current work with Social-Emotional Learning. Moving forward, it is recommended that the district continue to prioritize and update its approach to these social-emotional factors, as they make up the backbone of student learning in the district.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Rubric for Part 2

Score	1	2	3
Rationale for Topic	No rationale provided	Rationale is stated but process for topic selection is vague	Rational is stated and clear process for topic selection is delineated
Topic Description	Topic description is not succinct and includes no details	Topic description lacks pertinent details providing overview only	Topic is succinctly described and includes necessary details
Recommendations Locations	Recommendations are scattered throughout and difficult to find	Recommendations are included within each section of the report	Recommendations are summarized in one location for easy reference (and may also be included in each section of the report)

Appendix B:

Recommendation 1			
Expand and further implement the Characteristics of Successful Learners (CSLs) framework to include non-cognitive factors			
Explanation: -Strategic plan (portrait of a scholar) -Include student characteristics on report cards			
Does recommendations pertain significantly to implementation?	Yes		
Score	1	2	3
Feasibility of Recommendation	Unrealistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Partially realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline
Alignment of Recommendation with Existing District Priorities	Represents a totally new initiative	Partially aligned with current practices or recent initiatives	Completely aligned with current practices or recent initiatives
Volunteer Support Required by Recommendation	Requires high volunteer support	Requires minimal volunteer support	Requires no volunteer support
Action steps for Recommendation	Does not provide for administrative decision-making regarding implementation action steps and/or outcomes	Provides some district discretion regarding implementation action steps and/or outcomes	Provides over-arching recommendation that requires district decisions about action steps and/or outcomes
Implementation of Recommendation	Administration did not accept recommendation	Administration partially implemented recommendation	Administration fully implemented recommendation as stated in the report

Recommendation 2			
<p>Prioritize the development of executive functions for all students (Superintendents Recommendations: Parent resources and presentations; Schoology for 4th grade as part of transition; Parent information on instruction)</p>			
<p>Explanation: -Strategic plan (portrait of a scholar) -Previous superintendent accepted all three sub recommendations -Required PTO volunteers for parent involvement/presentations</p>			
Does recommendation pertain significantly to implementation?	No		
Score	1	2	3
Feasibility of Recommendation	Unrealistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Partially realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline
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Recommendation 3			
Build parent awareness about CSL/non-cognitive factors			
Explanation: -SEL/CASEL information has replaced “CSL” -Information posted on website -Regular presentations related to SEL topics -Student learner behavior added to report cards			
Does recommendation pertain significantly to implementation?	No		
Score	1	2	3
Feasibility of Recommendation	Unrealistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Partially realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline
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Recommendation 4			
Given research regarding benefits of sleep on non-cognitive skill development and stress/anxiety reduction, re-evaluate the school start and end times.			
Explanation: At the April 2017 Board meeting, the school board approved new start times for all six schools to begin their day after 8:20, with HMS having the latest start time.			
Does recommendations pertain significantly to implementation?	No		
Score	1	2	3
Feasibility of Recommendation	Unrealistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Partially realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline
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Recommendation 5			
Re-evaluate and monitor the D39 homework policy			
<p>Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parent help desk; recorded and live webinars -Parent technology resources on HMS website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - live & recorded sessions on Schoology -Schoology assignment calendar for team collaboration - Homework policy imbedded in curriculum presentations *No student feedback on feelings about homework *?Student support for homework? 			
Does recommendations pertain significantly to implementation?	Yes.		
Score	1	2	3
Feasibility of Recommendation	Unrealistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Partially realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline
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Recommendation 6			
Build stakeholder awareness about emerging best practices to cope with academic anxiety/stress			
<p>Explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -DESSA and MESH for Pre-K-8 SEL screeners -Supports provided based on SEL screener data -Presentations regarding SEL <p>*Do not provide “warning signs” of stress to parents *No strategies related to reducing teacher stress</p>			
Does recommendations pertain significantly to implementation?	Yes.		
Score	1	2	3
Feasibility of Recommendation	Unrealistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Partially realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline	Realistic in terms of finances available, resources (including staffing), and timeline
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References

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