

Somersworth Middle School Title I Schoolwide Plan Update

Title I Part A, of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), is a federal grant designed to provide opportunities for children to acquire the knowledge and skills to meet the state proficiency standards. This program is designed to provide services to students with educational disadvantages whose academic progress is at risk. Title I reading and math instructional support is supplemental to the regular classroom instruction and is not intended to replace core instruction by the classroom teacher. Title I funds are used to hire personnel and to purchase educational resources that will assist students in obtaining their goals. The funds are allocated by the state to the district based on census data, population income, and other local statistics. Should you have any questions about Title I at the Middle School, please contact Amy LaBelle, Title I Teacher at 603-692-2126, or Susan Blair, Title I Director at 603-692-4450.

- 1. Comprehensive Needs Assessment:** Somersworth Middle School (SMS) conducted our needs assessment in the spring of 2023. Parent meetings and surveys, staff surveys, and district input were collected. Data was also reviewed for all students, including those who received intervention and those who were experiencing homelessness. SMS did not have any migratory students. Data is reviewed each trimester to determine student progress and ensure our practices match our plan. SMS is currently designated as an Additional Targeted Support School by the NH DOE. Since our initial Title I School Wide Plan was submitted and approved in 2014, SMS has received three honors: in the spring of 2019, we received the NH Middle School of Excellence in Education Award; in 2014, we were named an NH Title I Distinguished School, and the New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS) designated SMS as a “Spotlight School” for 2013-2016 and the 2017-2020 years. Based on the data analysis, we determine how to use the funds best to provide supplemental instruction in literacy and math.
- 2. Evidence-based Instructional Strategies:** At SMS, Fountas & Pinnell’s Benchmark Assessment System is used to assess reading fluency and literal comprehension. NWEA assessments are administered three times a year to measure student skill development and proficiency to inform instruction in reading and math. NWEA data are used to evaluate literacy and math skills in students below grade level and receiving interventions. All students are engaged in daily explicit literacy and math instruction.
- 3. Instructional Support for Children Experiencing Difficulties Mastering the Standard:** STAR, NWEA, and Fountas & Pinnell assessments place students into intervention groups based on their skill levels and specific instructional needs. During our daily WIN/LL block, students requiring supplemental help attend literacy or math groups. Our primary literacy intervention is Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI), an evidence-based program that has proven effective at improving literacy skills among struggling students. In math, we have a math coach who works with students and offers supplemental support. The approach is to re-teach mathematical concepts to students, using different methods, to accommodate the learning styles of students.
- 4. Parent Involvement:** Somersworth School District created a “District Family Engagement” committee in 2015, comprised of administrative staff from our four schools, our Home-to-School Coordinator, and representatives from the schools’ PTAs. The mission of this group is to “engage families in meaningful activities and two-way communication to increase student achievement.” We believe strongly that students succeed when there is a partnership between the community, schools, families, and students. Our strategy is two-fold: 1) provide opportunities for educators and families that are interactive, collaborative, relationship-building, and linked to student learning; and 2) build the capacity for

respectful and trusting partnerships among the community, families, and educators that support student achievement. To this end, we have hosted family game nights, back-to-school events, the national “Lights On for Learning” event, our end-of-year District Showcase, and various parenting workshops. We continue to plan these and other activities, based on parent, staff, and student feedback. Title I partners with SYC throughout the school year to host various events. We have annual Parent-Teacher conferences in November, and parents are welcome to request meetings anytime.

- 5. Professional Development (PD):** The Title I teacher attended the National ESEA conference remotely in February 2023, utilizing the resources to enhance student instruction. The plan is for the Title I teacher to attend the National ESEA conference in February 2024. During the summer of 2023, the Literacy Leader and the Title I teacher worked to develop a Literacy plan. District Title I and Literacy Leaders met throughout the year. The model in 6th grade has changed so that all 6th-grade students will now have language arts twice per day- a section of reading and a section of writing. This will require time for 6th-grade language arts staff to divide the current Language Arts standards and accompanying units. SMS in-house literacy experts Amy LaBelle and Anne Parsons will also support this shift.
- 6. Transition:** We support students transitioning to Somersworth Middle School from 5th grade, and from 8th grade to the Somersworth High School. The step-up day is held in June for the 5th graders. During the step-up day, students attend a middle school model day, which may include an assembly led by Principal James Lampron, sample content classes, and a class with the Essentials instructors. Eighth-graders spend time visiting the high school and choosing courses for their freshman year. In addition, staff members from the middle school meet with staff from the elementary schools and the high school to review student assessments so that students will receive appropriate interventions.
- 7. Instruction by Highly Qualified Staff (HQT):** Staff members in teaching positions are certified by the state, and many hold more than one endorsement, meaning they can teach in more than one area, or with special populations such as ELL and students with learning disabilities. Support staff also have strong credentials. All paraprofessionals either meet the qualifications for HQT or hold Paraeducator II certifications. The same is true for Title I tutors. Many of our staff have credentials beyond what is required by their jobs. When new teachers are hired, they are paired with another teacher who acts as a mentor for the new teacher. All staff members are provided with many hours of professional development both within and outside the school district.
- 8. Extended Learning Opportunities:** There are many opportunities for students to learn beyond the direct instruction they receive in the classroom. Our summer academy is a cooperative endeavor. Students are invited to the program based on teacher recommendations, guidance, Title I, and the school administration. The program runs for four weeks in the summer. Students participate in various educational and recreational activities, including field trips within the Somersworth community. There is always an academic component to the program. Each student attending the program receives breakfast. In addition, each week, students can select a free book to take home.