

School Transforming Learning

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Spring Branch Independent School District

Principal Institute Cohort 7

Our profession requires that we embrace the fact that we cannot have a one size fits all mentality when working with large diverse groups of people. Here at Landrum Middle School, we serve approximately 640 students. Of that 640 students, 52 percent of our students are labeled limited English proficient, 85 percent of our students are economically disadvantaged and our mobility rate fluctuates around 17 percent. In 2014, Landrum Middle School was labeled Improvement Required by the state due to poor student achievement. Since that time, we have installed and implemented a solid curriculum, effective instruction and formative assessments to move out of Improvement Required within one school year and have maintained a met standard rating since. We acknowledge that we continue to have major learning gaps and that our students are not at mastery level. With that knowledge, we have engaged in school redesign to radically change the learning experience our students have when they are engaged in learning here at Landrum. We are making huge strides in regards to creating learning environments that support personalized learning for each student that we serve here at Landrum Middle School. In addition to academic advancements in personalized learning, we are launching an enrichment track experience that allows students to select and participate in enrichment activities they are passionate about. Matching our students' passion with our teachers' interests allows our students to build social and emotional capacity while building a set of new skills.

Understanding what skills our students need to develop is critical to help them reach their academic potential. Our teachers use multiple measures assessment data to track students' performance so that we are able to plan efficient instruction, interventions or enrichment opportunities for them. While planning for learning, our teachers are moving to providing students with more real world situations to engage them in relevant learning experiences that meet their needs. When our students are engaged in lessons that effective teachers plan, they have voice and agency in their learning. We know that a one size fits all approach to teaching and learning does not prepare students to be college and career ready. Today, we are creating a personalized learning approach that blends technology in the classroom to pace instruction to match students' needs and tailor learning to their interests. Students are now able to move through learning pathways without being held back by their fellow classmates learning pace. They are able to move through either adaptive software curriculum, flipped classroom lessons or menu options to learn and experience content. Once they show mastery, they are able to move to the next set of learning pathways at the rigor and structure of their own learning styles. To expand this experience for our students, we have invested in transitioning one of our teachers into a personalized learning coach. Her

responsibility is to help our staff members gain proficiency in creating personalized learning pathways for their students. Our personalized learning specialist also gives ongoing feedback through modeling, demonstrations, observations, and follow-up conversations. This form of professional learning helps teachers receive a supportive mentor who can exponentially help them enhance teaching practices, develop effective lesson plans, and clearly observe educational outcomes for their students. By building pedagogical capacity of our teachers and providing both students and staff with learning choices, we are able to maximize our efforts to improve student achievement. Rather than passively receiving and reiterating information, our students in 21st century personalized learning environments take an active role in their education and contribute to their own learning. They can work with our teachers to set learning goals for themselves, and are able to work toward them through blended learning, combining face-to-face interaction with their teacher and the use of education technology. We have seen clear evidence through assessment data that students who are engaged in personalized learning experiences have 20 to 30 percent higher mastery of the curriculum than the students who are not engaged in personalized pathways.

In an effort positively impact the social and emotional aspect of our students' journey, we have planned enrichment experiences that allows the students to get connected to enrichment activities they are passionate about. Our teachers volunteered to host or sponsor the courses the students will be engaged in throughout the course of the school year. Students can choose from activities such as cooking class, gardening, skateboarding, cheer, drama, coding and poetry just to name a few. These enrichment courses give students opportunities to participate in activities that are not offered in a traditional school setting. Students who are not plugged into athletics, fine arts or performing arts, now have options to choose activities they have interests in. This enrichment experience allows students who are not involved in traditional fine arts or athletic groups to have an opportunity to explore their passion and enhance their social emotional learning. We know that the more agency our students have, the more engaged and enthusiastic they will be in their learning journey.

Our Landrum Middle School staff maintain a clear sense of doing the right thing and doing it well, shared commitments and beliefs, common purpose and vision, accountability, and use of standards to inspire student achievement. Through our redesign, we have activated learning priority standards that reflect development of the total range of student capabilities and that enable students to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to successfully compete in today's digitally connected world. With our focus on personalized learning, our students have access to the technology tools and value the use of those tools in learning and communication. Finally, building our students social and emotional capacity in our students through enrichment opportunities, our students gain a sense of purpose and strive to reach their ultimate potential.

Superintendent's Endorsement



Dr. Scott Muri, Superintendent, Spring Branch ISD