



SCHOOL COMPREHENSIVE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SCIP)

Ramsey Jr 08-09

Submitted by the Site Council

Description of School Program

Ramsey Junior High offers a challenging, comprehensive academic program. The school's *Gifted and Talented* specialty offers advanced math, science, social studies and English courses and prepares motivated students to enter a high school International Baccalaureate, Quest, Advanced Placement or other accelerated program.

Ramsey is an **International Baccalaureate-Middle Years Programme (IB-MYP) candidate school**. **IB** helps students participate actively and responsibly in a changing and increasingly interrelated world. Learning how to learn and how to evaluate information critically is as important as learning facts.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) provides help in building skills in the areas of organization, time management, note taking, and test taking.

Speakers, field trips and academic competitions enhance classroom activities. The school offers three languages: Chinese, French and Spanish. Ramsey has a full range of general courses, special education classes, ELL services, and special activities for students including band (concert, marching, and jazz bands), orchestra, chorus, journalism, speech/debate, theater., and movement. Computer technology is integrated into the curriculum. An ALC program meets after school to help struggling students.

Go to www.ramsey.spps.org for more details.

Outcomes/Strategies Matrix

	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3
	MCA-II Growth	Achievement Gaps	Climate
Strategy 1 PAE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strategy 2 IB-MYP	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strategy 3 AVID	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strategy 4 PLC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Strategy 5 Above/Below	Yes	Yes	Yes

Budgets/Strategies Matrix

	General Fund	Comp. Aid	Title I	ELL Aid	Integration Aid	Grants	Referendum	Other Sources
Strategy 1 PAE	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Strategy 2 IB-MYP	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Strategy 3 AVID	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Strategy 4 PLC	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Strategy 5 Above/Below	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No

Data Analysis and Conclusions

Ramsey made adequate yearly progress (AYP) in 2005 and 2006, but did not make AYP in 2007 as the special education student group did not meet the target goal or achieve safe harbor.

We will continue to implement **IB** and **AVID** strategies school-wide to give all students additional strategies to "learn how to learn."

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT MCA-II DATA

Ramsey students continue to reach state targets or safe harbor on the MCAs (with the exception of the special education sub group). However, we are behind the district's MCA targets.

Year	Reading		Math	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target
2007		2009	2007	2009
American Indian	z*	z	z	z
Asian American	58	65	62	65
Latino	48	67	36	62
African American	51	65	41	55
Caucasian	82	80	79	76
Low Income	52	65	48	60
Special Ed	30	55	24	53

*z=number of students too small to accurately measure.

DISCIPLINE

Though suspensions have been reduced over the past 2 years, the suspension rates are still above the district's target for most sub groups.

Year	Suspensions	
	Actual	Target
2007		2009
American Indian	z	z
Asian American	10.6	16.2
Latino	26.7	16.2
African American	37.2	16.2
Caucasian	9.1	16.2
Low Income	25.8	16.2
Special Ed	36	16.2
ELL	16.6	16.2

ATTENDANCE

Ramsey's attendance rates for students that are absent 11 days or more are above the district's targets.

Year	Attendance	
	Actual	Target
2007		2009
American Indian	z	z
Asian American	21.3	26
Latino	53.3	26
African American	45.4	26
Caucasian	24.9	26
Low Income	39.8	26
Special Ed	55.6	26
ELL	28.3	26

CONCLUSIONS

Though there are many positive things at Ramsey, there are many areas that need to be addressed. Closing the achievement gaps is a priority. Data shows the relationship between positive academic student achievement, attendance in school, and low suspension rates.

A Leadership Team has been redefined and is looking at the research to address the issues to lower our suspension rates and increase attendance in order to improve student achievement and close the achievement gaps. Department based and interdepartmental Professional Learning Communities have helped to build a more collegial approach to create more interventions to help students before they fail classes and support students that are not proficient on the MCAs.

School Outcomes

Outcome 1

District Strategic Plan that this school outcome is based on.
Accelerate MCA-II Annual Growth Rates of Student Groups
The index rate for all students will be above the index target or the safe harbor target on the MCA-II tests.

Outcome 2

District Strategic Plan that this school outcome is based on.
Close Achievement Gaps Between Student Groups
The gaps in index rates between student groups will continue to lessen on the MCA-II tests.

Outcome 3

District Strategic Plan that this school outcome is based on.
Improve School and Classrooms Management
The percentage of suspensions across all student groups will decline to meet the district's targets.

Strategies

Strategy 1 last modified on 04/28/2008
Continue to implement the junior high literacy initiative, including and Disciplinary Literacy.

The following Strategic Plan Goals are addresses by this Strategy;

- Ensure High Academic Achievement for ALL Students
- Accelerate the Path to Excellence
- Align Resource Allocation to District Priorities

Research-Basis/Rationale for this Strategy

The **Project for Academic Excellence (PAE)** provides a well-reasoned theoretical foundation for comprehensive school reform, proven models for instructional practices in the core content areas, a full complement of professional development opportunities, and material resources necessary for successful implementation of the program. It focuses on twelve national, researched, proven educational reform practices. **PAE** is a systemic reform model designed to raise expectations and academic achievement for all students.

Environment for Learning

Underlying the instructional practices modeled throughout the **Project for Academic Excellence** are the *Principles of Learning* developed by the **Institute for Learning**. These principles guide not only administrative leadership, but curriculum, instruction, and assessment in an authentic standards-based model.

The Principles of Learning are:

- Organizing for Effort
- Clear Expectations
- Fair and Credible Evaluations
- Recognition of Accomplishment
- Academic Rigor in a Thinking Curriculum
- Accountable Talk
- Socializing Intelligence
- Self-management of Learning
- Learning as Apprenticeship

Curriculum Content and Instructional Programs Linked to Students' Assessed Need and Strengths

Staff will review and modify their course offerings and curriculum as needed to align with state or national standards and address the needs of under-performing students. *Principles for Learning* concepts will be implemented through *Disciplinary Literacy* strategies.

Staff/Professional Development

Ongoing trainings will be provided by the **Professional Development Center** which include the *Minnesota Writing Project*, *Disciplinary Literacy*, and the **Institute for Learning's Principles of Learning**. Additional staff members will participate in **Project for Academic Excellence** training for the 2007-08 school year with the entire staff being trained by the end of the school year.

Parent/Family Involvement

Ramsey staff will increase communication to families of students academic progress by posting information on both the **Campus Parent Portal** and the school's web site, teacher-parent email, direct contact, and other outreach methods. Parents will provide email addresses in addition to the current sources of communication.

Strategy 2 last modified on 04/28/2008

Continue the application phase to become an authorized **International Baccalaureate - Middle Years Programme**.

The following Strategic Plan Goals are addresses by this Strategy;

- Ensure High Academic Achievement for ALL Students
- Raise Expectations for Accountability
- Accelerate the Path to Excellence
- Align Resource Allocation to District Priorities
- Strengthen Relationships with Community & Families

Research-Basis/Rationale for this Strategy

The **Middle Years Programme (MYP)** emphasizes a broad and balanced education which focuses on values as well as intellect. It addresses the students' physical, affective, social and intellectual development. In helping students to understand the connectedness and applications of knowledge, it serves their search for relevance and meaning, and helps them come to a deeper understanding. At the same time, the **MYP** allows the nature of each subject to emerge with integrity and rigor as the students prepare for the *Diploma Programme* or other upper secondary studies. The **MYP** is designed to help adolescents to develop a knowledge of, and interest in, local and global issues. The explicit emphasis on communication and intercultural awareness encourages international-mindedness and responsible citizenship. In age-appropriate ways, the program involves students in concrete, socially responsible action and service, individually and in groups.

Environment for Learning

The **MYP** is a framework of academic challenge and life skills appropriate to this stage of adolescence. The framework of the **MYP** requires schools and teachers within them to work as teams in reflecting on, developing, organizing and delivering the curriculum, with close attention to the perspectives of the students. It empowers teachers and students to shape a stimulating but rigorous learning experience.

Curriculum Content and Instructional Programs Linked to Students' Assessed Need and Strengths

Five perspectives known as the areas of interaction are at the core of the **MYP**. These are: approaches to learning; community and service, health and social education, environment, and homo faber. These pervade and recur throughout the five years of the **MYP**, through the eight subject groups, but also through interdisciplinary teaching and projects, whole school activities and the **MYP** personal project. The areas of interaction are not directly assessed nor awarded individual grades, since they are themes rather than subjects. They are, however, indirectly assessed through the personal project.

Staff/Professional Development

The **MYP** requires teachers to become concerned with the total experience of the student at school. Organizing a well-rounded experience requires team planning across subjects on the part of teachers as well as discussion of, and reflection on, the curriculum and learning activities from the point of view of the student.

A team is participating in an **MYP** conference this summer.

Parent/Family Involvement

The involvement of parents is very important for an **MYP** school. Parents are informed about program events and expectations through newsletters and parent meetings. Parents will be encouraged to be active in planning programs and implementation of the **MYP**.

Strategy 3 last modified on 04/28/2008

Continue the **Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)** program for the "academic middle" students. Implement 7th grade AVID classes. Also, continue the use of **AVID** strategies school-wide as we prepare to apply for **National Demonstration Site** status.

The following Strategic Plan Goals are addresses by this Strategy;

- Ensure High Academic Achievement for ALL Students

- Raise Expectations for Accountability
- Accelerate the Path to Excellence
- Align Resource Allocation to District Priorities
- Strengthen Relationships with Community & Families

Research-Basis/Rationale for this Strategy

AVID is a fifth- through twelfth-grade program to prepare students in the academic middle for four-year college eligibility. It has a proven track record in bringing out the best in students, and in closing the achievement gap. Most **AVID** students are underrepresented minorities -- Latinos, African-Americans, Asians -- who may lack a college-going tradition in their family and whose success is critical to closing the achievement gap. One of the most impressive and consistent indicators of **AVID's** success is the rate at which it sends students to four-year colleges. Over 70% of **AVID** students were accepted to a four-year college.

Environment for Learning

The **AVID** program is tailored to the needs of this diverse group of students, and it works for them because

AVID:

- accelerates underachieving students into more rigorous courses, instead of consigning them to dead-end remedial programs.
- offers the intensive support students need to succeed in rigorous courses.
- uses Socratic methods and study groups that specifically target the needs of under-achieving students.
- is a schoolwide initiative, not a school within a school.
- changes the belief system of an entire school by showing that low-income and minority students can achieve at the highest levels and attend colleges.
- redefines the role of teacher from lecturer to advocate and guide. The role of counselor changes from gate-keeper to facilitator.
- creates site teams of administrators and educators from different content areas, encouraging communication and sharing among teachers, counselors, and principals.
- strategies are based on research on tracking — the process by which some children are channeled into challenging courses and others are relegated to remedial ones — and peer influences in student achievement.

Curriculum Content and Instructional Programs Linked to Students' Assessed Need and Strengths

WIC-R — or writing, inquiry, collaboration, and reading — forms the basis of the **AVID** curriculum. It gives students the skills they need to succeed in college-preparatory classes, like **Advanced Placement** and **International Baccalaureate**. These techniques turn students from passive learners into active classroom contributors and critical thinkers, an approach that's necessary for college admission and success.

Staff/Professional Development

The **AVID** elective class is led by a teacher who's been trained in the program's methodologies. **AVID's** professional development, however, goes further than that. Teachers and administrators from throughout the school will attend **AVID's Summer Institutes**, where they all learn techniques for bringing out the best in average students. In this way, **AVID** students are supported in content-area classrooms as well as in the **AVID** elective, and even more students can benefit from the **AVID** program.

Parent/Family Involvement

The involvement of parents is a priority in **AVID**. Parents are informed about program events and expectations through newsletters and parent meetings. Parent groups often become active in planning programs and fund-raising.

Strategy 4 last modified on 04/28/2008

Continue implementation of **Professional Learning Communities (PLC's)** with the focus on the questions:

- What do we want each student to learn?
- How will we know when each student has learned it?
- How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?
- How will we respond when students do learn?

Departmental PLCs began work in the 2006-07 school year. Interdepartmental **PLCs** will be developed to help implement **IB-MYP** strategies.

The following Strategic Plan Goals are addressed by this Strategy;

- Ensure High Academic Achievement for ALL Students
- Raise Expectations for Accountability
- Accelerate the Path to Excellence

Research-Basis/Rationale for this Strategy

Dufour and Eaker (1998) assert, "It is difficult to overstate the importance of collaborative teams in the improvement process" (p. 27). All six of the features that have been linked to changes in teacher performance and/or student learning are present in the schoolwide PLT process described in the previous section. These include:

- Reform-oriented organization (for example, a study group, teacher network, or mentoring relationship)
- Collective participation and collaboration among teachers from the same school, department, or grade level
- Coherence (linking professional development to standards and assessments and other school-improvement efforts)
- Content and pedagogical focus (developing expertise in areas that teachers teach)
- Opportunities for active learning (such as reviewing student work)
- Sustained time and duration, including the total number of contact hours and the span of time over which the activity occurs

Environment for Learning

PLC's are groups of educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve. **PLC's** operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for student is continuous, job embedded learning for educators.

To be effective, educators must change their focus from teaching to learning. In a **PLC**, educators have three goals:

- Ensuring that all students learn. Every classroom includes students of varying abilities. In a **PLC**, teachers are prepared to serve both the students who learn material quickly and those who need additional time and support. That means developing a

- coordinated strategy to provide timely intervention when students are struggling.
- Creating a culture of collaboration. In many schools, teachers work in isolation. While staff may come together to formulate basic operational policies (like how to respond to tardiness or supervise recess), they do not engage in professional dialogue about what works in their classrooms. In a **PLC** school, educators share best practices, join forces to solve problems and work together to improve both their individual performances and the school's performance as a whole.
- Focusing on results. To ensure that a **PLC** meets its educational goals, educators must identify students' current levels of achievement, establish clear educational objectives, work together to meet those goals and provide evidence that they have succeeded.

Curriculum Content and Instructional Programs Linked to Students' Assessed Need and Strengths

PLC's judge their effectiveness on the basis of results. Working together to improve student achievement becomes the routine work of everyone in the school. Every teacher team participates in an ongoing process of identifying the current level of student achievement, establishing a goal to improve the current level, working together to achieve that goal, and providing periodic evidence of progress.

Common formative assessments will be developed throughout the school year, so each teacher can identify how his or her students perform on each skill compared with other students. Individual teachers can call on their team colleagues to help them reflect on areas of concern. Each teacher has access to the ideas, materials, strategies, and talents of the entire team.

Staff/Professional Development

Continue to work with the district's **Professional Development Center** and the content coaches to:

- Identify essential learnings
- Create common formative assessments
- Create school-wide interventions
- Develop a clear, consistent, and fair grading and assessment system

Parent/Family Involvement

N/A

Strategy 5 last modified on 04/28/2008

Continue to incorporate strategies that promote a positive school culture. Included would be:

1. Create a Leadership Team to identify areas of concern, research strategies, and initiate action plans to improve school climate and create interventions for struggling students.
2. Continue implementation of **Project Wisdom** curriculum.
3. Do a school-wide activities around a **Project Wisdom** theme.
4. Train or retrained all staff in *Above the Line/Below the Line* behavior management.
5. Increase school incentives for positive behavior.
6. Have all teachers display high quality student work in hallways.
7. Develop strategies for incoming 7th grade students to ease the transition to junior high school.

The following Strategic Plan Goals are addresses by this Strategy;

- Ensure High Academic Achievement for ALL Students
- Raise Expectations for Accountability
- Align Resource Allocation to District Priorities
- Strengthen Relationships with Community & Families

Research-Basis/Rationale for this Strategy

Character education strategies encourage students to reflect upon the meaning of civic and personal values and the application of those values in their daily lives. These strategies help them understand that any true success is rooted in respectful, responsible, and caring behaviors.

A growing body of research supports the notion that high-quality character education can promote academic achievement. For example, Marvin Berkowitz and Melinda Bier have identified character education programs for elementary, middle, and high school students that enhance academic achievement. These findings, however, are based on prepackaged curricular programs, and most schools do not rely on such programs. Instead, they create their own customized character education initiatives. It remains to be seen whether such initiatives also lead to academic gains. - PDK International

Environment for Learning

Partly due to the interventions listed above, over the past two years, dismissals are down 58% and suspensions are also down 58% at Ramsey. The staff has worked to create a safe, orderly, and caring school in which students are given the opportunity to perform at their best academically, and teachers are provided with environments which allow them to perform at their best. By continuing and expanding on the above activities, the positive learning environment will be maintained.

Curriculum Content and Instructional Programs Linked to Students' Assessed Need and Strengths

Project Wisdom is a respected character education program. The centerpiece of the program is a collection of thought-provoking messages designed to be read over the PA or in-house television system. These messages inspire and teach. They reach every student and every staff member everyday.

Corwin Kronenberg bases his seminars on principles from the **Love and Logic Institute** and the work of **William Gasser**. His *Above the Line/Below the Line* strategies are dedicated to making teaching fun and rewarding, instead of stressful and chaotic. They provide practical tools and techniques that help adults achieve respectful, healthy relationships with children. The work is based on a psychologically sound teaching philosophy.

Staff/Professional Development

Good schools promote and model fairness, equity, caring, and respect. In schools with good character education programs and high academic achievement, adults model and promote the values and attitudes they wish the students to embrace, and they infuse character education throughout the school and across the curriculum. Rick Weissbourd drove home this point in a recent essay: "The moral development of students does not depend primarily on explicit character education efforts but on the maturity and ethical capacities of the adults with whom they interact...Educators influence students' moral development not simply by being good role models -- important as that is -- but also by what they bring to their relationships with students day to day." The staff of excellent character education schools in our sample

Parent/Family Involvement

Continue to hold monthly parent meetings focused on the needs of junior high school aged students. Continue to utilize the *Above the Line/Below the Line* model (based on **Love and Logic**) as an approach to find effective solutions to help create more responsible children. Parents need training as this is a new model for discipline.

Site Council Members

Name	Role	Group
Shirley Holm	Member	Staff
Thomas Haugen	Member	Staff
Angela Mahrt	Member	Staff
Robert Schlesinger	Member	Staff
Corey Needleman	Member	Staff
Joseph Miske	Member	Staff
Javier Rodriguez Gaitan	Co-chair	Parent
Molly McCurdy	Member	Staff
Bruce Maeda	Principal	Staff

Signatures

Principal

Not Yet Signed

Site Council Chairperson(s)

Not Yet Signed

School Quality Reviews Director

Not Yet Signed

Title I/Funded Programs Assistant Director (if applicable)

Not Yet Signed

Executive Director Elementary, Middle or High School

Not Yet Signed

Performance Review

Ramsey Jr

Outcome: Close Achievement Gaps Between Student Groups

	07-08	08-09	09-10
School Strategy: Achievement Gaps	?	?	?
School's Self Evaluation:			
Supervisor's Evaluation:			

Outcome: Accelerate MCA-II Annual Growth Rates of Student Groups

	07-08	08-09	09-10
School Strategy: MCA-II Growth	?	?	?
School's Self Evaluation:			
Supervisor's Evaluation:			

Outcome: Improve School and Classrooms Management

	07-08	08-09	09-10
School Strategy: Climate	?	?	?
School's Self Evaluation:			
Supervisor's Evaluation:			

* NM = Does not meet PM = Partially meets M = Meets E = Exceeds expectations