



WAUNAKEE
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Curriculum Committee
April 20, 2026

What's the Role of Student Services?



SECOND STEP



District Continuous Improvement

Definition

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, CASEL).

Why this matters?

Research shows that an education that promotes SEL has a positive impact on a wide range of outcomes, including academic performance, healthy relationships, mental wellness, and more (CASEL).

Goal

By the end of the 2025-2026 school year, we will establish baseline data between content that is universally taught (Second Step lessons K-8), reported (K-6 work habits), and recorded (NextPath referrals K-12).

Metrics

Significantly Exceeds Expectations	83%-100%
Exceeds Expectations	70%-82.9%
Meets Expectations	58%-69.9%
Meets Some Expectations	48%-57.9%
Below Expectations	0.0%-47.9%

Global Data - Second Look UPDATE

Arboretum Elementary School

[Baseline Data Link](#)

Heritage Elementary School

[Baseline Data Link](#)

Prairie Elementary School

[Baseline Data Link](#)

Waunakee Intermediate School

[Baseline Data Link](#)

Data Trends Worth Noting - MV

McKinney Vento - federal law for students who lack a “fixed, regular, and adequate” nighttime residence. Ensures children and youth have immediate access to education and the right to stay at their “school of origin”.

2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Nov 2025	Apr 2026
13	25	41	42	55	46	27	33 (+ 5 OUT OF HOME)

Data Trends Worth Noting EL Students

2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	Nov 2025	April 2026
124	137	148	167	149	153
2.8%	3.1%	3.4%	3.8%	3.3%	3.5%

2025-2026

NC/Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
23%	20%	29%	29%

Trends Worth Noting from Elm Schools

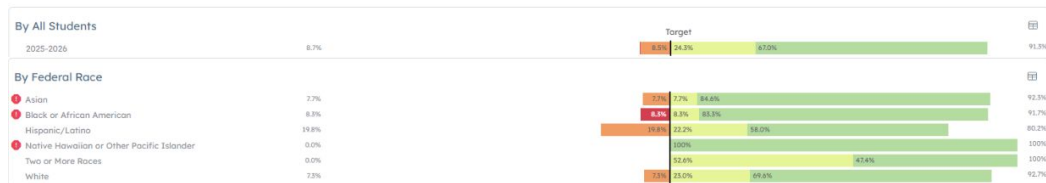
Attendance Implementation:

- Belonging and Engagement
 - WOW Work
 - Family Photos
- Positive emails home when attendance improves
- Classroom teachers reaching out when students are absent
- Classrooms wishing students well who are absent
- Restorative Practices PD for teachers and paras

Attendance Implementation:

- Second Step units
 - Bullying Prevention unit implementation
 - Paraeducator training
- Tucker Tuesday's
- Belonging and Engagement walks: welcoming students
- Student services team collaboration
 - Family connection & support as needed

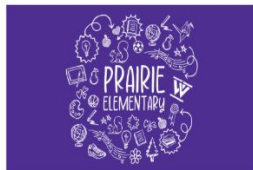
Goal 3 Progress: Attendance



Target: By the end of the 25/26 school year, Heritage Elementary will reduce our number of "Chronically Absent Students" by 1%. (June 2025 data: 9.3%, Goal is 8.3% in June in 2026)

Progress:

- District communication sent out around the importance of attendance.
- Parent Square initial roll out to engage families
- Current is 8.1%
- Positive phone calls for every student in Sept.
- Positive phone calls from encore teachers in Oct.
- YES postcards currently
- Attendance improvement letters
- Riggins - students with attendance needs have had specific jobs with Riggins



Trends Worth Noting from Int-Mid School

Int Reading

Target Group - Proficiency/State Benchmark



Int Math

Target Group - Proficiency/State Benchmark



MS Math

By English Learner/Multilingual Learner



Data Trends Worth Noting from High School

Attendance: Monitoring and New Ideas

- APs, Counselors, Social Workers, School Psychs meet as “Alpha Teams” Bimonthly review tier 2 and 3 students
- AP monthly meetings with Attendance secretary
- Addressing attendance tracking accuracy:
 - CT has a high error rate, we’ve changed settings for when students can make changes. Clarifying expectations for staff/students
- Sending letters more frequently, including 10 day.

New Initiatives:

- Postcards home for perfect monthly attendance.
- 10 day tracker
- “Secret Attender”
- Attendance data “spotlight” in staff/family newsletter

District Priorities

1. Continue to build systems for connection, belonging, and engagement
2. Maximize our professional gifts by matching adults where the students' needs reside
3. Increase capacity in all staff for social-emotional wellness/learning opportunities (Restorative Practices, Culturally Responsive Practices, Trauma-Sensitive Approaches, etc.)

Staffing Updates

1. Bilingual Counselor Vacancy
2. Continue monitoring support as Bilingual Program rolls up
 - a. Support/PD for 6th grade planning
 - b. Bilingual para position at HS
3. Increase Nurse Time
 - a. Creative distribution without adding FTE cost
4. Intermediate School Social Worker (RETENTION)
5. WaunaGROW potential

District Challenges (Keep Perspective)

1. Level of service and expectation
2. Depth of mental health needs is real and palpable
 - a. RFP Process closes THIS WEEK!
3. Declining enrollment overall equates to declining enrollment in our programs as well
4. Grant funding - a HUGE source of our resources
5. Families have immense barriers

What questions can I answer?



<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/100-questions-answers-collaboration-communities-stan-garfield>



WAUNAKEE
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Curriculum Committee Update
Special Education
April 20, 2026



Department Vision

Our vision for the K-12 Special Education Team is to create inclusive, equitable environments, and positive relationships to meet each student's individual needs for growth.

Special Education Department Goal

Definition

The Wisconsin State Report Cards measure a school's achievement and growth. In order to make progress toward the goal of improving our state report card rankings, it will be critical to monitor the progress of many demographic groups, including students with disabilities.

Why this matters?

Although students with disabilities have unique learning needs, it is critical to monitor the progress of each student in the target group through local assessment data. (AimsWeb & QRI)

Goal

During the 2025-2026 school year, 80% of target group students will make expected growth in reading.

Metrics

Significantly Exceeds Expectations	83%-100%
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2025-2026 Academic Action Plan

- Target groups in each building
- Baseline data using AimsWeb, QRI and I-Ready
- Data analysis of screening data, as well as progress monitoring data
- Add to our menu of interventions in reading



Disproportionality

The overrepresentation of a particular demographic group in special education. A district can be identified under a specific eligibility area of special education, or just as a whole.



Are we still identified this year?

- Our risk ratio has decreased slightly for each of the last 3 years, but is still above 2.0.
 - 2023 = 2.6119
 - 2024 = 2.5893
 - 2025 = 2.5736
 - 2026 = 2.3304



Referral Data 2025-2026

- 97 Initial Referrals
- 7 Private School Referrals
- 29 Early Childhood (Ages 3 & 4)
- 50 Elementary
- 10 Middle School
- 1 High School

25% of students did not qualify for special education services (so far).



Referrals by Race

- White = 62% (81.4%)
- African American = 15% (1.7%)
- Asian = 8% (3.5%)
- Hispanic = 4% (8.3%)



Multi-Level Systems of Support





Academics: Multi-Levelled Systems of Support (MLSS)

- MLSS is a framework schools use to provide targeted support to struggling students.
- The goal of MLSS is to intervene early so students can catch up with their peers.
- It screens all students and aims to address academic and behavior challenges using a tiered approach to interventions.
 - Tier 1 - Universal Instruction
 - Tier 2 - Small intervention groups
 - Tier 3 - Intensive targeted intervention in small groups
- ***MTSS Work Group: Examine System Bias***



Goal 1: Strengthening Multi-Level Systems of Support (MLSS)

Establish equitable, bias-aware MLSS decision-making practices.

- Implement a routine review of academic and behavioral data disaggregated by race, language status, disability, and socioeconomic indicators.
- Train staff in identifying and mitigating implicit bias during problem-solving meetings and when interpreting screening, progress-monitoring, and referral data.



Goal 2: Strengthening Multi-Level Systems of Support

Streamline and standardize the goal-setting process across all tiers.

- Develop a districtwide goal-setting protocol that includes step-by-step guidance for writing measurable, time-bound goals aligned with curriculum expectations and assessment tools.
- Integrate goal-setting templates into existing data platforms so teams can easily track progress and adjust interventions.
- Provide staff training to ensure consistent use of the process during MLSS meetings.



Goal 3: Strengthening Multi-Level Systems of Support

Revise academic decision-making processes for special education referral.

- Establish clear, research-aligned thresholds for determining when MLSS interventions are insufficient and a special education evaluation is warranted.
- Ensure that referral decisions are based on multiple data sources, including fidelity of interventions, rate of student progress, and comparison with grade-level expectations.
- Communicate updated procedures to staff to ensure transparency and understanding of the revised referral pathway.



Goal 4: Strengthening Multi-Level Systems of Support

Create and publish a comprehensive menu of academic and behavioral interventions for all grade levels.

- Compile evidence-based interventions for Tiers 1, 2, and 3, including duration, frequency, and materials needed.
- Provide training for educators on selecting and implementing interventions with fidelity and monitoring student response.



Parent Engagement





Parent Focus Group Themes: Strengths

- Strong communication
- Teams are open to communicating with outside providers
- Great peer interaction in the elementary grades
- Good resources in the district to support students with disabilities
- Staff go above and beyond
- Good transition for new students who come into the district with an IEP
- Very qualified teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators
- Great co-taught class options



Parent Focus Group Themes: Weaknesses

- Transportation can be challenging at times
- Transitions between 6th and 7th grade and 8th to 9th grade are challenging
- Administrators need more knowledge about strategies for emotional regulation
- Takes a lot of time to get through the evaluation process
- Peer relationships suffer as students enter middle school
- Too many transitions between case managers from year to year
- Homework can be overwhelming at the upper grades
- Students work with too many different paraprofessionals
- Lack of staff ability to manage bullying situations



Parent Focus Group Themes: Opportunities

- How can we better educate general education students to improve peer relationships, especially at the upper grades?
- Could we explore more parent support and engagement?
- Parents need more information about outside resources and agencies.
- How can we communicate more information about extra curricular activities to parents?



Parent Focus Group Themes: Threats

- Future federal funding for special education
- Medicaid cuts
- Funding for services needed after K-12 education is completed



Parent Advisory Group

- 6 parents of students with disabilities
- 3 meetings so far this year
- Connected with the Middleton parent group to gather ideas
- Brainstormed ideas for better parent connection and engagement



Parent Advisory Group Draft Recommendations

- Parent transition meetings between 6th and 7th grade and 8th and 9th grade
- Options for parent learning in 26-27
- Provide case manager assignments by early/mid August
- Provide a time at back to school nights that are just for students with disabilities
- Provide learning for general education students in neurodiversity
- Focus on helping develop peer relationships at the upper grades



Questions?

