

Jr. Husky Success...Nothing Less

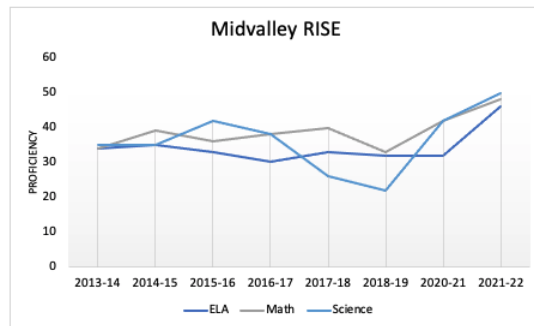
Margaret Swanicke, Principal

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I love being an elementary school principal. This is the best job—EVER! I have had the opportunity to work as an elementary teacher, at the district office as a teacher specialist, at a high performing elementary school for 8 years, and now I am in my second year at Midvalley Elementary School. My first year at Midvalley I was tasked with supporting Midvalley as we transitioned to Title I status. It was an awesome experience where I learned a lot. We were able to put academic and behavior systems in place to significantly increase student learning.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21	2021-22
ELA	34	35	33	30	33	32	32	46
Math	34	39	36	38	40	33	42	48
Science	35	35	42	38	26	22	42	50



As seen in the data above, last year’s RISE results were the highest the school has ever achieved. This progress also led to our school getting a B on the state report card.

HOW IS THIS SCHOOL PERFORMING IN EACH SUBJECT AREA?

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	45.8%	↑ 14.0% increase from 2021 score
MATHEMATICS	48.3%	↑ 6.0% increase from 2021 score
SCIENCE	50.4%	↑ 7.8% increase from 2021 score

GROWTH OF LOWEST 25%

66.2% ↑ 14.0% increase from 2021 score

B Commendable 55.3%

I attribute our growth to 5 key areas.

Academic Systems

Midvalley has the most committed teachers. They start the day at 7:15 am and stay until 5:00 pm. We accomplished a lot of our shared learning in PLCs. Time was spent evaluating systems used in the past and developing our skills together to improve our work. We spend a lot of time focusing on teacher clarity. We worked together to create common learning intentions and success criteria. This year—we have moved our PLCs to what we refer to as the cycle, where we create CFAs and then bring the data to our PLCs where we use the data to inform our instruction.

Another key area we improved was our Tier II system. We grouped our students by skill across grade levels. We placed our students with the greatest need with classroom teachers. We moved Tier II groups into our classrooms. We then used progress monitoring to adjust our groups as needed in PLCs.

The building leadership team also created a master schedule to protect core instruction. We followed that schedule and then made even more improvements this past spring.

Behavior Systems

Last year, we prioritized our Tier I PBIS. We implemented PBIS Rewards which is a PBIS management system where adults can recognize students for meeting behavioral expectations on a multi-device platform. We also supported teachers in implementing trauma informed practices like calm corners and a recovery room. We tightened our systems so that we had common school behavior contracts starting with the teacher, then Check and Connect, followed by Check In and Check Out, and a level system with the highest amount of support.

We found that communication needed to be tightened as well. We implemented SLACK, a multi-device platform for communication. Each teacher has an office and behavior SLACK channel. It allows for us to respond to teacher and student needs immediately with privacy and documentation.

Student Ownership

I often will say in meetings that the adults can have the best plan but without the buy-in of the child—we won't get anywhere. We work hard to get our Jr. Huskies to own their learning. Teachers have created data boards and posters on walls where students track their success. Success criteria helps our students understand what and why they are learning skills.

We have two very important student recognitions weekly. Every Friday, teachers pick one student's work to hang in our front entryway. Families are invited to come in to hear from administration as to why their student was selected. It is an awesome way to build partnership

with families too. We also have teachers pick one student per week who has shown mastery on a standard. We read their names on the intercom and the students come to the office to get a prize.

Community Partnerships

The Midvalley community is amazingly supportive of the school. Each family signs our Midvalley Compact which outlines expectations for all stakeholders. They attend all our events including: Moms Matter, All Pro Dad, Literacy Nights, Math Nights, Tech Nights, and other PTA Events.

ParentSquare has been embraced as a common means for communication. The administration sends out a weekly Jr. Husky Happenings as well as teachers send out a weekly update. It is very beneficial for our families to have a reliable communication plan in place in all languages needed.

Mentorship

This job is not for the weak nor weary. I could not do what I do without the mentorship I have received throughout my career. I have been fortunate to have had the best of the best take an interest in my work and share their skills with me. I work hard to surround myself with other leaders who listen and support me when I need advice. When you give your heart and soul to your job and get critical feedback from other stakeholders, it hurts. Leaders need to be able to share what they experience with their mentors so that they can process, learn, and grow from it.

To conclude, it isn't just one piece that I attribute Midvalley's student achievement to—it is the culminating experience of all of the pieces coming together. Supporting teachers to do the most impactful teacher moves in the classroom, building partnerships with families, and empowering students to own their educational experience together leads to *Jr. Husky Success...Nothing Less.*