



McPherson Unified School District 418

Randy Watson, Ed.D, Superintendent
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House Education Committee Testimony on Innovation and Excellence in Kansas' schools

C³ - Citizenship, College and Career Readiness Initiative
Dr. Randy Watson, Superintendent
USD 418 McPherson

Tuesday, January 24, 2012

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today concerning the innovative and excellent programs we have in Kansas K-12 schools.

Today I ask you to think about the people in your family that you care deeply about – your own children and grandchildren.

Ask yourself this question, “What are your dreams and aspirations for your own children or grandchildren when they graduate from high school?”

We asked that question three years ago in McPherson. We asked it to our school board, staff, parents and community groups. The answers we received were what many of you thought – success, happiness, a good person, ready for college and ready for a great career. When we looked at the hundreds of responses we had gathered we noticed that they fell into three categories – being a good citizen, being ready for college or post secondary education and being ready for a fulfilling career. We also noticed what was not on any list. No one in any of our focus groups, not a single person, stated that they wanted their son or daughter to do well on a state assessment.

After those focus groups, our school board went about directing administration and staff to design a school district that focused on students and their future. We applied to the United States Department of Education for a waiver from No Child Left Behind and in February of 2011, we were the first school district in the nation to be awarded a waiver from NCLB.

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Our initiative is simple, while the work is hard and sometimes complex. We simply want EVERY child who graduates from McPherson to be Citizenship, College and Career ready. In the citizenship domain, we focus on three areas:

- Character
- Service
- Involvement in school and out of school activities

College ready focuses on what students need to be ready to succeed—without remediation—in an introductory level course at a two or four-year institution, trade school or technical school. In this area we focus on using assessments from ACT to measure our effectiveness. Again we focus on three areas:

- Academic ready for post secondary education as measured by ACT
- Taking and succeeding in rigorous courses as measured by Advanced Placement
- Psychosocial measures of readiness for post secondary education (goal setting, self-confidence, study skills, etc.)

Our third area is career ready. Being career ready means having all students ready for a vibrant and fulfilling career that allows a student to earn a middle class wage. To accomplish this our district is focused on the following areas:

- Academic ready for work and career as measured by WorkKeys and industry specific certification
- Having the soft skills employers are looking for in employees
- Spending time investigating and deciding on a career that matches interest

Our district believes that in order to get students where they want to go in the future requires much more than a single state assessment. We are assessing students in 9-10 different areas – every year, to determine whether or not they are on course towards being ready for success after high school.

We are now into our second full year of implementation. We have learned many things and continue to grow, and while this work is extremely hard, it is the most rewarding work that any district could ever pursue. It forces the educational system to ask hard questions about itself and to focus all the time and energy on students and their success upon leaving McPherson. It puts the focus on children, not the system or adults.

Thank you for your time this morning. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

**McPherson Unified
School District 418**

C3 **Citizenship, College
and Career Readiness**



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May 10, 2010**

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November 14, 2011**

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**McPherson Unified
School District 418**



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Background

“Some men dream things that are and say ‘why’, I dream things that never were and say why not? – George Bernard Shaw

“McPherson is being seen as a model for the country. Your decision to request the waiver was courageous.” – Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

In late February 2011, the United States Department of Education informed McPherson Unified School District 418 that they were granting a waiver to the district to enact the locally designed, **C³ – Citizenship, College and Career Readiness** initiative. The department called the McPherson initiative bold, challenging and one of a kind in the United States.

This announcement verified the important work that McPherson was doing to see that every student was citizenship, college and career ready. It allowed the school district to continue to do the vital work necessary to see that all students are ready for citizenship, college and career upon graduating high school.

Two previous documents are invaluable to understanding this latest version of our **C³** initiative. The first document was entitled, ***Building the System***. This document outlined the intense groundwork necessary for our current work to be so successful. The early work took our district over two years to implement, laying the groundwork for our initial venture into **C³** starting in May, 2010. ***Building the System*** focused us on three areas – foundation, core and improvement focus. We strongly encourage districts wanting to undergo a similar transformation in their work with students to carefully examine this document. It can be secured at <http://www.mcpherson.com/418>

The second document our district produced was the extremely popular first volume of our work, **C³ – Citizenship, College and Career Readiness**, published in May of 2010. That document outlined the work our school board did to enact the program, along with the components of each area of our work. Again, we highly recommend that school districts read the original document before examining this document. It covers the work necessary for school districts to help students become citizenship, college and career ready. This document may also be secured at <http://www.mcpherson.com/418>




Background


This new document is about our progress and what we have learned during our first year. It is intended to help guide not only our staff and community, but to inform others about what is needed to put these exciting principles into action. We are calling this second version of our work, *C³ – Sharpening our Focus*. It involves the detail work that is necessary to see that students are being successful.

“McPherson has set the standard for other districts to follow and shown a commitment to educational excellence that far exceeds the ordinary.” – Kansas Governor Sam Brownback


Our work is far from complete. Quite honestly, the really hard work lies ahead of us. To ensure that every student is citizenship, college and career ready is truly a challenging task. However, we know that our district is well on our way to making that happen for every student.


What we have learned and accomplished to date...

 Staff presents updates on C³ to the McPherson Board of Education every Board meeting (twice monthly). Our Board of Education is fully committed to the C³ initiative and holds the leadership team accountable to meeting the rigorous goals set forth in this plan.

 Every Friday, central office administrators meet with principals and directors to discuss the progress and roadblocks of C³. We use these meetings to analyze data, discuss changes we need to implement to ensure our students are Citizenship, College and Career ready when they leave our high school. These meetings help us focus on the students and keep us moving forward as a district and within buildings.

 We have had 21 media stories written or on the television about the C³ work.

 We engage in weekly conference calls with Quantum Learning. These calls are focused on the character component of citizenship. We have been instrumental in helping create a growth gauge to measure the growth of student character over time, which is now available as a national model.


 We engage in conference calls with various departments within ACT, which include data conversations around a growth model, implementing the Quality Core curriculum, and incorporating CoreWorks data solutions.


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Background


 We engage in frequent conversations with the Kansas Commissioner of Education. These conversations center around establishing AYP models using new assessments, growth models, and issues related to implementation of the process.


 We met with state Legislators on December 22, 2010 to update them on C³. They were very supportive of our plan and have asked for frequent updates.

 We presented our C³ initiative to the Kansas Association of School Board's state convention on December 4, 2010.


 We presented our C³ initiative to the United School Administrator conference on January 27, 2011.


 We presented our C³ initiative to the State ACT conference on April 28, 2011.

 We engaged in conference calls with several school districts across the nation to discuss data collection processes and growth model ideas.

 We presented our C³ initiative to the National Council of State School Officers in June of 2011. This introduced our work to the state commissioners of education from across the US.


 We received support from the Kansas State Board of Education for our second year waiver on July 12, 2011. The vote was 10-0.


 Monthly meetings with the Superintendent's Advisory Council allow us to receive feedback from business leaders of the community.


 Monthly meetings with the current and former McPherson Teachers of the Year allow us to gather feedback and improvement suggestions for the initiative.





Background


 We held parent meetings at all levels to explain C³ and gathered feedback. Parents have expressed their gratitude that we are wanting better for their children. Parents and patrons see the value of the initiative.

 We presented to the National Latino Conference in Dallas in September 2011. This group is comprised of aspiring Latino superintendents in the country. The group was impressed and may be looking to give a grant to McPherson to work with minority students in the C³ system.

 We are implementing Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in academic and behavior in our elementary schools and our middle school. MTSS helps staff analyze data and pinpoint students not on grade level in math and reading, so that staff can develop individual plans for helping students progress at an expedited pace.

 We implemented Professional Learning Communities (PreK-5) and/or Department Meetings (9-12) weekly and daily (6-8). This allows teachers to discuss student data and determine interventions for students needing an advanced pace of learning in order to be Citizenship, College and Career ready.


 We implemented core advisory on a daily basis for 6th grade at middle school with grades 7-8 slated for the 2011-2012 school year. This allows teachers time to work with individuals and/or small groups of students with learning gaps in order to speed up the progress of learning.


 We implemented an advisory period at the high school with focus on C³...more in-depth scheduling being processed for next school year. The focus this year has been on helping students choose the right courses to enable them to be College and Career ready upon graduation. The core advisor checks student grades on a weekly basis and contacts parents as needed to keep them updated on their child's progress.


 We planned and held the ***C3- Citizenship, College and Career Day Celebration*** in McPherson, Kansas on Friday, April 8, 2011.




Background


 We expanded our AVID program to include school-wide structures at our middle school. AVID prepares students for college. Our middle school has decided to expand many of the strategies and structures beyond just the 10 percent of students normally targeted for the program.


 We moved all 4 year old pre-k programs to neighborhood schools. This was done to establish a deeper relationship for our families and to strengthen the curricular bonds between pre-k and kindergarten staff.

 Special Education took a bold move and established a PAWS program at both our middle and high school. This was specific programming geared toward students on the autism spectrum. In the short term, this program has been very beneficial in helping our autistic children.


 We implemented a new approach to our Emotionally Disturbed room at MHS. We hope that this new approach will yield benefits to this population of students.


What we still have yet to accomplish...


 Communication with parents has proven to be more difficult than we anticipated. While we can meet daily with students, we have tried to communicate with parents, but haven't found the exact, perfect forum for doing this. We have tried to have face-to-face meetings, but the turn out has been about 30-40% of parents. We have tried to communicate via the radio and direct mail, but we are only seeing about 50% of our parents engaging in the process. We feel that adjusting parent-teacher conferences at MMS and MHS may help in this area.

 Keeping our focus is a challenge. Often people note that education is slow to change. While that is true from a structure standpoint, it is not true about small changes or seeking the "latest fad or program." Our challenge is to keep this initiative simple. The complexity will come in the details of designing our program.



 Changing an entire educational system to focus on the needs of every child is a daunting task. It is especially difficult in a time when school budgets have seen dramatic cuts. It takes creative thinking to do the necessary work with fewer dollars. Partners have to be solicited to provide their products at a reduced or free rate, schedules have to be changed to help students and most importantly there can never be enough internal communication with staff, students and parents.

 We must find a way to change the structure of secondary school to get more one-on-one time with parents and students. If we can design what this will look like and implement it, our communication issue is solved.

 While this work is extremely hard, it is the most rewarding work that any district could ever pursue. It forces the educational system to ask hard questions about itself and to focus all the time and energy on students and their success upon leaving McPherson.



Citizenship Ready

“Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.” – Abraham Lincoln

What is Citizenship Ready?

Citizenship ready is segmented into two overlapping areas: (1) Character Education and (2) Service to the Community.

Character Education - USD 418 is working with Learning Forum, a world leader “to make a difference for kids with great promise and limited resources, empowering them with greater self esteem, highly effective academic and learning skills, and a desire to achieve.” Learning Forum has developed the 8 Keys of Excellence. We are partnering with Learning Forum to use their 8 Keys of Excellence to measure character.

I Live the 8 Keys of Excellence

Name: _____

Live your best life
 - I stay aware of what's meaningful and important in my life.
 - I make positive choices about how I spend my time.
 - I balance my activities to nurture my mind, body, and emotions.
My choices keep me happy.

Match behavior with values
 - I have positive personal values.
 - My words and actions reflect my values.
 - I know myself and I am true to who I am.
I do the right thing.

Learn from mistakes
 - I view failures as feedback and opportunities for growth.
 - I take time to learn from mistakes and do better next time.
 - I am not fearful of making mistakes.
I grow by learning from my failures.

Speak honestly and kindly
 - I am aware of the power of my words.
 - I speak positively—no bullying, no insults, no gossip.
 - I make sure my intention is good and my words are sincere.
I think before I speak and choose my words carefully.

Make the most of every moment
 - I focus my attention on what I'm doing right now.
 - I know I have the power to choose my attitude—good or bad.
 - I choose a positive attitude.
I focus on the present moment.

Be willing to do things differently
 - I recognize that things may not always work out as planned.
 - I am open to suggestion and change—I am not rigid.
 - I adapt to changing situations in order to move forward.
When something isn't working, I try something new.

Failure Leads to Success
 - I view failures as feedback and opportunities for growth.
 - I take time to learn from mistakes and do better next time.
 - I am not fearful of making mistakes.
I grow by learning from my failures.

Speak With Good Purpose
 - I am aware of the power of my words.
 - I speak positively—no bullying, no insults, no gossip.
 - I make sure my intention is good and my words are sincere.
I think before I speak and choose my words carefully.

Take responsibility for actions
 - I think about the results of my choices.
 - I am responsible for my words and actions.
 - I don't blame others or make excuses for things I say or do.
I "own" the choices I make and the results that follow.

Commitment
 - I have meaningful goals and believe in my ability to achieve them.
 - I take positive action to move forward toward my goals.
 - I persevere—giving up is not an option.
I give my best effort to achieve my goals.

This is It!
 - I focus my attention on what I'm doing right now.
 - I know I have the power to choose my attitude—good or bad.
 - I choose a positive attitude.
I focus on the present moment.

Growth Gauge
 middle and high school
 www.8keys.org
 © 2010 Quantum Learning Network

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Citizenship Ready

“Everyone can be great because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't even have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve... You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.” - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Service to the Community - Whether someone lives in a large city or a small rural town, we feel it is important as a citizen to “serve” those communities. By partnering with churches, 4-H and other organizations, USD 418 proposes to have students who demonstrate “service” to their school and community every year that they are in school. This will require students to “serve” in at least one area yearly during their K-8 years and two areas yearly in their 9-12 years.








“Everyone can be great because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't even have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve... You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.” - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.


Citizenship Ready


What we have learned and accomplished to date...

 Quantum Learning has been a terrific partner in our work with citizenship and character. They helped us design rubrics and assessments at all grade levels. Having a character education program is easy, measuring it at the student level is more difficult. What we have experienced is truly remarkable. Not only are our students using the language of character education developed for them, but they are using it daily when they have conflicts or when they fall short of being “above the line.” Administrators are using the character education program when students are sent to the office and throughout the emotionally disturbed room. This work has been coupled with our MTSS behavior plan. This has moved our discussions toward helping young people understand their wrong decisions and to help them “make it right.”

 High School students organized the Big Event, a volunteer day throughout McPherson. The event turned out to be a huge success and we hope to make it an annual part of student service to the McPherson community. We have received tremendous, positive comments from the community about the Big Event.

 We held parent meetings to discuss 8 Keys of Excellence (character component). We asked the parents and community to partner with us in this endeavor. The response has been very favorable.


 All elementary schools have implemented service projects into the curriculum. Students are learning at a very young age the value of helping others.


 We implemented the 8 Keys of Excellence in all schools with monthly assemblies on character. This ensures that all staff and all students hear the same message and that this message can be expanded on throughout the school day, week, and year.





Citizenship Ready

What we still have yet to accomplish...

 In some ways, we have seen the greatest implementation of citizenship over college and career ready. However, much of the attention publicly has been given to college and career at the middle and high school.

 We have to institutionalize the language on character. We have a good start from last year, but we must continue this momentum. Probably more so than in any other curricular area, guidance and counseling tend to move from one important area to another. We are working hard to see that the 8 Keys of Excellence stay at the core of what we are trying to accomplish.

 We need to strengthen the character aspect of our program at MHS. While they have been a leader with their service projects and all aspects of college and career ready, character education development has not been established yet.

 We would like to see students in grades 6-12 involved in at least two and as many as five activities every year that they are in school. The research points to students doing better in school and after college if they are involved in activities. These activities do not solely need to be school activities, but should include church, scouts, 4-H and other community activities.



“Only 25% of all 2011 graduates nationally met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, meaning that 75% were not adequately prepared academically for first-year college courses in English Composition, College Algebra, Social Sciences and Biology.” - ACT

What is College Readiness?

USD 418 is committed to having every student “college ready” when he/she walks across the stage at graduation. College Readiness refers to the level of student preparation needed to be ready to succeed—without remediation—in an introductory level course at a two or four-year institution, trade school or technical school.

Academic Readiness

Scores on ACT’s academic achievement assessments from the College and Career Readiness System (EXPLORE, PLAN®, and the ACT® test) are reported on the same scale, allowing educators to assess students’ progress toward college readiness during middle school and high school in a meaningful way.

ACT College Readiness Benchmarks					
	Explore 6th Grade*	Explore 7th Grade*	Explore 8th Grade	PLAN 10th Grade	ACT 12th Grade
English	11	12	13	15	18
Mathematics	14	16	17	19	22
Reading	13	14	15	17	21
Science	17	19	20	21	24



College Ready

Academic Behavior

The factors that are important for college and work success go beyond cognitive ability and academic readiness. In order to assess students' progress over time related to academic behavior, ACT has developed a set of scales called ENGAGE that provides assessments of specific behaviors that are critical to academic success. McPherson uses the ENGAGE assessment to compliment our cognitive measures of ACT Explore, PLAN and ACT.

“McPherson’s C³ initiative reflects the district’s persistent commitment to educating all students well and reflects a realization that a student’s education is not only about learning material but about preparing for citizenship, higher education, and a career.” – Dr. Andy Tompkins, CEO Kansas Board of Regents

ENGAGE Grades 6–9 is designed to identify youth at academic risk by augmenting standardized achievement testing with measures of important psychosocial indicators. It is a low-stakes, self-report inventory made up of scales (106 items, 4th-grade reading level) that can be generally organized into three broad domains that have been shown to be predictive of academic performance and persistence:

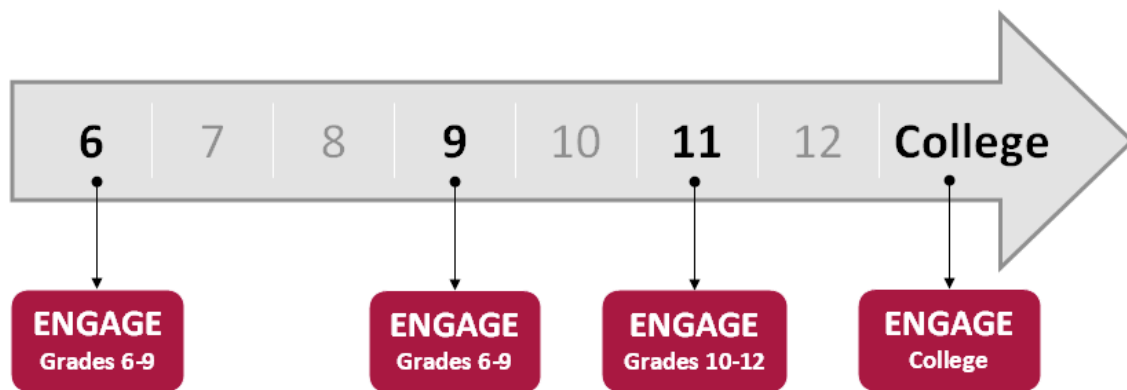
- **Motivation** includes personal characteristics that help students to succeed academically by focusing and maintaining energies on goal-directed activities.
- **Social Engagement** includes interpersonal factors that influence students' successful integration into their environment.
- **Self-Regulation** includes cognitive and affective processes used to monitor, regulate, and control behavior related to learning.

ENGAGE captures students' perceptions of themselves, their families' commitment to education, school-related factors, and important biographical information. It is designed for students in 6th, 7th, 8th, or 9th grade and yields a broad profile of students' psychosocial characteristics that can be used to inform intervention. Results from ENGAGE also indicate whether students are psychosocially “on-track” to succeed in high school. Research has shown that ENGAGE has excellent psychometric characteristics and is a valid predictor of student success. It provides schools with individual-level as well as school-level results.



College Ready

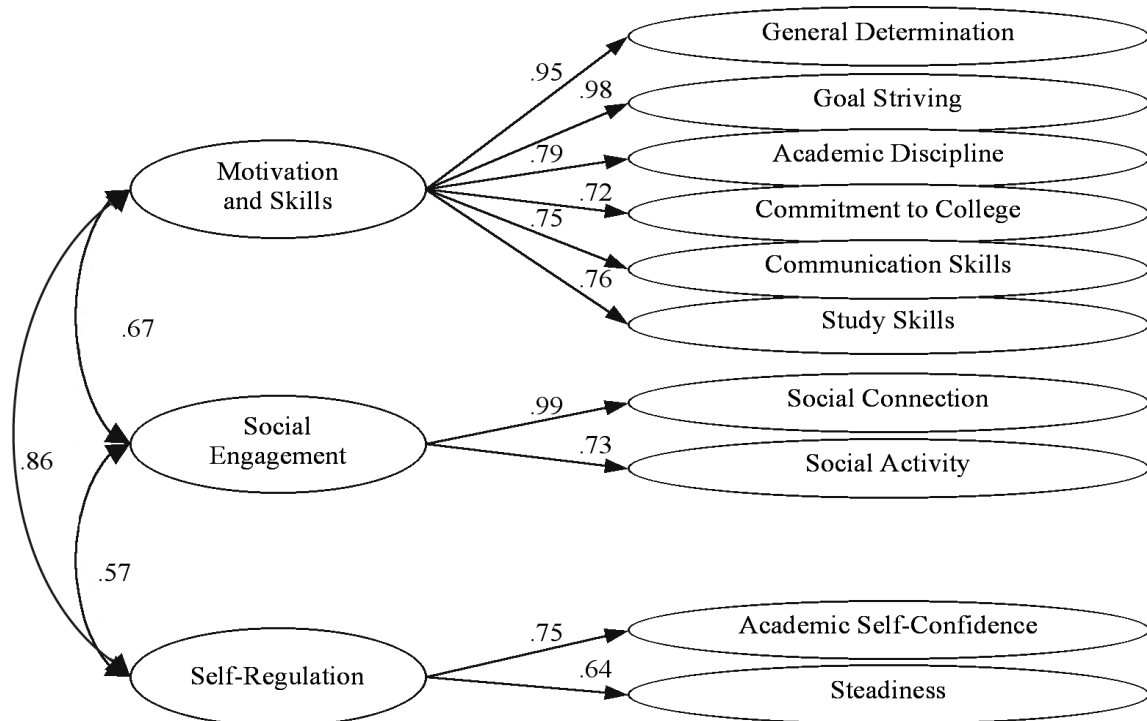
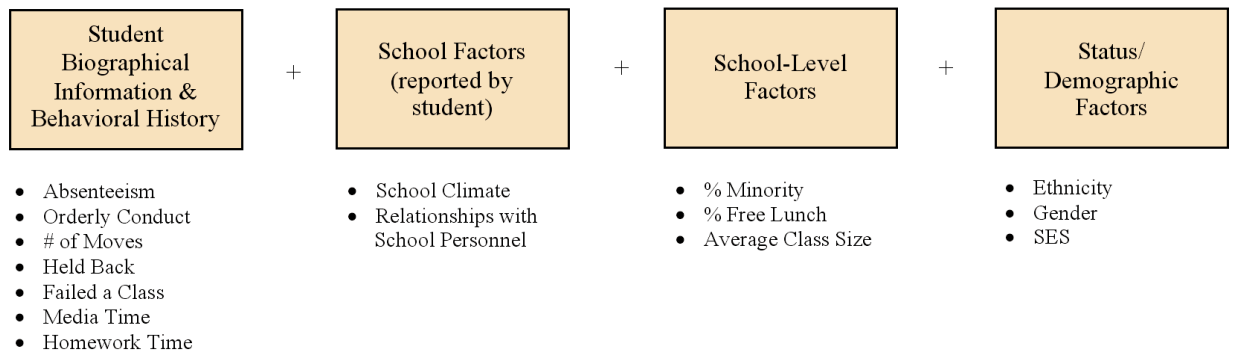
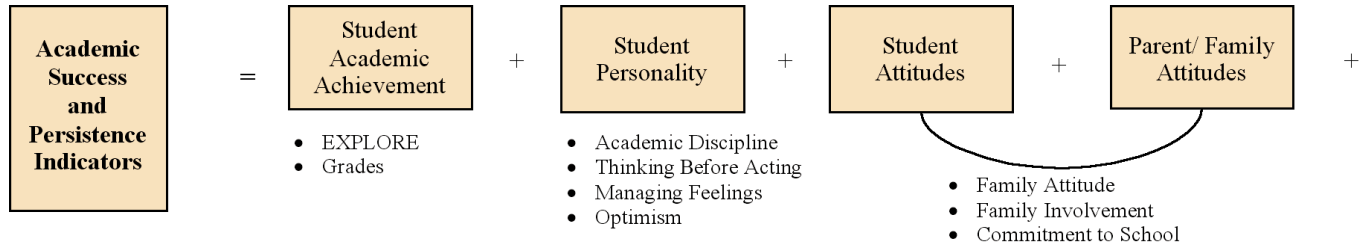
ACT developed ENGAGE Grades 10–12 to help educators evaluate students’ psychosocial attributes, determine their levels of academic risk, and identify interventions to help them succeed in their transition from college into postsecondary studies. ENGAGE is composed of 108 items that form ten scales: Academic Discipline, Academic Self-Confidence, Commitment to College, Communication Skills, General Determination, Goal Striving, Social Activity, Social Connection, Steadiness, and Study Skills.



The following models on the next page show the data used to determine college readiness in USD 418. Figure 1 is for middle school students and Figure 2 represents data for high school students.



College Ready




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College Ready


What we have learned and accomplished to date...


 We administered the ACT Explore exam to all 6th, 7th and 8th graders in October. We have been analyzing our data in a variety of ways. We have pinpointed students who are not on the trajectory for college-readiness and are looking at our curriculum and tiered instruction to meet the needs of these students to ready them for college before they enter our high school.


 We administered the ACT Plan to all sophomores in October. We have been analyzing our data in a variety of ways. We have pinpointed students who are not on the trajectory for college-readiness and are looking at our curriculum and tiered instruction to meet the needs of these students to ready them for college before they graduate from high school.

 We administered the ACT exam to all seniors on Saturday, October 23, 2010. We have been analyzing our data in a variety of ways. We have discovered numerous trends in the data to utilize when determining how to ensure future students are college-ready when they take the ACT. We are currently discussing how to help those who aren't college-ready be so in a very short timeframe.

 We implemented ACT's ENGAGE to measure psychosocial measures of students in grades 6-12. This will help us ascertain which students need small group instruction in order to have the motivation and drive to be college ready.


 We implemented ACT CoreWorks to analyze and track data from ACT. This has allowed us to accurately pinpoint students who are on the trajectory for college readiness as well as which students are close and which students are far away from that trajectory.


 Purchased and implemented Grockit and Kaplan ACT prep to help students and families prepare for the ACT exam.


 We held parent meetings to discuss data specific to the ACT, EXPLORE, and PLAN tests. We helped parents understand where their child stands at this time, and what their child needs to do (courses to take, study skills to develop, etc.) in order to get where they want to be upon graduation.





College Ready


 We established College Statistics in our math department for 2011-12 and College dual-credit Spanish in our World Languages department. This is a direct response to the need to prepare our students for their future.

 We accelerated students in our middle school so that they would be ready for Algebra in 8th grade.

 Our English, mathematics, and science departments are meeting to incorporate ACT Quality Core into existing curriculum as a move towards more rigorous core courses.

 We worked with ACT and the Kansas Department of Education to determine AYP levels and “bands” of excellence. We also worked on establishing normal growth curves from 6-12 grades.

 **Early Monitoring and Intervention.** We know from ACT’s empirical data that students who take challenging curricula are much better prepared to graduate high school ready for college or career training opportunities. If students are to be ready for college or career when they graduate, their progress must be monitored closely so that deficiencies in foundational skills can be identified and remediated early, in upper elementary and middle school. In addition, age-appropriate career assessment, exploration, and planning activities that encourage students to consider and focus on personally relevant career options should be a part of this process so that students can plan their high school coursework accordingly. This is why we have implemented Explore, Plan and ACT. When those results are seen, we then are creating systems to assist families and students to catch up in their skills. Thus, we have developed MTSS systems of support and College and Career Rooms (CCR) to assist students in skill development.

 **Data-Driven Decisions.** ACT reports that if districts are serious about ensuring more of their students are prepared for college and work in the 21st century, they must develop systems that allow schools to closely monitor student performance at every stage of the learning pipeline, from preschool through the elementary, middle, and high school grades, all the way through college. Use of a longitudinal data system enables educators to identify students who are in need of academic interventions at an early stage, thus giving teachers and students more time to strengthen these skills before graduation. Longitudinal data systems provide a tool to schools to ensure all their students take and complete the right number and kinds of courses before graduation. Using a longitudinal assessment system also permits schools to evaluate the value

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added by each core course in helping students to become ready for college and career. Such systems also allow colleges to offer feedback reports to high schools that examine how well prepared each high school's graduates are for college. These reports can be used to strengthen high school curricula. We are looking at every student, in every grade and then developing plans for the future.

What we still have yet to accomplish...



This year will be taking student's assessment scores and intervening much earlier in our secondary schools than we did last year.



Our CCR classes need to be strengthened with staffing and direct application of helping students in their learning gaps.



We need to develop clear goals and activities for our "band kids." Those students who are 1-2 points away from the college cut scores issued by ACT. These students need to know exactly what is needed to move their scores slightly higher.



The establishment of Bullpup Scholars needs to be completed. Parents have been meeting with me fall of 2011 to establish the criteria. This will enable us to honor and work with our highest achieving students.



We need to establish a college culture. This could include banners from colleges that our staff have graduated from and pennants from colleges that seniors are committed to attending. The establishment of "30" and "21" boards at MHS and MMS, which highlight those students scoring 30 on the ACT or 21 on the Explore.



Students should be taken to college campuses in Kansas. K-State, KU and Wichita State could be explored so that students know what it is like on a college campus. This could coincide with the Careers in McPherson day with possibly the sophomores going to careers and the juniors going to a college.



“Developing a skilled workforce—one that has the ability to quickly adapt to new and changing workforce demands—is a primary focus of the career and technical education programs offered through the nation’s secondary and postsecondary public schools. Identifying, quantifying, and assessing those skills necessary to prepare the workforce is critical to career and technical education.” - Jan Bray, Executive Director of The Association for Career and Technical Education

What is Career Readiness?

Being career ready involves having students explore their interests with systems such as KUDER and EXPLORE and PLAN. From there, students will be provided job shadowing, internships and work-study directly tied to their career interest. Finally, through the WorkKeys system, all students will gain a certificate, noting their success in being ready for careers in Kansas and across the United States.

“Citizenship, College and Career is a pioneering plan that will help students reach their full potential. I fully support USD 418’s efforts to prepare students for life after high school.” – Senator Jerry Moran

It is not enough to be a good citizen and to be college ready. We want to prepare students to have the skills necessary to be good workers and have a vibrant career. Many of the skills and attributes gained in our citizenship and college domain will assist students in being career ready, but we propose to partner with the Workforce Centers of Kansas, KansasWorks, Kansas Career Pipeline, the KUDER system and the National Career Readiness Network, to produce students that have the necessary skills to have a quality work career in Kansas.




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Career Readiness


What we have learned and accomplished to date...


 We administered the ACT WorkKeys exam to all freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors in November. We have been analyzing our data in a variety of ways. We have pinpointed students who are not on the trajectory for career-readiness and are looking at our curriculum and tiered instruction to meet the needs of these students to ready them for careers before they graduate from high school.


 We administered the KUDER, career system to determine career interests to be used when planning for individual student advising, course additions and modifications, as well as career day planning.

 We held the first Career Day at McPherson High School on January 3, 2011. We surveyed students and staff in order to determine what worked well for students. We are instituting ongoing career awareness and activities based on this feedback. For example, we are bringing in career-related guest speakers for brown bag lunches monthly.

 We implemented a new system to advise students into courses to enable them to be career and college ready. A counselor or administrator sits down with each and every child, and using test data helps the child determine exactly which courses will enable that student to be college and career ready upon graduation.


 We implemented KeyTrain, which is a course designed to assist students to become career ready on the ACT WorkKeys exam.


 We implemented Navigation 101 to help students explore their interests, careers and post secondary options.

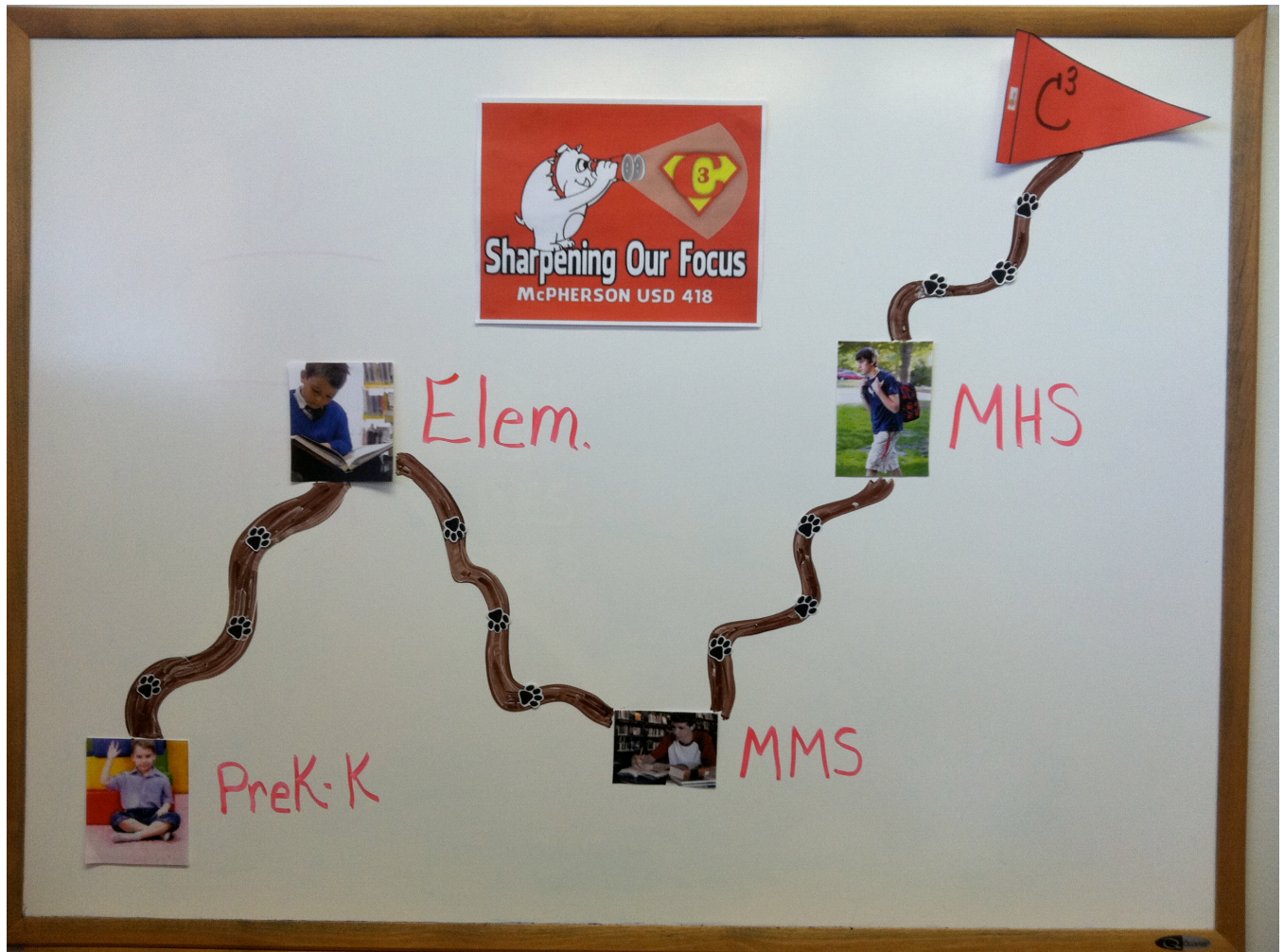
 We met with department heads and key staff in core areas to align curriculum with college readiness standards from ACT and from ACT WorkKeys.



What we still have yet to accomplish...

 We need to strengthen our commitment to Navigation 101 to assist in career development. Counselors will need to spend more time with students and parents in order to fully develop career interest. This may necessitate the addition of a college and career counselor.

 We need to establish a “Careers in the Community” day where students go out into the community to learn about what careers are found in McPherson. This would compliment our current Career Day, where representatives from industry come into the high school to speak to students.



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College, Career, & Citizenship Ready PreK/Kindergarten

Imagine it's several weeks before the end of the school year in the year 2006 and Robert's parents are meeting with the transition committee to talk about his experiences with McPherson USD 418 over the past two years in PreK/Kindergarten and to discuss Robert's transition to 1st grade.

"Hi Mr. and Mrs. Smith, we're meeting with you today to look over your son's portfolio to see what he's learned throughout his Pre-K and kindergarten experiences here at Washington Elementary School. We have some letters from Robert's teachers and counselor telling us that he's been a very hard worker and fits in very well with his peers. Do you agree with that?"

"Yes, we definitely agree. Robert has always loved learning and couldn't wait to start school. He seems to really enjoy school and talks about his teachers and his friends all of the time. We think that speaks highly of his surroundings."

"Well, let's talk about Robert as a learner. It looks like he came to our PreK program already knowing all of his letters and most of his letter sounds. He also knew a lot about how to play with sounds and manipulate sounds. All of this gave him a very solid foundation for learning to read. So, looking at Robert right now, his guided reading level and assessment scores tell us that Robert is reading like an end-of-year first grader." "Whoa, so what will he do next year?" "Not to worry, our 1st grade teachers are well-equipped to work with students reading above grade level. Our guided reading program is designed to take students where they are and help them grow to their fullest potential. So, he'll be just fine! Now let's look at Robert's math knowledge. Again, Robert came in already knowing the fundamentals. Our curriculum really focuses on understanding numbers and math conceptually, so we were able to help Robert deeply understand how to manipulate numbers. He is already combining and separating numbers like a pro and is ready to start showing addition and subtraction on paper. This is really good news. Again, our teachers will work with Robert and help him continue to grow. They'll most likely help him develop some independent projects to push him a bit in his understanding. How does this sound?" "That sounds great. Everything you've said makes sense and sounds like it will meet Robert's needs. Thank you so much!"

"So, Robert is certainly ready to move on to the 1st grade academically! Let's talk about our career focus these past 2 years. We've introduced the kids to careers through our center time. We've included lots of dress up activities and centers around careers, like a fire station, a hospital, a space station, a McDonalds, a veterinarian's office, a school, a pet store, and a construction site. Robert seems quite interested in these activities and participates with his peers often taking the lead in acting out scenarios. Here is a video you can take with you showing



Robert playing in several of these centers. You can tell he likes animals a lot because he always asks for the vet's office and pet store. We've also read several books that have a career focus. Robert does a nice job of asking questions and trying to understand each of the careers we introduce. He will really benefit from the continued career exploration throughout his elementary years. Do you have any questions about what Robert knows about careers?" "No, not really. He typically shares with us what he learns at school, so we knew he was learning something about careers. He's even asked us to set up a couple of the centers you just mentioned."

"Lastly, we'll talk about the 8 Keys of Excellence and how Robert is getting along as a citizen in his classroom." "He's constantly correcting us if we aren't following one of the 8 Keys. We're so glad his teacher sent home information about these so that we can reinforce what's happening at school." "Well, according to Robert's 8 Keys rubrics, he's doing just fine. His teacher did note that he certainly does pay attention to whether or not the other students are using the 8 Keys or not! But, Robert is doing just fine in this area. He gets along with his peers and speaks with good purpose most of the time. He's really pretty good about making it right if he does something that hurts someone's feelings."

"All in all, it looks like Robert has met the district's expectations for being College, Career, and Citizenship ready at this introductory level. He is well on his way to being successful in his elementary school years. Congratulations!"



College, Career, & Citizenship Ready Elementary

Imagine it's several weeks before the 5th Grade DARE graduation ceremony in the year 2011 and Robert is meeting with the transition committee to showcase his experiences with McPherson USD 418 over the past five years in elementary school and to prove that he is ready to transition to McPherson Middle School.

“Hello Robert, we’re meeting with you today to look over your portfolio to see what you’ve learned at Washington Elementary School. We have some letters here from your teacher and your counselor telling us that you have been a very hard worker and that you are a very good student. Do you agree with that?”

“Ummmm, yes, I agree with that. I’ve always liked school and I love to learn new things, so that helps me pay attention in class. My teachers have always let me work on harder projects because I’m a pretty good reader and I’m a fast learner. They work with my parents to make sure I don’t get bored and that I keep learning. Do you want to see some of my projects?” asks Robert. “Sure, we’d love to see a couple of your projects.”

“Here is a project I did in the 4th grade when we were studying about life cycles of butterflies and grasshoppers. I used the Internet to research the life cycles of dragonflies and fireflies. Then I created these models that show each of their normal life cycles. The coolest part is that I then created this model that shows what I think would happen if I crossed a dragonfly and a grasshopper. See how it’s a totally different kind of life cycle?” “Wow, Robert, that is very cool! Tell us about your latest project.” “OK, we just finished studying producers, consumers, and decomposers. So, I did a project that showed what I think would happen to a city if we killed all the mosquitoes. See how all the birds start dying, then all the wild cats and foxes die, then we start having lots and lots of mice?” Robert shared excitedly. “So, why did you choose to study that Robert?” “My mom and I were talking about the purpose of mosquitoes and we couldn’t come up with one. So when my teacher started talking to us about producers, consumers, and decomposers, I started to think more about mosquitoes. My mom wasn’t happy to learn there was a good reason we have mosquitoes!” Robert giggled.

“Those are very interesting projects Robert. It looks as if you are on your way to being a scientist. Have you talked with anyone about careers here at Washington School?” “Sure, our counselor taught us about a lot of different careers. She had us talk to our moms and dads about their careers and she even asked some moms and dads to come in and talk to our class. That was pretty cool. We also watched some videos on careers. And last year, we got a new program called Kuder Galaxy that helped us explore careers. We got to play a lot of games and watch short videos about careers. I found out that I like animals a lot. I actually already knew that because I love to go to the zoo and to the ranch all the time. But, I found out that there are lots of different jobs for people that like animals. I didn’t know that, so that was cool.” “So, do you think you know what you want to be when you grow up?” “Well, I’m not sure, but I think I



might want to work at a zoo.” “That sounds like an interesting career choice. We’ll be watching you to see where you end up!”

“OK, let’s look at your grades and test scores. We see on your report cards that you have always mastered everything your teacher taught you. Your teachers also told your parents about the many independent projects you’ve accomplished over the years. These look really impressive Robert and tell us that you like to learn new things. Your 4th grade teacher told your parents that you were very goal oriented and always put forth best effort. Do you know what that means?”

“Yeah, that I choose my own projects and stick to it. I do my best because I want to learn new things. Is that right?” “Yes, you got it! Now let’s talk about your assessment scores. It looks like you’ve always read above the top 90th percentile of all students in the nation. That means that out of 100 students you’re in the top 10...good job! Your math scores are in the 90th percentile too.

Your district tests all look great. These scores plus your hard work in class are the reasons your teachers let you work on interesting projects.” “Oh, well that’s cool...I didn’t know that!!

Thanks.” “It also looks like you took the EXPLORE test early since you are in the Bullpup Scholars. How was that experience?” “Holy cow...that was a hard test! I didn’t even get through with the test! But, my teacher told my mom that I scored pretty good on the test because it was actually for 8th graders.” “That’s right Robert, you did do pretty well. We’ll use this information just to see how you grow over the next few years. We’re glad you took the risk and tried taking the test.”

“So, tell us what classes you are going to take in 6th grade.” “Well, the middle school counselors met with my teacher, parents and me to help me decide. We decided I’d try to take the PreAP classes in English, Literature, and Social Studies. I’m also taking Choir and Band and PE. I think I’m going to have lots of homework next year!” “You’re right, you probably will have lots of homework. But, you seem prepared for that!. This looks like a really good schedule. What about math?” “Oh, yeah, my teacher said I should skip Math 1 and go straight into Math 2. That way I can be ready for Algebra in 8th grade. My teacher said that is seems like I’m really good at Science and that since I like Science, I should take Algebra at the middle school.”

“Well, it sounds like you’ve got a good plan for moving into the middle school. Talk to us about if you’re ready to be a good citizen at the middle school. What have you learned about the 8 Keys?” “We do the 8 Keys all of the time! My mom says she loves the 8 Keys because they have made me a good citizen at home and in the community too. I have to work really hard to speak with good purpose and to live with integrity all the time. I sometimes goof up on those two, but I always make it better and apologize. We learned about taking risks and making mistakes. I hate to make mistakes, but I know that I can learn from them, so they’re ok now. I know that my teacher said we will still use the 8 Keys at the middle school, so I’m glad I know all about them.” “Great Robert, it sounds like you really do understand the 8 Keys of Excellence. We have your rubrics here and you really have learned from your mistakes and have continually grown. Are you involved in any activities outside of school, like Boy Scouts or sports?” “Yes, I am a Boy Scout and I’m in Tae Kwon Do. I also play soccer and baseball and basketball. I like to



play sports a lot!” “Well, that’s a quite a few activities...you must keep your parents pretty busy!” Robert smiles.

“Robert, it looks like you’ve met the district’s expectations for being College, Career, and Citizenship ready. It looks like you are ready to go to the Middle School next year. Congratulations and good luck!”



College, Career, & Citizenship Ready Middle School

Imagine it's several weeks before 8th Grade Recognition in the year 2014 and Robert is meeting with the transition committee to showcase his experiences with McPherson USD 418 over the past three years in Middle School and to prove that he is ready to transition to McPherson High School.

“Good afternoon Robert, we’re excited to hear about what you’ve been up to during your time in middle school. We’ve been reading some recommendation letters from some of your teachers, including your advisor. It sounds like you have been working really hard and have grown a great deal. Are you ready to share your portfolio with us?”

“Sure, let’s get started,” replied Robert. “Great, why don’t you start by telling us what you feel are the highlights of your middle school experience.” “Well, let’s see, I guess one thing that I learned while in middle school is that I know for sure that I want to be a vet,” Robert responded excitedly. “Wow, that’s pretty exciting news. Many students headed to high school don’t sound as sure and excited about their career choices as you do. Tell us how you came to know you want to be a vet.” “Well, I’ve always liked animals, even as a little kid. I went to the zoo practically every weekend as a kid and continually asked my parents for new pets and even bought my first pet, a Beta, when I was less than 2 years old. I’ve just always loved animals! But, I didn’t know anything about being a vet until we started studying careers using Nav 101,” Robert continued.” “Tell us more about your experience with Navigation 101.” “Well, one part of the program asks us about stuff we like and another part asks us about things we value. I marked anything that had to do with animals very high and then the program helped me explore careers working with animals. I learned about zookeepers, biologists, park rangers, ecologists, vets, and even farmers. Out of all of those choices I decided that being a vet sounded the best.”

“Great, Robert. It sounds like you are truly inspired to be a vet. So, let’s see if you’ve taken the courses that will prepare you for high school and set you on the right path to be a vet.” “OK, here is the list of courses I took at the middle school. I did everything my counselors and advisor told me to do. I took PreAP English and Literature classes all three years. Oh, I was able to take the honors PreAP English class this year and the Honors Science class, which really helped prepare me for high school. I loved those courses, because I could focus on animals and science in my writing. We even had a unit on writing like a scientist! I also took Algebra this year because Mrs. Button told my parents it would help me get in the right courses in high school so that I could be ready for vet school. I even took all the PreAP social studies courses and to be honest, I didn’t really want to. My advisors told me that these courses would help me be a better problem solver and a better reader, so I decided to take their advice.” “Well, Robert you certainly made very wise course choices during middle school! And, it looks like you earned all A’s and B’s too...excellent work! Since we’re talking about grades, let’s move to your assessment scores, shall we?”



“OK, here are my EXPLORE scores starting with 6th grade through 8th grade. In the 6th grade we all took the ACT Explore test and I got a score of 11 on the English section, 13 on the Math section, 12 on the Reading section, and 13 on the Science section. All of these scores were below the College Ready benchmark. Now let’s look at my Explore scores from my 8th grade year. I got a 13 on the English section, a 17 on the math section, a 16 on the reading section and an 18 on the Science section. I was at or above on all areas but Science. I was really bummed about my Science score, especially since I want to be a vet and you have to have really good Science scores when you take the ACT to get into vet school. But, my parents and I sat down with my advisor and he explained that I shouldn’t be upset because I made growth. And, he told us that the school district sees a pattern of lower Science scores on the EXPLORE and that because I was taking Honors Science and would be on a strong Science path in high school, I was sure to do even better when I take our next ACT test, I think it’s called the PLAN,” explained Robert. “Wow, Robert, it sounds as though you have this all under control! We were going to explain your Science scores to you, but it sounds like you already understand. You made wise choices in Middle School, what classes do you plan to take in high school?”

“Here is a copy of my 7-year plan. The counselors and my advisors told my parents to help me choose rigorous courses so I can be ready for vet school. So, I’m planning on taking PreAP English, Geometry, AP Human Geography, Biology, Concert Choir, PE I, and Band. I’m really excited to take Biology of Vet Sciences, but that’s not until my Sophomore year!” “Looks like you have a really good balance of classes here. This would be the schedule we would recommend for you looking at your historical grades and knowing what your career goals are. How do you and your parents feel about this schedule?” “Well, I’m a little bit worried about taking an AP class already, but it’ll be ok. I know my parents will help me if I struggle and my mom says I have two things going for me, I learn new things pretty quickly, and I’m a hard worker.” “Speaking of being a hard worker, did your advisor talk to you about an assessment you took, called ENGAGE?”

“Oh, yeah, I kinda remember that one. Isn’t it where I answered a bunch of questions about if my parents thought school was important and if I studied and stuff like that?” “Yes, that’s the one. This assessment tells us, even more than your EXPLORE scores, that you are indeed ready for high school. It says you are a hard worker, you set goals, and that your parents support you and the school. Keep up that attitude and you will do really well in high school!”

“Let’s talk a little bit more about becoming a vet. You said that you used Navigation 101 to help you make that decision. Was there anything else that led you to decide on becoming a vet?” “Oh, definitely! I forgot about our career exploration visits...those were awesome! One of the places I visited was Dr. Dillon’s vet office. I got to watch her working with lots of dogs and cats that day. I even got to watch her spay a cat...that was so cool! I knew right then and there that I wanted to be a vet just like Dr. Dillon,” Robert beamed. “Well, that sounds like a very exciting experience. So, you’re ready for high school and you’ve chosen a career path, tell us more about Robert as a good citizen.”



“Well, I haven’t been referred to the office since the 6th grade,” Robert giggled. “Seriously, here are my citizenship grades and my 8 Keys rubrics from my PreK years to now.

I’ve learned to take the 8 Keys very seriously and try to use them all the time, even when I’m not in school. I see how using the 8 Keys makes me a good friend, a good son, a good student, and a good citizen.” “This looks really good Robert. Have you participated in any activities either at school or outside of school?” “Oh, yeah, I’m part of the natural helpers with Mr. Allmon and I’m the greeter when we have guests at the school. I played football and basketball and plan to keep playing in high school. I also compete in Tae Kwon Do on the weekends.” “OK, wow, you are involved in plenty of activities. That’s another sign that you’ll continue to do well in high school.”

“Robert, it looks like you have once again met the district’s expectations for being College, Career, and Citizenship ready. You have proven to us that you are ready for your next step of becoming a McPherson High School student. Good luck and keep doing what you’ve been doing!”



**College, Career, & Citizenship Ready
McPherson USD 418
High School**

Imagine it's several weeks before graduation in the year 2018 and Robert is meeting with the graduation committee to showcase his experiences with McPherson USD 418 over the past thirteen years and to prove that he is ready to pursue post-secondary studies, ready to embark on a career path, and ready to be a positive and productive citizen...

“Good morning Robert, it’s great to see you. We know that you have worked hard to become the person you are today and we’re excited to see and hear about all of your accomplishments and experiences over the past thirteen years. Are you ready to share your portfolio with us?”

“You bet, I’m ready,” replied Robert. “Great, why don’t you start with telling us about what you plan to do after high school.” “Well, I was accepted to most of the colleges I applied to including several out-of-state institutions. I just sent in my registration fee to Kansas State University so I can study in the pre-vet program. I hope to have my own veterinary clinic someday!” “Super Robert, we’re proud of you! So, let’s start there. Share with us how you know you are ready for college.”

“OK, we’ll start with my ACT scores since they’re the reason I got accepted to the pre-vet program. If you’ll look on the screen I will show you my growth from 6th grade to now. In the 6th grade we all took the ACT Explore test and I got a score of 11 on the English section, 13 on the Math section, 12 on the Reading section, and 13 on the Science section. All of these scores were below the College Ready benchmark. Now let’s look at my Explore scores from my 8th grade year. I got a 13 on the English section, a 17 on the math section, a 16 on the reading section and an 18 on the Science section. I was at or above on all areas but Science. So, now look at my ACT Plan scores from the 10th grade. I was 1 or 2 points above college ready on all 4 tests. And now for the exciting news, my ACT scores from my senior year! I was anywhere from 4-12 points above college ready in all areas of the ACT!”

“Excellent Robert, we really are proud of you! So, tell us how you made such remarkable gains in your ACT scores.” “A couple of things really helped me improve my ACT scores. First, my teachers, the counselors, and my advisors talked with me and my parents when we met with the 5th grade and 8th grade transition committees. They told us that I should take rigorous courses and helped us decide which courses fit my desire to become a veterinarian. Here is a copy of my 7-year plan. You can see which courses we chose in the beginning and that I followed the advice of my committees most of the time. I had one year that I changed my mind about being a vet and thought I wanted to be in sports medicine and that’s why I had a few courses that weren’t on my original plan. I used Navigation 101 to study the differences between sports medicine and vet medicine and still wasn’t quite sure what I wanted to do. But, when I shadowed a guy in sports medicine, I knew for sure I wanted to be a vet. I decided I really like working with animals, not



pulled muscles! I also took advantage of several programs the school district purchased for high school students. I already mentioned Navigation 101. This program was incredibly valuable in helping me find colleges that offered really good vet med programs, plus a strong intramural sports program because I'm still really interested in playing sports and know I can't play on a traveling team. Nav 101 also helped me find scholarships because I found out how much vet school was going to cost! Kaplan and Grockit were really helped me improve my ACT scores. I just kept trying to improve my score to make sure I got a good scholarship offer and I did it! Thank you for buying those programs for us."

"Great Robert, you took several AP courses and most of your courses seem to fit your career aspirations. We are particularly pleased to see that you took many AP science courses to prepare you for your college experience, as well as Biology of Vet Sciences. And looking at your AP assessment scores, you will receive college credit at KSU for two of your science courses. That will certainly be a helpful start!" "I know I was pretty excited to see my AP scores. I will get college credit for 2 Science courses, 1 Math course, 2 History courses, and one English course. I also took a dual credit speech course and Spanish course. So, I'm basically starting college as a sophomore!" "We also have a letter from your advisor telling us that you maintained high scores on your Quality core assessments in all of your core courses. Your counselor also reports that according to the ENGAGE assessment, you have the motivation and determination to do well in college. Has anyone shared that information with you?" "Oh, sure, my advisors in middle school and high school explained the results to my parents and me each time I took the assessment. My mom says I've always been pretty focused and worked hard to achieve my goals." "Setting goals and hard work have really paid off for you and your parent's pocketbook!"

"OK, you've already talked a lot about your career path and your high school course selection certainly had a lot to do with being ready to tackle the college coursework needed to become a vet. So, now talk to us about how you know you are truly ready to begin your career path as a vet." "Not a problem! You're right I did take the right courses and that's helpful, but it was really my job shadowing and internship experiences that made a difference for me. Way back in the middle school I had my first opportunity to see a vet on the job when we studied career exploration. We got to choose 3 places to go visit and watch people working. I chose to visit a vet's office and I remember getting very excited and talking about being a vet nonstop after that. Then in high school, we were able to job shadow several people for a whole week and that's what really did it for me. I already told you I decided I didn't like sports medicine, but I LOVED shadowing the vet. In fact that experience, led to my internship the next year and finally my part-time job in that vet's office. Here is my job-shadow rubric, my internship rubric, and an actual letter of recommendation from my boss proving that I'm ready for this career field. Oh, and I also received a gold rating on the ACT WorkKeys assessment."

"Again, Robert you have a solid foundation for career readiness. Nice work! So, now let's turn to the citizenship piece. How do we know that you are ready to leave us and head out into the world as a good citizen?" "Well, I have several things to show you about my citizenship readiness too. First, my peers and teachers voted me as one of the ten finalists for both the



Integrity Award and the Commitment Award. I've also included several 8-Keys of Excellence rubrics from peers, teachers, my parents, and community members showing that I live by the 8-Keys wherever I go. And, here is my service record showing all of the activities I've participated in at school, at church, and in the community. As you can see a lot of my service had to do with working with animals, especially helping to chair the animal neutering campaign for the City of McPherson. I believe that was an invaluable experience for me both personally and later on professionally. I also helped plan and organize the Big Event my senior year, which taught me a lot about organization and working with community agencies. I was also involved in several sports and clubs at school and took on a leadership position with STUCO."

"Robert, it looks like you have not only met, but gone beyond our expectations for being College, Career, and Citizenship ready. You have proven to us, and we hope more importantly to yourself, that you are indeed ready to go to K-State and succeed in your pre-vet program. It looks like you'll be in school for quite awhile now as you move on to vet school after that. We are proud of your accomplishments and know that if you continue down the path you are on right now, you will most certainly be a positive role model for those following in your footsteps."



		Citizenship	College	Career
M H S	Courses	Advisory	Advisory CCR PreAP/AP Dual Credit Debate/For Humanities	Advisory CCR Health Sciences Teacher Ed Building Trades Auto
	Core Programs	8 Keys Big Event	Navigation 101 Kaplan Grokit	Navigation 101 Career Fair Job Shadowing Internships
	Intervention Programs		CCR Kaplan Grokit TCA Bullpup Scholars	CCR KeyTrain
	Assessments	8 Keys Service Hours	ACT ACT Plan PSAT AP Tests Quality Core	WorkKeys KeyTrain World of Work KUDER

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		Citizenship	College	Career
M M S	Courses	Advisory Guidance	Advisory PreAP Guidance Honors ELA Honors Science	Advisory Guidance
	Core Programs	8 Keys Service Projects Second Step	Navigation 101	Navigation 101 Career Fair Job Shadowing Kid to Work Day
	Intervention Programs	8 Keys lessons Pos Beh Support MTSS Behavior	Tier II Reading Tier II Math Bullpup Scholars	
	Assessments	8 Keys Service Hours	ACT EXPLORE AIMSweb Maze AIMSweb M-Cap QC (PreAP 8 th)	World of Work KUDER

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		Citizenship	College	Career
Pre K- 5	Core Programs	8 Keys Assembly Service Projects Second Step	Guided Reading Growing w/ Math Treasures Lit by Design	Kuder Galaxy Guidance
	Intervention Programs	8 Keys lessons Pos Beh Support MTSS Behavior	Tier II ELA Tier II Math Tier III ELA Tier III Math Bullpup Scholars	
	Assessments	8 Keys Rubrics Service Hours	AIMSweb Rcbm AIMSweb Maze AIMSweb M-Cap District Math GR Levels Get it Got it Go Creative Curr	

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McPherson Unified School District 418
Citizenship, College and Career Ready
C³



Approved By McPherson Board of Education
May 10, 2010

McPherson Unified School District 418
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Background

“Education then, beyond all other devices of human origin, is the great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance-wheel of the social machinery.” - Horace Mann

Throughout 2008 and the spring of 2009, the McPherson Board of Education held a series of retreats to define the district goals for the next two years. Three goals came from those sessions:

- 1. We will engage parents and the community in serious discussions about the education of our children.**
- 2. We will provide staff the training, knowledge, skills and resources necessary to assist children to grow to their fullest potential.**
- 3. We will work to hire and retain the best people to serve our students.**

To further these goals, the Board and administration held several more retreats in the late summer and early fall of 2009. The purpose of these retreats was to look at research, the goals adopted by the Board and to examine what we, collectively in USD 418, wanted for our students. The Board specifically looked at the research on student achievement and the role that a strong functioning board should be involved to ensure strong student learning. That research led the McPherson USD 418 Board of Education to establish not only the Board goals, but a deeper commitment to redesign our schools to ensure that all students, upon graduation, were citizenship, college and career ready. This was a non-negotiable position for the school board and one that through collaborative goal setting, our entire administrative staff supported.

The Board asked administration to start to put into practice a system that reached well beyond anything being asked for in the current NCLB system. They asked staff to think broadly and boldly in scaling new challenges. Thus, the work began to implement an entire new system of accountability in USD 418.

Early Work

Much of the early work in the fall of 2009 was on research. Research on structures, assessments and accountability that would ensure all of our students would be successful. This work was carried out in all buildings. First we created training in the MTSS system. Our district worked with the state as a pilot district for MTSS behavioral supports. We changed our Pre-K system from a centralized system to a neighborhood system. We researched, collaborated and visited other schools. What we found is that many districts and systems talked about raising standards, but we saw little REAL evidence that this was the case. Measures were low, expectations narrow and systems not designed well to achieve real results. That did not discourage our work. We simply wanted something better for our students. We insisted on multiple measurements of a student, high standards for our graduates and an accountability system that was second to none. As we worked on the system, it all started to come together. One focus – to have all our students be **Citizenship, College and Career Ready** when they walk across the stage at graduation.

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Imagine it's several weeks before graduation in the year 2015 and Robert is meeting with the graduation committee to showcase his experiences with McPherson USD 418 over the past thirteen years and to prove that he is ready to pursue post-secondary studies, ready to embark on a career path, and ready to be a positive and productive citizen...

“Good morning Robert, it's great to see you. We know that you have worked hard to become the person you are today and we're excited to see and hear about all of your accomplishments and experiences over the past thirteen years. Are you ready to share your portfolio with us?”

“You bet, I'm ready,” replied Robert. “Great, why don't you start with telling us about what you plan to do after high school.” “Well, I was accepted to most of the colleges I applied to including several out-of-state institutions. I just sent in my registration fee to Kansas State University so I can study in the pre-vet program. I hope to have my own veterinary clinic someday!” “Super Robert, we're proud of you! So, let's start there. Share with us how you know you are ready for college.”

“OK, we'll start with my ACT scores since they're the reason I got accepted to the pre-vet program. If you look on the screen, I will show you my growth from 6th grade to now. In the 6th grade we all took the ACT Explore test and I got a score of 11 on the English section, 13 on the Math section, 12 on the Reading section and 13 on the Science section. All of these scores were below the College Ready benchmark. Now let's look at my Explore scores from my 8th grade year. I got a 13 on the English section, a 17 on the math section, a 16 on the reading section and an 18 on the Science section. I was at or above on all areas except for Science. So, now look at my ACT Plan scores from the 10th grade. I was 1 or 2 points above college ready on all 4 tests. And now for the exciting news, my ACT scores from my senior year! I was anywhere from 4-12 points above college ready in all areas of the ACT!”

“Excellent Robert, we really are proud of you! So, tell us how you made such remarkable gains in your ACT scores.” “Well, my teachers, the counselors, and my advisors talked with me and my parents when we met with the 5th grade and 8th grade transition committees. They told us that I should take rigorous courses and helped us decide which courses fit my desire to become a veterinarian. Here is a copy of my 7-year plan. You can see which courses we chose in the beginning and that I followed the advice of my committees most of the time. I had one year that I changed my mind about being a vet and thought I wanted to be in sports medicine and that's why I had a few courses that weren't on my original plan. But, when I shadowed a guy in sports medicine, I knew for sure I wanted to be a vet. I decided I really liked working with animals, not pulled muscles!”

“Great Robert, you took several AP courses and most of your courses seem to fit your career aspirations. We are particularly pleased to see that you took many AP science courses to prepare you for your college experience, as well as Biology of Vet Sciences. And looking at your AP assessment scores, you will receive college credit at KSU for two of your science courses. That will certainly be a helpful start!” “I know I was pretty excited to see my AP scores. I will get college credit for 2 Science courses, 1 Math course, 2 History courses and one English course. I'm basically starting college as a sophomore!” “All that hard work really paid off for you and your parent's pocketbook!”

“OK, you've already talked a lot about your career path and that your high school course selection certainly had a lot to do with being ready to tackle the college coursework needed to become a vet. So, now talk to us about how you know you are truly ready to begin your career

path as a vet.” “Not a problem! You’re right I did take the right courses and that’s helpful, but it was really my job shadowing and internship experiences that made a difference for me. Way back in the middle school I had my first opportunity to see a vet on the job when we studied career exploration. We got to choose 3 places to go visit and watch people working. I chose to visit a vet’s office and I remember getting very excited and talking about being a vet nonstop after that. Then in high school, we were able to job shadow several people for a whole week and that’s what really did it for me. I already told you I decided I didn’t like sports medicine, but I LOVED shadowing the vet. In fact that experience, led to my internship the next year and finally my part-time job in that vet’s office. Here is my job-shadow rubric, my internship rubric, and an actual letter of recommendation from my boss proving that I’m ready for this career field. Oh, and I also received a platinum rating on the ACT WorkKeys assessment.”

“Again, Robert you have a solid foundation for career readiness. Nice work! So, now let’s turn to the citizenship piece. How do we know that you are ready to leave us and head out into the world as a good citizen?” “Well, I have several things to show you about my citizenship readiness too. First, my peers and teachers voted me as one of the ten finalists for both the Integrity Award and the Commitment Award. I’ve also included several 8-Keys of Excellence rubrics from peers, teachers, my parents, and community members showing that I live by the 8-Keys wherever I go. And, here is my service record showing all of the activities I’ve participated in at school, at church and in the community. As you can see a lot of my service had to do with working with animals, especially helping to chair the animal neutering campaign for the City of McPherson. I believe that was an invaluable experience for me both personally and later on professionally. I was also involved in several sports and clubs at school and took on a leadership position with STUCO.”

“Robert, it looks like you have not only met, but gone beyond our expectations for being Citizenship, College and Career ready. You have proven to us, and we hope more importantly to yourself, that you are indeed ready to go to K-State and succeed in your pre-vet program. It looks like you’ll be in school for quite awhile now as you move on to vet school after that. We are proud of your accomplishments and know that if you continue down the path you are on right now, you will most certainly be a positive role model for those following in your footsteps.”

McPherson Unified School District 418

Citizenship Ready

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“Every good citizen makes his country's honor his own, and cherishes it not only as precious but as sacred. He is willing to risk his life in its defense and is conscious that he gains protection while he gives it.” – Andrew Jackson

What is it?

Citizenship ready is segmented into two overlapping areas: (1) Character Education and (2) Service to the Community.

USD 418 is working with Learning Forum, a world leader “to make a difference for kids with great promise and limited resources, empowering them with greater self esteem, highly effective academic and learning skills, and a desire to achieve.” Learning Forum has developed the 8 Keys of Excellence. We are partnering with Learning Forum to use their 8 Keys of Excellence to measure character. The 8 Keys are:

1. **INTEGRITY**

Match behaviors with values

Conduct yourself in the state of authenticity, sincerity and wholeness that results when your values and behavior are aligned.

2. **FAILURE LEADS TO SUCCESS**

Learn from mistakes

Embrace the concept that failures provide you with the information you need to learn and grow so that you can succeed.

3. **SPEAK WITH GOOD PURPOSE**

Speak honestly and kindly

Speak in a positive sense with good intent, being responsible for honest and direct communication.

4. **THIS IS IT!**

Make the most of every moment

Focus your attention on the present moment, knowing that how much attention you pay to now determines the quality of your tomorrow.

5. **COMMITMENT**

Do whatever it takes

Follow your vision without wavering. Keep your promises to yourself and to others.

6. **OWNERSHIP**

Take responsibility for actions

Be accountable and responsible for what you feel, say and do. Be someone who can be counted on, someone who responds.

7. **FLEXIBILITY**

Be willing to do things differently

Recognize what's not working and be willing to change what you're doing to achieve your desired outcome.

8. **BALANCE**

Keep a healthy mind, body and spirit

Make positive choices. Experience a sense of well-being and fulfillment by focusing on your highest priorities.

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“Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.” – Abraham Lincoln

The following chart was designed in consultation with Learning Forum to measure the 8 Keys of Excellence each month, each year that a student is enrolled in McPherson schools. Students will have discussions with their teacher and/or advisor about each key.

Name: _____

I Live the 8 Keys of Excellence

Live your best life
 - I stay aware of what's meaningful and important in my life.
 - I make positive choices about how I spend my time.
 - I balance my activities to nurture my mind, body, and emotions.
My choices keep me happy.

Match behavior with values
 - I have positive personal values.
 - My words and actions reflect my values.
 - I know myself and I am true to who I am.
I do the right thing.

Be willing to do things differently
 - I recognize that things may not always work out as planned.
 - I am open to suggestion and change—I am not rigid.
 - I adapt to changing situations in order to move forward.
When something isn't working, I try something new.

Learn from mistakes
 - I view failures as feedback and opportunities for growth.
 - I take time to learn from mistakes and do better next time.
 - I am not fearful of making mistakes.
I grow by learning from my failures.

Take responsibility for actions
 - I think about the results of my choices.
 - I am responsible for my words and actions.
 - I don't blame others or make excuses for things say or do.
I "own" the choices I make and the results that follow.

Speak honestly and kindly
 - I am aware of the power of my words.
 - I speak positively—no bullying, no insults, no gossip.
 - I make sure my intention is good and my words are sincere.
I think before I speak and choose my words carefully.

Make your dreams happen
 - I have meaningful goals and believe in my ability to achieve them.
 - I take positive action to move forward toward my goals.
 - I persevere—giving up is not an option.
I give my best effort to achieve my goals.

Make the most of every moment
 - I focus my attention on what I'm doing right now.
 - I know I have the power to choose my attitude—good or bad.
 - I choose a positive attitude.
I focus on the present moment.

Growth Gauge
 middle and high school
 www.8keys.org
 © 2010 Quantum Learning Network

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“Everyone can be great because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't even have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve... You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.” - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Service to the Community - Whether someone lives in a large city or a small rural town, we feel it is important as a citizen to “serve” those communities. By partnering with churches, 4-H and other organizations, USD 418 proposes to have students who demonstrate “service” to their school and community every year that they are in school. This will involve that students are “serving” in at least one area yearly during their K-8 years and two areas yearly in their 9-12 years.

A few examples of serving include:

- Being a member of STUCO
- Taking a church youth group trip to help people in Mexico
- Peer Tutoring
- Helping with Meals on Wheels
- National Honor Society service goals

Summative Outcome: By the end of high school all students will be citizenship ready as measured by the Quantum 8 Keys of Excellence.

By the end of high school all students will be citizenship ready as measured by the checklist of service activities completed within the community and school.

By the end of high school all students will be citizenship ready as measured by an individual portfolio indicating success in meeting Quantum outcomes, service activities and other measures of being citizenship ready.

Benchmark Assessments: By the end of each grade all students will be on target to be citizenship ready as measured by the Quantum 8 Keys of Excellence.

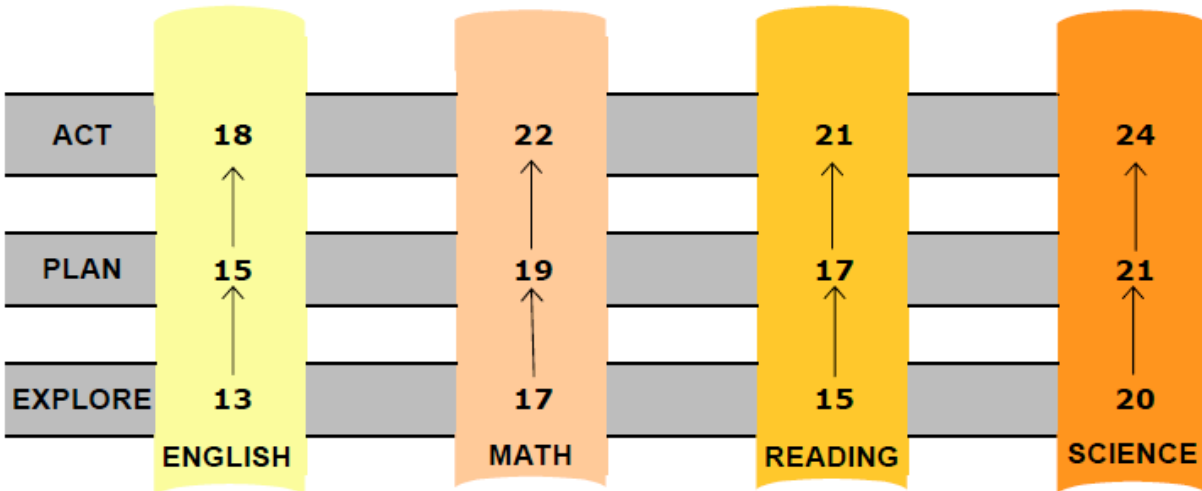
By the end of each grade, all students will be on target to be citizenship ready as measured by the checklist of service activities completed within the community and school.

McPherson Unified School District 418
College Ready
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“Only 23% of all 2009 graduates met all four ACT College Readiness Benchmarks, meaning that 77% were not adequately prepared academically for first-year college courses in English Composition, College Algebra, Social Sciences and Biology.” - ACT

What is it?

USD 418 is committed to having every student “college ready” when he/she walks across the stage at graduation. College Readiness refers to the level of student preparation needed to be ready to succeed—without remediation—in an introductory level course at a two or four-year institution, trade school or technical school. The EXPLORE (8th grade test) and PLAN College Readiness Benchmark Scores are based on the ACT College Readiness Benchmark Scores. They reflect students' expected growth from EXPLORE to PLAN to the ACT and assume sustained academic effort throughout high school.



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In the charts below, McPherson shows the percent of students ready for college as indicated by ACT. While we show growth from 8th grade to 10th and then 12th grade, we still have too many students who are going to college not ready for the academic rigors of post secondary education.

Percent of Students "College Ready" on Explore (8th Grade)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
English	69%	70%	64%	70%	69%
Math	36%	39%	36%	37%	50%
Reading	46%	38%	42%	36%	43%
Science	22%	17%	13%	21%	20%

Percent of Students "College Ready" on Plan (10th Grade)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
English	72%	72%	66%	45%	75%
Math	38%	36%	41%	34%	49%
Reading	52%	47%	53%	36%	51%
Science	24%	22%	23%	21%	22%

Percent of Students "College Ready" on ACT (12th Grade)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
English	NA	82%	78%	76%	74%
Math	NA	52%	59%	61%	58%
Reading	NA	59%	67%	64%	63%
Science	NA	33%	35%	40%	34%

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Summative Outcome: By the end of high school all students will be ready to attend a post secondary institution in Kansas as measured by the ACT exam.

By the end of high school all students who take Advanced Placement exams, will be ready to attend a post secondary institution in Kansas as measured by the College Board through the Advanced Placement exams.

By the end of high school all students will be ready to attend post secondary institution in Kansas as measured by an individual portfolio indicating post secondary institution exploration, visits, applications and other college ready information.

Benchmark Assessments: By the end of 10th grade all students will be on target to be ready to attend a post secondary institution in Kansas as measured by the ACT PLAN exam.

By the end of 8th grade all students will be on target to be ready to attend a post secondary institution in Kansas as measured by the ACT EXPLORE exam.

Formative Assessments: By the end of each course of study in the following courses, all students will be on target to be ready to attend a post secondary institution in Kansas as measured by the ACT Quality Core end of course exams:

English 9 and Pre-AP English 9
English 10 and Pre-AP English 10
English 11 and AP Comp and Lit
Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II and
Pre-AP Pre-Calc
Biology and Pre-AP Biology
Chemistry and Pre-AP Chemistry

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“Developing a skilled workforce—one that has the ability to quickly adapt to new and changing workforce demands—is a primary focus of the career and technical education programs offered through the nation's secondary and postsecondary public schools. Identifying, quantifying, and assessing those skills necessary to prepare the workforce is critical to career and technical education.” - Jan Bray, Executive Director of The Association for Career and Technical Education

What is it?

Being career ready involves having students explore their interests with systems such as KUDER and EXPLORE and PLAN. From there, students will be provided job shadowing, internships and work-study directly tied to their career interest. Finally, through the WorkKeys system, all students will gain a certificate, noting their success in being ready for careers in Kansas and across the United States.

It is not enough to be a good citizen and to be college ready. We want to prepare students to have the skills necessary to be good workers and have a vibrant career. Many of the skills and attributes gained in our citizenship and college domain will assist students in being career ready, but we propose to partner with the Workforce Centers of Kansas, KansasWorks, Kansas Career Pipeline, the KUDER system and the National Career Readiness Network, to produce students that have the necessary skills to have a quality work career in Kansas.



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Summative Outcome: By the end of high school all students will be career and workforce ready (bronze level or above) as measured by the Kansas WorkReady system and ACT WorkKeys.

By the end of high school all students will be career and workforce ready as measured by the KUDER system.

By the end of high school all students will be career and workforce ready as measured by an individual portfolio indicating career exploration, job shadowing, internships, work experience and other career information.

Benchmark Assessments: By the end of 10th grade all students will be on target to be career and workforce ready as measured by the ACT PLAN exam.

By the end of 9th grade all students will be on target to be career and workforce ready (bronze level or above) as measured by the Kansas WorkReady system and ACT WorkKeys.

By the end of 8th grade all students will be on target to be career and workforce ready measured by the ACT EXPLORE exam.

Formative Assessments: By the end of each grade, students will be on target to be career and workforce ready as measured by the KUDER system for that grade level.

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“We don't want to improve one thing 100%. We want to improve 100 things 1%” -

Timeline for Implementation
Phase I

To be accomplished by the start of school 2010:

1. MMS and MHS will provide to the Board of Education a plan to enhance relationships. This may include advisory periods, looping of core teachers, seminar periods, professional learning communities, changing parent/teacher conferences, restructuring SPED and other research based relationship programs. This will be reported to the Board of Education no later than April 2010.
2. MMS and MHS will provide to the Board of Education a plan to change student and course schedules to reflect a priority of establishing relationships rather than the current approach of maximizing electives. This would ensure proper scheduling of students in core and elective courses as determined by assessments and career advising. This will be reported to the Board of Education no later than April 2010.
3. Staff will provide to the Board of Education a plan to evaluate college and career readiness of students. This may include additional Explore testing, Kuder and WorkKey assessments. Total cost for additional testing may be approximately \$21,500. This will be reported to the Board of Education no later than April 2010. We will request State Board of Education assistance with the cost in late spring.
4. The middle and elementary schools will provide to the Board of Education a plan that shows how the MTSS process, both academically and behaviorally, will be implemented in their school. This will be reported to the Board of Education no later than May 2010.
5. Pilot work will be done with ACT QualityCore in selected courses at MHS and MMS.
6. Staff will present a plan to the State Board of Education detailing the McPherson USD 418 plan to have students citizenship, college and career ready upon graduation. The initial report will be given to the local Board of Education no later than May 2010. Our plan will ask for relaxation of using state assessments for the purpose of AYP and financial assistance for new assessments. This will be reported to the State Board of Education no later than July 2010.
7. Work this summer in teams to align curriculum with the College Readiness Standards and the WorkKey standards from ACT.
8. Establish in all schools a “25 book campaign” that expects all students to read 25 fiction and non-fiction books across the curriculum each year.
9. Have all sixth graders take the ACT Explore and use the results to plan for college and careers. This will serve as a pre-test and growth model for the 8th grade Explore exam.

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Phase II

During the school term 2010-11, the district will:

1. Start using QualityCore from ACT in our core curriculum at MHS.
2. Study other assessments at the elementary level, which may replace the state assessments.
3. Establish internships, job shadowing, career days and other items to assist students in choosing a career path.
4. Add or delete courses at MMS and MHS needed to ensure college, career and citizenship readiness.
5. Study and research various school year schedules to maximize learning.
6. Study and research portfolio outcomes at elementary, middle and high school levels.
7. Change the mathematics curriculum so that more students complete Algebra I or above successfully by the end of eighth grade.
8. Take immediate steps to enroll all students who declare that they are going to college in Pre-AP English, Literature and Social Studies courses at the middle school.
9. Continue and expand the AVID class to include sixth graders.
10. Consider using summer school to accelerate learning, especially in math and science at the middle and high schools.
11. Change Achievement Lab at the middle school to support any student who drops down to a “C” or lower in an academic class.
12. At the middle school, establish better formative assessment tied directly to summary measures such as ACT Explore and ACT Workkeys.
13. Establish an AP Statistics course at the high school.
14. Change the mathematics curriculum at the high school so that 80% of students complete College Algebra, AP Stats or a Calculus course successfully by the graduation.
15. Establish a Pre-AP Biology course to compliment the Pre-AP Chemistry course.
16. Establish career fairs at the high school.
17. Establish job shadowing experiences and mentorships for every student at the MHS.
18. Change Help Room to support any student who drops down to a “C” or lower in an academic class.