

General Information

Public Charter School Name	Frayser Community Schools: Westside Middle School
Point of Contact's Name	Dr. Bobby White
Point of Contact's Title	Founder and CEO

Eligible School	School Type	Eligibility Criteria
Westside Middle School	<input type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Charter <input type="checkbox"/> Virtual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two Years of "F" letter grade <input type="checkbox"/> Dropped from a "D" to an "F" letter grade

Name of School Leader/Principal	Years as Principal at Eligible School	Total Years of Experience as a Principal
Dr. LaWanda M. Clark	1	6

Strategic Planning

What are the academic priorities for the eligible school? How were these priorities determined?

<p>Westside Middle School has set academic priorities to tackle historical challenges in student performance, in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science and social studies where recent TCAP assessments revealed scores below expected standards.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving Academic Performance: The school's main goal is to enhance student achievement in ELA through targeted interventions and support programs. By focusing on data-driven decision-making and personalized instructional strategies, Westside aims to increase the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations. 2. Hiring, Retaining, and Developing Highly Qualified Teachers: Acknowledging that effective teaching is vital for success, Westside prioritizes the hiring and retention of qualified educators. The school allocates resources for competitive salaries and ongoing professional development, ensuring educators receive the necessary training to foster student engagement and success. 3. Purchasing High-Quality Instructional Materials: Acquiring high-quality instructional resources aligned with state standards is essential. The goal is to provide teachers with effective materials, including updated textbooks and digital resources, that cater to diverse learning needs and promote mastery of content. 4. Implementing Effective Programming: Westside is committed to establishing supportive programs like after-school tutoring and enrichment opportunities. These initiatives are designed to reinforce classroom instruction and assist struggling students.
--

The academic priorities of Westside Middle School are established through a thorough needs assessment that analyzes performance data, stakeholder input, alignment with educational standards, resource availability, and strategic planning, including continuous professional development and ongoing evaluation to ensure improvement.

What specific strategies have been implemented to improve academic performance at the eligible school? How and when is performance of the eligible school analyzed?

Westside Middle School is committed to enhancing student performance in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies through several prioritizing strategies.

1. **Targeted Instruction:** Implementing differentiated instruction is crucial. Strategies such as smaller class sizes or targeted interventions for struggling students provide personalized support tailored to individual needs.
2. **Curriculum Alignment:** It is essential to align the curriculums for ELA, math, science, and social studies with state standards and best practices. This may include revising instructional materials and integrating evidence-based methods to promote academic development across all subjects.
3. **Teacher Hiring, Retention, and Development:** Recruiting qualified educators passionate about ELA, math, science, and social studies is vital. A comprehensive onboarding process and mentorship can support new teachers. Retaining experienced educators through competitive salaries, professional development, and a positive environment is equally important.
4. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Utilizing assessment data to inform instruction allows teachers to identify students needing additional support and adjust teaching methods accordingly.
5. **Family and Community Engagement:** Engaging families in education is crucial. Workshops can help parents support their children's literacy, numeracy, and knowledge of science and social studies, fostering a strong home-school connection.
6. **After-School Programs and Tutoring:** Establishing after-school programs focusing on ELA, math, science, and social studies provides additional specialized support for students needing extra help.
7. **Monitoring and Accountability:** Setting clear performance goals and assessing student progress helps hold the school accountable for improvements. Encouraging a culture of continuous improvement among staff and students is essential.

Through these strategies, coupled with regular performance analysis, Westside Middle School strives to ensure that all students achieve grade-level expectations and succeed academically across all subjects.

Finance

How has TISA funding been used to drive progress toward the eligible school's academic priorities?

The Tennessee Investment School Account (TISA) funding has been pivotal in advancing Westside Middle School's academic priorities, particularly in enhancing student performance, hiring and retaining effective teachers, and acquiring high-quality instructional resources.

To boost the number of students meeting and exceeding TCAP assessment expectations by 10%, TISA funding has been allocated for targeted programs. This includes specialized tutoring, after-school enrichment opportunities, and academic interventions designed to assist struggling students. By providing these additional resources, the school aims to close achievement gaps and improve overall student performance.

Recognizing the role of highly effective certified teachers in student success, TISA funding has significantly improved recruitment efforts. This funding supports competitive salary packages and benefits to attract talented educators. Job fairs and strategic initiatives are employed to showcase teaching opportunities at Westside. Furthermore, ongoing professional development is funded to ensure teachers receive training that enhances their instructional strategies and fosters professional growth, thus creating a positive work environment that aids in retention.

In addition, TISA funding has facilitated the acquisition of high-quality curriculum materials and supplemental resources that align with state standards and best practices. These resources empower teachers to deliver engaging lessons and equip students with the necessary tools for academic success.

Through the strategic utilization of TISA funding, Westside Middle School is diligently working toward its academic priorities, fostering a supportive environment that promotes student achievement and ensuring every learner has the resources to excel. This comprehensive approach aims not only to boost academic performance but also to instill a culture of continuous improvement and excellence within the school.

In what ways has the spending strategy been adjusted for the eligible school? How is the return on investment measured for these spending strategies?

Westside Middle School has revised its spending strategy to boost student achievement by reallocating funds toward initiatives that address identified needs, particularly in instructional interventions and academic support.

1. **Increased Funding for Instructional Interventions:** Recognizing the need for additional support, the school has allocated more funds to enhance instructional interventions. This effort includes implementing evidence-based practices designed to assist students requiring targeted help in core subjects.

2. Expanded After-School Tutoring Programs: To further support students, Westside has invested in after-school tutoring programs aimed at reinforcing classroom learning. These programs provide personalized assistance to students who need extra help, focusing on improving performance and ensuring all learners meet grade-level expectations.

3. Professional Development for Teachers: Understanding that effective teaching is vital for student success, the school has prioritized professional development. Investments in training sessions, workshops, and collaborative planning time enhance teachers' instructional strategies, equipping them to better support diverse learners.

To measure the return on investment (ROI) for these strategies, Westside employs various evaluation methods:

- Data Analysis: The school tracks student performance data before and after implementing programs, comparing assessment scores and academic progress to gauge intervention impact.
- Feedback Mechanisms: Surveys from teachers, students, and parents provide qualitative data on initiative effectiveness, highlighting areas for improvement.
- Longitudinal Tracking: Monitoring student progress over time allows the school to evaluate the sustainability of improvements and the long-term effectiveness of its funding strategies.

Through these focused adjustments and evaluations, Westside Middle School aims to ensure that investments lead to positive educational outcomes, enhancing overall student support and achievement.

What role does the school leader/principal play in budgeting decisions for the eligible school?

The role of the school leader in budgeting decisions at Westside Middle School is essential for effectively allocating resources to enhance educational outcomes. The principal, alongside the Chief Financial Officer and the Director of Grants, oversees the budgeting process to align financial resources with the school's mission, goals, and strategic priorities.

The principal analyzes student performance data to identify areas that require additional support or resources. This analysis guides budget priorities, ensuring that funding is directed toward programs and initiatives with the greatest impact on student achievement.

Engaging with stakeholders—such as teachers, students, and families—is also a critical aspect of this process. By fostering open communication, the school leader gains insight into the community's needs, such as requests for new materials, technology upgrades, or extracurricular activities. This collaborative approach results in a more inclusive budget that reflects the voices of those affected by funding decisions.

Additionally, the principal ensures compliance with district and state guidelines by allocating funds appropriately and transparently. Expenditures are monitored throughout the year to align the budget with actual spending, making adjustments as necessary.

Moreover, the school leader advocates for adequate funding by presenting budget proposals to district officials, emphasizing the school's unique needs and goals. Together with the grant manager, they seek additional funding sources, such as grants or community partnerships, to supplement the budget.

In summary, the principal at Westside Middle School plays a pivotal role in budgeting by assessing needs, engaging stakeholders, ensuring compliance, and advocating for resources, ultimately supporting the mission to provide a high-quality education for all students.

Staffing

Staffing is often the largest spending category. How are funds used to support the recruitment and retention of the most effective educators and leaders at the eligible school?

At Westside Middle School, staffing constitutes the largest category of spending, making strategic fund allocation vital for recruiting and retaining effective educators.

1. **Competitive Salaries and Benefits:** To attract qualified candidates, the school allocates funds for competitive salaries and a comprehensive benefits package. By offering compensation that aligns with or exceeds market rates, Westside Middle School becomes a desirable option for potential educators.
2. **Recruitment Initiatives:** Funds are invested in targeted recruitment efforts, including job fairs, partnerships with local universities, and online recruitment platforms. These initiatives help the school reach a diverse candidate pool and emphasize the advantages of teaching at Westside.
3. **Comprehensive Onboarding Programs:** Once teachers are hired, resources are dedicated to thorough onboarding programs. These programs provide new educators with essential training and support to acclimate to the school culture and curriculum expectations, enabling a smooth transition.
4. **Professional Development:** Ongoing professional development is a priority for retaining effective educators. Westside allocates funds for workshops, coaching, and training opportunities focusing on instructional strategies, classroom management, and leadership development. This investment fosters continuous growth and supports teachers in their roles.
5. **Mentorship Programs:** Funding is also directed toward mentorship initiatives, pairing new teachers with experienced staff. This support system enhances collaboration, improves teaching practices, and assists with talent retention.

6. Positive Work Environment: Finally, Westside invests in creating a positive work atmosphere that values staff input and fosters community. Regular feedback and recognition programs ensure educators feel appreciated and engaged.

Through these strategic investments, Westside Middle School effectively supports the recruitment and retention of high-quality educators, fostering a strong academic environment for students.

Within the last 2-3 years, what leadership changes have been made, if any, at the eligible school? What led to these changes?

In the past two years, Westside Middle School has experienced significant leadership changes as it transitioned from three separate schools to one unified institution. This restructuring aimed to retain top talent and establish a cohesive leadership framework to enhance decision-making and operational efficiency.

Initially, the school implemented a four-person leadership arrangement, dividing responsibilities into special education, parent relations, student discipline, and academics. While this structure aimed to address each area comprehensively, it ultimately proved expensive and ineffective. The fractured leadership resulted in unclear decision-making and inconsistent strategy implementation, hindering the school's progress.

Recognizing these challenges, Westside transitioned to a more traditional model with one principal responsible for all decisions and their implementation. This streamlined approach fosters accountability and coherence, allowing for decisive action and a unified vision for the school's direction.

Additionally, an overarching layer of leadership was established to address charter-related issues, finance, human resources, and broader organizational decisions. Importantly, this layer operates with minimal interference in day-to-day school operations, enabling the principal to focus on immediate educational needs.

The results of this new model are already evident, with data indicating positive trends in student discipline, attendance, and academic performance. Common assessment results show improvement, reflecting the effectiveness of a simplified leadership structure. Overall, these changes have positioned Westside Middle School for greater success and a more cohesive educational environment, promoting both student achievement and well-being.

Instruction

In what ways does school leadership ensure that all components of the eligible school's instructional program—curriculum, materials, interventions, and assessments—work together to advance grade level expectations for all students, as set by Tennessee's academic standards?

Leadership promotes collaborative planning among teachers, allowing for the alignment of curriculum with state standards. Regular meetings facilitate the sharing of best practices and integration of diverse instructional strategies. Professional development plays a crucial role, equipping educators with the latest instructional methods and a thorough understanding of academic standards through workshops and coaching.

Data-driven decision-making is another key strategy. By analyzing student performance data, school leaders can identify areas for improvement and refine instructional practices and interventions to meet individual student needs. Developing a clear curriculum map ensures that lessons, materials, and assessments are aligned with grade-level expectations, guiding teachers in their instructional planning.

Resource allocation is vital; providing instructional materials that support curriculum goals empowers teachers to deliver lessons effectively. Additionally, implementing tiered intervention systems allows for tailored support to students who require additional help, with leadership monitoring the effectiveness of these interventions.

Regular use of formative and summative assessments helps measure student progress against grade-level expectations, enabling school leaders to make necessary instructional adjustments. Finally, fostering family and community engagement reinforces learning goals and provides additional support for students.

Through these strategies, school leadership at Westside Middle School creates a cohesive instructional program that effectively advances grade-level expectations for all students in line with Tennessee academic standards.

School Culture & Community

How are teachers, students, and families involved in the decision-making for the eligible school, what types of decisions can these stakeholders impact, and what changes have been made as a result of their input?

At Westside Middle School, teacher and family involvement in the decision-making process is facilitated through the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). This council serves as a platform for parents to collaborate with school leaders and educators, fostering open communication and engagement in school affairs.

Teachers actively participate in PAC meetings, where they share insights on academic programs, student needs, and classroom experiences. This collaboration allows for dialogue on important issues, such as curriculum development, school policies, and resource allocation. By working together, teachers and families can collectively address challenges and strategize solutions aimed at enhancing student performance and overall school climate.

Family members contribute valuable perspectives, providing feedback on school initiatives and sharing concerns relevant to their children's education. Their input has led to

significant changes, particularly in addressing student well-being and academic achievement. For instance, as a direct result of discussions within the PAC, Westside Middle School implemented new mental health resources, including counseling services and social-emotional learning programs. These initiatives aim to support students' emotional and psychological needs, fostering a healthier school environment conducive to academic success.

Additionally, parent feedback has influenced the development of academic support programs, such as after-school tutoring and enrichment activities tailored to students who need extra help in their studies.

Furthermore, partnerships with community organizations, such as Agape and Communities in School, enhances support for students and families. These collaborations facilitate access to additional resources, mentorship programs, and enrichment opportunities, reinforcing the school's commitment to holistic student development. Through the involvement of teachers, families, and community partners in the PAC, Westside Middle School creates a partnership that emphasizes shared responsibility in decision-making, leading to meaningful changes that enhance both student welfare and academic performance.

Additional Information

Any additional evidence (i.e., context, qualitative data, quantitative data) to provide the State Board prior to the hearing?

- Over the past 4 to 5 years, Westside Middle School has navigated leadership changes that impacted teacher retention and school culture. To stabilize and unify leadership, we established a single principal structure, supported by a turnaround consultant and the formal network director of curriculum instruction, who now serves as our current school leader. This strategic shift fosters a strong school community committed to success and achievement for all stakeholders.
- As of February 2026, Westside Middle School is making significant progress, both academically and behaviorally. Office referrals have decreased dramatically from 526 in 2025 to 301 this year. Additionally, we have achieved 120 consecutive days without fights, indicating positive changes in our school culture. Notably, we ended the 2024-2025 school year with 98 out-of-school suspensions, and as of February 2026, we have reduced this number to just 57.
- Our goal for chronic absenteeism was set at 65%. Initially approaching this target at 63%, we have further improved to an impressive 54.2%. This reduction underscores our commitment to creating a safe and engaging environment for students. Our attendance rate has also risen to 85%, supported by incentives and structured parental support aimed at strengthening our academic programs.

- Academically, our beginning-of-year Mastery View Predictive Assessment indicates we are on track to increase proficiency in ELA, math, science, and social studies by at least 10%. Daily intervention and enrichment periods, along with after-school tutoring, bolster student learning. Teachers are making real-time instructional adjustments based on data, supported by our Director of Curriculum and Instruction and school principal.
- Parental involvement remains a priority. Parents actively engage in our school improvement planning process and parent advisory council, providing valuable input on academics, behavior, and funding. Partnering with community organizations and implementing a comprehensive guidance program enhances our social-emotional learning resources for teachers, students, and families.