



Smart's Mill Middle School
Loudoun County Public Schools
Comprehensive Needs Assessment - Executive Summary
[LCPS School Profile](#)
[Virginia School Quality Profile](#)
[LCPS Strategic Plan 2023-2027](#)

School Improvement Team:

(Your school improvement team should consist of a variety of stakeholders within your school community including parents)

Name	Position
WILLIAM WALDMAN	PRINCIPAL
KELLY SMYTH	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
JOE GUINTHER	ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
KERRI COY	DEAN
NATHAN GOUGH	DEAN
JODI REEVE	DEAN
JESSE AYCOCK	DEAN (SPED)
SHEILA STEEN	DIVISION, INSTRUCTIONAL FACILITATOR
SARAH CASSETTE	COUNSELOR
ALEXIS CANNON	COUNSELOR
ALEXSIS THOMPSON	COUNSELOR
KATRINA SMITH	COUNSELOR
CAITLIN RAABE/ANDREA KLING	SALT (MATHEMATICS)
BAILEY WASHINGTON	SALT (ENGLISH.LANGUAGE ARTS)
JASON SHANER	SALT (HISTORY/SS)
JAMIE SHANER	SALT (SCIENCE)

ANNE NICKERSON	SALT (SPED)
ALLISON RICHARDSON	SALT (EL)
MICHAELA CAUSEY	SIP COORDINATOR

Instructional Overview

Provide descriptive information related to the curriculum, instructional programs, professional learning and existing interventions utilizing a Response to Intervention approach to support the academic needs of students.

Provide explicit connections to your school's instructional overview and how it supports and aligns with GOAL 1: Empowered Students of the LCPS Strategic Plan and Goal 2.1 Offer high-quality Ongoing Growth and Development available to all staff; 2.2 Develop dedicated resources to improve Professional Collaboration across schools and the division

Secondary English and Reading:

Curriculum and Instruction: Secondary English and Reading instruction is grounded in the science of reading and utilizes evidence-based literacy practices that reflect three of the five pillars of literacy: fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, in addition to writing. Instruction across all areas of literacy is explicit and systematic and aligns with the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs). The purpose of curriculum and instruction is to develop knowledgeable readers, writers, speakers, and thinkers. *Resources:* All classrooms are provided with state-approved resources consistent with the expectations of the Virginia Literacy Act and VDOE recommendations. Resources include digital content such as No Red Ink, Newsela, and Schoology as well as authentic literature and informational texts. *Professional Learning:* Secondary teachers and reading specialists engage in continuous professional development to support the implementation of best practices for literacy instruction in classrooms and intervention settings. *Intervention and Progress Monitoring:* Each student's literacy progress is monitored through multiple data points including MAP, SOLs, and IReady as well as formative assessments. Students who have identified areas of need are provided with differentiated classroom instruction and/or evidence-based intervention. Using the LCPS decision trees as guidance, tiered supports are provided to students that align with expectations outlined in the Virginia Literacy Act.

At Smart's Mill Middle School, English, reading and writing instruction is a multi-faceted approach to student academic, social, and emotional learning. Below is a list of some of our practices to support the needs of all students in English

- We have instituted a model of Differentiated Instruction by creating heterogeneous classes in all instructional settings. We have integrated all students into all instructional settings.
- To continue our work with Differentiated Instruction we have implemented an instructional routine in all classes that facilitates the use of formative assessments to implement Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III instruction during each instructional block.
- We utilize a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to identify student needs, provide supports, and then monitor those supports.
- We utilize data to identify student strengths and areas of need by using MAP and other assessments to provide support in the classroom and through the use of programs like SAVVIS and LEXIA
- Teachers utilize frequent feedback to students through the use of formative assessments prior to summative assessments. This information is documented in both Schoology and in the gradebook of record.

- We continue to utilize PLC/CLTs within the instructional day to ensure that curriculum, instruction, and assessment is aligned across each content area.
- Within the CLTs, teachers collaborate to identify students that require additional interventions, develop plans for those students and then monitor those interventions.
- Also included within the instructional day are Interdisciplinary Teams. The focus of these teams is to identify through-lines of students that are requiring support across several different disciplines.
- We continually offer professional development for staff to increase their knowledge of how different students learn and tools to provide appropriate support for these students. We have had PD on the attributes and best practices for English Learners, Gifted students, and students with IEPs.
- To support students in Reading we utilize strategies from FOLI and Orton Gillingham.
- To support students in our Language Arts classes, we utilize LEXIA
- Throughout the school we utilize PL strategies like Station Rotation, Flipped Classrooms, and Playlists to provide students with the opportunity to delve deeper into the curriculum through the increase in authentic activities and assessments and a greater degree of student voice and choice.
- We have created classes for all sixth grade students that are designed to increase their proficiency in Reading (Reading Enrichment and Discovery/READ).
- We have created classes based on student needs in grades 6, 7 and 8 to support students in Reading.
- We focus our attention on student reflection and ownership of their learning by implementing Student Led Conferences
- Teachers utilize a standard form of objectives that identify the behavior, condition, and criteria for both process and products. All teachers also include an agenda for each lesson.
- Each quarter the administration meets with each CLT to conduct an "Administrative Debrief". During this meeting members of the administrative team meet with each CLT to discuss planning, pacing, curriculum, instruction, and programs in place to support students.

Math: LCPS Math Curriculum and instruction uses a [math workshop structure](#) and focuses on student-centered learning activities that include daily number sense routines and reflection. Teachers plan small-group targeted instruction, varying the groups regularly. Instruction prioritizes hands-on, inquiry-based learning focusing on conceptual understanding using representations and models/manipulatives. Instruction also emphasizes the implementation of the Process Goals and the 5Cs through student collaboration, reasoning, communicating, making connections, and problem-solving. Students who have identified areas of need are provided with differentiated classroom instruction and/or explicitly taught, evidenced-based intervention.

At Smart's Mill Middle School, Mathematics instruction is a multifaceted approach to student academic, social, and emotional learning. Below is a list of some of our practices to support the needs of all students in English

- We have instituted a model of Differentiated Instruction by creating heterogeneous classes in all instructional settings. We have integrated all students into all instructional settings.
- To continue our work with Differentiated Instruction we have implemented an instructional routine in all classes that facilitates the use of formative assessments to implement Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III instruction during each instructional block.
- We utilize a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to identify student needs, provide supports, and then monitor those supports.
- We utilize data to identify student strengths and areas of need by using MAP and other assessments to provide support in the classroom and through the use of programs like iReady,, BRIDGES, and MathSpace.
- Teachers utilize frequent feedback to students through the use of formative assessments prior to summative assessments. This information is documented in both Schoology and in the gradebook of record.
- We continue to utilize PLC/CLTs within the instructional day to ensure that curriculum, instruction, and assessment is aligned across each content area.

- Within the CLTs, teachers collaborate to identify students that require additional interventions, develop plans for those students and then monitor those interventions.
- Within the Mathematics department we are implementing across all grade levels the use of the “Workshop” model. Mathematics will also use MathSpace this year as a math support for data collection in place of (or in addition to) BRIDGES and ALEKS.
- Throughout the school we utilize PL strategies like Station Rotation, Flipped Classrooms, and Playlists to provide students with the opportunity to delve deeper into the curriculum through the increase in authentic activities and assessments and a greater degree of student voice and choice.
- We have created classes for all sixth grade students that are designed to increase their proficiency in Mathematics (Math Enrichment Every Day/MEED)
- We have created classes based on student needs in grades 6, 7 and 8 to support students in Math.
- Teachers utilize a standard form of objectives that identify the behavior, condition, and criteria for both process and products. All teachers also include an agenda for each lesson.
- Each quarter the administration meets with each CLT to conduct an “Administrative Debrief”. During this meeting members of the administrative team meet with each CLT to discuss planning, pacing, curriculum, instruction, and programs in place to support students.

Science: LCPS science programs are designed to actively engage students in the process of science and use reasoning processes that build scientific thinking. These programs teach students to know, use, and interpret scientific explanations of the natural world; to generate and evaluate scientific evidence and explanations; to understand the nature and development of scientific knowledge; and to participate productively in scientific practices and discourse.

At Smart’s Mill Middle School, Science is a multi-faceted approach to student academic, social, and emotional learning. Below is a list of some of our practices to support the needs of all students in English. In addition to the items implemented throughout the school. . .

- Science classrooms utilize inquiry-based learning, the use of technology and enrichment in Science through our Level Up program and participation in the “You Be the Chemist Challenge.”
- To support literacy across the curriculum, Science was provided with the SDBQ which they will use to create a literacy goal for the 2024-2025 school year.
- We focus our attention on student reflection and ownership of their learning by implementing Student Led Conferences
- Teachers utilize a standard form of objectives that identify the behavior, condition, and criteria for both process and products. All teachers also include an agenda for each lesson.
- Each quarter the administration meets with each CLT to conduct an “Administrative Debrief”. During this meeting members of the administrative team meet with each CLT to discuss planning, pacing, curriculum, instruction, and programs in place to support students.

Social Sciences & Global Studies: Social Science and Global Studies instruction in LCPS is grounded in a culturally responsive approach to the content in a way that elevates multiple perspectives. Students are empowered through authentic, inquiry-based learning experiences that promote students' development of historical thinking skills and provide opportunities to make their thinking visible. Students demonstrate their understanding, knowledge and skills through authentic performance tasks.

At Smart’s Mill Middle School, History and Social Science is a multi-faceted approach to student academic, social, and emotional learning. Below is a list of some of our practices to support the needs of all students.

- To support literacy across the curriculum, Science was provided with the SDBQ which they will use to create a literacy goal for the 2024-2025 school year.
- We focus our attention on student reflection and ownership of their learning by implementing Student Led Conferences

- Teachers utilize a standard form of objectives that identify the behavior, condition, and criteria for both process and products. All teachers also include an agenda for each lesson.
- Each quarter the administration meets with each CLT to conduct an “Administrative Debrief”. During this meeting members of the administrative team meet with each CLT to discuss planning, pacing, curriculum, instruction, and programs in place to support students.
- Within the History/Social Sciences department the teachers routinely use authentic Performance Assessments to create a greater understanding of the content.
- The interdisciplinary teams meet weekly to discuss students and to create interdisciplinary connections within lessons and assessments.
- Throughout the school we utilize PL strategies like Station Rotation, Flipped Classrooms, and Playlists to provide students with the opportunity to delve deeper into the curriculum through the increase in authentic activities and assessments and a greater degree of student voice and choice.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Academic Achievement

A summary providing evidence of analysis of trends, patterns, proficiency, and growth in student academic achievement data. Provide a clear connection between outcomes and contributing factors.

At the conclusion of the state testing cycle, Smart’s Mill showed growth in the majority of content areas and subgroups. Grade 6 reading passed or showed growth in all subgroups except for black students. Grade 6 mathematics passed or showed growth in all subgroups. Grade 7 reading passed or showed growth in all subgroups except for black and hispanic students. Grade 7 mathematics passed or showed growth in all subgroups except for our Asian population. Grade 8 mathematics and reading students with disabilities, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students did not show growth. Civics and Economics classes passed or showed growth in all subgroups except for students with disabilities. For Algebra I and Geometry all subgroups showed growth and had a 100% and 97% pass rate respectively.

We are continually seeking feedback and reflecting on any needs for refinement of current structures and processes so that we can better ensure that we provide a learning environment where students and staff thrive. Our processes and systems exist to promote and check that we remain proactive and responsive to meet the unique and sometimes, changing, needs of our population. Collaboration within admin, school leadership, grade level, content, grade level content, and teams within grades have set meetings weekly to assess current reality and plan for meaningful responses. The school continues to partner with Central Office departments for guidance and support.

At the conclusion of our Critical Needs Assessment, it was noted that a lack of prior knowledge and student literacy and numeracy levels significantly impact academic achievement. We are addressing these needs through the creation of a master schedule that provides opportunities for students to build proficiency during the school day, the implementation of a lesson routine that focuses on the use of formative assessments to drive instruction, and the use of a lesson planning model that focuses on meeting the varied needs of students while promoting collaboration amongst staff.

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Student Engagement

A summary of trends, patterns, strengths and areas for growth in student engagement data, including attendance, discipline, perceptual data, and graduation data (HS only).

Chronic absenteeism decreased from 21 to 14. This took us from a Level 2 during the 2022-2023 school year to a Level 1 during the 2024-2025 school year. We will continue to work with families to decrease the number of students identified

as chronically absent.

Extended Learning and Engagement Opportunities

Provide information to describe extended learning and engagement opportunities for students, families, and community including what events you have planned or are considering hosting.

Provide explicit connections to your school's extended learning and engagement opportunities and how they support and align with GOAL 4: Engaged Community of the LCPS Strategic Plan, especially GOAL 4.1 Deepen Family Engagement by offering inclusive opportunities for conversation across the division.

Extended Learning:

All students engage in EXPLORE clubs during the school day. These clubs are created by student interest and supervised by staff. Students participate in these clubs twice per month beginning in the first marking period. On the opposite days from EXPLORE clubs, we are implementing content specific activities to support student literacy. This will take the form of grade level book clubs. We continue to support the student intramural program and offer this to students this year. We offer the Level-Up program for identified students. We have all students engage in the creation of a learning portfolio over the course of the academic year which culminates in Student-Led Conferences that occur in the spring. We have a strong Odyssey of the Mind group that went to the World Finals last year. Our theatrical department performs a musical each year. In addition we have extracurricular activities that are planned collaboratively with our PTA. We have "Fun Nights" at local venues that are grade level specific. We have dances, bingo nights, talent shows, and fun runs to extend not only the learning, but also the overall climate of the building. The SCA is a partner in creating activities to support student growth. This group, composed of students and faculty, plan events like outdoor movie night, participation in the local holiday parades, spirit days, and holiday events.

Family and Community Engagement Opportunities:

We have a strong connection to our PTA and plan with them collaboratively to put on several events throughout the school year. We have a thriving Parents as Educational Partners program that helps families that are not native to the American school model transition, acclimate, and gain support to navigate the educational system. We have strong ties to many local businesses and with members of the Town of Leesburg that provide incentives and support for student programs. Each year we invite local community members to participate in our Student-Led Conferences and events like our Veterans Day celebration.

Climate and Culture

Provide a description of strategies that address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly the needs of those at risk of not meeting the challenging state academic standards, through activities such as counseling, social emotional learning and mental health programs, and PBIS implementation.

Make explicit connections to the LCPS Strategic Plan goals of 1.3 Prioritize Care for Students by ensuring a safe and affirming learning environment for all;

School specific narrative At Smart's Mill we strive to seek input from all stakeholders. We have a strong link to our PTA and to the community. We ask for multiple forms of input from informal parent meetings with the principal to formalized

surveys. We have an avenue for students to be a part of the instructional environment through our SCA and Principal's Advisory Group.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS): PBIS is a systemic approach for establishing a safe and supportive learning environment. Through the implementation of a consistent vision, language, and practices, school staff promote social, behavioral, and academic success for all students.

Successful implementation of PBIS can lead to a positive school climate, improved classroom management, increased understanding of schoolwide expectations, strengthened relationships, increased positive behaviors, academic achievement and equitable learning experiences, and decreased office referrals and suspensions. To support implementation, the PBIS team meets regularly to evaluate behavioral data, provide behavioral lessons based on identified needs, and share resources.

At Smart's Mill we use the acronym of S.T.R.I.D.E. which stands for Self-discipline, Teamwork, Respect, Integrity, Decision-making, and Empathy. All students are taught the expectations and provided with tangible reinforcement through the use of Critter Coin.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL): The social-emotional learning framework provides students with explicit SEL instruction, practice and reinforcement of skills through academic integration, and a supportive environment that cultivates relationships, belonging, safety and a student-centered approach. The framework is supported by the involvement of all community members, including staff, students, families and community partners.

As Smart's Mill we have a daily advisory that we refer to as CONNECT. During this time a small group of students engage with a minimum of two adults to participate in restorative circle talks, lessons from the LCPS created curriculum, and other topics created through our counseling department which is a Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP). We are identified as a No Place For Hate school based on the programs we create to maintain a respectful and empathetic environment for all.

Our school continues to seek, learn, and implement high yield strategies in order to better meet our student population's academic needs. We have invested time into having all staff trained in QTEL strategies, revisited CLT meeting expectations and structures, and employed a new lesson routine with which we will incorporate IF language and the Fundamental 5 routines. We lean on the expertise of our teachers, where they conduct peer learning walks to learn from each other. We also provide professional learning and formal and informal coaching to finetune and stretch our practices.

By including all of these aspects of a model middle school, Smart's Mill has been named a School to Watch six times by the Association for the Acceleration of Middle Level Education and a School of Distinction by the Association for Middle Level Education.