# GMS Improvement Plan 26-27

## School Improvement Plan (2026-27)

*Our Promise: Every child will be prepared for continued learning, career, and life.*

## Vision

A graduate who is:
- A clear and effective communicator
- A self-directed and lifelong learner
- A creative and practical problem solver
- A responsible and involved citizen
- An integrative and informed thinker

## Values

**Student achievement:** We believe in establishing rigorous standards and setting high expectations for all students.
**Experiential learning experiences:** We believe students learn best when they are able to apply their learning through relevant and authentic learning experiences.
**Equity:** We believe in providing students with what they need to succeed in school and career.

## Theory of Action

### *If School...*

> If we believe that individual student academic achievement in the Smithfield Public Schools is the result of academic rigor and the provision of appropriate resources, supports, and accommodations,
>
> If innovation and engagement is implementing forward thinking and visionary research-based practices that offer students new experiences and allow them to tackle real world

problems through student interest and choice, design thinking, hands on programming, and technology,

If we believe that social-emotional learning and wellness in the Smithfield Public Schools requires a commitment to providing a comprehensive framework that promotes positive self-discipline practices, empathy, respect, self-awareness, and understanding of individual differences in all facets of the public school experience across all schools and grade levels,

### *Then School can...*

our students will engage in appropriately rigorous and challenging curricula that align with state and local academic standards and foster intellectual growth while provided with a wide range of academic opportunities and pathways, including advanced coursework, specialized programs, and career-oriented education, to meet their diverse needs and interests.

our students will take ownership of and value their education because it builds the critical thinking skills needed to be lifelong learners, problem solvers, and informed members of society.

our students will learn to be resilient, compassionate, collaborative, and confident individuals positioned for success and achievement across all endeavors and aspirations.

### *So that...*

Every child will be prepared for continued learning, career, and life.

# Needs Assessment

A review of our school data in the areas of English language arts, mathematics, and science revealed a need to focus on improving our students' performance in these three vital areas. Additionally, we desire to improve our students' sense of belonging and connectedness to school. Baseline data for these four areas: 48.7% of our students are meeting or exceeding expectations in ELA (RICAS '24-'25); 48% of our students are meeting or exceeding expectations in Mathematics (RICAS '24-'25); 51.4% of our students are meeting or exceeding expectations in Science (NGSA '24-'25); 50% of our students responded favorably to school belonging survey questions on the Spring '26 SurveyWorks; and 13% of students were chronically absent.

Therefore, we have selected the following main priorities for this academic year: ELA/Humanities, mathematics, science, and school belonging.

# Priority 1: Academic Excellence and Student Learning

*Smithfield Public Schools will improve student achievement through professional learning and evidence-based curricular resources.*

# Measurable Goals

**Goal #1 - To increase the percentage of all students in grades 6-8 meeting or exceeding expectations on the RICAS ELA from 49% to 52% by the end of SY 2027.**

| **Initiative 1: Continued Implementation of HQIM in ELA** | | |
|---|---|---|
| *In September of 2026, our ELA department will continue the implementation of our HQIM ELA curriculum.* | | |
| **Supporting Research and Evidence:**<br><br>Structural, and curriculum and instruction strategies to improve middle school education. Key findings include:  establishing shared leadership that entails working with stakeholders;  ensuring structures that support students' development of strong connections with peers and adults for personal and academic success;  developing challenging and relevant curricula, including access to enrichment and elective courses; and  providing common planning time for teachers.<br><br>**Citation:** Best Practices for Improving Middle Schools. Hanover Research. August 2018<br><br>**URL:** https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/ESSA-Evidence-Guides/Best_Practices_for_Improving_Middle_Schools.pdf | | |
| **Action Step** | **Complete-Date** | **Notes** |
| Planning and collaboration among ELA teachers during weekly grade level CPT department days and vertical department meetings | 06/04/2027 | |
| Participate in Writing Workshop with District ELA Curriculum Director | 06/04/2027 | |

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| Fine tune and adjust the units of study per grade level focusing on meeting the needs of all learners | 06/04/2027 | |
| Continue calibration of student writing samples in all three grade levels utilizing the LASW protocol to determine instructional next steps | 06/04/2027 | |

**Initiative 2: Year Three Implementation of HQIM in Social Studies**

*In September of 2026, our Social Studies department will embark on the third year of implementation of our HQIM SS curriculum.*

**Supporting Research and Evidence:**

Structural, and curriculum and instruction strategies to improve middle school education. Key findings include:  establishing shared leadership that entails working with stakeholders;  ensuring structures that support students' development of strong connections with peers and adults for personal and academic success;  developing challenging and relevant curricula, including access to enrichment and elective courses; and  providing common planning time for teachers.

**Citation:** Best Practices for Improving Middle Schools. Hanover Research. August 2018

**URL:** https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/ESSA-Evidence-Guides/Best_Practices_for_Improving_Middle_Schools.pdf

| **Action Step** | **Complete-Date** | **Notes** |
|---|---|---|
| Continue Unit Unpacking and Lesson Internalization of year three Social Studies curriculum units including examining incorporation of geography skills and Civics. | 01/29/2027 | |
| Increase student writing as part of the curriculum in collaboration with the ELA teachers | 06/04/2027 | |
| Planning and collaboration among Social Studies teachers during grade level CPT department days and vertical department meetings focusing on common learning and assessment strategies | 06/04/2027 | |

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| Creation of grade level scaffolded expectations | 06/04/2027 | |

**Initiative 3: Interventions Support in ELA**

*Students will complete assigned Lexia tasks assigned by their ELA teacher based upon individualized student data. In addition, selected students will participate in small group ELA instruction delivered by their ELA teacher.*

**Supporting Research and Evidence:**

Implement a specific set of core in-school strategies and practices to support reading. Implementation of a set of specific instructional and classroom practices is effective in closing the reading achievement gap, such as, explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies in the upper grades (e.g., inferencing, questioning, and visualizing)

**Citation:** School-based strategies for narrowing the achievement gap. Hanover Research. February 2017

**URL:** https://www.wasa-oly.org/WASA/images/WASA/1.0%20Who%20We%20Are/1.4.1.6%20SIRS/Download_Files/LI%202017/May-%20School-Based%20Strategies%20for%20Narrowing%20the%20Achievement%20Gap.pdf

| Action Step | Complete-Date | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Facilitate data analysis sessions during CPT and/or data days three times per year. | 06/04/2027 | |
| Use Lexia as an intervention tool for students who are identified as developing readers | 06/04/2027 | |
| Science and Social Studies teachers will facilitate enrichment lessons to support developing background knowledge and reading comprehension | 06/04/2027 | |

**Goal #2 - To increase the percentage of all students in grades 6-8 meeting or exceeding expectations on the RICAS Mathematics from 48% to 51% by the end of SY 2027.**

**Initiative 1: Interventions Support in Mathematics**

*Students will complete assigned ALEKS and/or Roadmaps tasks assigned by their mathematics teacher based upon individualized student data. In addition, selected students will participate in small group mathematics instruction delivered by their mathematics teacher.*

**Supporting Research and Evidence:**

Provide explicit and systematic intervention instruction. Struggling students should receive explicit instruction to ensure that they have the foundational skills and conceptual knowledge necessary for understanding grade level content.

**Citation:** Gersten, R., Beckmann, S., Clarke, B., Foegen, A., Marsh, L., Star, J. R., & Witzel, B. (2009). Assisting students struggling with mathematics: Response to Intervention (RtI) for elementary and middle schools (NCEE 2009-4060). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education

**URL:** https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/rti_math_pg_042109.pdf

| **Action Step** | **Complete-Date** | **Notes** |
|---|---|---|
| Refine data-based decision-making process, focused on progress monitoring and targeted interventions. | 12/18/2026 | |
| Facilitate quarterly data analysis sessions during CPT and/or data days | 06/04/2027 | |
| Provide mathematics teachers with professional development/training on the use of Roadmaps as an interventions tool. | 12/18/2026 | |

**Initiative 2: Year Three Implementation of HQIM in Mathematics**

*In September of 2026, our mathematics teachers will embark on the third year of implementation of our HQIM Math curriculum (Algebra is on year two).*

**Supporting Research and Evidence:**

Demonstrate multiple problem-solving strategies. Exposing students to problems that are solved using multiple strategies enables students to become more efficient in selecting appropriate ways to solve math problems with greater ease and flexibility.

**Citation:** Woodward, J., Beckmann, S., Driscoll, M., Franke, M., Herzig, P., Jitendra, A., Koedinger, K. R., & Ogbuehi, P. (2012). Improving mathematical problem solving in grades 4 through 8: A practice guide (NCEE 2012-4055). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

**URL:** https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/mps_pg_052212.pdf

| Action Step | Complete-Date | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Planning and collaboration among mathematics teachers during grade level CPT department days and vertical department meetings | 06/06/2026 | |
| Participate in professional development and/or training in the use of Coteach AI | 06/04/2027 | |
| Conduct one cycle of instructional walkthroughs (and/or peer to peer visits) with action planning | 06/04/2027 | |
| Continued unpacking and lesson internalization of units of study for each grade level (Algebra is only in year two of this process) | 06/04/2027 | |

**Goal #3 - To increase the percentage of all students in grades 6-8 meeting or exceeding expectations on the NGSA Science assessment from 51% to 54% by the end of SY 2027.**

**Initiative 1: Year Three Implementation of HQIM in Science**

*In September of 2026, our Science department will embark on the third year of implementation of our HQIM science curriculum.*

**Supporting Research and Evidence:**

Structural, and curriculum and instruction strategies to improve middle school education. Key findings include:  establishing shared leadership that entails working with stakeholders; 

ensuring structures that support students' development of strong connections with peers and adults for personal and academic success;  developing challenging and relevant curricula, including access to enrichment and elective courses; and  providing common planning time for teachers.

**Citation:** Best Practices for Improving Middle Schools. Hanover Research. August 2018

**URL:** https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/ESSA-Evidence-Guides/Best_Practices_for_Improving_Middle_Schools.pdf

| Action Step | Complete-Date | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Planning and collaboration among science teachers during weekly grade level CPT department days and vertical department meetings | 06/04/2027 | |
| Instructional Walkthroughs with action planning and feedback at least once per semester. | 06/04/2027 | |
| Continued lesson internalization of units of study including accessible assessments for all learners for each grade level. | 06/04/2027 | |

# Priority 2: Innovation and Engagement

*Smithfield Public Schools will use innovative practices to engage students in their learning.*

# Measurable Goals

**Goal #1 - To increase the percentage of all students in grades 6-8 who respond favorably to SurveyWorks school belonging questions 50% ('25-'26 data) to 55%; and to decrease the number of students who are chronically absent from 13% (current '25-'26 data) to 10% by the end of SY 2027.**

| Initiative 1: Decrease chronic absenteeism |
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| *We will focus on ways to decrease the number of students who are chronically absent from school.* |

**Supporting Research and Evidence:**

Maximize student attendance and participation. Student participation is affected by issues of access and convenience, as well as by the adequacy and attractiveness of the services, and features provided in the program. Minimize the barriers to participation, especially for the students most in need of program services and most likely to benefit from them. Provide engaging learning experiences. Activities should be interactive, hands on, learner directed, and related to the real world, while remaining grounded in academic learning goals.

**Citation:** Beckett, M., Borman, G., Capizzano, J., Parsley, D., Ross, S., Schirm, A., & Taylor, J. (2009). Structuring out-of-school time to improve academic achievement: A practice guide (NCEE #2009-012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

**URL:** https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/ost_pg_072109.pdf

| Action Step | Complete-Date | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Attendance team meets biweekly to discuss attendance data in accordance with the district attendance policy | 06/04/2027 | |
| Maintain our family communications and outreach for students discussed during Attendance Team meetings | 06/04/2027 | |
| Continue our utilization of the RIDE Attendance Tools | 06/04/2027 | |
| Utilize our support staff to connect families with available community resources | 06/04/2027 | |
| Closely monitor students who were chronically absent during the '25-'26 SY and frontload school interventions/support. | 10/30/2026 | |

**Initiative 2: Implementing the Kingian Nonviolence framework with students and staff.**

*We will implement a school-wide framework provided by Nonviolent Schools RI with students and staff. This initiative is a 6-12 program being implemented at both the high school and middle school.*

**Supporting Research and Evidence:**

This article focuses on the psychology of principled nonviolent activism, specifically ideas associated with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy of nonviolence and how they are compatible with attachment theory and related areas of modern neuroscience (e.g., attachment/social neuroscience and interpersonal neurobiology). The proposed Kingian Neuro-Relational Theory (KNRT) recognizes King as having a relational development approach to social justice. KNRT offers a way of understanding King's ideas to aid research and develop strategies for reducing many forms of societal violence, with eventual outcomes of improving mental and physical health via stress reduction, and subsequent creation of a more socially just world. KNRT is an integrative, multidisciplinary approach, incorporating the philosophy of nonviolence, attachment theory, social neuroscience, ecological systems theory, and personalistic philosophy. The theory highlights developmental and clinical implications of moving beyond tactical/pragmatic nonviolent activism (nonviolent direct action) to activism via embracing nonviolence as a principled way of life (nonviolent daily interactions). This theory is building on an earlier project that conveyed how King's philosophy of nonviolence is related to modern–day diversity and inclusion efforts.

**Citation:** Thomas, D., Stavros, G., Sandage, S., Berg-Cross, l., & Nichols, E. (2022). Attachment Neuroscience and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Nonviolence Philosophy: Implications for the 21st Century and Beyond. Journal of lack Psychology, 48(3-4), 507-546.

**URL:** https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/00957984211016236

| **Action Step** | **Complete-Date** | **Notes** |
|---|---|---|
| Establish a school-based Nonviolence Leadership team to guide the implementation and monitor progress. | 09/04/2026 | |
| Train a group of volunteer students in Kingian Nonviolence principles and practices to assist in the implementation. | 06/10/2026 | Students were trained on June 8-10 as grant money was paying for the training to take place prior to June 30, 2026. These students will work on implementation |

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|---|---|---|
| | | during the '26-'27 SY. |
| Integrate Kingian Nonviolence practices into classroom routines, behavioral expectations, and conflict resolution systems. | 06/04/2027 | |
| Survey staff and students as part of the implementation process | 06/04/2027 | |
| Train 100% of school staff in Kingian Nonviolence principles and practices. | 12/18/2026 | A sub group of teachers will be trained on June 22-24, 2026. |
| Examine our discipline approaches to incorporate restorative, nonviolent practices. | 06/04/2027 | |
| Provide students and families with tools and strategies to support nonviolent communication and conflict resolution. | 06/04/2027 | |