

## LOFTIS MIDDLE SCHOOL

*Loftis Middle School... where EVERY cougar feels supported, successful, and included as a significant member of the pack.*

This vision statement is our guiding focus as we launch our MSNS reform plan. Beginning in 2006, Loftis Middle School will focus on examining the culture of our school so that it will become an energetic, learning-focused, student-friendly community. In order to achieve our goals of providing flexibility, personalization, rigorous and relevant curriculum, and build a professional learning community our action plan is designed to ensure that students, as well as teachers, feel *supported, successful, and significant*.

A major component of our reform plan involves establishing a flexible schedule consisting of three academic sections, one related arts section, and "Cougar Time". The new schedule allows more time- (in most cases an 80-minute "block" of time)-in math and language arts classes. We believe teachers and students will thus be able to do more than simply acquire knowledge; they will be able to refine and extend understanding. To help *support* our staff in this endeavor, training will be provided in Bloom's Taxonomy of higher level questioning, teaching strategies for block scheduling, differentiated instruction, meta- cognitive strategies across the curriculum, and how to use alternative assessments, such as project-based learning and student led discussions. With the *support* provided by outside consultants and our change coach ALL cougars will experience *success* in the classroom and afford sustainability in our professional learning community.

"Cougar Time," a daily 40-minute enrichment/ remediation time will provide a variety of high interest, diverse activities that motivate and inspire students. The number of students in each class will be kept small and students will be given an opportunity to select enrichment classes that peak their interest. This adds a dimension of personalization, which is missing in our school. It also opens up fantastic opportunities for all students to be more "connected" to the school. In particular it should spark the interest of brighter students who often are not as challenged or engaged as they deserve. During this same time each day, students who need additional help in math or language arts will have the opportunity to receive *support*. Test scores, teacher recommendation and other formative/ predictive assessments will be used to determine which students need *support*; student progress will be assessed continually. Students will return to regular enrichment classes when they have attained skills necessary to be *successful*. A special note: With a substantial increase in the number of eighth graders taking Algebra I next year, this time will provide assistance for struggling students. "Cougar Time" will foster *support* and provide *success* for each student in his or her unique areas of need and interest. As we personalize the school experience, each student should believe that he or she is a *significant* part of the Loftis family.

As we reflected upon our current school status, we found we are proud of the fact that on TCAP, 90 percent of our students score proficient or advanced in the areas of language arts and math. However, when we evaluated trends over a three-year period, we found that in the "transition" grades of six and eight, we have fewer percentages scoring at the "advanced" level. Considering the ability of our student body, this is not acceptable.

In order to address the specific needs of sixth graders, we will invite fifth graders and parents from our feeder schools for "Step Up to Loftis Day" and an evening orientation. During this time, we will introduce sixth grade teachers, explain grading and other procedures, and provide time

for touring the facility. A more intensive transition program is planned for the summer. "Launch into Loftis" will include a Saturday brunch for parents and students and a scavenger hunt will provide a fun way for students to acquaint themselves with their locker, the building, the teachers and each other.

In order to help our older students build confidence, which will help them *succeed* in their transition from middle to high school, we will *support* the development of leadership skills in a plethora of areas. We will begin a seventh and eighth grade "ambassador" program. One of the responsibilities of the ambassadors is to be a resource for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders who have questions or need a "buddy". Each 7<sup>th</sup> grader will participate in a leadership class for one quarter in order to prepare for being school leaders in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and to help them feel a *significant* part of our pack.

Realizing that our goals are lofty and *support* will be a *significant* part of our *success*, we plan to hire a change coach to help with the implementation of our reform plan. The change coach will be integral to training our staff and providing sustainability in our professional learning community.

As evident in our action plan, Loftis Middle is committed to attaining the goals set forth in the MSNS reform. Through the implementation of a flexible schedule, rigorous and relevant curriculum, personalization, and a professional learning community we will be proud to say: