

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell
Commissioner of Education

DATE: December 2, 2015

SUBJECT: Alliance Districts Success: Bloomfield and New London High Schools

Executive Summary

Introduction and Background:

Two high schools in the Alliance Districts, Bloomfield High School and New London High School, demonstrated a level of academic achievement on the 2014-15 administration of the Smarter Balanced Assessment that allowed both schools to exit Turnaround status. Turnaround schools are Title I schools or Title I eligible schools with the lowest performance of all students. The criteria to exit Turnaround status is outlined in Connecticut’s Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Renewal: “Prior to the start of the 2015-16 school year, previously identified Turnaround schools that are not in the bottom 10% of schools based on the percentage of All Students at or above level 3 on both the Smarter Balanced ELA and Mathematics assessments will exit the Turnaround category.” Of the 28 Turnaround schools identified in 2012, only these two high schools qualified to exit at this time based on this criteria.

Bloomfield High School’s Performance Highlights in the 2014-15 Smarter Balanced Assessments

- The percentage of BHS students performing at Level 3 or higher in ELA (67.0%) substantially exceeds the overall ELA state average (55.4%). It places BHS in the top 40% of **all schools** statewide in terms of ELA achievement.
- The percentage of BHS students performing at Level 3 or higher in Math (29.0%) is greater than 30% of all schools statewide.

New London High School’s Performance Highlights in the 2014-15 Smarter Balanced Assessments

- The percentage of NLHS students performing at Level 3 or higher in ELA (44.3%) is greater than 30% of all schools statewide.
- The percentage of NLHS students performing at Level 3 or higher in Math (19.9%) is greater than 20% of all schools statewide.

Bloomfield High School

Bloomfield High School is a traditional, Grades 9-12 school, located in the Bloomfield School District, with a current student population of 545 (October 2015). Fifty percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Over fourteen percent are identified as needing special education services, and over one percent are English learners. Four percent of students are Hispanic and 90 percent are Black.

In 2006, BHS was identified as a “School in Need of Improvement” under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). In 2012, BHS was designated as a Turnaround School by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).

Bloomfield High School’s Turnaround Story

A growing achievement gap in BHS was evident when looking at historical CAPT data broken out by most subgroups. Similarly, SAT results, dropout and graduation rates all showed negative comparison trends and growing achievement gaps. As such, BHS applied for and was awarded a School Improvement Grant (SIG). SIG, authorized under Section 1003 (g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, are grants to State Education Agencies (SEAs) that SEAs use to make competitive sub grants to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that demonstrate the greatest need for the funds and strongest commitment to use the funds to provide adequate resources in order to raise substantially the achievement of students in their lowest-performing schools. BHS implemented a Transformation Model to “re-conceptualize” the school.

Then Principal Sam Galloway restructured the school’s leadership team to include a Director of Numeracy and Science, Director of Literacy, and a Director of School Operations. This team set an aligned focus for teaching and learning. BHS created a culture of instructional ownership for, and increasing rigorous instruction with respect to school-wide literacy and numeracy programs. Systematic infusion of reading and writing took place across all content areas including Physical Education, Health and Career and Technical Education areas (e.g., automotive, culinary arts, fashion and communication technology). Data team work at the district, school, and instructional levels established the foundation of a holistic accountability system which drove instructional practices in all classrooms. Instructional course level teams met weekly and had common planning time embedded into their schedules. A positive school climate was created for children and adults by focusing on the critical role of adults in assuring a safe, nurturing and supportive environment for all children. The school restructured its school day in order to provide additional professional learning time while also establishing a weekly teacher professional learning and collaboration time with an early release on Wednesdays. BHS added twenty instructional days in the summer by developing the Bloomfield High School Academy.

In 2014, BHS was awarded a federal 1003(a) grant. The purpose of this grant is to assist LEAs to dramatically improve student achievement in their lowest-performing schools by making targeted investments in schools pursuing comprehensive and transformative improvement plans. This grant supported embedded professional development focused on assisting teachers with implementation of Connecticut Core Standards (CCS) across all content areas. Professional development also focused on questioning strategies, close reading and common language for problem-solving, and adult instructional

practices. The grant funding was also utilized to support the school's four-week summer academy. The program offered support in mathematics, science, and literacy for all students in Grades 9-11. Students are able to earn course credit during the summer academy.

BHS's stated mission, which is embedded in all aspects of teaching and learning in core and related subjects, is "to prepare every student to become a life-long learner who reads closely, thinks critically, asks questions, solves problems and communicates effectively."

New London High School

New London High School (NLHS), is a traditional, Grades 9-12 school, located in the New London School District, with a current enrollment of 961 students as of October 2015. The majority of students, 65 percent, are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Nineteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and 17 percent are English learners. Approximately 41 percent of the students are Hispanic and 22 percent are Black. In 2003, New London High School was identified as a "School in Need of Improvement" under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). In 2012, NLHS was designated as a Turnaround School by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

NLHS Turnaround Story

The turnaround of NLHS occurred over time and with intentional and strategic actions that resulted in improved student outcomes. The change began with the communication of a clearly stated vision and the development of high expectations to which both students and staff would be held accountable.

In 2011, New London High School was awarded a three-year School Improvement Grant 1003(g). NLHS chose the SIG Transformation Model and Principal Tommy Thompson led the development of a three-year professional development plan aligned with instructional improvement activities throughout the year that addressed effective teaching, implementation of written curriculum, and the embedding of literacy and mathematics across the curriculum. Embedded instructional coaching and feedback were provided to teachers that exceeded the requirements of Educator Evaluation. Instructional data teams met regularly and coordinators worked with those teams to ensure vertical alignment as well as the incorporation of best instructional practices based on student needs. Leaders operated from a key belief that no student would be overlooked or be allowed to slip through the cracks. Intervention classes in reading and math were instituted. NLHS offered a successful summer school program for students with a focus on instruction. Partnerships with parents/caregivers and other local community organizations were established to inform the public of the school's continued reform efforts.

In 2014, New London High School was awarded a federal 1003(a) grant which helped support the alignment of current curricula to the CCS and to produce end-of-course assessments. The school reading specialist was appointed to design, implement, and evaluate a series of professional development and curricular alignment sessions in each content area. Teachers in English/language arts, mathematics, social studies and science met collaboratively once a month to complete one phase of curriculum development. NLHS also implemented a SRBI tiered approach which includes protocols for both academics and behavior and provides teachers with strategies for improving Tier I classroom instruction and expectations as well as specific protocols for referring students.

Every member of the NLHS community is involved in these efforts. The professional dialogue centers on students and how staff can best support their success. Leadership and staff continuously ask “How can we do better? What more is needed to ensure the success of our students?” Principal Thompson said it best, “The school has raised its expectations for students and staff, not through test prep, but through a steady diet of reading, writing, debate and discussion. We knew if we focused on the right things, then good things would happen.”

Three Year Graduation Rates

The most recent 3-year adjusted cohort graduation rates for Bloomfield High School and New London High School are as follows:

	2014	2013	2012
Bloomfield High (All Students)	90.2	91.2	83.3
New London High School (All Students)	72.6	64.8	64.9

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Bloomfield High School

Making an **IMPACT** on Student Achievement





Vision

The Bloomfield Public Schools will be a high-performing district with a positive climate of inclusion, an expectation of competitive academic achievement and a culture of meaningful family and community engagement.



Theory of Action

“The Bloomfield Schools will successfully implement a comprehensive and collaborative accountability system characterized by data-supported planning and decision-making practices at every level, leading to adult work that will be strengthened throughout the district. As a result, learning for all students will substantially improve and be sustained over time.”



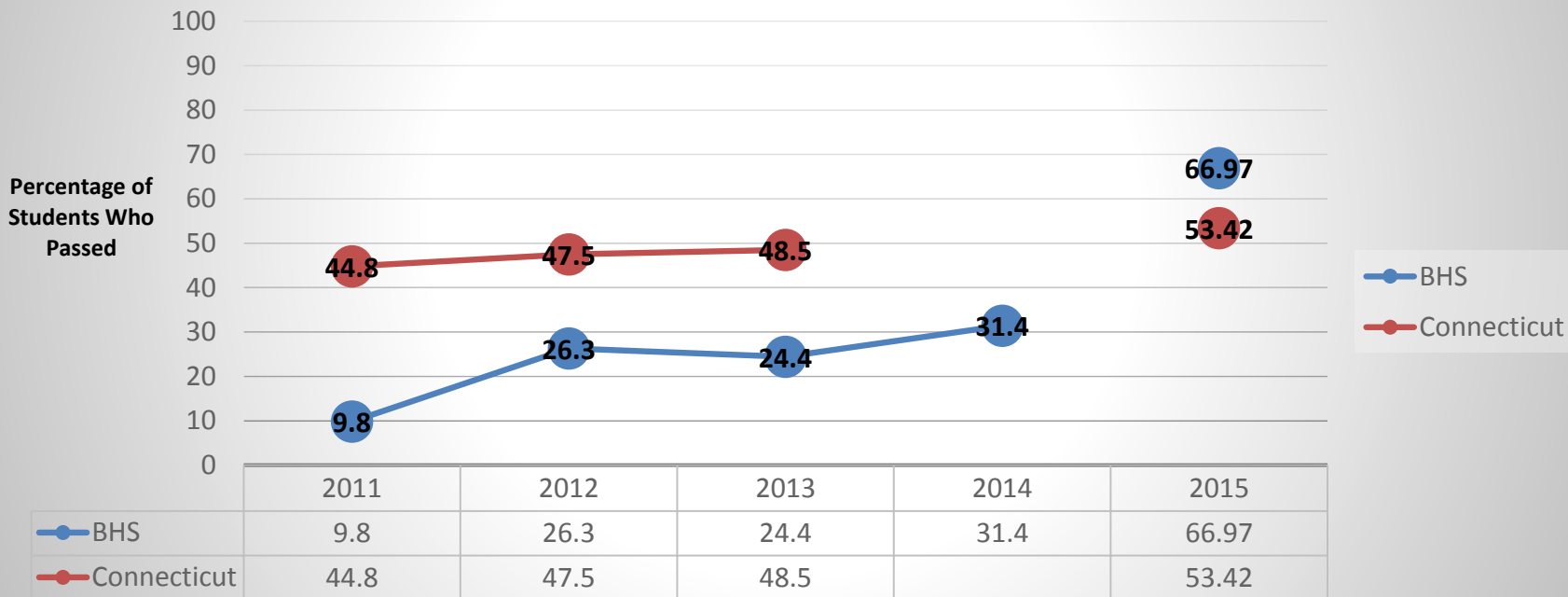
Four Priorities

1. Holistic Accountability
2. Rigorous Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
3. Positive School Climate
4. Family and Community Engagement



Priority 2 Rigorous Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Standardized Assessment Data For ELA 2011-2015 BHS vs Connecticut



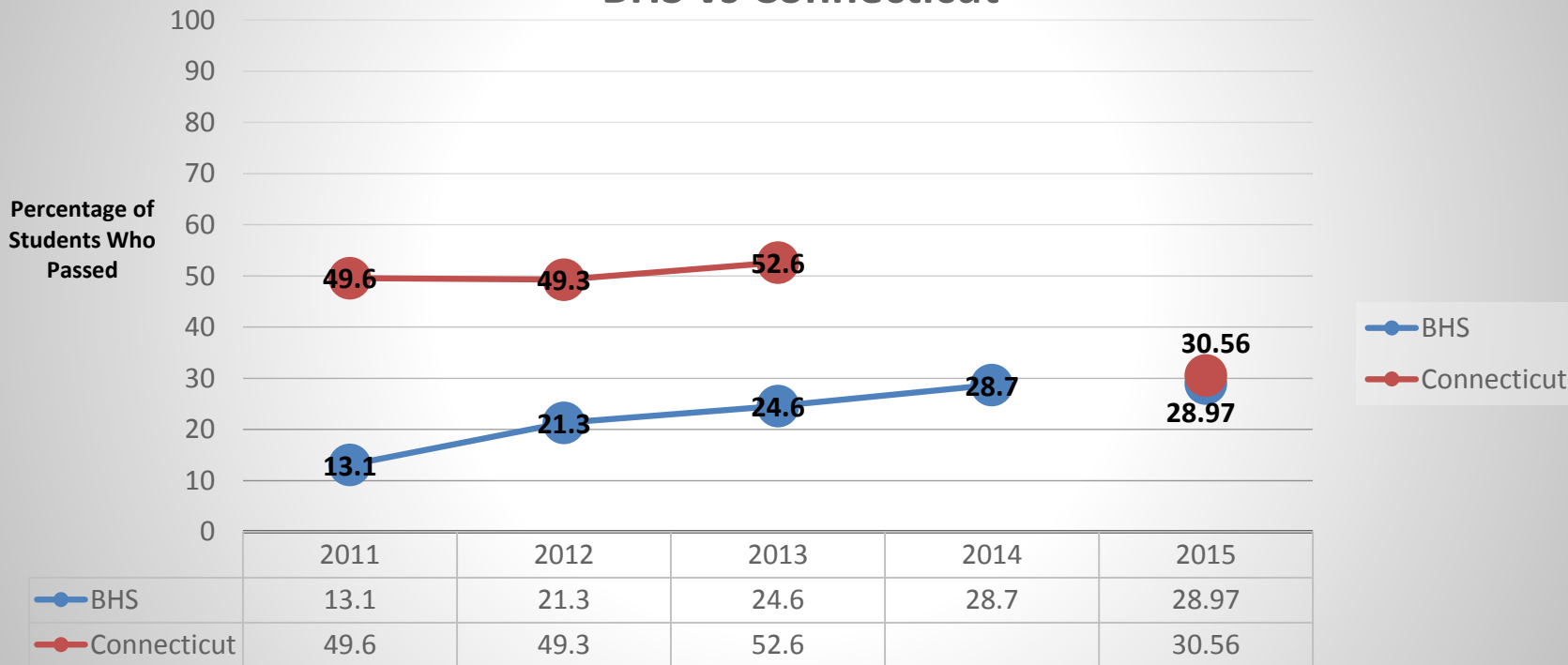
*In 2014, the state of Connecticut did not take the CAPT ELA or Math Assessment. Schools were provided the option of taking the CAPT or the practice Smarter Balanced Assessment. BHS took both, other school districts did not take CAPT.

* The state assessment in Connecticut changed from CAPT to Smarter Balanced in 2015.



Priority 2 Rigorous Curriculum Instruction and Assessment

Standardized Assessment Data for Mathematics 2011-2015 BHS vs Connecticut



*In 2014, the state of Connecticut did not take the CAPT ELA or Math Assessment. Schools were provided the option of taking the CAPT or the practice Smarter Balanced Assessment. BHS took both, other school districts did not take CAPT.

* The state assessment in Connecticut changed from CAPT to Smarter Balanced in 2015.



□ Priority 1: Holistic Accountability

Three-year Goal:

By September 2015, all certified staff will be engaged in data teams that analyze and adjust instruction to promote the preparation of all students for college and careers...

Key Strategy: Implementation of School & Instructional data teams

Accomplishments:

- Established 12 interdisciplinary literacy & numeracy data teams across grade levels and content areas
- Conducted **more than 200 data team meetings** to date
- Held **more than 50 job embedded professional development sessions** for all staff
- Each certified staff has **attended an estimated average range of 200-250 hours of professional development** within the past 2 ½ years



□ Priority 2: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Three-year Goal:

By September 2015, all certified staff at Bloomfield High School will increase the percentage of teachers who implement with fidelity a standards-based curriculum in English Language Arts and Math with instructional and assessment practices aligned to the Common Core State Standards.

Key Strategy: Redesign all curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices

Accomplishments:

- 78 content course syllabi & curriculum maps developed and aligned to CT Core State Standards with revised curriculum
- Teachers developed over 30 literacy/numeracy based performance tasks
- Teachers developed over 300 Common Formative Assessments
- Teachers developed numeracy benchmark assessments
- Increased enrollment in AP courses



□ Priority 3: Positive School Climate

Three-year Goal:

By September 2015, Bloomfield High School will meet the National School Climate Standards by creating supportive communities of learners who demonstrate enthusiasm for learning and respect toward one another.

Key Strategy: Adoption and implementation of National School Climate Standards

Accomplishments:

- BHS has developed a professional learning community
- Conducted some 20 collaborative and calibrated scoring session of student work
- Teachers deliver professional development to their peers
- All content area teachers plan collaboratively
- School-wide student mentoring program facilitated by School Counselors



Priority 4: Parent and Community Engagement

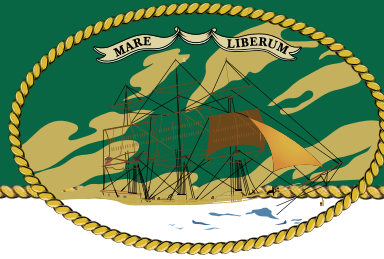
Three-year Goal:

By September 2015, Bloomfield High School will be characterized by strong community partnerships involving families and community members

Key Strategy: Implement the Joyce Epstein Model of School, Family and Community Partnerships

Accomplishments:

- Teachers maintain monthly parent contact logs
- Staff host academic student competitions-(Mega Education)
- School hosts awards assemblies
- Successful mentoring partnerships with the Sons of Solomon
- Hosted successful 2015 Summer Reading Initiative sponsored by CSDE-Educating READsponsible Citizens
- Provided Summer Academy programming for grades 9-12 students-(3years with average student enrollment of 220 students)
- Partnership with Windsor Federal Bank



NEW LONDON HIGH SCHOOL

Turn-Around Successes
*Presentation to the
Connecticut State Board of Education*
December 2, 2015





**NEW LONDON PUBLIC SCHOOL'S SUPERINTENDENT
*DR. MANUEL J. RIVERA***



NEW LONDON HIGH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE ON THE 2014-15 SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENTS

English/Language Arts

- › Though the percent of NLHS students performing at Level 3 or higher in ELA (44.3%) on the new rigorous college/career ready standards is substantially lower than the state average (55.4%), NLHS is performing better than 30% of all schools statewide.
- › The ELA achievement of “High Needs” students at NLHS (38.5%) exceeds the state average for “High Needs” students (30.6%) and places NLHS in the top 40% of all schools statewide with regard to the ELA achievement of “High Needs” students.

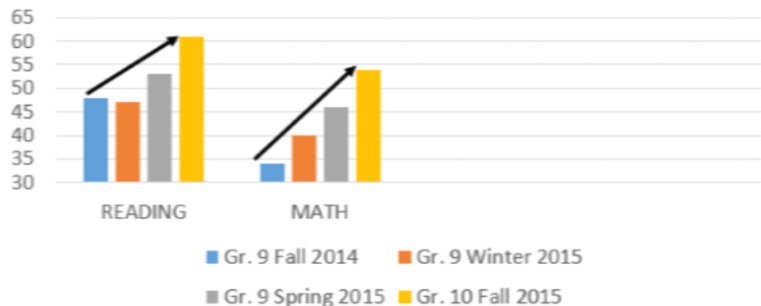
Mathematics

- › Though the percent of NLHS students performing at Level 3 or higher in Math (19.9%) on the new rigorous college/career ready standards is substantially lower than the state average (39.1%), NLHS is performing better than 20% of all schools statewide.
- › Though the Math achievement of “High Needs” students at NLHS of 14.8% is low, it nearly matches the state average for “High Needs” students (16.4%) and is better than 30% of all schools statewide.

The participation rate in the Smarter Balanced assessments for all NLHS students *and* the High Needs subgroups well exceeds 90% in both ELA and Math.

New London High School By The Numbers

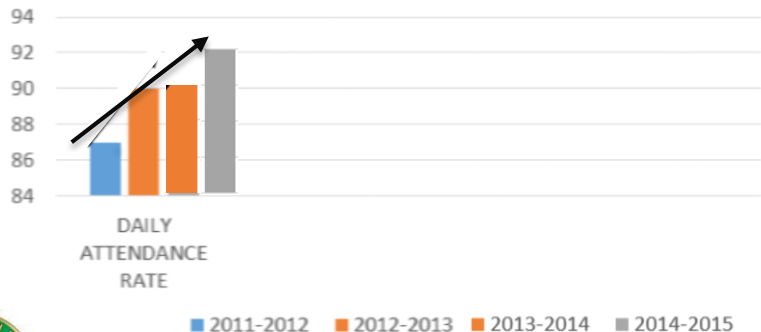
Increase In Standardized Test Scores



Decrease In Out of School Suspensions



Increase In Attendance

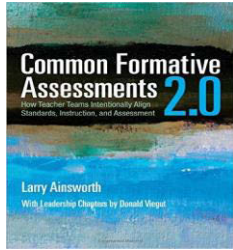
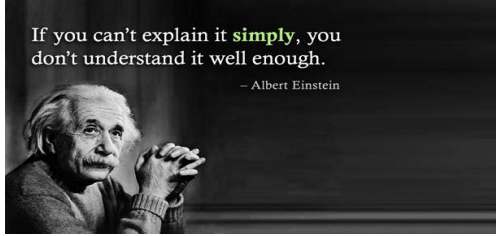


Increase In Graduation Rate



Mr. Tommy Thompson, Principal of New London High School

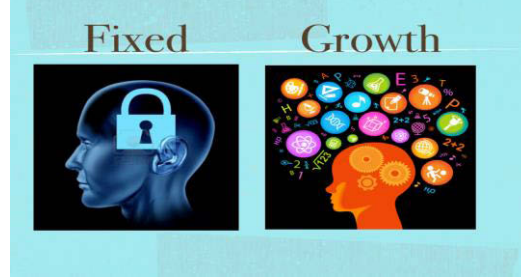
What, How, Who...



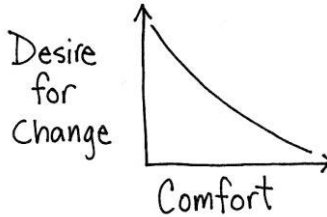
Current Reality + Clear Goal = Growth



Work hard. Be nice. Get better.



CHALLENGE



EVIDENCE



It's all about relationships

4 C'S:
Critical Thinking,
Collaboration,
Communication,
& Creativity


Science & Technology Magnet High School of Southeastern Connecticut

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL OF SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT

The Four C's

The diagram consists of four overlapping circles. The top-left circle is yellow and labeled 'Critical Thinking'. The top-right circle is light blue and labeled 'Collaboration'. The bottom-left circle is light green and labeled 'Communication'. The bottom-right circle is light purple and labeled 'Creativity'. The central area where all four circles overlap is shaded in a darker green.

The four C's are 21st Century teaching and learning skill areas that are high priorities for everyone at Science & Technology Magnet High School of Southeastern Connecticut.
"Success is an attitude."


The 4C's at STMHS

Critical Thinking: The ability to analyze facts, generate and organize ideas, defend opinions, make comparisons, draw inferences, evaluate arguments, and solve problems

Collaboration: Exchanging information for mutual benefit, and altering activities, sharing resources, and enhancing the capacity of another to achieve a common purpose

Communication: Meaningful exchange of information between two or more people using a variety of methods including the following: oral, written, sign language, graphs, music, art, charts, and pictures

Creativity: Using knowledge and understanding to develop new ways of thinking in order to find solutions to new problems and to create new products and services

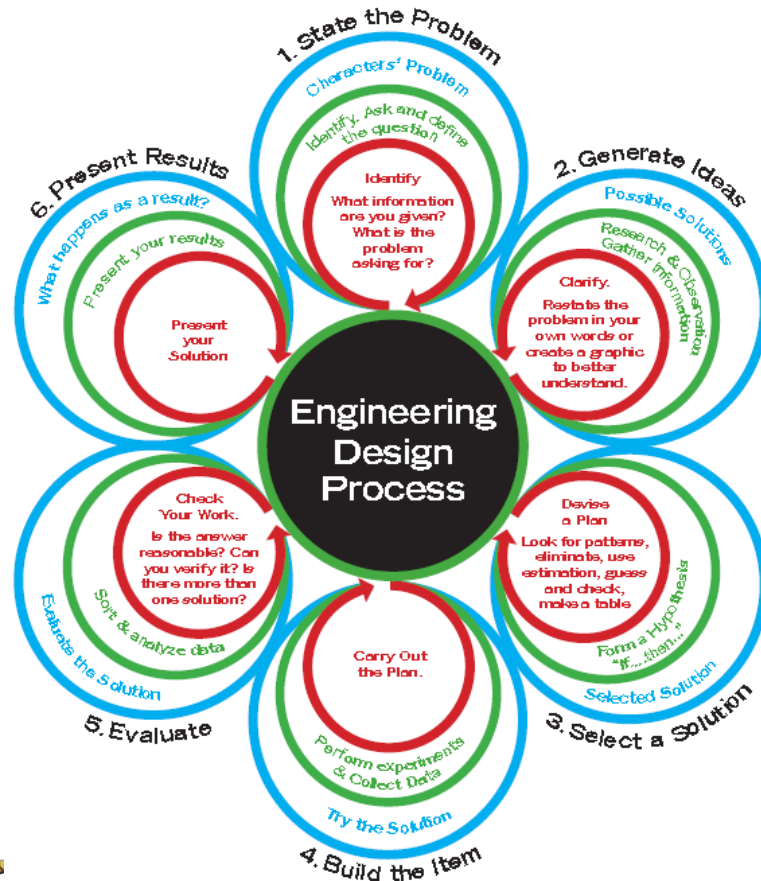


Ms. Kristen Maynard
& Ms. Sandra Silva,
English/Language Arts Teachers

Applying the Engineering Design Process in English/ Language Arts



Content Area Application of the Engineering Design Process



- Math
- Scientific Method
- English/L.A.
- Engineering Design Process





NLHS COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT SYSTEM



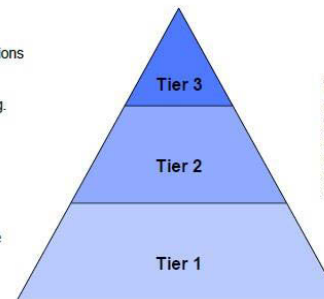
Early Academic WARNING SYSTEM



Pyramid of Intervention

Tier 3:
Intensive interventions designed to close the gap or accelerate learning.

Tier 1: A coherent and viable core differentiated curriculum that embeds ongoing monitoring for all students.



Tier 2:
Immediate and powerful targeted interventions systematically applied and monitored for any student not achieving at his or her potential.

**Ms. Grace Conti, RTI Coordinator
& Ms. Angela Peralta, Spanish Language Teacher**