



UPSALA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Independent School District #487

Website: www.upsala.k12.mn.us

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2014 – 2015 World’s Best Workforce Report Summary

“World’s Best Workforce” means striving to do the following:

- Have all students meet school readiness goals.
- Have all third grade students achieve grade-level literacy.
- Close the academic achievement gap among all racial and ethnic groups of students and between students living in poverty and their more privileged peers.
- Have all students graduate from high school.
- Have all students attain college and career preparedness.

Upsala Area School, ISD #487 – Mission Statement

It is the mission of Upsala Area Schools to provide a meaningful curriculum within a positive school climate. Recognizing our role within the community, we will strive to promote moral and ethically responsible behavior. These experiences will enable students to function successfully in a changing society.

“Cardinal Pride” – Culture of Success.

The vision of ISD #487 is to create a culture of success. In this culture, all students can, and will, learn and strive to reach their academic potential. Controlling the conditions that will enable our students to succeed, referred to as “Cardinal Pride”, creates this culture.

“Cardinal Pride” Conditions for Success

1. Clear, Defined Student Achievement Goals.
 - a. Provides clarity and understand what is essential to learn.
2. Properly aligned programs, practices, procedures, and policies.
 - a. Proper alignment provides a common strategy for everything that we do.
3. High Expectations.
 - a. Professionalism in everything we do.
 - b. Respect for all.
 - c. High expectations of student performance – student achievement goals are set with the growth as the focus.
 - d. Teacher and Administrator Effectiveness – Expected performance levels of “Highly Effective” or “Effective”, as defined by the District’s evaluation model.
4. Create a culture where everyone can be his or her best.
 - a. Implement professional learning communities (PLCs) to support and promote learning for all.
 - b. Strive to promote engagement – Engaging all learners, everyday.
 - c. Create and maintain a safe and caring learning environment.

Identified Needs Based Data

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- *UAS students are 10 or more percentage points above the state average of proficiency on the MCAs in the area of Mathematics. As of 2014-2015, UAS students are 10.4 percentage points below the state average on the Mathematics MCAs.*
- *UAS students are 10 or more percentage points above the state average of proficiency on the MCAs in the area of Reading. As of 2014-2015, UAS students are 8.3 percentage points below the state average on the Reading MCAs.*
- *UAS students are 10 or more percentage points above the state average of proficiency on the MCAs in the area of Science. As of 2014-2015, UAS students are 10.4 percentage points below the state average on the Science MCAs.*
- *100% of UAS students will graduate on time with their cohort. As of 2014-2015, 100% of UAS students have graduated on time with their cohort.*

Summary of Needs: The results obtained on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments are due to the volatility of small statistical sample sizes. We expect to see similar volatility in the future as our class sizes fluctuate, however, we will maintain the same student achievement goals. We will implement strategies to increase student achievement and reduce the statistical volatility due to small sample sizes. The strategies we will implement will be directly correlated to the goal areas of the World's Best Workforce legislation.

Systems, Strategies, and Support Category

Students

- *UAS staff has implemented new curriculum in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science in recent years in both the elementary school and the high school. Utilizing these new curricula, the UAS staff has been focusing on developing and implementing a guaranteed and viable curriculum to all students. The development of this guaranteed and viable curriculum involves the identification of essential learning standards and goals, appropriate assessments to assess the level of learning related to these standards and goals, and grading practices that reflect student learning. We have also continued to implement professional learning communities (PLCs), which work extensively to student achievement and learning in an effort to increase student achievement on assessments, close any achievement gaps that exist, and ensure that all of our students will graduate on time with their respective cohorts. We have also increased the number of career and college preparation courses, including CIS/PSEO courses that will be delivered on the UAS campus, to assist in preparing our students for post-secondary education/careers.*

Teachers and Principals

- *UAS teachers and administrators have had a variety of high quality professional development opportunities to enhance growth, development, and practice. A cohort of our teachers and administrators have attended a PLC Institute that provided the cohort members with knowledge and resources to assist our staff in implementing PLCs with greater efficacy. Our goal in this endeavor to increase the impact that our PLC work has on the rigor and relevance of our curriculum, as well as, providing effective strategies that will increase the level of student engagement in the classroom. In addition to the PLC institute, teachers have been focusing on select elements of Marzano instructional framework in order to increase the impact that their instruction has on student achievement.*

District

- *The UAS School Board has included the implementation of high-quality professional development, specifically the implementation of PLCs and the Marzano instructional framework, in its strategic plan. The UAS School Board is also committed to fiduciary support for the development and implementation*

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of best practices in instruction. Structures have been put in place to monitor our progress in student achievement, closing the achievement gap, graduation rate, and teacher/student growth and development. Through our ongoing analysis, the District has been able to monitor and adjust our efforts to ensure that the vision of our District is accomplished.

Best Practice Strategies and Action Steps

- *UAS teachers and administration will work collaboratively to identify areas of need, research best practices, and implement appropriate action steps to increase student achievement. UAS staff will analyze data from various assessments including, but not limited to, MCAs, STAR Assessments, ACT, EXPLORE, PLAN, and local level assessments, to identify focus areas for instructional improvement. The staff will develop SMART goals for each grade level/discipline area in order to drive the development of curriculum and instruction. Appropriate assessments and rubrics will be developed in order to measure student growth and achievement and provide effective feedback to students and parents, which will help target areas of need. The process outlined above will help us to become more consistent in our delivery of core instruction, identify and target areas of need for Tier II and Tier III interventions, and reduce the statistical volatility that we observe in our accountability data due to small sample sizes.*

Current Student Achievement Plans

Current Student Achievement Plans include the following:

- *Character development incorporating Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS). UAS staff is continuously striving to promote the development of positive character traits. This plan is embedded into all areas of student programming.*
- *UAS has adopted and implements a Local Literacy Plan to pursue the goal of ensuring all students achieve grade level literacy standards by the end of third grade. This plan encompasses the delivery of core instruction, interventions, and assessments to screen, benchmark, and progress monitor students continuously throughout the academic year in order to target instruction to areas of need.*
- *The UAS Title program is a targeted services program that services K-5 students who are one-half to one full year behind their grade level achievement benchmarks. The targeted interventions utilize various research-based interventions in order to accelerate the growth of students and help them make significant academic gains to close the gap in achievement.*
- *The UAS preschool program is a four-star Parent Aware program that implements the OWL curriculum to prepare and assess student readiness for Kindergarten. UAS preschool staff has aligned the preschool curriculum with the Kindergarten curriculum to ensure that all students receive the key components of readiness in the core instruction.*
- *UAS has developed a College and Career Readiness model that supports the development of personalized students plans. UAS utilizes the Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) to facilitate the development of these student plans. Beginning with sixth grade students, student advisors facilitate the process of plan development by guiding students through career interest inventories, career and college planning, course pathway selection and skill development in order to prepare students for life after graduation.*
- *UAS has implemented research-based strategies for educator evaluation utilizing the Marzano instructional framework. UAS staff will develop personalized growth plans on an annual basis and receive observational feedback from trained observers, represented by administration and peers, in order to reflect on their teaching and instructional strategies. The plan implemented by UAS is designed to promote and support educator growth and development over time.*

Key Indicators of Implementation Progress

- *The implementation of best practices to promote educator growth and student achievement has been the focus of the UAS Strategic Plan. Professional Learning Communities, concentrated core curriculum, **“Cardinal Pride” – Creating a Culture of Success***

positive behavior interventions, data driven instruction all contribute to our vision of creating a culture of success.

- *Additional indicators of success can be seen in the following areas of student achievement:*
 - *100% of our students graduate on time with their cohort.*
 - *Our ACT scores are consistently at or above the state average.*
 - *Our MMR ratings have helped us attain Celebration Eligible and Reward status in recent years.*
 - *A high percentage of our graduates going on to post-secondary programs. In 2015, 32 out of 38 graduates enrolled in 2- or 4-year post-secondary institutions.*

Goals and Outcomes

All Students Ready for Kindergarten

- *UAS has a four-star Parent Aware preschool program to prepare students for Kindergarten. In addition to offering preschool programming, UAS also offers ECFE programming, community education classes and preparation, as well as an effective ECSE program. In 2015, we had 14 general education preschoolers enrolled, of which 12 met the readiness criteria determined by the OWL curriculum and local curriculum alignment. UAS preschool staff recommends to parents of students who do not meet the readiness criteria that they repeat preK. In the event that parents choose not have their child repeat preK, the staff will provide recommendations and resources for at-home support.*

All Students in Third Grade Achieving Grade-Level Literacy

- *s We have seen considerable variation in this result in recent years, which we attribute to the statistical volatility of our small sample size. Our goal each year is to reach 100% proficiency, or to achieve at a rate that is, at a minimum, 10 percentage points above the state average. UAS staff is continuously focusing on the data from the MCAs, and other assessments, to identify areas of needs and target instruction to these areas in order to raise the proficiency level of our third grade students. The focus for upcoming years will be to deliver concentrated core instruction to all students and implement targeted Tier II and Tier III interventions where needed to ensure the success of all students.*

Closing Achievement Gap(s)

- *The assessment data that we have collected and analyzed on our subgroups indicates that we are closing the achievement gaps exhibited in the past. Our demographic makeup is primarily white students, with our free and reduced population being our largest subgroup, and special education being the next. Assessment data has shown that these subgroups are doing fairly well overall, but our white students are currently not achieving at the levels we desire. The conclusion that we have drawn from this data analysis is that we need to improve the core instruction for all students, while providing appropriate and effective interventions to those students in need.*

All Students Career- and College-Ready by Graduation

- *UAS uses the ACT to assess college readiness. Each year, UAS students are consistently at or above the state averages for composite scores, as well as the scores in each subject area. In 2015, UAS students scored an average composite of 26, with 100% of the juniors completing the exam. The ACT results also indicate the percentage of UAS students who are prepared for college success in the four subject areas. Results showed that 85% of students are college-ready in English; 54% in Mathematics; 62% in Reading; 62% in Science, and 38% in all four-subject areas. Data collected from the Class of 2015 graduates show that 32 out of the 38 graduates are progressing to attend 2- or 4-year post-secondary institutions. The other 6 students planning on transitioning directly into the work force. One contributing factor to this success is the prevalence of post-secondary opportunities we offer on the UAS campus, including CIS and PSEO courses delivered over interactive TV or online, and BRIDGES academies in various career and technical education areas. UAS also implements a rigorous career and college counseling program that provides individualized assistance to every student.*

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All Students Graduate

- *100% of UAS students graduated on time with their cohort. UAS typically has a 100% graduation rate. This is due to the implementation of a dedicated counseling staff, as well as the implementation of individualized learning programs for students in danger of not graduating on time. Beginning in ninth grade, each student is advised and guided through the course registration process in order to ensure that they are on track for graduation. Students who fail to obtain credit in a previous semester are immediately placed on an improvement program that allows them to recover the lost credit. Our academic counselor facilitates this program and support is provided to the student as needed.*