

# **Francis Howell High School**

## **School Improvement Plan Summary**

Francis Howell High School has grown, expanded, and thrived since its founding in 1915. With its genesis in the Francis Howell family's immigration to the rolling, rural, farming communities 30 miles west of St. Louis in 1800, the family assisted in the formation of 12 one room schools beginning in 1821, seven weeks after Missouri attained statehood. Their efforts culminated in the opening of the Howell Public School District and two year high school known as Francis Howell Institute in 1881. By 1915, consolidation with four schools created the new, four year Francis Howell High School. The small initial enrollment grew to 25 students in the Class of 1932, and today, 1850 students attend in grades 9-12. With 30 of the world's languages spoken in student homes, the school rests in a rural community between the 8,398 acre Weldon Spring Conservation Area and the 6987 acre August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area in St. Charles County.

The 100 year long history of achievement in the Francis Howell community precipitates industriousness and innovation. Francis Howell High School has received

- The 2020 National Blue Ribbon Award
- The 2020 Missouri Gold Star Award
- In 2017, Francis Howell High School received National Model Professional Learning Communities School recognition from Missouri's Department of Education.
- 2011-Present, Advanced Placement District Honor Roll for simultaneously increasing access to AP for underrepresented students while also increasing the percentage of students earning AP Exam scores of 3 or higher;
- ACT's 2008 Red Quill Award for application of student data in improving student and staff performance.

The core catalyst for the growth in school wide achievement stems from the learning community climate and culture established over the last 15 years at Francis Howell High School. With all faculty participating in small teams of 3-6 teachers that meet regularly, the consistent emphasis on constructing a shared purpose around the mission of the school; collaborating for the success of all students; seeking researched instructional practices to inform the work of the faculty; committing to continuous improvement; and measuring outcomes with tangible results empower teams to create high quality instructional experiences and forge improvements within the school. The consequence of this school wide process first appeared in Francis Howell High School's inclusion in Missouri's top 10 most improved schools in 2004 and 2005 and has spurred continued growth on state assessments since that time.

To build on the positive school climate and increase the time dedicated to learning for all students, the 9th grade Edge mentoring program intentionally provides opportunities to create positive rapport among students and teachers from a variety of backgrounds and instill an encouraging, supportive, and reassuring feeling of social emotional support within the school. Beginning with a full day of relationship building activities among incoming 9th grade students and their mentors prior to the beginning of the school year, the program continues through the fall semester with specific activities around academic skills such as study habits, exam

preparation, and seeking academic support as well as the importance of involvement in school activities.

After a reexamination of the school's mission and vision to create opportunities for high levels of learning for all students in 2018, the learning community's focus shifted school wide attention to dignity. More specifically, staff values transformed to prioritize the belief in the good intentions of others; fostering inclusive learning environments; accepting and providing meaningful feedback; and modeling ways of promoting physical and psychological safety. These values, in conjunction with other social emotional learning (SEL), prompted monthly, school wide concentrations on community building and fostering the sense of belonging in all students and staff. These community values signify principles upon which positive school climate continues to be built.

Francis Howell's Response to Intervention (RTI) program identifies and adapts to the needs of all students. In one example, the behavior support teams program screens all students in the school 8 times per year for academic, attendance, and behavior success. Collaborative teams of teachers, counselors, and administrators analyze the results of the screenings and deliver specific, tiered, interventions based on the level and nature of each student's need.

In seeking to better prepare students in special education for transition to the competitive workforce after high school, a new transition classroom developed over the last four years. This classroom implements simulated work environments focused on job readiness skills for 196 jobs. The progressive nature of these jobs enables students and teachers to track accuracy and efficiency of job task completion as students transition among the variety of available activities. The embedded knowledge and skills align with individual needs of students as well as those of local employers and job site facilities.

Throughout its more than 100 year history, Francis Howell High School has adapted to the ever changing needs of the rural community it serves while always maintaining attention to the mission of fostering the success of every student.

## **22-23 Primary Goals**

To continue this mission, Francis Howell High School has following primary goals for this school year.

- **Instruction:** implement high quality instructional strategies from Classroom Instruction That Works and assessment strategies developed in district level professional development in the classroom and through the online classrooms known as Canvas during the 22-23 school year to increase overall achievement and reduce the achievement gap as measured by the Missouri End of Course Assessments, the ACT, and the Advanced Placement Exams.
- **Professional Learning Communities:** all professional learning community teams will implement 3 or more common assessments each semester to identify student performance on priority standards and implement adjustments instruction based on data to improve student mastery.

- Social Emotional Supports: continue to build students' sense of validation and belonging to increase student motivation and academic performance; increase staff implementation of trauma informed practices to equip staff in encouraging on task behaviors; and improve student attendance rate as a means of creating higher levels of cognitive engagement and student academic performance.

### **Professional Development**

The professional development efforts include the long term focus learning and the implementation of Classroom Instruction That Works strategies with an emphasis on clear learning objectives, feedback to students, and cooperative structures. Teachers and administrators visiting classrooms will provide feedback to teachers and engage conversations about the use of these strategies. In addition, all teachers will participate in district level professional development on effective assessment.

### **Parent and Community Engagement**

High levels of parent and community engagement are essential elements of student and staff success at Francis Howell High School. To learn more about activities, please access the following avenues:

- Monthly Academic Flyer communicated to all parents.
- The principal's Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/FHHSPrincipal>
- The school website <http://fhsdfhhs.sharpschool.net/>
- The school activities website <https://howellvikings.com/>
- The school Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/fhsvikings/>