

Dr. Joseph A. Whelan Elementary School, 2026-27

School Improvement Plan (2026-27)

Dr. Joseph A. Whelan Elementary School provides students in grades K-5 with multiple experiences and learning opportunities to engage in curriculum, building relationships, and personal achievements. Through consistent collaboration with families and clear expectations, our school community ensures every student feels safe, supported, and able to succeed.

Vision

Dr. Joseph A. Whelan Elementary School will be a place where students feel seen and heard, engaging in meaningful learning tailored to their needs, while helping them to achieve beyond their expectations. Staff will work collaboratively and consistently to build strong relationships with students to support growth and well-being. Staff, students, and families will create a connected school community where all students are prepared for their next steps.

Values

Growth Mindset: Students will improve their skills with effort and practice. Students will adhere to the belief that they can always improve their abilities through effort and perseverance.

Accountability : Students will hold themselves accountable for their own learning and actions.

Create an environment where students learn and grow from mistakes and accept both positive and negative consequences for their choices.

Kindness and Empathy : Students will show kindness and empathy by acknowledging their own feelings and those of others.

Create an environment where students show kindness and care toward themselves and others.

Curiosity : Students will be curious to learn new things and push themselves to take risks academically.

Create an environment where students feel safe to engage in activities outside of their comfort zone and have the ability to try new things.

Teamwork and Respect : Treat others the way you want to be treated

Respect everyone even if they look, act, think differently than you

To create a safe school community where everyone feels included. Understand the importance of learning from each other.

Personal Academic Growth : Students will show success through individualized academic growth.

All students are individuals and learn at different capacities. Setting goals for all students to growth through their personal interests, ability levels, and strengths is necessary for success.

Theory of Action

If School...

Provides students with high-quality instruction, assessment, and feedback within a safe and consistent learning environment.

Creates the environment for students to engage in rigorous and relevant learning experiences.

Enhances students' unique skills and strengths.

Prioritizes and designs multiple opportunities and pathways to engage as learners.

Engages families and partners in a collaborative community.

Then School can...

Students can reach their highest academic potential.

Students can attain growth and achievement as life-long learners.

Students can grow socially, emotionally, and academically.

So that...

Students can be productive, contributing, and impactful members of their community.

Needs Assessment

Our needs assessment revealed that a strength of our school community are the relationships between students and staff. However, the data in the academic areas of math and English language arts (ELA) revealed a need to focus on improving math, reading, and science scores. Here is the baseline data based on Dr. Joseph A. Whelan's 2025-26 accountability report card:

- 16.2% of our students are proficient in ELA. Whelan is performing 17.6% below the LEA and almost 20% below the state. Additionally less than 5% of our SWD and MLL population are proficient on RICAS.
- 12.7% of our students are proficient in mathematics. Whelan is performing 9.7% below the LEA and 17.3% below the state. Additionally 5.9% of SWD and less than 5% of our MLL population are proficient on RICAS.
- 9.8% of our students are proficient in science. Whelan is performing 16.1% below the LEA and 20.8% below the state.

*Whelan Elementary is identified for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) for economically disadvantaged and white students. These low performing subgroups are identified with both low achievement levels and growth levels.

While Whelan Elementary School has urgent academic needs, we saw significant growth on our surveyworks data this year. We met our SIP goal, growing from 39% favorable responses from staff related to school climate in 2022% to 73% favorable responses in 2026.

We have improved our student attendance from 34.8% in 2022 to 26.7% in 2025, but still need to improve before we meet our goal of 20%. Our SWD population increased their rate of chronic absenteeism from 20.6% in 2022 to 33.1% in 2025. One area worth celebrating is that of our MLL population: here, we have surpassed our goal at 17% of students being labeled as chronically absent in 2025, down from 30% in 2022.

Therefore, we have selected the following main priorities for this academic year: Improving Core Instruction, Improving School Climate, and Improving Attendance

Priority 1: Improving Core Instruction

Whelan Elementary will improve overall academic achievement and growth by implementing core curriculum and instructional practices with fidelity.

Through the use of ongoing learning opportunities and necessary resources we will develop common protocols in K through 5 to ensure the fidelity of instruction and differentiation for all students.

Measurable Goals

Goal #1 - To increase the percentage of students (grades 3-5) meeting or exceeding proficiency on the ELA RICAS assessment achievement from by 5% each year by the end of the SY 2029. In doing so, Whelan will align with LEA proficiency rates.

Initiative 1: Improving Tier 1 ELA Instruction		
<i>We will improve Tier 1 instruction through student engagement, use of data to inform instruction and design, and teaching and learning practices including but not limited to coteaching, station rotation, collaborative design, and Total Participation Techniques.</i>		
Action Step	Complete-Date	Notes
Learning Walks in the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Data will be collected and shared using a walkthrough tool.	06/14/2027	Debrief days/reflection opportunities will occur

		with teachers after each walkthrough.
Hold ELA learning academy in Fall and Spring for students who are "partially proficient" on RICAS ELA.	06/14/2027	Based on 25-26 RICAS data
Create a schedule, systems, and routines for staff that allow for regular CPT across all grade levels. All grades will meet once per week in September and at least biweekly starting in October.	06/14/2027	
Implement district-developed RICAS Slide Decks and Standards Mastery iReady Quizzes with released items for each grade level and provide instruction to students using the released items.	04/30/2027	
Promote school-wide Professional Development goals of coteaching, student engagement through structured discourse (Total Participation Techniques), and Station Rotation through a consistent approach.	06/14/2027	
As needed, teachers will be supported in proactive data-driven planning by coaches.	06/14/2027	
Ongoing progress-monitoring of TSI-identified groups.	06/29/2027	

Goal #2 - To increase the percentage of students (grades 3-5) meeting or exceeding proficiency on the Math RICAS assessment achievement from by 3% each year by the end of the SY 2029. In doing so, Whelan will align with LEA proficiency rates.

Initiative 1: Improving Tier 1 Math Instruction

Reveal materials used in station rotation model in all K-5 classrooms. Differentiated station rotation, student collaboration and adjusting instruction based on student data is our focus.

Action Step	Complete-Date	Notes
As needed, teachers will be supported in proactive data-driven planning by coaches.	06/14/2027	
Learning Walkthroughs in the fall, winter, and spring. Data will be collected using a walkthrough tool.	06/15/2027	Debrief days / reflection opportunities will occur with teachers after each walkthrough.
Math learning academy in the Fall and Spring for students who are "partially proficient" on RICAS Math	06/14/2027	Based on 25-26 RICAS data
Promote school-wide Professional Development goals of coteaching, student engagement through structured discourse (Total Participation Techniques), and Station Rotation through a consistent approach	06/14/2027	
Implement district-developed RICAS Slide Decks and Standards Mastery iReady Quizzes with released items for each grade level and provide instruction to students using the released items.	04/30/2027	
Create a schedule, systems, and routines for staff that allow for regular CPT across all grade levels. All grades will meet once per week in September and at least biweekly starting in October.	06/14/2027	
Ongoing progress-monitoring of TSI-identified groups.	06/28/	

Goal #3 - To increase the percentage of students (grade 5) meeting or exceeding proficiency on the Science State Assessment from 3% by the end of the SY 2029.

Initiative 1: Improving Tier 1 Science Instruction

Amplify materials used in science inquiry models in all K-5 classrooms.

Action Step	Complete-Date	Notes
Continued monitoring of building schedule to allow for sustainable, predictable, and realistic Science Blocks	06/20/2027	
Share NGSA proficiency results with the school and a collaborative Spiral Review Toolbox with Grade 5. (Ideally collaborative across all NPSD Grades 5)	01/31/2027	
Apply Learning Walks, Professional Development, and School Goals to science context with a focus on applying practice to the focus skill and overarching goal of the curriculum/program.	06/13/2027	
Implement science instruction using Amplify curriculum resources in all K-5 classrooms.	06/12/2027	
Ongoing progress-monitoring of TSI-identified groups.	06/29/2027	

Priority 2: Improving School Climate

Whelan will improve the overall school climate for both students and staff.

Through the use of SEL initiatives and team building opportunities we will build a cohesive, safe, and supportive school community, inclusive of all stakeholders.

Measurable Goals

Goal #1 - Whelan Elementary will increase the percentage of favorable responses from students for questions aligned to School Engagement on Survey Works by 3-5% a year, improving from 36% in 2026 to a minimum of 45% in 2029.

Initiative 1: Positive School Wide Culture and Engagement

Develop and sustain a positive, connected school community by strengthening partnerships between school and families, elevating student voice, reinforcing school values through consistent recognition systems, and embedding social-emotional learning practices throughout the school. This initiative focuses on creating a culture where students feel heard, valued, supported, and connected to their learning and school community.

Action Step	Complete-Date	Notes
Gather student feedback about their school experience through a student-facing survey and student focus groups.	06/24/2027	Questions aligned to School Engagement Survey Works
Align PBIS system with core School Values - Student of the Month to be aligned to specific traits.	06/13/2027	
Continue to embed RULER components in classrooms and teacher practice	06/13/2027	School Charter, Class Charter, Implementation of Mood Meter in classrooms
Align communication strategy throughout the building to support steady, frequent school-family partnership.	09/01/2026	

Priority 3: Improving Attendance

Increasing family engagement will allow Whelan Elementary School to build a community focused on students increasing academic achievement and building strong character. When families are more involved in the educational process, students have a stronger foundation to grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

Whelan Elementary will work to involve families in more school events, provide parent teacher organization opportunities, and increase communication through inclusive practices.

Measurable Goals

Goal #1 - We plan to improve our overall school attendance rates from 20% of students being labeled as chronically absent in 2026, to a maximum of 11% of students in 2029.

Initiative 1: Increase Student Attendance

Improve student attendance by building strong relationships with students and families, monitoring attendance regularly, communicating concerns early, and recognizing positive attendance habits. Staff will work together to identify students who are beginning to show attendance concerns, provide support to families, and reinforce the importance of being present at school every day.

Action Step	Complete-Date	Notes
Continue to build on the school culture where all are responsible for developing a relationship with students and families, specifically those who begin to develop absenteeism patterns	10/02/2026	Communicating with families about how absences contribute to long-term academic

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Create an Attendance Team to monitor student attendance, implement initiatives, and inform parents of student's attendance patterns/totals. Send letters to flagged students every month letting them know attendance is on track to be identified as chronic
Specifically: Monitor attendance and follow up on students who are beginning to develop patterns of more than 2 days a month.

06/13/20
27

Positive recognition at monthly event for Perfect Attendance for students, classroom attendance, trimester recognition. (Big Attendance Celebration every 5-6 weeks)

06/13/20
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