



Albany Junior High School Annual Plan

Continuous Improvement Plan (AJHS CIP)

2016

Introduction

Our School's purpose is...

To empower each learner to excel in a fast moving world

The core purpose of our school is to give all our learners the confidence and capacity to flourish in the world they are going to live in, helping them to build up the mental, emotional, social and strategic resources to enjoy challenge and cope well with uncertainty and complexity.

The educative purpose of Albany Junior High School is to:

- Supplement the upbringing provided by families, whanau and communities with a more systematic preparation for the future.
- Activate high quality learning. Achievement at AJHS includes traditional 'success criteria' such as academic results but also includes broadening learners' horizons in order to prepare them to face the tests of life.
- Ensure that the cognitive (learning and thinking) and conative (personal and emotional) needs of each and every learner are met and expanded upon.

Mission Statement - (Manaakitanga – Leading with moral purpose)

By addressing the needs of the emerging adolescent, we create and maintain an environment that empowers each and every learner to excel by activating and building powerful attitudes, skills and knowledge. We recognise that the context in which our learners will excel is that of a fast moving, changeable world.

Empower Each Learner to Excel in a Fast Moving World

We empower each learner to reach their full potential, whatever their starting level, creating deeply curious young adults who are resourceful and reflective, are resilient, and understand the need for reciprocity with others. They will set goals to make above average academic progress towards nationally set standards, measured by effect size analysis with 0.4 as the benchmark target.

Foundational Vision Principles

1. Community:

- AJHS values Participation, Respect, Integrity, Diligence, and Empathy (PRIDE).
- These values will lead to productive collaboration and synergistic outcomes that exceed the outcomes that one person would be capable of.
- Learners feel a sense of higher purpose than that of selfish pursuits, through interdependence.

2. Learnable Intelligence:

- AJHS believes that our future focused education is valuable for all young people and involves helping them to discover the things that they would really love to be great at, and strengthening their will and skill to pursue them.
- AJHS infuses Learning Mindframes. This demands that teachers engage in ‘Split Screen’ thinking, with one side of the ‘screen’ being the best-practice teaching of content and the other side being knowledge of the learner.
- Intelligence is not fixed and we display a growth mindset at all times. Confidence, capability and passion can be developed since real-world intelligence is something that people can be helped to build up.
- Learners know that they do not know things, revel in learning what they do not know, know what to do when they do not know what to do, build the skills to learn through applying AJHS learner mindsets and stretch their minds to excel in core learning areas and areas of passion.

3. Understanding:

- Learners will know that understanding comes from deep curiosity, through being open to making errors, and whole hearted involvement in asking questions, investigating and coming to a rigorous understanding. Understanding is open to change should new information come to light. A closed mind does not lead to full understanding.

4. Mastery:

- Through being proactive, setting goals to which they are committed, and working hard whilst striving for mastery, learners will realise their potential, be fulfilled and confident, and will excel in whatever they apply themselves to.

Critical Success Factors (CSFs)

The following Critical Success Factors are foundational elements within the framework of the Albany Junior High School Continuous Improvement Plan (AJHS CIP). These CSFs will serve as key focus areas in our school improvement planning. The CSFs documented are grounded in evidence-based research and have been found to be key elements for implementing improvement efforts. All of these research-based measures, when taken as a whole, are key to continuous school improvement.

CSF 1: Improve Academic Performance

Academic performance is the foundational Critical Success Factor. By ensuring the Critical Success Factors of quality teaching practices, data driven instructional decisions, effective leadership, productive community and parent involvement, efficient use of academic learning time, and maintaining a positive school climate, our school can increase performance for all students.

CSF 2: Increase Quality of Teacher Practices

Continuously improving the quality of teaching practices focuses on the need to recruit and retain effective teachers while supporting and enhancing the knowledge and skills of (previously well-recruited) current staff with continuous professional development. Research has demonstrated a clear connection between the quality of teaching practices and increased student performance. The evidence shows that low-expectancy students are more likely to benefit from instruction by a teacher using highly effective practices than are their more advantaged peers (Nye, Konstantoupoulos, & Hedges, 2004). Students enrolled in successive classes taught by teachers using effective practices show greater gains in student performance than student groups taught by teachers using less effective practices (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). AJHS can have a direct impact upon student achievement through the effective implementation of a comprehensive teacher development-based appraisal program with inherent follow up processes.

CSF 3: Increase Leadership Effectiveness

Leadership effectiveness targets the need for the AJHS school leadership to exhibit characteristics and skills known to promote and implement positive educational change. Of the elements proven to have the greatest degree of impact on student achievement,

school leadership is second only to classroom instruction. Examples of successful school turnaround efforts without effective leadership are rare (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). The foundational beliefs of the school leadership are based upon Student Centred Leadership (Robinson, V., 2011), whereby we accept that we are a learning institution but also recognize the importance of relational trust within the teaching team.

CSF 4: Increase the Use of Quality Data to Drive Instruction

The use of quality data to drive instructional decisions can lead to improved student performance (Wayman, 2005); (Wayman, Cho, & Johnston, 2007); (Wohlstetter, Datnow, & Park, 2008). This CSF emphasises effective uses of multiple sources of disaggregated data. However, it is not necessarily the amount of data utilised, but the quality of how the information is used which matters (Hamilton, et al., 2009). For example, academic achievement can improve when teachers create regular opportunities to share data with individual students (Black & Williams, 2005). Therefore, it is not only the use of data to drive instructional decision-making that is significant, but also the ongoing communication of data with others that provides the greatest opportunity for data to have a positive impact on student learning outcomes. To enable this, AJHS has a dedicated Head of Data and Assessment, a teacher leader who is highly qualified in data collection, analysis and reporting, and who has an in-depth knowledge of assessment types, including reliability and viability, used at the school. This person is also well versed in reporting and visualization.

CSF 5: Increased Learning Time

Research promotes a three-pronged approach to Increased Learning Time that includes the following elements: (a) increased academic learning time; (b) increased enrichment activities; (c) and increased teacher collaboration and professional development. Increased learning time necessitates strategies that maximise the number of sustained, engaging 'learning minutes', the result of which is "higher academic achievement, especially for disadvantaged students." (Jez & Wassmer, 2011; Gettinger & Seibert 2002). To be successful, increased learning time must be applied strategically. Effective strategies include providing a rigorous, well-rounded education that provides for Senior High School and career readiness, improving teacher development, improving and aligning the curriculum, reducing distractions, using the time for teachers to thoroughly

respond to data, and setting aside time to develop teachers in ways that continuously strengthen their teaching practices (Kaplan & Chan, 2011).

CSF 6: Increase Family, Whanau and Community Engagement

Family, whanau, and community engagement calls for increased opportunities for input from parents and the community, as well as the necessity for effective communication. Parent, family, whanau, and community involvement has a direct correlation with academic achievement and school improvement. When school staff, parents, families, and surrounding communities work together to support academic achievement, students tend to earn higher achievement levels, attend schools for longer and more regularly (leading to higher lifetime earnings, e.g., Bullen, 2006), and eventually enrol in programmes of higher education (Barton, 2003).

CSF 7: Improve School Climate

The connection between school climate and student achievement has been well established in research. Focusing on the development of a school's climate, as a happy learning environment, is fundamental to improved teacher morale and student achievement (Nomura, 1999). Formally assessing and addressing school climate is essential to our school's effort toward successful continuous improvement, achievement and making a difference for low expectation student groups. Indicators of a happy school climate and invitational learning environment are increased attendance and reduced disciplinary action. Increased attendance in extracurricular activities is another sign that students feel supported by an affirming school climate. (Scales & Leffert, 1999).

The **Critical Success Factors (CSFs)** reflect behaviours that must be demonstrated by students at the school or by adults working on their behalf. The effective implementation of each CSF is crucial in school efforts to meet stated goals and objectives. Critical Success Factors must also be monitored using measurable performance indicators. It is these indicators that will enable our school leaders, Board members, teachers, students, parents and staff to determine whether we - and our learning programmes - are on track to achieve their desired outcomes.

The Strategic Frame: High Reliability School (HRS) Framework

Dr. R. Marzano's research suggests a framework is needed in order to become a HRS. His framework shows how best practices work together and provides indicators to empower schools to measure their progress on attaining five increasing levels of reliability. Using the framework and indicators, schools can drive permanent, positive, and significant impacts on student achievement by synthesising multiple complex initiatives into one harmonious system.

Levels of Operation for a High Reliability School

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|---------|---------------------------------------|
| Level 5 | Competency-Based Education |
| Level 4 | Standards-Referenced Reporting |
| Level 3 | Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum |
| Level 2 | Effective Teaching in Every Classroom |
| Level 1 | Safe and Collaborative Culture |

It is in relation to the 5 levels of the HRS framework that the Critical Success Factors have been formulated. Each level has critical commitments that research has identified as being the best practice for each level, e.g., professional learning communities (PLCs) are the critical commitment for Level 1, Safe and Collaborative Culture. Each level also has measurables in the form of leading and lagging indicators, which are assessed by use of surveys, focus groups and observation.

NOTE: In the goals to follow, you will see reference to the CSFs and the HRS levels. There are also acronyms used in order to save space¹.

¹ The acronyms' meanings are:

- SLT: Senior Leadership Team (Principal, Deputy Principals (DP) and Business Manager)
- ILT: Instructional Leadership Team (SLT, Heads Of Learning Areas (HOLAs), Assistant HOLAs, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo), Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT), Head of Data and Assessment (HODA), and Head of Digital Learning (HODL)
- DT: Data Team (Principal, HODA, and selected teachers)
- HFT: Happiness Factor Team (DP, Whanau Leaders and Assistants (WLs) Social Club coordinator, selected students)