



MURDOCK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Where Students Come First!

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March 27, 2018

To the Murdock Middle School Community,

Over the past few weeks, there have been questions raised about the use of Summit Learning in the middle school. The teachers and I would like to take this opportunity to answer these questions and share our vision for the students at MMS. Below you will find our response to the frequently asked questions we have heard.

At Murdock Middle School, we envision that every individual, upon leaving the middle school, is equipped with the skills, knowledge, and habits necessary to persevere and realize their unique potential. We understand that every student is an individual and deserves an education that meets their needs, whether that be specialized instruction, interventions, or extension tasks to challenge students. It is our job as educators to provide these opportunities.

Murdock Middle School has remained around the 10th percentile on the MCAS assessments for the past 3 years. Although steady progress has been made in improving task/lesson design and student engagement, student growth has been stagnant. In the winter of 2016, Murdock Middle School was selected to participate in the Level 3 Turnaround Process developed by the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The process is designed to provide Level 3 schools with constructive information and feedback that will contribute to the school's efforts to engage in rapid improvement. During this process (classroom observations, principal interview and staff survey conducted by the American Institute of Research in April 2017), the Murdock Middle School staff came to the understanding that to increase learning and performance, we needed to increase the knowledge and skill of teacher, and provide more opportunities for students to build close relationships with their teachers and therefore, gain a better understanding of the content. Using data received from the TSV process, the School Improvement Team created a one-year Turnaround Plan that focuses on the implementation of Personalized Learning.

After conducting school visits, speaking with users of Summit and conducting additional research on Summit Learning, the MMS faculty viewed Summit Learning as offering the change we had been searching for. The staff and I went through an extensive application process to demonstrate our readiness and commitment to improve instruction and were accepted.

What interested us in Summit's approach to personalized learning was much more than the platform. The platform is useful, but the exciting part is what it allows teachers and students to do together. Here are what teachers are saying about personalized learning and the use of Summit in their classrooms:

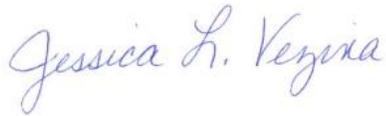
- *Each day during our Personalized Learning Time, I guide students through two separate content areas or skills. I enjoy these periods because I get to work closely with a group of students who have acknowledged that they need some assistance in that specific area. I love that my students are becoming such strong self-advocates. –A. Coleman*
- *This year for science class my students have been busy getting their hands dirty and exploring science through inquiry-based and problem solving based projects. The majority of these projects*

are hands-on lessons that do not involve a computer...Using data to inform my teaching has made me a better teacher. Rather than teaching everyone the same thing at the same time, I can now use data provided by the platform to better teach smaller groups of students exactly what they need. –A. Herrick

- *Through mentoring I have made much stronger relationship with all my mentees. The platform allows me to quickly look at their progress (daily, weekly, and overall) and their work, form targeted groups and prioritize their next steps in class. I spend way less time chasing down lost/incomplete assignments which frees up more instructional time within the class. –M. Bolick*

Change is not a one-step process; throughout this year, we continue to improve our instructional practice to make sure all of our students are receiving the support they need, when they need it. Murdock Middle School would like to invite parents, guardians and the community to visit our school to see the classroom experience first-hand. We are holding tours every Monday, from 8:45-9:45 and 12:00-1:00. We also understand parents have very busy schedules and we are willing to find a time to meet that works best for you. The teachers and I would love to talk to you about the changes we have made and to answer any questions you may have. If you would like to set up a time to meet, please call us at 978-297-1256 ext. 5101.

Sincerely,



Jessica L. Vezina
Principal