



**ACADEMICALLY EXCELLENT.** High-performing schools with middle grades are academically excellent. They challenge all students to use their minds well.

1. All students are expected to meet high academic standards.
2. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are aligned with high standards.
3. The curriculum emphasizes deep understanding of important concepts and the development of essential skills.
4. Instructional strategies include a variety of challenging and engaging activities that are clearly related to the concepts and skills being taught.
5. Teachers use a variety of methods to assess student performance (e.g., exhibitions, projects, performance tasks).
6. The faculty and master schedule provide students time to meet rigorous academic standards.
7. Students are provided the support they need to meet rigorous academic standards.
8. The adults in the school are provided time and frequent opportunities to enhance student achievement by working with colleagues to deepen their knowledge and to improve their standards-based practices.



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**What Cosgrove already does well:**

- Expectations are clear for students and parents.
  - o Ex: All teachers have a syllabus that is shared for their courses.
- Prior to beginning an assignment, teachers supply students with exemplars of high quality work that meet the performance standard.
  - o Ex: <https://ensemble.monroe2boces.org/Watch/n4KHr29D>
- Students know what high quality work should be like. Students revise their work based on meaningful feedback until they meet or exceed the performance standard or level.
  - o Research based knowledge on feedback—Hattie’s “6” from Dr. Meier
- Standards provide a coherent vision for what students know and are able to do.
- Students, teachers and families understand what students are learning and why.
- In any class and at any time, students can explain the importance of what they are learning.
- The curriculum is rigorous, non-repetitive and moves forward substantially.
- Work is demanding and steadily progresses.
- Strategies include: direct instruction, cooperative learning, project based learning, simulations, hands on learning-integrated technology
- Teachers make connections across the disciplines to reinforce important concepts and assist students in applying what they have learned to solve real world problems.
  - o Cross curricular projects
- All teachers incorporate academic and informational literacy into their course work (i.e. Reading, writing, note taking, researching, listening and speaking).
  - o LDC, focus on writing
- Common assessments are consistent and expected in all departments:
  - o Gradecam data is reviewed and evaluated by departments to determine next steps.
- Assessment design team was initiated during the Spring of 2015 to improve and create a diverse way to improve our overall assessment expectations.
- Scheduling committee made recommendations and adjustments to the schedule a few years ago.
- Information Literacy and Information Technology at 6th grade continue to be adjusted to enhance delivery and overall program.
- Various levels of AIS support are embedded within the schedule to ensure proper support for students.
- Students have a wide range of ways to access help through lunch intervention, Alternative Learning Center, AIS, Flex, Activity Period.
- Common planning time for 7th and 8th grade departments has been established.
- There is increased planning time for 6th grade teachers.
- Department meeting norms were developed by members of each department.
- 21st Century Team, Literacy Team, and other faculty-led professional development opportunities have supported the goals and initiatives of the building.

**Areas for growth:**

- Develop cross curricular projects through a humanities and STEM approach within all grade levels
- Develop a variety of ways to assess students' learning using portfolios, presentations, etc...
- Continue the RTI Committee and delivery of interventions based on a Tiered system
- Continue to provide training and support for all faculty on close reading and other literacy-based instructional strategies
- Continue to align and increase the rigor and expectations of each curricular area
- Continue to develop and support staff with the integration of technology within lessons and units by the 21st Century Team



**DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIVENESS.** High-performing schools with middle grades are sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence.

1. The staff creates a personalized environment that supports each student's intellectual, ethical, social, and physical development.
2. The school provides access to comprehensive services to foster healthy physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development.
3. All teachers foster curiosity, creativity and the development of social skills in a structured and supportive environment.
4. The curriculum is both socially significant and relevant to the personal and career interests of young adolescents.
5. Teachers use an interdisciplinary approach to reinforce important concepts, skills, and address real-world problems.
6. Students are provided multiple opportunities to explore a rich variety of topics and interests in order to develop their identity, learn about their strengths, discover and demonstrate their own competence, and plan for their future.
7. Students have opportunities for voice—posing questions, reflecting on experiences, and participating in decisions and leadership activities.
8. The school staff members develop alliances with families to enhance and support the well-being of the children.
9. Staff members provide all students with opportunities to develop citizenship skills, to use the community as a classroom, and to engage the community in providing resources and support.
10. The school provides age-appropriate, co-curricular activities to foster social skills and character, and to develop interests beyond the classroom environment.



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**What Cosgrove already does well:**

- Team structure for both adults and students; considering a house structure for 2015-2016.
- Each team meets weekly to engage in professional collaboration and dialogue.
- Counselors loop for three years, forming relationships built on trust that are fostered and maintained.
- DASA has heightened mandated reporting; all faculty are trained on identifying and communicating student issues.
- Counseling office works in close collaboration with the Family Support Center to ensure that students and families get the help they need.
- Nurses, counselors, social worker and school psychologist provide a wide range of student support.
- School social worker and teachers offer courses through the Office of Continuing Education for parents and community members.
- Standards-based learning/instructional strategies continue to develop through professional development, faculty meeting breakout sessions and a variety of instructional coaches in the building (21st century, Differentiation Mentor, Literacy).
- Classroom procedures and routines are evident across the building—classroom referrals are at an all-time low.
- Study and organizational skills are embedded into daily teaching practices including the use of graphic organizers, online study tools (Moodle, IXL Math, Quizlet, etc...)
- Each department developed a plan to utilize one new piece of technology at each grade level once a quarter.
- Info. Literacy has started to work closely with ELA/Literacy teachers to provide complementary instruction and research.
- Through the implementation of the CCLS for literacy in the content areas, all teachers are responsible for literacy instruction and achievement.
- Counselors push into a variety of core courses throughout middle school to develop academic plans to support future career goals. New this year: Career Day in 6th grade, which has resulted in a dramatic increase of dialogue regarding academic and career goals.
- Partnerships with community to expose students to career opportunities have been enhanced with Career Day.
- The master schedule reflects all of the Commissioner’s Regulations outlined in Part 100.4.
- Cosgrove’s activity period has an “Open Door” policy. Counselors and principals maintain this policy throughout each day.
- Starting this school year, students were actively and purposefully invited to participate in parent/teacher conferences.
- Parents are informed using the following communication tools: Infinite Campus, Teacher webpages/homework websites, Ned’s e-blasts and newsletters, Instagram (students too)
- Supporting the Community: Fundraising activities, Groundhog Olympics, Pat Chapman Day of Caring, Office Helpers
- Clubs and Activities (17)
- Modified team sports (Fall-13, Winter-10, Spring-8)
- Visual/Performing Arts: Cosgrove musical, Art show participation, Chorus, Band, Jazz Band, Jazz Lab Band, Jazz Ensemble, Junior Drumline

**Areas for growth:**

- Students talk about issues in their own lives, their community and their world.
- Student generated: (Take action, make informed choices, work collaboratively, learn to resolve conflicts)
- Cosgrove Blog? FACS/Health?
- Through student participation in a variety of leadership clubs and organizations (some chosen, some voluntary), **SOME** students take action, make informed choices and work collaboratively (Student council, Principal’s Advisory Council, Student Leaders).
- Cosgrove is considering reassigning administrative duties to better support a focus on STEM and humanities. One goal is to increase interdisciplinary units across all grade levels and have students work on the same project in several different classes.
- NUMERACY?
- Not ALL students have access to all courses due to program requirements: AIS, Resource Room
- **Give All** students a real say: Student Council, Student Leaders, others?
- Parent involvement: library (some), special events (some), No PTA/PTO
- “Students take on projects to improve their school, community, state, nation and world.” How?
- Problem-based learning/project based learning
- Nature Center?



**SOCIAL EQUITY.** High-performing schools with middle grades are socially equitable, democratic, and fair. They provide every student with high-quality teachers, resources, learning opportunities, and supports. They keep positive options open for all students.

1. To the fullest extent possible, all students, including English learners, students with disabilities, gifted and honors students, participate in heterogeneous classes with high academic and behavioral expectations.
2. Students are provided the opportunity to use many and varied approaches to achieve and demonstrate competence and mastery of standards.
3. Teachers continually adapt curriculum, instruction, assessment, and scheduling to meet their students' diverse and changing needs.
4. All students have equal access to valued knowledge in all school classes and activities.
5. Students have ongoing opportunities to learn about and appreciate their own and others' cultures.
6. The school community knows every student well.
7. To the fullest extent possible, the faculty welcomes and encourages the active participation of all its families and makes sure that all its families are an integral part of the school.
8. The school's reward system is designed to value diversity, civility, service, and democratic citizenship.
9. To the fullest extent possible, staff members understand and support the family backgrounds and values of their students.
10. The school rules are clear, fair, and consistently applied.



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**What Cosgrove already does well:**

- Faculty and administration are committed to helping each student produce proficient work:
  - o Tutoring
  - o Mentoring
  - o Differentiated instruction
  - o Special adaptations
  - o Students with disabilities are integrated throughout the building to get the same instruction as their peers.
- All students are able to participate in extracurricular clubs and activities.
- Teachers differentiate instruction in order to give each student equal opportunity to comprehend the standards-based curriculum:
  - o Technology-based instruction
  - o 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills infused into lessons
  - o Alternative assessments
  - o Common Planning
- To the fullest extent possible, students with disabilities are in regular classrooms that are co-taught by special education professionals:
  - o CT Model replaced the co-teaching model
- All students use technology to do research and analyze data, read more than textbooks, and understand how to solve complex problems.
- Materials in the media center represent all of the cultures of the students (Library).
- Multiple viewpoints are encouraged.
- Each student is appreciated and respected:
  - o Student of Month
  - o End of quarter pizza surprise
- Mobile Food Pantry
- Concerts and Play
- Provide a safe, inviting environment for students.

**Areas for potential growth:**

- To the fullest extent possible, students with disabilities are in regular classrooms that are co-taught by special education professionals: What about in exploratories?
- All students have access to participate in interest-based classes, activities or opportunities.
  - o Students have little choice in course selection at this level
- Accelerated, short-term interventions for students with similar needs are fluid and do not become low-level or permanent tracks:
  - o RTI? SIP? FBA?
- The school values knowledge from the diverse cultures represented in the school, community, and our nation.
- Families often come and share their traditions and beliefs.
  - o Check with other schools.
- Teachers use multi-cultural materials and methods (Some teachers do, but still an area we need work on).
- Transportation, meals, childcare, and translation support are provided so all families of diverse cultures and languages can attend school events.
- Every student has an adult advocate and supporter in school.



**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES.** High-performing schools with middle grades are learning organizations that establish norms, structures, and organizational arrangements to support and sustain their trajectory toward excellence.

1. A shared vision of what a high-performing school is, and does, drives every facet of school change.
2. The principal has the responsibility and authority to hold the school-improvement enterprise together, including day-to-day know-how, coordination, strategic planning, and communication.
3. The school is a community of practice in which learning, experimentation, and the opportunity for reflection are the norm.
4. The school and district devote resources to content-rich professional learning, which is connected to reaching and sustaining the school vision and increasing student achievement.
5. The school is not an island unto itself; it is a part of a larger educational system, i.e., districts, networks, and community partnerships.
6. The school staff holds itself accountable for student success.
7. District and school staff possess and cultivate the collective will to persevere, believing it is their business to produce increased achievement and enhanced development of all students.
8. The school staff and district staff partner with colleges and universities.
9. The school includes families and community members in setting and supporting the school's trajectory toward high performance.



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**What Cosgrove already does well:**

- We are guided by our district’s mission statement, which is posted throughout the district.
- Teachers have input via surveys, BPT reps, and open communication with administration to modify current ‘practices’
- Shared decision-making includes staff, administrators, parents and teachers, all of whom have taken the responsibility to make the changes necessary for school improvement.
- Principal's Advisory Council and Student Council allow students a voice in school decisions.
- Longevity of administration and their assigned duties (departments, grade level, etc...) within the building/district ensures progress
- Building plans are shared electronically, shared via faculty meeting breakout sessions, voted upon, and evaluated by staff
- Communication Methods from Administration: Monthly Courier, E-News, Instagram, open door policy
- Administrators regularly participate in department and team meetings
- Teacher assignments are distributed prior to the end of the year for the following year
- Faculty Supports: mentor programs for new teachers, DI, technology
- 21st Century Team: piloting technology, support for teachers
- Break-out training sessions in faculty meetings (literacy, technology)
- Common department planning, collaborative atmosphere and culture
- Departments analyze data together and are transparent with results (use of GradeCam)
- Growth in technology and staff development offerings
- Teachers understand needs of middle school aged children and tailor instruction accordingly
- Support staff is available to co-teach or assist in delivery and development of lessons (Corey Allen, 21st Century Team)
- HS-MS partnerships: sharing of teachers, upper level student projects, tour of high school for students as needed from 8th to 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the spring, completion of 4 year plans in 8th grade to ensure proper placement of students in the high school, and the placement of students in Academy prior to entering 9th grade
- Parent information night hosted at Cosgrove in the spring for upcoming 6th graders and at the high school for incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders
- Smooth transition from elementary school to middle school through 5th grade guided tours of Cosgrove in the spring
- District to district: Inviting those outside to share (STW) and visiting other districts (math models, schedule ideas)
- Service club connections: Foodlink
- Connections with BOCES: training of teacher leaders at their workshops
- Review of former special education model and reimplementaion of consultant model  
Cosgrove works collaboratively to bring coherence to curriculum (department planning time), assessment (common assessments; common grading practices), intervention (SIP, team meetings with administrators and counselors), data collection (Grade Cam), data collection and analysis (department planning time), and accountability for student achievement (team plans, SIP, BIT, etc...)
- The school staff holds itself accountable for student success by: PBIS program & activities, working lunch (lunch intervention), team interventions, parent involvement/conferences
- Accelerated programs, Honors FLEX (as motivation), resource room, AIS
- Reevaluation of master schedule to maximize student learning and retention
- The school staff and district staff partner with colleges and universities: Door signs, 6<sup>th</sup> grade career day, FACS resume and interview process, Hosting of student teachers/observers, Teachers serve as guest speakers/performers to area colleges, 2 staff members are adjunct professors at area colleges, the principal contacts colleges when hiring new teachers as needed
- Mentoring program for new teachers in in place and follows new teachers for 2 years

**Areas for potential growth:**

- We need to create visuals of the building plan and goals to post in the school.
- Curriculum within most departments is vertically aligned. Departments need to review curriculum and reduce overlap.
- Student survey to demonstrate whether or not the door signs made an impact on their awareness of college offerings or choices
- Need to increase our partnerships with area colleges through student campus visitations as well as inviting college representatives to our school