

School Improvement Plan

South Spencer Middle School

ALL STUDENTS ~ ALL THE TIME

South Spencer School Corporation - 7445

South Spencer Middle School - 7797
1298 N. Orchard Road, Rockport, IN 47635
Principal- Scot A. French

For the period of
2024-2025

Updated September 2024

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The following committee members comprise the School Improvement Committee and School Wide Planning Team

SSMS

Scot A. French - Principal

Abbie Lawalin - Guidance Counselor

Teacher- Pam Wilkinson

Teacher- Sharon Helms

Teacher- Pam Lindsey

Teacher- Christine Kuester

Teacher- Jennifer Eble

Teacher- Mallory Tempel

**South Spencer Community School Corporation
Vision Statement**

All Students ~ All the Time

Mission Statement

SSMS

To achieve our corporation vision, we will teach our students today to become the leaders of tomorrow, prepare our students to become independent lifelong learners by enacting a learning environment which supports the whole child, is focused and directed by teachers, and supported by home and community.

Student Motto

SSMS
Learn Today-Lead Tomorrow

Description of Schools

Location

South Spencer Middle School is a small town / rural school serving two hundred and eighteen students in grades 6-8. SSMS is located in REO, IN, in Spencer County. SSMS serves the communities of Rockport, Grandview, Richland, Eureka and Hatfield in the Townships of Ohio, Luce, and Hammond.

Brief History

South Spencer Middle School is a comprehensive middle school for students in grades six through eight. The new facility was completed in August 1997 at its present location at 1298 North County Road 275 West. Our campus is located just north of South Spencer High School in Reo, Indiana. Formerly, the old middle school was located within the city limits of Rockport.

The school's main community of Rockport is well established having been first settled in 1807 and named the justice center for Spencer County on March 11, 1818. In the fall of 1976, South Spencer Middle School first opened its doors at a site on Fifth Street in Rockport. This building is now occupied by the Lifetime Education Center and the South Spencer County Superintendent's Office. The move to the new middle school in 1997 provided a state-of-the art facility including three computer labs, a special education lab for science and self-help skills, an industrial technology lab housing a Synergistic system for learning, and three full science labs. South Spencer Middle School is an integral part of the South Spencer School Corporation, which was established in 1965.

Student Population and Demographics

SSMS

Ethnicity: 95% White, Hispanic 1%, African American 4%

Overall Free/Reduced Lunch: 49%

Gender: 53% Males 47% Females

Description of Faculty and Staff

Rockport Elementary

Mr. Scot A. French, principal, is in his 11th year leading SSMS, and Mrs. Abbie Lawalin is the school's counselor. The faculty at South Spencer Middle School consists of thirteen full-time teachers for regular education classes, 2 special education teachers, three part-time licensed teachers, a library assistant, a shared social worker, a Lead Behavioral Technologist, and 5.5 instructional aides.

Highly Qualified Teachers in Content Areas: All teachers with South Spencer School Corporation meet NCLB guidelines for being "highly qualified". Teachers are Highly Qualified through having a bachelor's or master's degree, a valid Indiana Elementary teaching license or Special Education license and one of the following: passed the Praxis II, passed the NTE, NBPTS certified or passed the HOUSSE rubric with ≥ 100 points. Para-professionals/classroom assistants also meet the highly qualified guidelines under NCLB (through PRAXIS, teacher's license, or two or more years of college). Documentation is on file in the district personnel office.

School Programs

Curriculum

South Spencer Middle School's curriculum is written by a South Spencer County School Corporation committee of teachers, principals, and administrative personnel. It is aligned with Indiana Academic Standards in all subject areas. In 2018, staff began creating new curriculum maps, units and lesson plans that are in line with transitioning to the new Indiana Learning Standards. We plan to use the guidance documents the state has indicated it would provide to schools. We will also continue to embed Literacy Standards across the curriculum and work on text dependent skills this year as we get ready for ILearn testing.

Each school's curriculum incorporates multiple strategies of instruction and assessment that will improve student learning based on research-based practices. Careful planning creates appropriate teaching and learning experiences: writing across the curriculum, self-selected reading, differentiation of instruction, flexible grouping, Bloom's Taxonomy, technology integration, alternative assessment, Evidence Based Writing, and Notice and Note through HMH.

Through a differentiated curriculum, adaptations are made to meet the needs of all students. High ability students are accelerated by curriculum compacting and enrichment activities. Inclusion for special needs students is school wide with support from the special education teachers and instructional assistants. Why Try lessons, which are developed by the school counselor and social worker, and delivered by teachers. Character traits are reinforced through classroom instruction and students are recognized monthly in a school wide assembly. Art, Music, Library and P.E. are implemented on a weekly basis.

The math curriculum is standards-driven and the core curriculum (McGraw Reveal) is supplemented with the use of manipulatives, and Maneuvering the Middle curriculum.

All teachers have copies of the Indiana College and Career Readiness Standards. With ongoing reflection and revision of the curriculum maps based on the Indiana Standards, and professional development that supports research based instructional practices, improved student learning will be ensured.

Educational Programs

- Target Time / WINN Time
- Special classes include Physical Education, Business, College and Career Readiness, Technology, Music, Art, and Band
- IXL

- Study Island
- WhyTry/SEL
- Aleks
- Reading Plus
- Google Classrooms
- Student Leadership Team / Helping Hands Student Team
- Junior Achievement

Instructional Strategies

South Spencer School Corporation uses an ongoing process of curriculum mapping to support the review and revision of curricular programs. South Spencer School Corporation's curriculum documents outline the content to be taught to students and the sample methods used to teach this content. The documents also outline the assessment process used to evaluate what students are expected to know and be able to do to meet the Indiana Academic Standards. These documents are housed on Team Drives for access by all staff, and are located in the teachers' classrooms and the administrative office at each school. These documents outline expectations for student learning within each content area.

South Spencer School Corporation's curriculum supports the achievement of Indiana Academic Standards. Knowledge and skills within content areas are identified and outlined. Our curriculum documents present an overview of classroom experiences necessary to address content area knowledge and skills so that all students work toward meeting or exceeding the Indiana Academic Standards.

South Spencer School Corporation teachers develop curriculum and lessons using best practices. Teachers are trained at conferences, workshops, and during professional development opportunities offered at school in the best practices shown by research to improve student learning. Case conferences, 504 conferences, and RTI conferences are periodically held to assure that individual educational plans are appropriate to meet the needs of students with special needs.

The following strategies/programs are used to strengthen the core academic programs and increase consistent implementation of core programs strategies/practices across the curriculum, classrooms, and grade levels:

- Collection of data from a variety of sources such as Math/ELA curricular assessments, ILearn summative, ILearn checkpoints, IXL, Aleks, Reading Plus, Study Island, and 1:1 chromebooks (grades 6-8).
- Grade Level collaboration and data meetings are held at least once a month to support RTI for students in need of support, and core program mapping and development. Meetings are led by administrator, guidance counselor, or teachers.

Exceptional Learners

High Ability:

South Spencer School Corporation updates yearly goals for our high ability students through each school's leadership team. This diverse committee, represented by staff, parents, and community members, is given the challenge to meet the needs of these students by:

- Planning activities and ensuring high ability students in grades K-12 are given appropriate educational experiences.
- Distributing staff development materials to every school. These materials give teachers the opportunity to develop and implement appropriately differentiated instruction in each academic subject based on the latest research.

Special Needs:

South Spencer School Corporation provides services to those students eligible for special education services under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A wide-range of special education services are provided. Services are supported through our regional Coop. Students receive services as described in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and classroom teachers work cooperatively with special education teachers to ensure that every child receives a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAP).

SSMS uses inclusive school practices—those practices that individualize instruction and support to meet the needs of all children and exemplify the very best in education. We believe inclusive schools benefit children both developmentally and socially by embracing the notion that all children can and will learn. Inclusive school practices ensure everyone belongs, are accepted and supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met (Stainback & Stainback, 1990, p. 3). The corporation has also purchased the Styler Fitzgerald curriculum and training to more support the needs of our more functional population.

Technology as a Learning Tool

The use of technology in our schools follows two tracks. The first is the use of technology for the business of conducting school. This entails an effective student management system, a platform for ongoing professional development, communication within the school and corporation, communication externally to stakeholders (most importantly parents and guardians), teacher and administrative planning and business, and the use of technology to enable data driven decisions. It can also be a powerful professional development tool, providing a virtual learning platform for staff.

The second track is the use of technology as a tool in the classroom by enhancing lesson delivery, engaging students, providing more productive student learning opportunities, and offering opportunities for student enrichment and remediation.

Technology is embedded in all areas of our school and academic programs. Each classroom is equipped with:

- Teacher computer and Chromebook
- Document camera
- Smart Board
- 1:1 Chromebooks
- Integrated technology instructional tools including:
 - Google Classroom
 - Reading Plus
 - Aleks
 - IXL
 - Study Island

Safe & Disciplined Learning Environment / Cultural Competency

The staff and faculty of South Spencer Middle School believe that a safe and disciplined environment is paramount in the educational process. South Spencer Middle School also uses recommendations and strategies created by the South Spencer Safety Committee. This corporation-wide committee is composed of building administrators, corporation administrators, counselors, transportation personnel, and the corporation nurse, as well as outside personnel including EMTs, firemen, policemen, and representatives from social services. Three areas of concern are the focus of this committee: facility and grounds, student safety, and student transportation. The following are indicators of our attention to maintain a safe and disciplined learning environment:

- Corporation Safety Committee
- School Safety Committee
- Drug Free School Policy
- Policy and Medication Guidelines
- Universal Precautions Training
- CPR / AED Training
- Visitation Policy

- Locked Monitored Entrances
- In compliance with all state mandated safety requirements
- Fire and Weather Emergency Drills
- In compliance with 2013-14 Bullying Legislation

Our climate and culture programs include a mashup of a number of programs and best practices that have been used over time at a number of schools; Positive Behavior Supports, Responsive Classroom, Why Try, and Restorative Practices being key elements. We work towards a broad understanding of our systems to create common practice throughout our school. Our program is a framework of ideas and practices that are proven to support the culture and environment that is the best for our students' growth and development. Our program is intended to frame a growth mindset, the idea that every student can grow and develop and move towards mastery of both academic and social skills.

As experts of their craft, teachers will have many tricks and strategies that they employ in their individual classrooms that work best for their teaching style and for their students. Different ages, different class structures, and different groups of students require teachers to develop a system that works best in their classroom context. What is expected is that all team members weave the key elements presented of our program into their classroom program, that classroom programs integrate with the school-wide structures, and that we are able to have a common language around school culture and environment. This is accomplished by setting a positive tone, proactively setting expectations and addressing behaviors before they happen, being responsive to issues as they surface and to student's individual needs, and by ensuring a culture of restorative practice.

We recognize that all students and staff have a basic human need to feel a sense of belonging (Deci & Flaste, 1995). For children in a classroom, this feeling is critical if they are to be motivated from within to learn. When they feel safe and valued, they're more willing to do the risk-taking and the cooperative give-and-take that lead to greater learning (Jensen, 2005). We can foster all students' sense of belonging by using language that encourages everyone to value and practice cooperation, respect, and empathy. Teachers guide students to behave in ways that allow all classmates to participate fully in classroom life and to see all classmates as members of their community.

This year we are working with Jim Sporleder to become more trauma responsive in our policies, procedures, and practices. Also this year, our guidance counselor has worked to obtain a grant and connect with staff and community members that can supervise various clubs.

Parent Participation

Parents are invited to attend multiple school functions and events. Events and school functions are communicated to parents using many different types of communication such as the following: social media (Twitter/Facebook) posts, school websites, School Messenger system, Principal Message, classroom newsletters, Canvas, school marquee, emails, and additional notes and invitations.

Our teachers believe that consistent communication to the parents/guardians on academic progress and programming is essential. Teachers communicate students' assessment results with the parents/guardians. Classroom newsletters include standards that will be focused on in the upcoming week. This allows parents to monitor the progress of the students and have knowledge of upcoming instruction. Frequent reports on student progress are made to parents and mastery of standards are included with each report card. This is done every nine weeks so parents know what the students learned throughout each grading period.

Other parent and family involvement includes:

- Family events: Ball game and ECA events, Educational Nights, 6th-8th Grade Open House, Awards celebrations.
- Social media posts and engagement
- Dental Program: Our local hospital communicates with our school and provides our students with mobile dental care each year. Dentists come to provide services for students at the school.
- Purdue University Extensions: A community organization that offers multiple learning opportunities to our students. Members teach students about various important aspects such as money, proper food choices, exercise, and science concepts. The organization also brings STEM activities to our school for an after school club once per month.
- Junior Achievement: It is the nation's largest organization dedicated to giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to win their economic success, plan for their futures, and make smart academic and economic choices.

Assessments Used in Addition to ISTEP+ / ILearn

A variety of both formative and summative assessments are utilized at the elementary schools in addition to ILEARN and IREAD 3. The summative assessments are long term in nature and help us look at student academic gains over the long term. The formative assessments are short term and inform our instruction of students. Many of the formative assessments are used to progress monitor students in the RTI (Response to Intervention) process.

Summative assessments include:

- ILEARN -This assessment is given to grades 6-8 in both English/Language Arts and Mathematics. Grade 6 is tested in Science.

Formative/Progress Assessments include:

- ILearn Checkpoints assessments in ELA, and Math are given to Grades 6-8 students three times per year on the computer. It shows how students are meeting and growing towards the College and Career Indiana State Standards.

Coordination and Integration of Federal, State, and Local Funds and Resources

Currently, SSMS benefits from federal, state, and local funding. 4.5 assistants are paid through special education funding. These positions combine their efforts to support student success.

Strategies to attract effective teachers to this school

In conjunction with the district, SSMS strives to attract and retain highly qualified staff through a variety of ways including the following:

- SSMS teachers are hard working, dedicated, welcoming and willing to help others. The staff works well together and maintains high expectations of all students and staff.
- SSMS and SSHS have access to a full-time social worker who works with students that have emotional, physical, and academic problems. The social worker also works with students who have attendance and tardy issues. These students have to be in the lower tier of our student population.
- The South Spencer School Corporation provides a competitive salary and benefit package.

**Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA)
School Data**

Student achievement data was analyzed during data and grade level meetings and by the school-wide planning (Leadership) team through the Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Data sources used in the CNA includes ISTEP+/iLearn, NWEA, and Math/ELA curriculum assessments. The data analysis will determine if student needs are being met, strengths are continued, weaknesses are improved, and if current strategies are working.

Math										
Geometry & Measurement, and Number Sense & Computation										
Current Assessment Data										
Our Current Reality	Percent Math NWEA Grade Level Benchmark Spring 2024-Geometry & Measurement					Percent Math NWEA Grade Level Benchmark Spring 2024- Number Sense & Computation				
	Lo	LoAvg	Avg	HiAvg	Hi	Lo	LoAvg	Avg	HiAvg	Hi
Grade 6	2%	8%	22%	30%	38%	2%	7%	18%	32%	42%
Grade 7	12%	22%	31%	24%	12%	6%	7%	22%	35%	29%
Grade 8	7%	20%	34%	11%	28%	6%	14%	21%	28%	31%
Our Current Reality	Percent Math At/Near or Above Computation & Number Sense ILearn Spring 2023		Percent Math At/Near or Above Computation & Number sense ILearn 2024		Percent Math At/Near or Above Geometry and Measurement ILearn Spring 2023		Percent Math At/Near or Above Geometry and Measurement ILearn Spring 2024			
Grade 6	64%		86.5%		82%		86%			
Grade 7	62%		64%		70%		70%			
Grade 8	79%		75%		68%		68%			

ELA

Current Assessment Data

Our Current Reality	Percent Nonfiction Comprehension NWEA Grade Level Benchmark Fall 2023					Percent Nonfiction Comprehension NWEA Grade Level Benchmark Spring 2024				
	Lo	LoA vg	Avg	HiAvg	Hi	Lo	LoAvg	Avg	HiAv g	Hi
Grade 6	7%	25%	21%	23%	25%	4%	13%	24%	45%	15%
Grade 7	11%	13%	30%	30%	17%	12%	21%	21%	30%	15%
Grade 8	9%	24%	29%	30%	8%	4%	25%	35%	23%	13%
Our Current Reality	Percent Nonfiction Comprehension At/Near or Above iLearn Spring 2022			Percent Nonfiction Comprehension At/Near or Above iLearn Spring 2023		Percent Nonfiction Comprehension At/Near or Above iLearn Spring 2024				
Grade 6	89%			63%		88%				
Grade 7	90%			86%		81%				
Grade 8	83%			93%		86%				

Attendance Data SSMS

2022-23	93.64
2023-24	94.63

Goals - Action Plan - Professional Development Program

Goal 1: ELA/Writing - South Spencer Middle School will increase the Nonfiction/Literary Reading comprehension score by 2% in the At/Near or Above category on the Applied Skills and Multiple Choice section of the ELA iLearn assessment.

Goal 2: Math - South Spencer Middle School will show a 2% increase in the At/Near or Above category in number sense and computation on the mathematics iLearn assessment.

Goal 3: Math - South Spencer Middle School will show a 2% increase in the At/Near or Above category of Geometry & Measurements for real world problems on the iLearn assessment.

Goal 4: SEL - Over the next year, students will be supported with school wide social and emotional programming that will reduce incidents of behaviors requiring office intervention by 25% and support a student attendance rate of at least 95%.

Action Plan for Goals 1 & 2

Activity	Description/Action Needed	Training	Implementation/Goal
Refine Standards Mapping & Curriculum Alignment / Assessment Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle School will vertically align ELA and Math curriculum and refine annually Begin collaboration with EL to vertically align ELA and Math curriculum 		In progress Annual refinement 2024-2025
Refine master schedule to allow extended ELA classes in 6th grade, and extended math classes in 6th and 7th grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers, counselor, and admin will collect and evaluate data to analyze impact of extended classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School visits to observe similar classes PD on how to utilize extended class times 	Spring 2023 Summer 2023

Refinement of Technology and eLearning (Academic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate current technology use, value programs in supporting academic growth, teacher proficiency in use of various systems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Surveys and student performance data will be used to complete this evaluation 	Potential PD depending on evaluation findings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PD for use of Chromebooks in the classroom ● New Curricular Technology Assets/Programs ● Alignment of Tech and eLearning 	Annual refinement
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Action Plan for Goal 1

Activity	Description/Action Needed	Training	Implementation/Goal
Reading Curriculum/ Responsive Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Common language/reading strategies for fiction & nonfiction will be identified and implemented. ● During our Interdisciplinary/RTI class, students will be flexibly grouped for reading interventions, including the use of the Reading Plus program. ● Language arts teachers will identify best practice reading strategies that will help all teachers emphasize reading through their subject areas. ● Core subject area teachers will develop lessons that include students “writing” in their subject area. Content area teachers will evaluate these written responses at least once per semester using the common scoring method taught at a previous in-service and submit samples of scored responses to the administration. ● ELA staff will train other content areas how to use text dependent questions that model those students will experience on the ILearn. ● All staff members will require that students re-submit written work that does not include complete sentences, thoughts, and punctuation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SSMS ELA teachers will share best practice ELA strategies with whole staff ● SSMS will utilize interventionist to train assistants in best ELA/Reading practices ● ELA staff will train other content areas how to use text dependent questions 	In progress Annual refinement

Action Plan for Goal 2			
Activity	Description/Action Needed	Training	Implementation/Goal
Math Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of Reveal Math • Maneuvering the Middle 6-8 • Implementation of iLearn performance tasks in Math 6-8 • Individual training of support staff to maximize teacher support. • PD with all math staff on using the Math Curriculum • During our Interdisciplinary/RTI class, students will be flexibly grouped for math interventions, including the use of the Aleks, IXL and Xtra math applications • Science will incorporate real-world math problems involving conversions and volume. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSMS will utilize interventionist to train assistants on best practices for math • PD on how to utilize extended class time and centers for differentiation 	<p>Implementation 6-8 doing all components of the Math Strategies.</p> <p>All data compiled by teachers, counselor, and principal, and will be put into our Data Tracker</p>

Action Plan for Goal 3			
Activity	Description/Action Needed	Training	Implementation/Goal
Social Emotional Curriculum/Behavior management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhyTry curriculum in grades 6-8 • PD with all staff on emotional self-regulation and discipline. (Utilizing the behavior specialist and social worker to effectively implement) • Trauma Informed PD • CRDT Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social worker and outside resources will be brought in to speak and train staff/teams in de-escalation and self regulation techniques. • Jim Sporleder will be working with staff • Coop staff will train a team of admin, teachers, and assistants in de-escalation techniques 	<p>Implementation began 2020</p> <p>Begin Fall of 2023 Annual training</p>

Documentation of Support by CTA

As required by 511 IAC 6.2-3-3, I, as the exclusive representative of the CTA, have reviewed and support the Professional Development Section of the Continuous School Improvement Plan for SSMS.

Signature of Exclusive Representative

Date

Waived Statutes and Rules

No statutes or rules have been waived at this time.

The following list of statutes and rules have been waived

Certificate of Submission

The committee, composed of the building principal, administrators, teachers, parents, and community member(s), have submitted the final draft of the Strategic and Continuous Improvement and Achievement Plan to the superintendent. The school improvement committee has considered the recommendations of the superintendent and revised the plan at their discretion. The final plan has been presented to the superintendent and the school board.

Signature of Building Principal

Date

This school improvement plan has been reviewed in accordance with the timelines established under I.C. 20-10.2-3-2.

Reviewed by South Spencer School Corporation Board of School Trustees

WHEREAS a three year Continuous School Improvement Plan has been developed and coordinated by the building principal with input from a committee of persons which included the principal, teachers, parents, students, and community member(s), and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Schools has reviewed the plan to ensure that the plan aligns with the school corporation's mission statement, goals, and expectations, and

WHEREAS, the governing body is required under Indiana Law to review said plan, and

WHEREAS, the governing body reviewed this plan on this date, _____

THEREFORE BE IT KNOWN that the governing body will submit this plan to the Indiana Department of Education as required under 511 AC 6.2-3-5 Sec. 5 and directs that a copy of this plan remain on file for public review in the office of the building principal.

Signature of Superintendent

Date

This school improvement plan has been reviewed in accordance with the timelines established under I.C. 20-10.2-3-2.