

Canfield Middle School

Semester One Overview



Directions: Please tell your story of the first semester of our 2020-21 school year at your school. Design/format your story in a way that is meaningful to your team and ensure to incorporate the following components:

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Planning, development and implementation:

Our main focus to start school in September was around how to provide engaging instruction via the blended learning model. We began by exploring different models of teaching blended learning: [Model 1](#), [Model 2](#), and [Model 3](#). This was needed because several staff members were stuck on how to plan in blended learning.

Our entire staff engaged in Catlin Tucker PD. We had departments complete the virtual PD sessions together. We allotted 3 hour segments of time for staff to watch, discuss, and create. Simultaneously, we had teacher leaders facilitate Schoology “help sessions.” On two occasions, staff came to the cafe and had a chance to ask questions and get help on their Schoology courses. We are so thankful for the staff members that stepped up to be teacher leaders. We also invited Dan Kirkbride to show us some tips and tricks in Schoology.

Once school was rolling, we brought in Dan Kirkbride and Kim Shandy to help with some mini PD sessions. Staff had to attend two sessions (we also welcomed Classified Staff). The first session was a choice between Loom and Screencastify. We wanted all staff to have the tools to create tutorial videos. The second session was a choice between Zoom and Google Meets. We wanted staff to be able to run effective virtual meetings/office hours.

At this time, staff is settling in on using Schoology. Thomas and I created these [guidelines](#) that became the expectation at CMS. While these expectations are minimal, they have created more consistency and ease of access for our students and families.

In October and November, our whole staff, with the guidance of Andi West and our SOS team, focused on SEL. The focus is on giving staff tools for their toolbelt to talk with students and/or staff who may be struggling emotionally. We are also talking about teaching and learning again. We have resumed our monthly Collaborative Friend Groups and Book Study. Our focus is on the PEBC Teaching Framework. This framework provides a tremendous opportunity for reflection. It allows staff to dig deeper

into our craft. They are able to identify areas of strength and potential growth areas. The goal is for them to self identify strengths and weaknesses, which usually leads to more openness to change. This focus is also aligned to the District Strategic Plan.

Relationship:

Relationships always have and always will be a focus at Canfield Middle School. Relationships and community are the foundation to learning. One thing Scott Murphy has really emphasized is that the point is not to just create a positive community. The point is to create a positive community so that staff can get students doing the heavy lifting of learning. It is awesome for a staff member to have superb classroom community. But if all their work is non rigorous, then kids may have fun, but they are not learning to their full potential.

Community building was interesting this year because we had 3 first days of school. We started school in blended learning so we had a first day with A-K, then a first day with L-Z, and then a first day with both groups together. Most of our staff took time to intentionally do some community building activities while diving into content. To check on students, we still have a Monday and Thursday check in system. Students complete a reflection form, which includes the Zones of Regulation. Students who express concern are followed up with their counselor.

To be honest, it has been very tough to build relationships with our families during Covid. Most of our correspondence is done via email, Schoology, and Skyward. We did prepare videos for 6th grade families. Every staff member recorded an Open House video for parents so they could see who their child's teachers are. During the October conferences, staff were required to make 5 positive contacts to parents (most did via email) in addition to meeting with failing students and their parents in person. During our November conference night, we allowed parents to sign up for times to meet in person or on the phone. It was interesting as very few took this opportunity. All staff members were also required to make a minimum of 5 positive phone calls to parents.

We have a cohesive staff who has endured many tragedies and obstacles together over the years. In some ways, these hard times have made us closer. Since the first day together (in the cafe with social distancing) we have discussed the importance of taking care of ourselves and each other. We have continued to meet in person with social distancing because I feel that connection is SO important. During Andi's most recent SEL PD, we talked about the importance of taking care of ourselves and each other. It is important to laugh and to surround yourself with positive people. Our SOS team emphasized that the SOS wheel is for both students and adults also. For the last three Wednesdays heading into Christmas Break we have organized treats to encourage and energize staff.

Partnership:

- We are always in communication with the Kroc Center and Boys and Girls Club to provide families with out-of-school activities and supervision.

Reflection:

- Pandemic learning has forced many changes. Sometimes this is a positive. It has forced staff to embrace technology and to learn new technologies. It has caused us to reflect on things that we have done in the past and now wonder if we should keep doing them moving forward. Here are some positives of pandemic learning that we will consider keeping in place moving forward:
- Wednesday Collaboration rather than Monday
- Prioritizing standards
- Lockers optional
- Divided passing period allows for calm halls and fewer tardies
- Four days per week (wednesday work day)- would need to find a way to make up these lost instructional days
- Posting lessons online
- Allowing students to eat at multiple locations at lunch
- Student check ins
- Streaming athletics or any activity
- Flexibility and resiliency to learn new programs and schedules
- Small class sizes- probably not sustainable
- Opportunity for connection on an emotional and personal level

Artifacts (Student and Teacher Interviews):

Student: Emily S- 8th grade. Why did I choose this student? Honestly, I wanted to chat with an 8th grader who has been here for 3 years, and she had TA this class period, so I chose her.

1) Before this year, do you feel your teachers try to form positive relationships with their students?

Yes. Teachers check in with students to make sure students are doing ok mentally and with school work.

2) Before this year, have you found your school work at Canfield to be interesting?

Most of it. Most of the time I don't mind doing the work because it is interesting.

There are times I don't want to do the work because it doesn't seem to serve a purpose.

3) Before this year, do you think your school work was easy, just right, or too challenging?

As a whole, it is usually just right. I do take ALP Math and ELA, and they can be challenging at times.

4) Before this year, do you feel like you have had too little, just the right amount or too much homework?

Most of the time it is just right. Sometimes at the end of the semester, we get hit really hard with tests.

5) This year, do you feel your teachers try to form positive relationships with their students?

Yes, they are trying to connect with their students.

6) This year, have you found your school work at Canfield to be interesting?

Same as above (Most of it. Most of the time I don't mind doing the work because it is interesting. There are times I don't want to do the work because it doesn't seem to serve a purpose). It is hard to get motivated to do school work from home.

7) How do you think your teachers are doing with Schoology?

Most of them are doing ok. It is a new program for everyone, so everyone is learning it. I would like more guidance on expectations at home.

8) This year, do you think your school work is easy, just right, or too challenging?

For the most part, it has been just right. At the moment, we are getting bombarded. There are times where new programs are a challenge.

9) This year, do you feel like you have had too little, just the right amount or too much homework?

For the most part, it is the right amount. Some weeks are more than others. I spend about 3-4 hours a day when at home.

10) What do you like about blended learning?

Like to sleep in 3 days a week. I can get work done more quickly and efficiently. I can also choose when I do my schoolwork.

11) What do you not like about blended learning?

I don't get to see my friends. I don't get to hear other people's questions. Hard to get answers and explanations from teachers that I would get in person.

12) What is your preference- 5 days, 4 day, or blended? Why?

4 days a week. I like having one day to catch up. I would like to have 4 days in person rather than 2 days in person. Blended is my least favorite of the three.

Teacher: Dodson. I chose Ben because he is a hard worker and stays late after school. He doesn't have a family to get home to, so I could steal his time after hours.

1) What is life like right now for you as a teacher in blended learning?

It is stressful! I feel like I am being asked to teach each lesson two different ways. One way in person and another for asynchronous. This is extremely time consuming. I have to start and stop. It is extremely hard to gain any momentum with students being away from school for 5 days. I have more students failing now than I have the previous two years. For the most part, my high performing students are able to keep up, but my proficient and below students are really struggling with less in-person learning.

As far as student relationships, I am able to connect with some students with smaller groups. However, with masks and changing learning models, it has been tricky to form relationships and community. Students are learning to communicate with me both in person and online. A pro is students are learning how to better communicate electronically.

I was just talking to a parent today, and they are trying their hardest to help their child with time management. This age group really struggles with time management. I only have about 30% of my students who fully complete the asynchronous work well. I have a large portion of my students who check out the online work, but they don't see it through in its entirety. It is really frustrating to spend so many extra hours making videos and tutorials and only have a small percentage of students use all the resources that I am providing.

Blended learning is also challenging for things such as essays. We are currently doing an argumentative essay. It is not ideal for students to be away working on the essay for three days without the in person feedback.