

School Annual Education Report (AER) Cover Letter

January 29, 2020

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2018-19 educational progress for the Blue Water Middle College Academy (BWMCA). The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment and accountability, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact BWMCA director, Pete Spencer, for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following web site: <http://bit.ly/37EuNtJ>, or you may review a copy in the Blue Water Middle College Academy office.

For the 2018-19 school year, schools were identified using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that has at least one underperforming student subgroup. An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that has a student subgroup performing at the same level as the lowest 5% of all schools in the state. A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance is in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state or has a graduation rate at or below 67%. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no label is given.

The Blue Water Middle College Academy has not been given one of these labels.

The structure of the Blue Water Middle College Academy makes assessing its success difficult using many of the measurements used by traditional high schools. Approximately 80 percent of BWMCA students attend one of the local high schools that partner with the middle college. Those students enroll in the middle college at the start of 11th grade and complete the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) at their local high school. Their assessment scores are part of their local high school's accountability data and are not included in the BWMCA data. A relatively small percentage of each cohort completes the MME at the middle college. Assessment results posted on the mischooldata.org site represents less than 20% of our students.

Student achievement areas that the BWMCA is actively working to improve include success in college courses as measured by reducing the need for students to take developmental education courses, increasing the ratio of credits earned versus credits attempted, and on-time associate degree completion. To impact these outcomes, the BWMCA is developing tools and processes for better use of data to identify students likely to need help in one or more of these areas. When students are identified to be in need of support or intervention, BWMCA staff are reaching out to students and parents and requiring attendance at support meetings, when needed.

State law requires that we also report the following additional information.

1. Process for Assigning Pupils to the Blue Water Middle College Academy

The Blue Water Middle College is a single-building districts. Students enroll in the middle college no later than the beginning of 11th grade. The enrollment process begins the winter before a student enrolls. Middle college staff present overview meetings at the six local partner high schools and hold an Open House to inform students and parents about the program. Interested students submit an application and participate in an interview with a BWMCA staff member and at least one of the student's parents or guardians.

There are no minimum academic criteria students must meet to be able to enroll in the middle college. The enrollment process and extended interview are designed to help students and parents make a well-informed decision on whether or not to enroll in the middle college. When a student commits to enrolling, they are provided a list of the next steps they need to take to complete enrollment in the BWMCA and St. Clair County Community College (SC4). There is currently no limit on the number of students that can enroll in the middle college.

2. School Improvement Plan Status: 2016 – 2017

The primary goals in the BWMCA School Improvement Plan include students successfully completing their college experience while in the middle college and becoming proficient in college level writing and mathematics. To achieve the SIP goals, the BWMCA is designing and improving the tools and processes used to identify students most in need of support. We are working with SC4 advisors and academic support personnel to provide more opportunities for BWMCA students to improve English and math skills so fewer students require developmental education classes in those subject areas.

To improve the success rate of students in their college classes, BWMCA student advisors are monitoring students who are doing poorly in classes during and at the end of each semester and contacting the student and his or her parent/guardian to make sure they are aware of the many free academic tutoring and supports available on campus. Students whose grade point average places them on academic warning or suspension at the college are required to meet with middle college staff members to help them start building positive academic momentum and bring their GPA back up.

The middle college has not reached the specific goals set in the School Improvement Plan a couple of years ago, but improvements are being made that should lead to their achievement in 2019 – 2020.

3. Specialized School Description

The Blue Water Middle College Academy is a specialized high school program in that it allows students to take multiple college courses before graduating. Students graduate with their high school diploma at the end of grade 13. BWMCA students can earn 62 or more college credits, an associate degree, and fulfill the Michigan Transfer Agreement requirements with coursework at St. Clair County Community College.

The BWMCA is a member of the Michigan Early and Middle College Association (MEMCA). The structure and college success curriculum has been approved by the MEMCA Leadership Council.

4. Core Curriculum

BWMCA students must fulfill the requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) to earn their high school diploma. The curriculum is delivered to the students at the local partner high school they attend. Required courses may be earned by successfully completing college courses at SC4 that meet the appropriate MMC requirements. For example, MTH 112 (Intermediate Algebra) at SC4 includes the content and skills normally included in a high school Algebra II course. If a student does not complete Algebra II at their high school, they can fulfill the requirement by successfully completing MTH 112 at the college.

BWMCA staff members work closely with the partner high school counselors and administrators to make sure the students have a clear path and opportunity to meet all of the requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum.

5. Student Achievement on local competency or nationally normed achievement tests

As mentioned in the introduction of this letter, the state-mandated, norm-referenced Michigan Merit Exams (MME), including the SAT and ACT Workkeys, are given to most BWMCA students at their local partner high schools in 11th grade. Students do not enroll in the middle college until the beginning of 11th grade. Even the ACCUPLACER placement exam administered to all incoming BWMCA students is taken by the students in 10th grade, before they are officially enrolled in the middle college. Therefore, the ability of the BWMCA to impact and improve results on those assessments is minimal.

The middle college offers and promotes preparation and practice for 11th graders prior to taking the MME in 11th grade and for those retaking the SAT in 12th grade or after. However, because all traditional classwork is done either at the partner high schools or at the college, the ability to impact those exam scores is not significant. Therefore, the middle college focuses its efforts on helping students improve low ACCUPLACER placement scores in English and math. It works with students to increase successful completion of college classes, including earning all credits attempted and increasing grades earned in college classes. These outcomes are measured, but not by state or nation norm-reference assessments.

6. Parent Participation

Because the Blue Water Middle College Academy does not have its own teaching staff, it does not hold parent-teacher conferences. Its local partner high schools, where BWMCA students take their high school classes, hold conferences. Their PTC participation rates should be posted on their Annual Education Report letters on their website. The college treats all students, including middle college and traditional dual enrollment, as regular, adult students. Therefore, instructors do not share information with parents. When issues arise in a college class, BWMCA staff help the parent and student follow proper protocols and procedures to request information or have concerns addressed by appropriate college staff.

While the Blue Water Middle College Academy does not host traditional parent-teacher conferences, it highly values contact with parents. A BWMCA staff member meets with at least one parent of every student as part of the enrollment process. Parents are encouraged to meet with BWMCA staff members throughout their child's time in the middle college to discuss current academic plans and progress and plans for the future, including applying and transferring to new four-year colleges and universities.

A “Parent Orientation” is held in September each year for the parents of the new cohort. A morning and an evening session is held to accommodate different availabilities. One or more parent or guardian of 60 students (over 25% of the cohort) attended the session. A presentation for the parents of 12th grade BWMCA students was held in October to update them on what is ahead for their son or daughter. Parents of grade 13 students, who will be graduating and frequently enrolling in another college, are invited to a “Paying for College” Success Session in the fall semester.

7. Additional Information on Opportunities for Students to Earn College Credit

Due to the nature of the Blue Water Middle College Academy, 100% of our students take multiple college classes through our post-secondary partner, St. Clair County Community College (SC4). 11th grade students take at least four SC4 courses. 12th grade students take at least 6 SC4 courses. 13th grade students take about 8 – 10 SC4 courses and as many as 34 credit hours over the course of that final year.

BWMCA students can and do take Advanced Placement (AP) courses at their local partner high school. All partner high schools offer at least some AP or IB courses. The larger schools offer a wider variety. BWMCA students are eligible to take AP courses and can earn additional college credit with appropriate scores on the AP exam(s). Because the AP exams are administered by the local partner high schools, the Blue Water Middle College Academy does not have access to the exact number of students who take AP exams or who earn scores that provide them credit at SC4 or other colleges.

The Blue Water Middle College Academy is a unique partnership between several St. Clair County school districts, St. Clair County RESA and St. Clair County Community College. Literally hundreds of educators are involved in providing the opportunity to over 550 students a year. I appreciate the hard work of all of them and especially the efforts of the staff of the Blue Water Middle College Academy. We will continue to improve the outcomes of our students and to increase the number of great success stories we hear from graduates of the middle college.

Sincerely,



Pete Spencer
Director