

School Annual Education Report (AER) Cover Letter

April 12, 2019

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2017-18 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, accountability, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Pete Spencer, Director, for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following web site <http://bit.ly/2Mfjw8j>, or you may review a copy in the Blue Water Middle College Academy office.

For the 2017-18 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 three or more underperforming student subgroups. 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.

* Note TSI and ATS definitions were changed for the 2018-19 school year per federal requirements. The new definitions are:

TSI – The school has at least one subgroup performing in the bottom 25% within each applicable accountability index component.

ATS – The school has met the criteria for TSI identification and has at least one subgroup performing at the same level as a CSI school.

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

Key Challenges

Challenges that the BWMCA actively works to address focus more on student success in college than on academic achievement as measured by the Michigan Merit Exams and reported in the Annual Education Combined Report linked to above. Most BWMCA student take the MME less than a year after enrolling in the middle college. Our ability to impact their scores is not significant, but we can impact their success in the transition to college coursework.

Challenges students face in college include succeeding in individual college courses as measured by percentage of courses passed and courses passed with a C grade or higher. Completing an associate degree by the end of grade 13 is another measure of success in college and a challenge area for the BWMCA.

In 2018 - 2019, in particular, we have made great improvements in helping students meet those challenges. One strategy has been continuation of our Academic Success Program (ASP), which involves frequent contact and mentoring support by BWMCA staff for students who are not succeeding in one or more college courses. The BWMCA works even more closely with SC4, our post-secondary partner, to prevent our students from withdrawing from college courses before seeking guidance and academic supports.

The Blue Water Middle College Academy has also improved our process for auditing BWMCA students' college Programs of Study and communicating the audit results with our students and parents/guardians. This helps students choose college courses more wisely and stay on track to graduate with their desired degree(s) as quickly as possible.

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 district, therefore all students in the BMMC district are enrolled in the Blue Water Middle College Academy. 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:

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 has been 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 monitor students who are doing poorly in classes during and at the end of each semester. They contact 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 build positive academic momentum and raise their GPA.

The middle college has not reached the specific goals set in the School Improvement Plan a couple of years ago, but the outcomes continue to improve and are approaching the goals set in the plan.

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.

BWMCA students can attend St. Clair TEC, a countywide career and technical training school.

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. A link to the BWMCA high school graduation requirements is on our home web page at bluewatermiddlecollege.org.

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

Results for most Blue Water Middle College Academy students on the SAT, ACT WorkKeys and M-STEP exams are reported by their partner high schools (Algonac, Capac, Memphis, Port Huron, Port Huron Northern and Yale). The only students who take those tests as a BWMCA students are students who are not affiliated with one of our partner high schools. There are only about two dozen such students each year who take the MME. Therefore, the results are not representative of all BWMCA students.

The ACCUPLACER placement exam administered to all incoming BWMCA students as required by the college is taken by students in 10th grade, before they have enrolled in the middle college. Therefore, the ability of the BWMCA to impact and improve results on those assessments is minimal.

The middle college works with SC4 to help students improve low ACCUPLACER placement scores in English and math. It also works with students to increase successful completion of college classes, including earning all credits attempted and improving grades earned in college classes. These outcomes are measured but not by state or national norm-reference assessments.

6. Parent Participation

Because the Blue Water Middle College Academy does not have its own teaching staff, it does not hold traditional parent-teacher conferences. Its local partner high schools, where BWMCA students take their high school classes, do hold conferences. Their PTC participation rates should be posted in their Annual Education Report letters on their websites.

The college (SC4) treats middle college and traditional dual enrollment students 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 for the parents of the new cohort (11th graders). A morning and an evening session is held to accommodate different availabilities. One or more parent or guardian of over 50 students (approximately 25% of the cohort) attended the session. An information session for the parents of 12th grade BWCA students was held in October to update them on what is ahead for their son or daughter, and parents of grade 13 students were invited to a “Paying for College” Success Session in November.

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 during the year. 12th grade students take at least 6 SC4 courses. 13th grade students take between 8 and 10 college courses totaling up to 34 credit hours over the course of their final year.

In the 2018 – 2019 school year, Blue Water Middle College Academy students took 3,373 college courses at St. Clair County Community College and successfully completed 3,034 (90%) of them, earning over 10,000 college credit hours!

BWCA 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. BWCA 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.

Final thoughts

The Blue Water Middle College Academy is a unique partnership between several St. Clair County school districts, St. Clair County Community College and the St. Clair County RESA. Hundreds of educators are involved in providing this opportunity to approximately 600 students a year. Over 1,500 students have enrolled in the middle college since it opened in 2011. Since then, several hundred students have earned associate degrees and transferred thousands of credit hours to four-year colleges and universities where they have earned or are pursuing bachelor’s and graduate degrees.

I appreciate the hard work of all of our partners in this program 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 success stories we hear from graduates of the middle college.

Sincerely,



Pete Spencer
Director