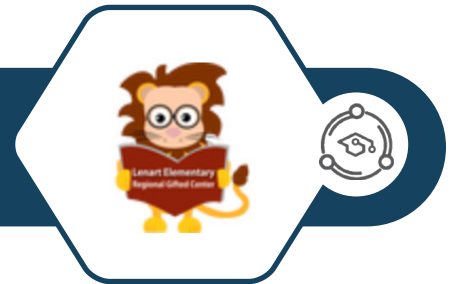


The To&Through Middle Grades Network (MGN) is a group of CPS schools dedicated to creating more equitable and responsive educational environments where middle grades students thrive. The network aims to *increase the number of students with attendance at or above 90% and GPAs at or above 3.0 (i.e. condensed elementary on-track) through a meaningful increase in students' sense of belonging.*

Participating schools in each cohort work to redefine the middle grades experience by using qualitative and quantitative data to understand student experiences, develop a problem of practice, and test change ideas that positively impact the experiences and outcomes of middle grades students.

This profile shares the journey of one MGN school in hopes of inspiring others to reimagine systems and structures to ensure that middle grades students thrive.

LENART ELEMENTARY REGIONAL GIFTED CENTER LOCATED IN CHATHAM



SY2022 - 2023 TEAM MEMBERS

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Counselor
- 6th-8th Grade Humanities Teacher
- 6th-8th Grade Math Teacher
- 6th-8th Grade Science Teacher

STUDENTS

School Grades: PreK - 8
Number of Students: 308
Middle Grades Enrollment: 69

DEMOGRAPHICS

64.9% Black
2.3% Diverse Learners
28.3% Low Income

DEFINITION OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Students at Lenart are successful when they:

- Have agency and ownership over how their successes, both academic and personal, are celebrated; and
- Feel like they belong, are heard, and are recognized by their peers and teachers.

Lenart Elementary Regional Gifted Center Year One Improvement Story

YEAR ONE

CHANGE IDEA RATIONALE

In spring 2022, the Lenart team conducted student experience surveys with their 6th-8th grade students. Survey results revealed that students felt teachers could do a better job at noticing students' challenges or knowing more about them. As a Regional Gifted Center, 5th - 8th grades students from across Chicago apply to join the accelerated instructional program at Lenart. Their unique student population led to a number of discussions and data analysis on how best to support students' sense of belonging and academic connection. With only 57% of students feeling their classes provided Meaningful Work, the team started the year by exploring different ways to make work more meaningful to students. However, throughout these discussions and based on additional student data, the team discovered that the root cause was actually building relationships through Teacher Caring.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. Knowing more about students helps build empathy and relationships; that is how trust is built and students know we have their best interest at heart.
2. Engaging in discussion with other teachers and learning from their experiences is very helpful.
3. Sometimes it's hard to see growth when you're in the middle of it, but taking a step back and seeing the big picture helps.

Data Sources

- Quarterly [Elevate survey](#) results related to the Teacher Caring and Meaningful Work learning conditions.
- Direct feedback through an [Elevate Data Circle](#), ["Love, Leave it, Keep It!"](#), and a [Google form](#) to gather additional data.

YEAR ONE

CHANGE IDEA

Implementing Morning Meeting during Advisory

- Teachers worked to implement [Morning Meeting](#) during their 75-minute advisory period twice a week.
- Morning Meeting included Question of the Day, Inspirational Videos, a Pair-Share Topic, and Journaling.

YEAR ONE

IMPACT

The *Implementation of Morning Meeting during Advisory* varied depending on the grade level, but all teachers focused on consistency and fidelity. Teachers focused on ways to build deeper relationships with their students and additional engagement strategies. After the first couple of months of Morning Meeting, teachers gave a survey to gather feedback about what students liked most about the activity. Students really enjoyed the "would you rather" questions, sharing about their weekends, and hearing the opinions of their peers.

The Morning Meeting change idea led to increases in 5 out of 6 learning conditions by the end-of-year on the Elevate survey with more than 70% of students reporting positive ratings on 4 out of 6 learning conditions. The Lenart team saw the largest increase in Teacher Caring which grew 12% from the beginning to the end of the 2022-23 school year.

For the 2023-24 school year, the Lenart team wants to work on consistency with Morning Meeting, shortening their advisory duration (but increasing the frequency), and incorporating additional ways to build relationships outside of advisory. Teachers hope to build off of the buy-in from last year and continue to strengthen authentic connections with their students.