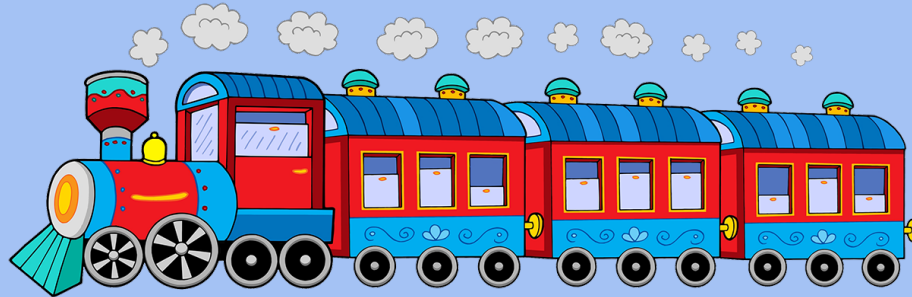


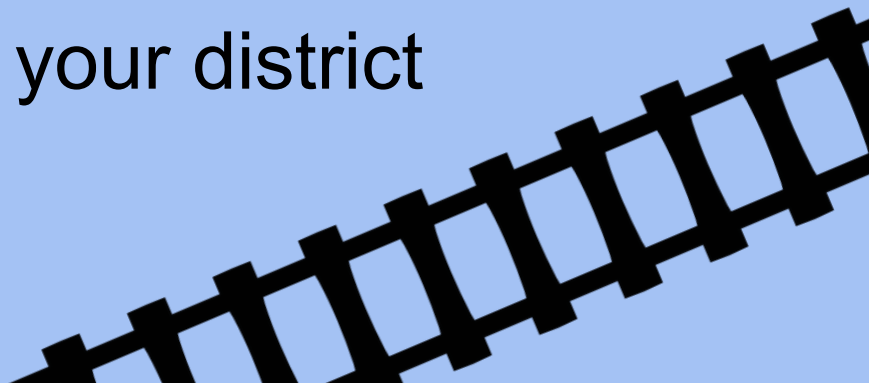
The Little Engine That Could: A School District Who Has Beat the Odds

Dr. Jaime Hembree, Superintendent of
McCormick County School District

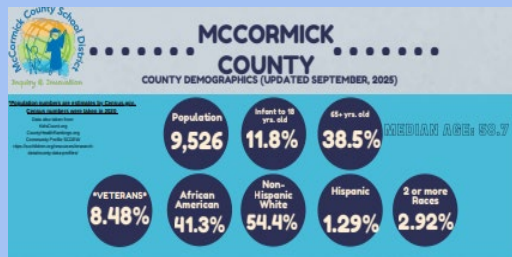


Our Goals for Today

1. Learn about our district's journey to success
2. Take away steps to support your district
3. Reflect on next steps for your district



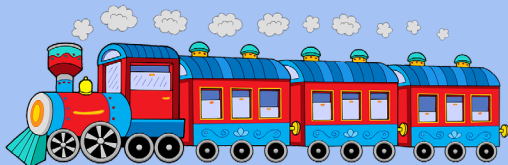
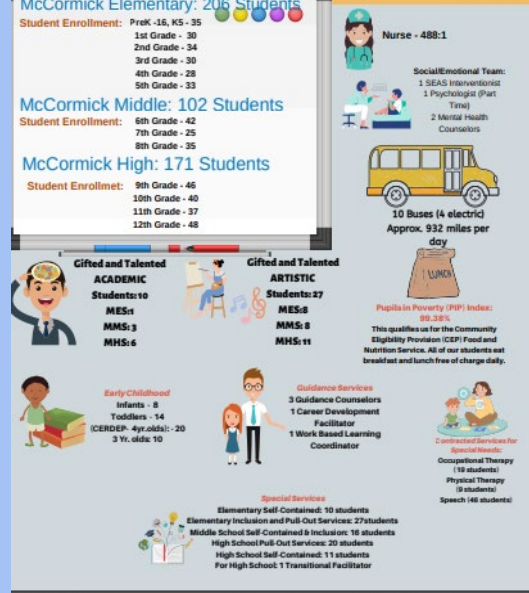
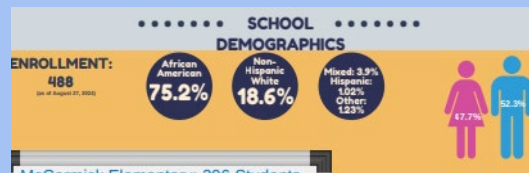
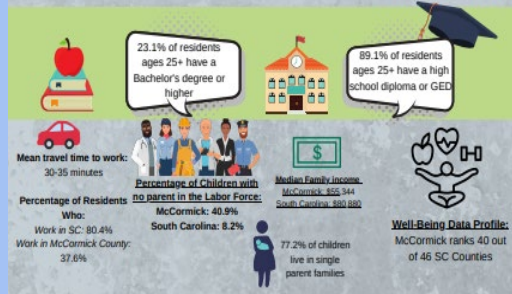
About McCormick County School District



Medical Factors	McCormick	South Carolina
Low Birth Weight	13%	10%
Heart Disease	5.9%	5.4%
Teen Births	23.5%	19.9%
Primary Care Physicians	1,950:1	1,490:1
Mental Health Providers	1,900:1	440:1

Healthcare:
McCormick is ranked 39 out of 46 S.C. Counties on the overall health of the county's residents.

Percentage under 65 with no health insurance: 12.1%
Percentage "Disabled" - 17.3%

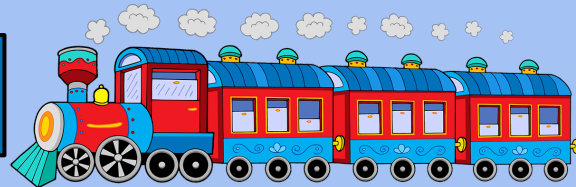




Small District, Big Heart

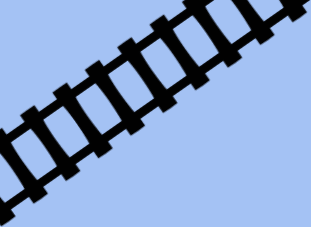
McCormick Early Childhood Center	32
McCormick Elementary School	194
McCormick Middle School	109
McCormick High School	168
Total Enrollment	541

Demographic Data



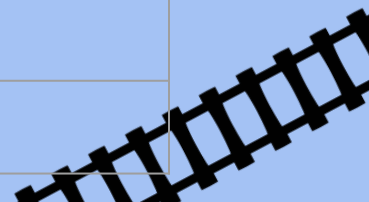
- Pupils in Poverty Rate is 99.38%
- Our entire district is Title I
- All students eat breakfast and lunch for free
- Demographic Break - Down
 - African American - 75.2%
 - Non -Hispanic White - 18.6%
 - One or More Race - 3.9%
 - Hispanic - 1.02%
 - Other - 1.23%





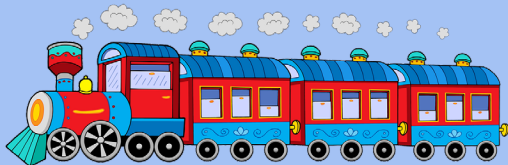
Federal Funding Sources

Title I	\$427,925
Title II	\$41,704.14
Title IV	\$31,632.15
Reap	\$23,162.68
CTE	\$45,686.00
IDEA	\$157,739.00
IDEA (Pre-School)	\$17,499.00
CSI and ATSI	No longer on the list!
Grand Total	\$727,848.97



Some Unique Challenges We've Faced Over the Years...

- Lack of industry within McCormick County, leading to decline in student enrollment
- Historically underperforming schools
- Lack of certified teachers
- Historic sense of distrust (from community, staff and parents)
- Prior to my arrival in 2020, there were seven superintendents in nine years
- Smallest school district in the state, very rural location bordering Georgia



THE JOURNEY...

ABOUT OUR JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION...



We Began Working as One System...

- All schools are housed together, but were operating in isolation
- Eliminated barriers by establishing teams for collaboration and communication (administrators and instructional coaches)
- Implemented professional development, facilitating vertical teaming across schools



A Vision Was Cast...



Inquiry & Innovation

Mission

TO PROVIDE A QUALITY
EDUCATION FOR EVERY
STUDENT

Vision

INSPIRING, CHALLENGING, AND
PREPARING OUR STUDENTS
FOR TOMORROW'S GLOBAL
OPPORTUNITIES



WORLD CLASS CHIEFS

PROFILE OF THE South Carolina Graduate

WORLD-CLASS KNOWLEDGE

Rigorous standards in language arts
and math for career and college
readiness

Multiple languages, science, technology,
engineering, mathematics (STEM), arts and
social sciences



WORLD-CLASS SKILLS

Creativity and innovation
Critical thinking and
problem solving
Collaboration and teamwork
Communication, information,
media and technology
Knowing how to learn

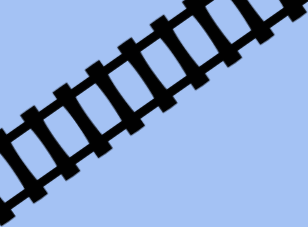
LIFE AND CAREER CHARACTERISTICS

Integrity • Self-direction • Global perspective • Perseverance • Work ethic • Interpersonal skills

© SCASA Superintendents' Roundtable
Adapted by SC Arts in Basic Curriculum Steering Committee, SCASCD, SC Chamber of Commerce, SC Council on Competitiveness, SC Education
Oversight Committee, SC State Board of Education, SC State Department of Education, TransformSC Schools and Districts.

transformSC
SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION

AN INITIATIVE OF  **SOUTH CAROLINA COUNCIL ON
COMPETITIVENESS**



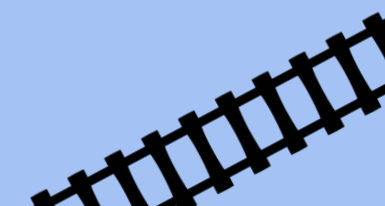
World -Class District Goals

Goal One: Provide World Class Instruction and Opportunities to Increase Student Achievement

Goal Two: Continue to Grow and Sustain a World -Class District Culture and Team

Goal Three: Provide World -Class Communication to Ensure Collaboration with Parents, Community Members, and All Stakeholders

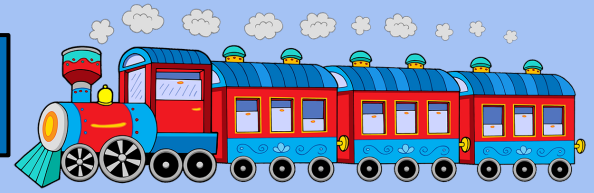
Goal Four: Grow and Sustain World -Class Community Partnerships



Organizational Streamlining

- District based instructional coaches rather than school -based
- Redefined roles, to include a Chief Academic Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, Director of MTSS & Accountability, a Broadcasting teacher/Public Information Officer, a Special Education Instructional Facilitator and a Director of CTE
- District -wide processes and procedures
- Developed district instructional non -negotiables
- Aligned the various state -required plans to focus on our common goal

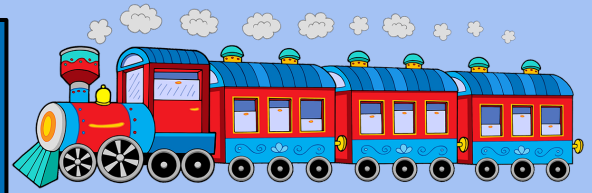
Staffing Recruitment



- Became creative with how we could attract teachers to come to our rural district
- Launched a salary study, resulting in our board approving a substantial raise for certified and noncertified employees
- Targeted Savannah Lakes, a retirement community within McCormick County, to hire retired teachers
- Added Incentives for teachers, such as a paid Master's program
- Board approval for signing bonuses in high need areas (Math, Science, Special Education)



We Were Rolling Along Smoothly

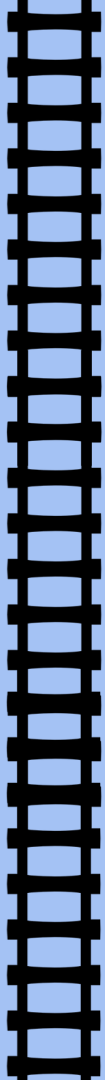
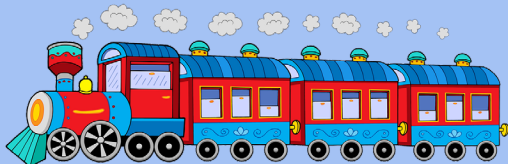


UNTIL...



A Curve Ball Was Thrown in 2023 - 2024...

**DISTRICT UNDERPERFORMING DESIGNATION
3RD YEAR IN A ROW**



Then What???

- We embraced our NEW reality, and were transparent about where we stood
- Controlled the message.
- Deep dive into current data with school board (board retreat)
- Formed accountability teams at each school
- Aligned resources
- Participated in SCDE District Transformation Cohort



Intentionality With Federal Funding

- Primarily spent on salaries (people, not programs)
 - Two Interventionists at our elementary school (Title I)
 - One interventionist at our middle school (Title I)
 - Parent Coordinator (Title I)
 - Professional Development Coordinator (Title II)
 - Work - Based Learning Coordinator (CTE)
 - SPED Teachers (IDEA)

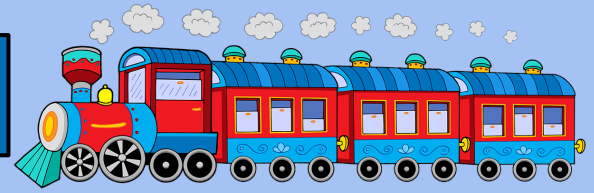
2026 Federal Funds

2025 Federal Funds

2024 Federal Funds

*In 2019, we paid \$83,494.73 to Odysseyware Academy just out of Title One

Alignment of ALL Plans



- Superintendent Goals
- Principal PADEPP Goals
- Continuous Improvement Plans
- School Strategic Plan Goals
- Teacher SLO Goals

**MHS Goal: By the end of May 2026,
through PLC's and PLT's, McCormick
High School will increase EOC scores in
Biology, United States History, English II,
and Algebra 1 scores by at least 3-5%.**

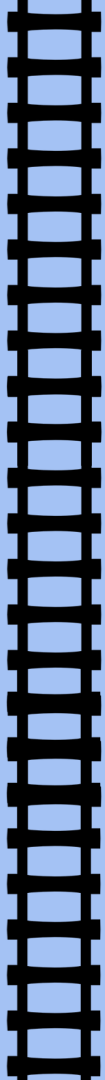
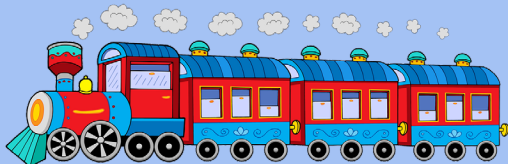
ONE PLAN, CLEAR GOALS, CLOSE MONITORING...

RESULTS!!!



How Did We Get Everyone All Aboard?

Accountability Teams Were Launched...





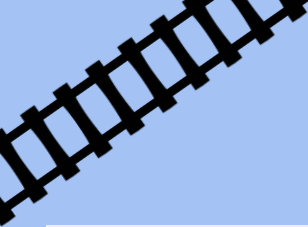
Data Driven Accountability Teams

We have created spreadsheets to track progress.
We meet regularly with each accountability team.

High School Tracking

- ★ Current Grad Rate
- ★ College and Career Readiness
- ★ Students on Track to Graduate
- ★ Academic Achievement
- ★ Preparing for Success

Selection Key	Qualifications
On Track, Guaranteed	The student entered the school year with the required credits for on-track status (GR 25: 6 credits, 1 Eng, 1 Math GR24: 12 credits, 2 Eng, 2 Math)
On Track, Confident	The student has 70 or above in all courses, and will be on track if this path is continued.
On Track, Needs Support	The student is passing all classes, but has at least one grade below a 70.
Not On Track, Needs Support	The student is failing at least one course.
Not On Track, cannot recover	The student is either failing courses beyond the point of recovery, or began the school year a grade behind where they need to be.
Nondiploma Pathway	The student is on a non-diploma pathway, and therefore will not be considered on track based on their credit requirements.

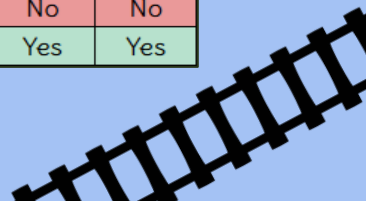


Data Driven Accountability Teams

- Elementary and Middle Tracking
- ★ Previous SC Ready scores
 - ★ Progress Monitoring through MAP
 - Academic Achievement totals after each test
 - Student Progress goals met after each test
 - Accuracy of Rally and MAP predictions based on SC Ready scores

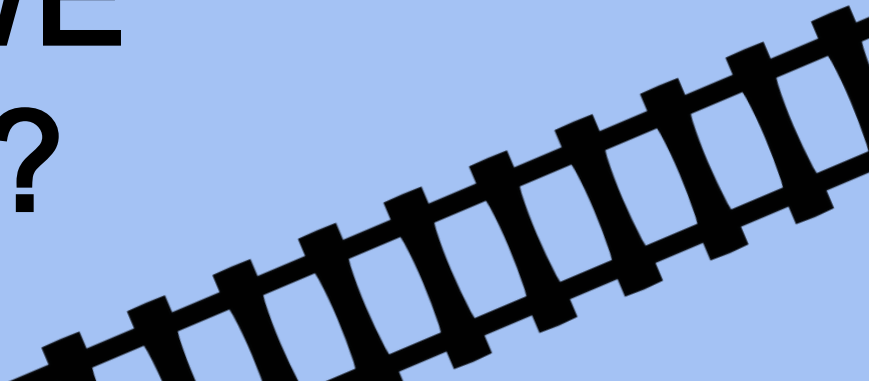
2025 School Report Card Simulator (v 1.0.0; 6/28/2024)								
			Points:	Out of:	Weight:	Est. Overall Points	Est. ES Overall Rating	Est. MS Overall Rating
Academic Achievement:	—	35.00	100.00	Not Rated	Not Rated	Not Rated		
Student Progress:	—	35.00	—	<i>INSTRUCTIONS: Use this spreadsheet to estimate projected School Report Card Ratings based on local data. Enter information into the cells that are highlighted in yellow, only. All other fields are calculated. The workbook has not been locked or protected so that you may modify it as needed. If you need a fresh copy, you may download it at https://eoc.sc.gov/educators.</i>				
Preparing for Success:	—	10.00	—					
Multilingual Learners' Progress:	—	10.00	—					
School Climate:	—	10.00	—					

Last Name	First Name	22-23 SC Ready Score & Category	23-24 SC Ready Score & Category	PAB Level	AVT Percentage	Fall MAP		Goals: Winter MAP Score		Winter MAP			
						Score	Percentile	MAT Goal	AVT Goal	Score	Percentile	MAT Met?	AVT Met?
		568 MEETS	537 App	4	65	225	61	229	230	227	57	No	No
		525 APPR	544 Met	4	65	224	59	228	229	229	61	Yes	Yes



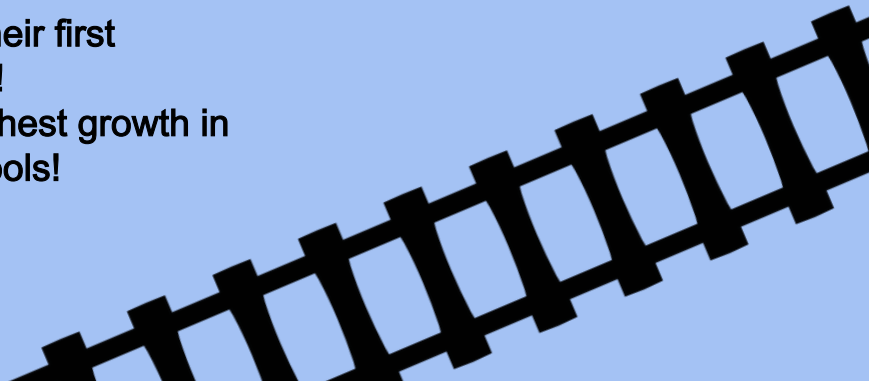
Current Progress

SO
WHERE
ARE WE
NOW?



Making History!

- McCormick County School District had the highest growth in the entire state on the SC Ready ELA assessment in 2024 - 2025!
- McCormick County School District had the third highest growth in the entire state on SC Ready Math in 2024 - 2025!
- McCormick Middle School has been named a “Beating the Odds” School from the Education Oversight Committee and will be featured in the report that is released this spring!
- McCormick Middle School achieved their first “EXCELLENT” rating in school history!
- McCormick Middle School had the highest growth in the entire state among traditional schools!



Current Trajectory



Accurate Reporting

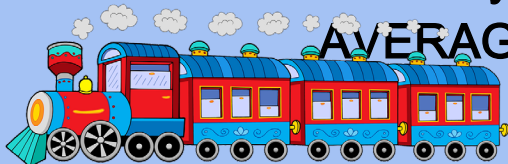
Our consistent tracking and internal audits have allowed us to identify and eliminate any errors in reporting.



Ongoing Progress Monitoring

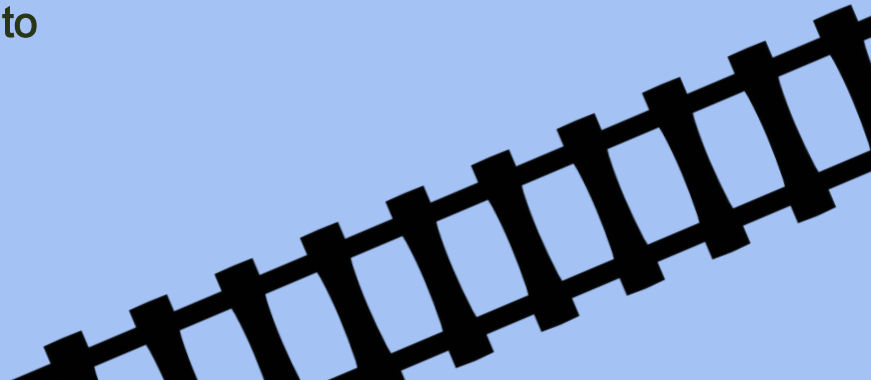
We update our data sheets and report card simulators each time we get new data. Real -time reporting for real -time decision making.

Currently Tracking One EXCELLENT, One GOOD and One
AVERAGE on the 2025-2026 School Report Card!



Data Driven Teacher Teams

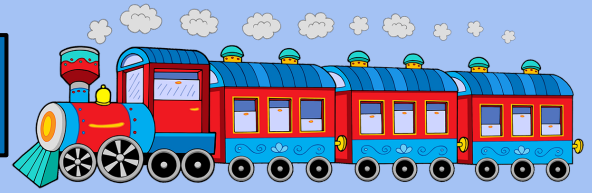
- Full transparency!!
- We shared the report card calculation process with teachers.
- We clearly communicate the data and its impact each time we progress monitor or update data.
- These data updates pair with their regular Professional Learning Team data discussions to guide instructional decisions.



Data Driven Decisions

- Adjustments to pacing
- Adjustments to rigor of assessments
- Identification of bubble kids
- Adjustments to small group instruction

The 4 Critical Questions of a PLC at Work



What is it we want our students to know and be able to do?

How will we know if each student has learned it?

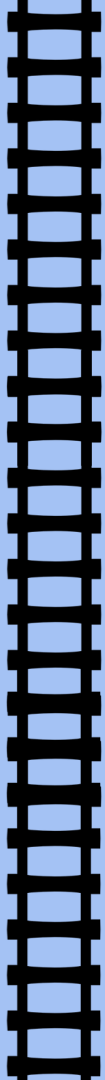
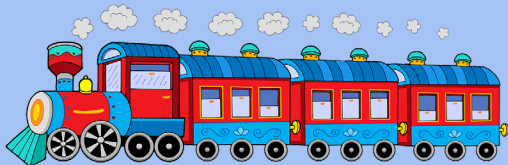
How will we respond when some students do not learn it?

How will we extend the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?



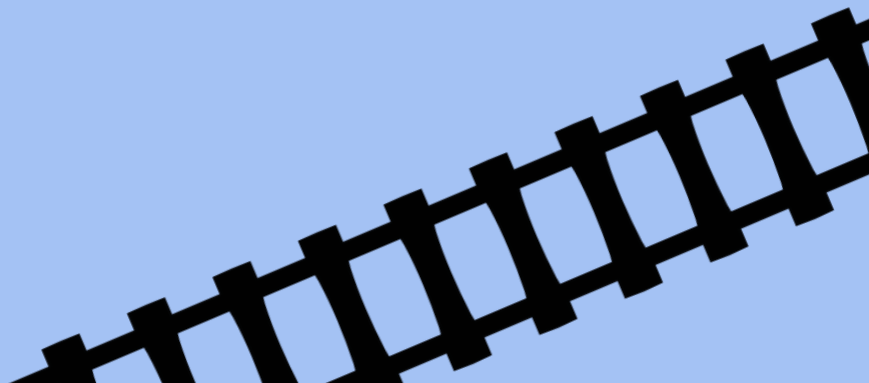
A Mindset Shift Has Transpired...

**We Think We Can, We
Think We Can**



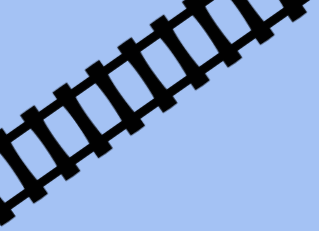
How is MCSD Beating the Odds?

- Visible, Supportive Leadership
- Clear goals and aligned plans
- Federal monies match needs (intentional focus)
- Accountability tracking and teams
- Student ownership of data
- Data team process via PLC at Work



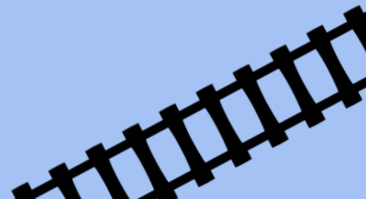
Final Tips

- Bring everyone to the table - Finance, HR, Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer, principals, etc for a conversation
 - Align all plans to reflect the same goals
 - If a strategy in a Federal Funding does not align to district and/or school goals, why write it?
 - Invest in people, not miscellaneous items
 - Don't be afraid to say "No, this doesn't fit".
 - Less is more!
- If we can achieve success in McCormick, so can you!

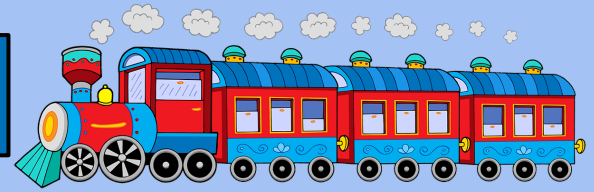


Question for Reflection...

**Does your district
have the mindset of
“The Little Engine
That Could?”**



Thank you for your time!



Dr. Jaime Hembree
Superintendent
hembreej@mcsd1.org
864 -602 -9595