# Minnesota Principals Academy – Action Learning Project
## Bob Wayne
### Abstract

Are Franklin Middle Schools safety nets effective based on data? Franklin Middle School provides a number of safety nets for our students. For this study, I narrowed my research to two areas, Read180, and School Within A School, and using data to determine if these programs are a viable use of school district funds and resources. This ALP evaluated both programs and their effectiveness.

Three years ago, I began the process of investigating a reading program, Read180, as continuous result of poor reading scores by some of our students on the Minnesota Comprehension Assessment tests (MCA). There was a group of students in each grade level, (6th through 8th), that needed further assistance to meet state standard. Through the use of data, I evaluated the overall value of the program to the school and district. I have found in this study positive student growth breaking down SWS and Read180 data in 8th grade Communications.

**School Vision**: Nurturing all students to become responsible and respectful with a passion for learning.

**Project Description:** I investigated whether our safety nets provided students with effective resources, both human and financial. Through the use of MCA and NWEA data, as well as teacher and parent input, I have found great success and student growth in both programs.
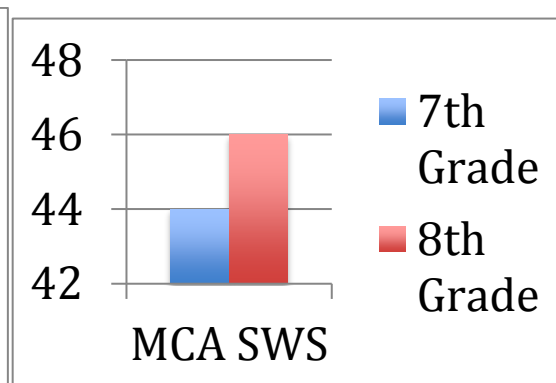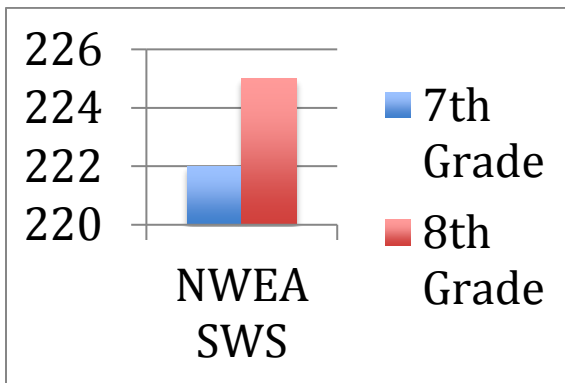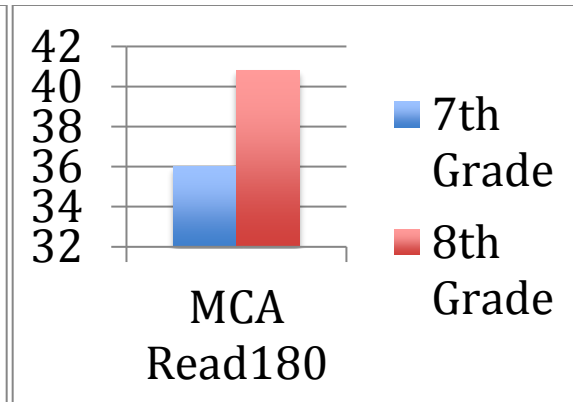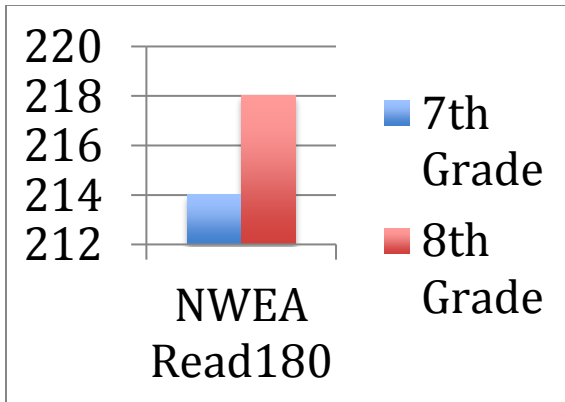
**Current Context:** Franklin Middle School is a 6-8 middle school with 470 students. We are a rural school in Northwestern Minnesota. Our student population includes a 35% FRL; 8 % students of color; 16 % special education and 1 % ELL. We have 35 teachers in our 7 period schedule which includes team-time for core teachers.

**Alignment of Project to Vision:** Our over all vision for success is to ensure we are making state standards and that we are working towards our students being successful on standardizes tests required by the state, be high school ready, and work towards being college and career ready. We needed to create a plan to help who we call our bubble students reach grade level so that they can achieve success. We have done this by using our Worlds Best Work Force (WBWF) team effectively to help identify needs.

**Purpose and Background:** Read180 hopefully will bring approximately 60 students not only to grade level, but to provide them the tools to be successful. The same could be said about SWS Communications. This particular program is geared towards at-risk students at FMS who really do not fit into the regular classroom setting. The Purpose of Safety Nets is to provide academic options to assist students in make academic progress and to work towards the goal of graduating, and being college and career ready. Students are challenged at their current grade level.

**Why Investigate:** Over the last year, we were directed to make budget adjustments for the 2017-18 school year. I needed to know if Read180 and SWS were good uses of resources and if students were actually demonstrating growth.

**What I Did:** Knowing that I would be looking at both programs, I visited with both the instructor and the students numerous times during the school year to check student progress, and spoke with the groups to emphasize the need for accurate data. I expected effort, which most gave, but also provided the information to the students the value of the data for them moving forward, and what I was going to do with the data. Again, I believe that most gave their best efforts and emphasized showing growth was ultimately the goal.

**NWEA Read180** — 7th Grade, 8th Grade (y-axis: 212, 214, 216, 218, 220)

**MCA Read180** — 7th Grade, 8th Grade (y-axis: 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42)

**NWEA SWS** — 7th Grade, 8th Grade (y-axis: 220, 222, 224, 226)

**MCA SWS** — 7th Grade, 8th Grade (y-axis: 42, 44, 46, 48)

**What I found out:** We had 21 students in the 8th grade Read180 class who grew from an average of 4.8 points on their MCA reading test. 5 are considered hi growth, 14 medium, and 2 low. This same group grew on their NWEA reading test by an average of 4 points each. 3 students were at a negative 7 each, telling me effort came into play.

For our SWS communications class, there were 6 students in the class. 3 others transferred out during the school year. For those 6 students, 3 passed their MCA test, two making partial, and one going down 7 points. 1 demonstrated high growth, 3 medium and 2 low. Reminder, SWS students have a history of not engaging is school. These same students on their NWEA test grew by an average of 3 points. For our the 21 Read180 students, I also looked at their Lexile scores. This is an ongoing view of how these students have demonstrated growth, rather than relying on the snapshot of the MCA or NWEA test. The purpose of this test is to identify growth. The average student is expected to grow approximately 60-100 Lexiles per year. Of the 21 students, 15 demonstrated growth, with 13 students falling within the desired growth range, growing an average of 128 points. The bottom 5 students dropped from the pre-test to the post-test by an average of 67 points.

**Conclusion:** The data for both programs are very successful overall. The cliental in the classes are considered At-Risk. Positive growth was demonstrated by most students, better preparing them for the high school. Teachers and parents are extremely happy with the progress and the safety nets provided her at Franklin. Read180 and School within a school communications are viable and valuable safety nets for Franklin Middle School students.