

Belmont Ridge Middle School
Loudoun County Public Schools
Comprehensive Needs Assessment - Executive Summary

[LCPS School Profile](#)
[Virginia School Quality Profile](#)

School Improvement Team:	
Name	Position
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Instructional Overview

Provide descriptive information related to the curriculum, instructional programs, and/or existing interventions to support the academic, behavioral, and/or social emotional needs for all students.

At Belmont Ridge Middle School, we strive for excellence everyday within our classroom communities. Our hope is that our students engage in learning experiences that promote academic discourse and deep thinking around content standards. Over the past three years, we have been working on having our entire faculty trained in Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Performance Assessments (PA) as a way to support the design and implementation of lesson plans that foster more authentic learning experiences for our students. We continue to utilize practices around Personalized Learning as well to champion student-centered education for all of our students.

The math department encourages all students of all levels to succeed and build confidence in mathematics. The sixth grade math team uses a modified flipped classroom so the teacher can interact individually with all students to make sure they understand the lesson. Teachers across all math classrooms have incorporated the use of additional technology to help

students model and understand the deeper meaning of mathematical concepts. The use of the Desmos calculator and lesson presentation tools as well as other interactive presentation tools has helped students get feedback on their understanding in real time.

The English department focuses on reading and writing in ways that are meaningful for students. Sixth grade students read multiple articles about different social issues and how they impact them and the world around them. After researching several topics, students were able to pick a topic that was important and meaningful to them. Students then worked with a partner to craft an informational and persuasive presentation to educate their classmates about their chosen topic and try to inspire them to take action to make a difference in their community. Eighth grade English students focused on fine-tuning their writing skills. Students used a foldable graphic organizer to plan and structure their essays. The structured planning allows students to create logical and well-supported essays, which are then fine-tuned through a peer editing process.

Science classes expanded excellence in education outside of the regular classroom experience. Students were given the opportunity to participate in numerous clubs. In response to the pandemic, the science department offered virtual learning classes on health and medicine where students could learn about the science of pandemics and connect their learning with what was happening in the world in real-time.

The social studies department crafted lessons that allow students to create deeper, more personal connections to content. Seventh grade students made connections to historical events by comparing current modern advocacy movements to the civil rights movement of the 1960s and by drafting diary entries from the perspective of different people in the Great Depression. Seventh graders also had the opportunity to watch a presentation from a Holocaust survivor and reflected on what they had learned and how it impacted their understanding of the Holocaust. Eighth grade civics students focused on advocacy projects and connecting to the community. Projects included school improvement proposals presented to stakeholders in the school community, taking on the role of a defense attorney defending a client that has been denied their constitutional rights, and showcasing their understanding of economics by presenting a business plan in the style of the TV show, "Shark Tank."

Elective classes promote academic excellence through community outreach and involvement. The art department has hosted RiverCon, a convention open to both students and the community for popular media, the arts, and technology. Art classes also worked with the Loudoun County Police Department sketch artist for a lesson on proportions, invited a local artist in to show some civil rights movement paintings from the Loudoun County area, and hosted an endangered animal ornament paint night to raise funds for endangered animals. Family and consumer science (FACS) classes were able to take field trips to local restaurants for hands-on learning in kitchen safety, job skills, business leadership, and technology in food production. Students participated in Pizza Wars, a competition to create a pizza recipe of their own and market it. Judges for this event included teachers at Belmont and a local pizza shop owner. Students in FACS also gave back to the community by sewing pillow cases to donate to a pediatric cancer charity and quilts to donate to a local senior center. Technology education continues to grow at Belmont Ridge Middle School. The Introduction to Computer Science (formally CAMS) program has expanded to include both 7th and 8th grade students. Students learn both block and text-based programming to create interactive programs and share their

creations with other Belmont students. Students participated in several events where they were able to educate community members by teaching them to create their own program. Belmont was one of a few middle schools in Loudoun County to pilot the robotics class. The PE department has focused on putting students in charge of their learning with the use of self-reflection and goal setting. Teachers met with students individually to assess their progress and set new fitness goals as the year progressed. Students participated in a PBL advocacy project to help identify and address the most concerning health issues for teens.

Developmental Responsiveness Advisory/Sources of Strength

Students attend advisory class with their B 5-6 class for fifteen minutes each day. It is an opportunity for students to have a daily check-in with a trusted adult and to start each day positively with their peers. During this time, students participate in lessons from the Positivity Project or Sources of Strength, or they engage in fun activities with their peers. During the holiday seasons, Advisory has also been used as a time for students to share their unique cultural celebrations with others and for their peers to learn about a new culture. Within the advisory block, all students participate in customized lessons from the Positivity Project. These lessons include inspirational quotes, videos, and activities for students to work on with their advisory or independently with self-reflection. They are grade-specific and designed to promote positive relationships between students and their school community. All the lessons focus on empowering students to have a healthy self-image and foster positive relationships in their life. Throughout these lessons, students and teachers are able to share their unique life experiences with the class.

In addition to the Positivity Project, advisory is a time for students to complete lessons from Sources of Strength. This student-led program provides students with resources and activities to become aware of how to handle their own mental health and discuss suicide prevention with their peers. The program also focuses on social networking, cultural diversity, and fostering positive relationships among students and the adults in their lives. During the program, students learn about eight different strengths (mental health, family support, positive friends, mentors, healthy activities, generosity, spirituality, physical health) that they can utilize through their own challenging moments. It is important to note that students who participate in this program create their own materials, activities, and lessons to be shared with the school community during advisory. It is the hope of this program that students and adults can spread hope and kindness to others who are struggling and help them know that they are not alone through difficult times.

UMHT

Belmont Ridge students and staff receive access to mental health resources and support from the United Mental Health Team throughout the school year. This team consists of a school social worker, a student assistance specialist, a school psychologist, and four counselors with diverse backgrounds in different grade levels and special education experience. Throughout the year, this team provides support to the school with the creation and preparation of the school-wide advisory slides, positive peer-focused activities for students to talk about mental health, and a Mental Health Awareness Week. They are also some of the adult leaders who

participate in the Sources of Strength program at Belmont Ridge. In addition to providing students with resources, the United Mental Health Team also encouraged staff to come to Mindful Mondays, a space for learning how to alleviate and manage stress. These activities were in person or online (depending on school closure) and allowed staff to reflect and pause during their morning before starting a busy school day. Staff participated in a variety of activities including meditation and self-care practices.

Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI)

Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) is a small-group intervention designed for students who find reading and writing difficult. When readers struggle, there is a critical need for highly effective small-group interventions that will get students back on track as soon as possible. In addition, struggling readers need predictability to help them build confidence.

The English department found that struggling readers were not able to grow in their skills in their grade-level English class. Since Belmont Ridge does not have academic and honors classes, all students participate in English class together. While this is effective for many, the English department felt students reading below grade level were not being served. Our county had purchased LLI materials for reading specialists at all middle schools. While the original intent was that reading specialists would use these resources when they pull out students or work with them during resources, we proposed using those materials in ELA classes on a consistent basis. It was determined that on average there were 30-40 students below grade level in each grade. Working with teacher recommendations, SOL and MAP scores, and reading history, we selected students for the ELA LLI class. The classes have no more than 20 students, and there are two in each grade. This class is the student's ELA class; teachers use LLI materials for the reading portion of it. They also adapt grade-level writing curriculum to better suit these students. In order to work with students in small groups (a foundation of LLI), we determined that we would need 3-4 teachers/teacher assistants in each ELA LLI class.

We worked together as a department and administration so that each class is taught by a general education teacher, a special education or ELL teacher, the reading specialist, and the reading specialist teacher's assistant. We benchmark students and then assign them to small groups with a teacher. This allows us to work with students on their level every day. Lessons are designed carefully, using a sequence of texts that build on each other in many ways for rich class discussions. We have seen significant growth in student skills by using this model for the last two years. Teachers participated in multiple days of training to learn the LLI program and Words Their Way and have committed to this second prep for the good of our students.

Social Equity

Belmont Ridge is committed to ensuring that all of our students are treated in an equitable manner and are provided opportunities to share their cultural experiences and unique backgrounds. The mission of Belmont Ridge is to "ensure the future success of our students by providing an equitable, engaging environment of educational excellence."

All Belmont Ridge staff have been trained in the Equity in the Center Modules 1 and 2. The training explores causes of inequities and the reasons for equity work. All Belmont Ridge teaching staff were required to have an equity-focused personal goal for the 2020-2021 school

year. Equity goals were suggested to be based on the “20 (Self-)Critical Things I Will Do to Be a Better Multicultural Educator” by Paul Gorski, but teaching staff had the flexibility to create a goal that would best enhance equitable practices in the classroom.

The Equity Team consists of classroom teachers, administrators, counselors, and other school staff (such as librarians) and meets monthly. Our goal for the next school year is to also have a student equity team/committee to give further support and student voice in decision-making at Belmont Ridge. During the 2019-2020 school year, Belmont Ridge followed specific protocols for responding to hate speech and racial slurs. When staff and/or students report hateful speech and racial slurs, we must address it immediately. When a report is made, parents/guardians are notified immediately and an investigation into the incident begins. Students have access to social-emotional support from our UMHT, who will facilitate restorative practice circles if needed.

During the fall of 2020, Belmont Ridge administrators conducted a school-wide professional development meeting to address both school and county-wide equity initiatives. The presentation provided specific details regarding equitable practices and specifically how they relate to education. Staff participated in a number of conversations about race, ethnicity, and diversity. To conclude training, small groups worked together to develop specific plans for continuing this important work.

During the 2020-2021 school year, LCPS recognized June as PRIDE month. In an effort to recognize PRIDE month, a handful of Belmont Ridge students came together and created a presentation in order to provide staff and students education about the LGBTQ+ community. The presentation was optional; seventh and eighth grade students had the opportunity to learn more about LGBTQ+ history and ways to support the LGBTQ+ community.

From 2018-2019 to the current school year (2020-2021), Belmont Ridge introduced the Positivity Project (P2) to students and staff. P2 is a social-emotional learning program that “empowers students to build positive relationships and become their best selves.” P2 is provided to students every morning through their advisory class. The lessons are made up of videos, activities, and discussion questions to help facilitate classroom discussions centered around positive characteristics.

Belmont Ridge teachers are committed to ensuring that all of our English Language Learner (EL) students are treated in an equitable manner and are provided ample opportunities to share their cultural experiences and unique backgrounds. Our EL teacher supports students that have a primary language other than English. She will pull out students to teach basic English, focusing on skills related to reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The teacher will also provide additional instruction to help them better understand vocabulary and concepts related to various content areas. Whenever possible, the EL teacher will stay in the classroom to embrace the inclusion philosophy. The EL students benefit from being amongst their peers and as a result tend to pick up the English language at a faster rate than if they were in a separate classroom.

Twelve different languages are represented by our active EL students. Since EL students come from diverse cultures and backgrounds, representing a multitude of varying life experiences, Belmont Ridge teachers work together to truly understand the needs of each EL child. Teachers are aware of the various language proficiency levels of the EL students and

understand what EL students are able to do at those levels. In addition, teachers use sentence and paragraph stems, graphic organizers, guided reading strategies, videos, visuals and realia, as well as many other techniques and “Best Practices” to provide the necessary support for the EL child.

EL students are initially assessed in reading. If there is a need for additional reading support, the students are placed in Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) classes. Here, the EL students are integrated into the general education classroom and are placed in reading groups based on the needs of each student. Each class has a reading specialist, EL teacher, language arts teacher, and often another staff member that has received specialized training in LLI. Throughout the year, the staff meets regularly to discuss the progress of the students and brainstorm changes that may need to be made.

Extended Learning Opportunities

Provide information to describe extended learning opportunities for students, staff, families and community.

Belmont Ridge provides a variety of extended learning opportunities for all stakeholders. One example are our community events in conjunction with our PTO. Recently, Belmont Ridge hosted a RiverHawk Family Night, where over 300 families joined our Belmont Ridge staff for outdoor games, a DJ, outdoor movie and a bonfire.

Students have the opportunity to join Sources of Strength, student-led program provides students with resources and activities to become aware of how to handle their own mental health and discuss suicide prevention with their peers. The program also focuses on social networking, cultural diversity, and fostering positive relationships among students and the adults in their lives. Students can also join our Principal Advisory Committee and/or our Student Council. Currently our Student Council has over ninety members.

In an effort to meet the interests and demands of our student population, the Belmont Ridge PTO sponsors several Before and After School programs. Belmont Ridge partners with Riverside High School National Honor Society to offer tutoring services from 8 am to 8:30 am on Wednesdays in all subject areas. Belmont Ridge staff members serve as advisors and supervise the clubs and activities. Additionally, several staff members partner with parents to offer activities which allow students to compete in local, state, national, and international competitions. Members of the Belmont Ridge VEX Robotics, Odyssey of the Mind, and Science Olympiad compete across the nation against other middle schools. Over 120 students participate in the spring musical and approximately 600 students participate in our band, chorus, strings, and guitar programs.

In an attempt to involve parents and increase transparency, a Principal for a Day program has been launched which allows for parents or community members to step into the role of a middle school principal and shadow Mrs. Johnson for a day. Belmont Ridge also conducts monthly PTO meetings and hosts principal coffee talks which explore topics such as course requests and selection, personalized learning, social-emotional health of students, and data analysis. A weekly newsletter is shared with stakeholders as well as communication via

social media and the Belmont Ridge website. Community members are also invited to present to parents during selected principal coffee talks. Belmont Ridge has increased the number of school-business partnerships and is examining opportunities to have our students visit local businesses and gain relevant experiences to support what they are learning in the classroom and empower them to make meaningful contributions to the world.

Lastly, we are excited to start our Parents as Educational Partners project for our families who are not native English speakers. This program is an opportunity for our staff to collaborate with our EL families and help familiarize them with the intricacies of the American School System.

Areas of Strength

Summary statements for domains providing evidence of analysis of trend data over a 3-year period and data triangulation to confirm areas of strength. Provide a clear connection between outcomes and contributing factors.

In conducting a needs assessment for Belmont Ridge Middle School, several areas of strength were identified for Belmont Ridge. Academically, Belmont Ridge's MAP achievement percentiles and both math and reading were greater than the County average for middle schools. Our Science Department creates hands-on experiential experiences for students and our Social Science Department leads the school in creating authentic learning experiences. Attendance is an area of strength for our school, with an average of 98.33% for the 2020-2021 school year, exceeding the average for middle schools. At Belmont Ridge, there is a well-established PBIS, Mentor, and Check-In Check Out program which are reviewed each quarter and tweaked to meet students' needs. Our Career and Technical Education Department uses Project Lead the Way to create innovative learning opportunities for students and our UMHT presents to students and plans individually with our scholars to provide exposure to different career paths for students.

In analyzing staff, student, and family survey results, students repeatedly shared that they feel safe and connected to the adults in my school. Our staff commented that professional development supports their learning and they can address concerns with administrations. Lastly, our families believe BEMS is a safe learning environment and overall school communication exceeds that of the County average.

Areas for Growth

Summary statements for domains providing evidence of analysis of trend data over a 3-year period and data triangulation to confirm areas of concern. Provide a clear connection between outcomes and contributing factors.

In conducting a needs assessment for Belmont Ridge Middle School, several areas of growth were identified for Belmont Ridge. Belmont Ridge will put interventions in place for students who scored below the 40th achievement percentile on MAP in reading and interventions in place for students below the 50th achievement percentile on MAP in math. The BEMS Science Department will collaborate with the Computer Science Department to create greater opportunities for Computational Thinking and the BEMS Social Science Department will collaborate with the Computer Science Department to create greater opportunities for Computational Thinking.

In supporting our students' transition to full time in person learning, Belmont Ridge will continue to work with our leadership and UMHT to make personal connections with families to help increase attendance as well as continuing to meet with students to reinforce expectations and reward positive behaviors.

School Improvement Goals

Strand 1

School identify at least one goal in Strand 1

Domain 1 - English Language Arts

Outcome Goal:	Students below the 40th achievement percentile on MAP in reading will have a fall to spring average conditional growth percentile of 60 or higher.	Process Goal:	Students in specific subgroups will be further identified through classroom assessments and MAP data. Students will receive targeted interventions based on their academic need(s).
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Domain 5 - Other Academic Areas

Outcome Goal:	Across all content areas, teachers will plan one lesson per unit with a focus on authenticity and elements of PBL in order to engage students in deeper learning.	Process Goal:	Across all academic areas, teachers will plan one lesson per unit with a focus on authenticity and elements of PBL in order to engage students in deeper learning.
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Select Domain			
Outcome Goal:	Students below the 50th achievement percentile on MAP in math will have a fall to spring average conditional growth percentile of 60 or higher.	Process Goal:	Students in specific subgroups will be further identified through classroom assessments and MAP data. Students will receive targeted interventions based on their academic need(s).

School Improvement Goals
 Strand 2
School identify at least one goal in Strand 2

Domain 8 - Safe and Supportive Environments			
Outcome Goal:	Across all academic areas, with the support of PBIS and the use of the Second Step, Belmont Ridge will create weekly learning opportunities to improve student-to-student interactions and student-to-student empathy as measured to by survey data, discipline data, and daily observations.	Process Goal:	BEMS United Mental Health Team and the BEMS PBIS Team will develop and implement developmental responsive Advisory lessons and supports to enhance school climate.

Domain 7 - Commitment to Professional Learning

Outcome Goal:	Teachers will improve their practice to ensure that BEM is an equitable learning environment for all students by making progress on personal equity goals	Process Goal:	Across all academic areas, teachers will improve their practice to ensure that BEM is an equitable learning environment for all students
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Select Domain

Outcome Goal:		Process Goal:	
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