At Glacier Middle School we are providing interventions to students through a couple different approaches. One of these is a daily, directed and dedicated time frame that we refer to as PACE.

PACE is an acronym for Practice – Activity – Choice – Enrichment. The purpose of this time has always been to provide students with either additional time and support or opportunities for enrichment. In the past few years, this has taken on various forms. As we have dug deeper into the questions about how we respond when students don’t learn and how we respond when they do learn, we have also restructured PACE.

Specifically, we aim to achieve the following during this time:

1) **Support students academically -- as soon as they need it**
   - Provide timely and directed support to students within the school day – this includes students who need to redo work, make-up work, or receive intervention/ tutoring to learn material before instruction moves to other topics
   - Return students who need additional support to the person most qualified to help them – their subject area teacher

2) **Motivate students to do their best -- consistently**
   - Motivate young adolescents to give their best effort by offering immediate and developmentally relevant rewards-- like fun, attractive activities and opportunities to interact with peers (for example: basketball, volleyball, foosball, board games, computer games, appropriately-rated movies)
   - Offer students who are doing well opportunities to select artistic or intellectually engaging activities (for example: leadership, chess, quiz bowl, yearbook, calligraphy, beading, library quiet time)

Students are identified for either intervention or activity based on daily grades. Students with passing grades and who meet expected standards choose an activity during PACE. Students with failing or incomplete grades are expected to attend a class in which they need intervention. A student who is passing but has work to redo or make-up, needs further instruction, or is not meeting a standard may be flagged by their teacher for support during PACE by having their grade designated as an I (incomplete). Once brought to standard, the student’s grade will reflect their progress. When all classes are in good order, a student is again eligible for an activity. Students only have opportunity for activity if their work is in good standing.

Since we started this approach, our total number of failing grades has reduced by 26% (comparing Quarter 2 of last school year, 2008-09, with Quarter 2 of this school year, 2009-10). This is after we implemented half-way through the quarter two days per week (which allows one day per week of intervention for each class). Additionally, our total number of students receiving failing grades has reduced by 31%. During Quarter 3 we will have a full quarter of intervention/activity occurring four days per week (two days per week for each class). Additionally, we have seen an impact on our overall discipline referrals as well. While we have a focused implementation of Safe and Civil School practices that we feel significantly contribute to lowered discipline referrals, we also know that the
quality of a student’s academic performance significantly influences the quality of their behavioral choices. Comparing Quarter 2 from last year to this year, our number of discipline referrals has reduced by 37% and our number of suspensions has reduced by 47%.

Anecdotally we have also observed several shifts in our school culture. These shifts appear to define themselves into four separate categories of students:

1. Students who don’t need the additional support are rewarded on a daily basis and are given the privilege of making choices about one small portion of their school day; this has impacted our the overall culture of our school by reinforcing that hard work is important and pays off.

2. Students who need support occasionally receive it, allowing them to quickly make-up work missed from absences or other and providing them steady, consistent pressure to stay abreast of their studies; this has helped our students who sometimes ‘ride the fence’ or don’t give their best consistently to aim higher for themselves.

3. Students who need support frequently receive it immediately and meaningfully, helping to keep them from becoming overwhelmed by getting far behind quickly and giving them important, timely and relevant intervention about concepts they find difficult or challenging; we are just now seeing this as having the greatest impact on our school culture – we are reaching that group of students who truly need that deeper layer of intervention and tend to check out because it’s too hard for them to manage alone.

4. Students who need support but openly refuse it are not given the option to fail, holding their feet to the fire and continuing to apply consistent pressure that they are expected to try; this has helped us sort out those students who simply won’t (our intentional nonlearners) so we can brainstorm and attempt interventions specific to each of their unique needs and challenges – these students are discovering that we won’t give up on them.

Our grand vision is that PACE supports student learning, impacts student success, and rewards student responsibility and hard work. Best practice research tells us that timely, directed intervention and meaningful rewards are powerfully effective in helping students achieve more. Our initial data is very encouraging and we are eager to continue comparing our future data and observations to previous years as well.