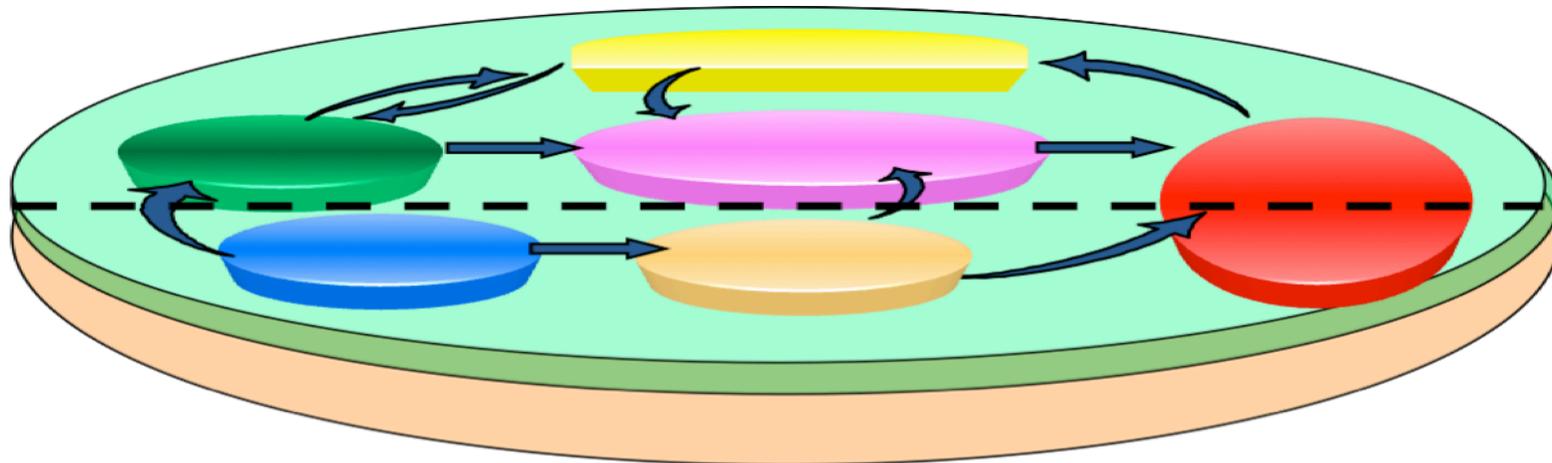


## Lemont District 113A System Assessment Executive Summary Report

The following system assessment feedback report was developed for Lemont District 113A by the System Assessment Review Team of the Consortium for Educational Change.

Using the best practice criteria of a correlation between the Baldrige Performance Excellence Education Criteria and the Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities as a lens, the System Assessment Review Team reviewed information provided by the school and interviewed administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents in order to identify strengths and opportunities for system improvement.



This feedback report was developed reflecting on the indicators described on the next few pages. It is a response to written information provided by the district as well as from information gathered from interviews. ***It is not intended to represent the perspective of all school administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents. Its accuracy is dependent on the information presented and discussed.*** It is a synthesis of the research from the Baldrige Performance Excellence Criteria and the Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities. They represent the best practice, continuous improvement frameworks.

**The system assessment process is built on values/beliefs:**

1. The district must believe in **continuous improvement**. A belief that every student, every staff member, every team, every school, every department and the district itself can be better tomorrow than it is today is necessary.
2. The district must believe strongly in the power or effective **labor-management collaboration**. The board of education, district leaders, union leaders, and family/community leaders must get on the same page through clear communication and collaboration to pull the improvement rope in the same direction. There must be trust, respect and a focus on learning for what is best for learners that guides shared decision-making.
3. The district must **be familiar with the best practices of a continuous improvement framework** and believe in systems thinking. The best practices originate from the Baldrige Performance Excellence Criteria for Education. Those practices were translated into the Professional Learning Community framework. These best practices are research-based and are to be used to benchmark against in striving for continuous improvement. It is clear when these practices are executed with a high level of fidelity, performance grows and improves.
4. The district must believe that **all children can grow and learn at high levels and should have equal access to quality education**. It supports recent federal requirements in placing an emphasis on the growth for all learners toward a set of expectations. It celebrates districts and schools who demonstrate growth in their performance results.
5. The district must believe their organization must **define how to measure success and both progress monitor and report performance periodically to their stakeholders** to demonstrate responsibility and accountability.

**Lemont District 113 A asked to use the Professional Learning Community Framework as its format. That framework with its 50 best practice Indicators is outlined below:**

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK: FIRST BIG IDEA - FOCUS ON LEARNING

<b>Focus on Learning:</b> We acknowledge that our fundamental collective purpose is to help all students achieve high levels of learning and therefore we are willing to examine all of our practices in light of their impact on learning.	
<b><i>A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum</i></b>	
A.	<b><i>Establishing the Curriculum:</i></b> We articulate student learning outcomes across all classrooms to build shared knowledge regarding state standards, district curriculum guides, trends in student achievement and outcomes for the next course or grade in all subject areas.
B.	<b><i>Executing the Curriculum:</i></b> We ensure that each teacher give priority to the identified learning outcomes in every unit of instruction to guarantee that each student has equal access to instruction that addresses those learning outcomes in all classrooms for the grade level or course.
C.	<b><i>Clarifying and Communicating the Curriculum:</i></b> We ensure that every teacher is able to assist all students and their families in knowing the essential learning outcomes so they can assist in monitoring performance in relationship to those outcomes.
<b><i>Formative and Summative System of Assessments</i></b>	
D.	<b><i>Defining the Assessment System:</i></b> We ensure there is alignment and balance between common, formative assessment data to guide instruction and learning and common, summative assessment data to reflect on teaching, programs, interventions and periodic student progress reporting in all subject areas.
E.	<b><i>Assessing What Each Student Knows and Needs to Learn Next:</i></b> We ensure each teacher monitors the learning of all students, aligns the learning to outcomes per unit, and identifies what each student knows, is able to do and needs to learn next.
F.	<b><i>Providing Frequent and Timely Descriptive Assessment Feedback:</i></b> We ensure there is frequent and timely feedback regarding the performance of our students on classroom, team, school, district, and state assessments. We demonstrate that we use formative and summative assessment data differently and for appropriately different purposes.
G.	<b><i>Using Assessment Data and Information to Drive Instruction:</i></b> We ensure teachers to use assessment data, aligned to student learning outcomes per unit, to determine how instruction should be modified, adjusted or changed in order to effectively respond to individual student and group learning needs.
H.	<b><i>Using Assessment Data and Information to Recognize Growth and Achievement.</i></b> We regularly recognize and celebrate individual and collective student growth, mastery and success aligned to appropriate unit-based learning outcomes.
<b><i>Instruction: Differentiation, Interventions and Enrichments</i></b>	
I.	<b><i>Differentiating Instruction:</i></b> We ensure Instructional activities are engaging and differentiated to meet individual and small group needs for a minimum of 80% of the students within the classroom. We ensure classroom differentiation to include models of co-teaching, cross grade instruction, push-in instruction, flexible grouping, etc. in all subject areas.
J.	<b><i>Aligning Interventions:</i></b> We ensure a system of interventions that guarantees each student will receive additional time and support for learning if he/she has not demonstrated mastery of grade level or course unit-based learning outcomes. Such an intervention system must be school-wide and engage a team of support specialists who assist classroom teachers in improving mastery of each grade level or course's unit-based learning outcomes.
K.	<b><i>Aligning Enrichments:</i></b> We ensure teachers extend and enrich the learning of students who have already mastered common learning targets so every student is appropriately challenged. Such an enrichment system must be school-wide and engage a team of support specialists who assist classroom teachers in improving mastery of content beyond each grade level or course's unit-based learning outcome expectations.
<b><i>Ensuring a Focus on Learning</i></b>	
L.	<b><i>Organizing and Allocating Resources:</i></b> We organize, allocate and reflect on resources of people, time and money with a focus on learning as opposed to a focus on teaching. Resources support our vision.
M.	<b><i>Providing Training and Support:</i></b> We provide sufficient training and follow-up support to guarantee the implementation of alignment of assessments and instruction within a standards-driven curriculum. Professional learning is aligned to our vision.
N.	<b><i>Providing Conditions for an Optimal Learning Environment:</i></b> We ensure all learning environments are safe, respectful and engaging while supporting a climate of high expectations for social emotional learning. We utilize student, family and staff satisfaction data as three types of evidence sources to assess and improve learning conditions.
O.	<b><i>Judging Quality Work:</i></b> We ensure that all teachers establish the criteria or standards by which they will determine that student work is of an organizationally prescribed level of quality and practice applying those criteria until they can do so consistently.
P.	<b><i>Examining Learning Practices:</i></b> We ensure that all teachers examine homework, grading, report cards, etc. to provide organization-wide clarity and common expectations regarding judgments of student performance. We provide consistency in these areas across all classrooms, teams and all other organizational levels.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK: SECOND BIG IDEA - FOCUS ON COLLABORATION

<b>Focus on Collaboration:</b> We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose of learning for all students. We cultivate a collaborative culture through the development of high performing teams.	
<b><i>Building Shared Knowledge and Leadership: Mission, Vision, Values, Goals and Strategies</i></b>	
A.	<b><i>Clarifying the “Big Picture”:</i></b> We deploy and evaluate mission, vision, values (collective commitments), long-range goals and high-level strategies to measure and monitor our direction. Everyone knows where we are and where we want to be.
B.	<b><i>Communicating the “Big Picture”:</i></b> We have established clear direction by communicating a “Big Picture” so everyone sees how current and new initiatives connect to that direction and how those initiatives align with district and school direction. Everyone understands how his/her work contributes to the “Big Picture’s” improvement planning process.
C.	<b><i>Reinforcing the “Big Picture”:</i></b> We ensure that common behaviors and actions of all staff support the vision, mission, values, goals and strategies of the organization at all levels. Everyone is accountable for aligning their behaviors and actions to our mission, vision, values and goals.
D.	<b><i>Living the “Big Picture”:</i></b> We consistently carry out strategies through action plans that describe the steps to be taken toward the attainment of goals. The improvement planning process serves as the centerpiece for examining how the organization performs.
<b><i>Making Appropriate Decisions Through High Performing, Collaborative Teams</i></b>	
E.	<b><i>Setting Expectations for Team Function:</i></b> Work is consistently done through collaborative teams in which members work together interdependently to achieve common goals. We consistently use appropriate structures and processes to efficiently organize our time as a team. We consistently use appropriate structures and processes to promote shared and distributed leadership.
F.	<b><i>Providing Time &amp; Purpose for Teams to Meet:</i></b> We provide sufficient time during the contractual day and school year for teams to meet. Team meeting time focuses on improving student learning. Team meetings are effective and efficient.
G.	<b><i>Providing a Safe Data Culture for Effective Team Function:</i></b> We ensure safe team environments at all levels to report and compare data and our own practices so as to learn from one another and share effective practices with the team.
H.	<b><i>Making Teams Accountable:</i></b> We ensure teams are accountable for the decisions they make and the results they achieve. We ensure each team understands its charge and expectations and take responsibility for its actions leading to improvement results. We ensure all members of the team assume equal responsibility for the learning progress of every student within the team. We ensure each team to understand its charge and expectations and take responsibility for its actions leading to improvement results.
I.	<b><i>Implementing a High Performance Culture:</i></b> We ensure a culture/teaching environment of personal growth and high performance. We high attained and continue to maintain high morale and professional relationships. We ensure that team time is used to engage in collective inquiry on questions specifically linked to gains in student achievement. We ensure team time is used to engage in professional growth, sharing and learning.
<b><i>Fostering Strong Partnerships</i></b>	
J.	<b><i>Fostering Collaborative Internal Staff Partnerships:</i></b> We ensure collaborative staff partnerships between and across all organizational levels to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of students. We consistently acting and responding to staff satisfaction data to improve working conditions.
K.	<b><i>Fostering Collaborative External Family Partnerships:</i></b> We ensure collaborative partnerships with parents (families) to engage them in decisions about the progress of district, school and student goal attainment. We consistently act on parent (family) satisfaction data to improve home-school relationships in order to improve student learning.
L.	<b><i>Fostering Collaborative External Community Partnerships:</i></b> We generate and sustain collaborative partnerships with the community to engage them in decisions about the progress of district, school and student goal attainment.
<b><i>Ensuring a Focus on Collaboration</i></b>	
M.	<b><i>Organizing and Allocating Resources:</i></b> We organize and allocate and reflect on our resources of people, time and money with a focus on collaboration. Resources support our vision.
N.	<b><i>Providing Job-embedded Training:</i></b> We ensure professional development and to include team effectiveness, parent engagement and school culture to be job-embedded and ongoing. Professional learning is aligned to our vision.
O.	<b><i>Providing Conditions for an Optimal Work Environment:</i></b> We ensure all work environments to be safe, respectful, and engaging in order to support a climate of high expectations for student learning. We ensure collaboration, commitment and accountability through the actions and behaviors of all for improving our organization and its results.
P.	<b><i>Providing Meaningful, Aligned Evaluation Systems:</i></b> We ensure the aligned evaluation system includes data-based evidence of results.

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK: THIRD BIG IDEA - FOCUS ON RESULTS**

<b>Focus on Results:</b> We assess our effectiveness on the basis of results rather than intentions. Individuals, teams, schools and districts seek relevant data and information and use that information to promote continuous improvement.	
<b>Data Transparency and Efficacy</b>	
A.	<b>Setting SMART Goals:</b> All district, school, team and individual staff goals are specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented and timely (SMART). They address gaps identified through key data sources that focus improvement efforts.
B.	<b>Measuring What Matters Most:</b> We have aligned key data indicators, measures and targets throughout the organization — district to school to grade level team/department to individual --- and ensure effective ways to monitor and report progress.
C.	<b>Aligning Administrator Performance Evaluation:</b> Administrative performance goals align with the organization’s improvement plans. Administrative performance goals address improving student learning results. Administrator evaluation system meets state requirements for student growth.
D.	<b>Aligning Teacher Performance Evaluation:</b> Teacher performance goals align with district, school and/or team improvement plans. Teacher/ team goals address improving student learning results. Teacher evaluation system meets state requirements for student growth.
E.	<b>Aligning Student Performance Evaluation:</b> Student performance goals align with unit-based learning outcomes and other assessment data and information. Individual student goals address improving individual student learning results.
<b>Creating a Results Orientation</b>	
F.	<b>Using Data Effectively:</b> We ensure all staff to use assessment data to: a) identify students who need additional time and support for learning; b) measure and report progress toward goals; c) define action plans, and d) discover strengths and weaknesses in their own job performance.
G.	<b>Reporting and Acting on Satisfaction Data:</b> We collect, analyze, prioritize and act upon student, parent, and staff satisfaction data at all levels of the organization to be certain they are addressing the needs and requirements of our stakeholders.
H.	<b>Monitoring and Reporting Progress to ensure accountability:</b> We view, monitor, and report progress to all stakeholders on through an established reporting timeline to identify what to celebrate and what to focus on next in terms of improvement.
I.	<b>Promoting Student Responsibility for Their Own Learning:</b> We ensure that staff assist students in taking responsibility for their own learning by setting goals, collecting data, monitoring their performance, and reporting their results to others and comparing their performance to high expectations and the performance results of others.
<b>A Data-Based Picture of Results</b>	
J.	<b>Closing Achievement Gaps:</b> We have data-based evidence to show our results have substantially narrowed or closed achievement gaps between groups of students. We know and are celebrating our strengths. We know and are continuing to address our opportunities for improvement.
K.	<b>Examining Trend Data:</b> We have data-based evidence to show our results have substantially improved compared to the past. Our achievement results include measures of both proficiency and growth. We know and are celebrating our strengths. We know and are continuing to address our opportunities for improvement.
L.	<b>Examining Cohort Data:</b> We are acting on data-based evidence to show our student cohort achievement results have substantially improved from grade to grade. Our achievement results include measures of both proficiency and growth. We know and are celebrating our strengths. We know and are continuing to address our opportunities for improvement.
M.	<b>Examining Comparative Data:</b> We are acting on data-based evidence to show our achievement have substantially improved compared to others (state and other benchmark districts). We know and are celebrating our strengths. We know and are continuing to address our opportunities for improvement.
<b>Ensuring a Focus on Results</b>	
N.	<b>Organizing and Allocating Resources:</b> We organize and allocate and reflect on our resources of people, time and money with a focus on results. Resources support our vision.
O.	<b>Providing Job-embedded Training:</b> We ensure professional development and training around data and results is job-embedded and ongoing. We know professional development is meeting the needs of our staff. Professional learning is aligned to our vision.
P.	<b>Managing Data:</b> We improve policies and processes related to data collection, management and analysis to be certain they are effective and efficient. Data are easily accessible and user-friendly in their formats. Staff satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of available data is high.
Q.	<b>Providing Meaningful Data-based Evaluation Systems:</b> We ensure the aligned evaluation system includes data-based evidence of results.

## **SYSTEM ASSESSMENT SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:**

The school responded to a set of questions aligned to the three criteria research best practice areas listed above. The external team reviewed the Professional Learning Community effective practices and identified school strengths and opportunities for improvement. The school self-assessed itself as to where they viewed their progress toward implementation of the criteria. The external team assessed the school and provided the school with affirmation in areas where there was evidence to support strengths and lack of evidence to identify opportunities for improvement.

The External Team examined the information and data prior to the site visit. They developed a list of questions to explore as part of the site visit. The External Team interviewed all stakeholder groups.

On the first day the Team interviewed:

- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent
- Business Official, Operations Official
- Human Resource Official
- Student Services Official
- Parent Organization Leaders
- Association Leaders
- Instructional Support Team- paraprofessionals
- Non-instructional Support Team
- Technology
- Building Leaders

On the second day, the Team interviewed:

- Parents
- Students
- Teachers
- Special Education Staff, Specialists
- RtI, ESL, and Title I Specialists
- Technology Specialists

The schedule was set by district leaders. Representatives interviewed reflected the demographics of the school. Approximately 305 stakeholders were interviewed. Following interviews, the Team reviewed its findings and prepared an oral report to give the district a preview of overall strengths and opportunities for improvement aligned to the framework and criteria. The week following the visit, the Team communicated electronically to prepare the final written feedback report. This final report was sent to the district within seven days of the visit.

CEC is available to assist the district in any way it chooses to follow up with suggested next steps. The district has committed to use the information to update its improvement plans. It also has committed to allow staff members to serve on a Review Team for another system assessment visit.

**System Assessment team members.**

<b>Lemont-Bromberek 113A System Assessment Team</b>		
<b>Member</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Email</b>
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Libbi Christman	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher LaGrange District 105	<a href="mailto:lchristman@d105.net">lchristman@d105.net</a>
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	Valley View School District 365U	
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This report summarizes the strengths and opportunities aligned to the continuous improvement criteria.

## SUMMARY OF OVERALL STRENGTHS

Among all of the strengths within each category and for all core values, the assessment team finds these strengths to be highest in priority. It is hoped that recognizing and celebrating these strengths will showcase past investment of resources in improving performance results.

### Focus on Learning Strengths:

- + The district is transitioning to the Common Core State Standards. There are trimester curriculum pacing guides in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics to communicate which outcomes are to be taught in each of the three trimesters.
- + In science the Instruction committee is aligned the essential learning outcomes to common unit plans. This procedure will follow in social studies. ELA and math will move from the Trimester Plan to common unit plans beginning next year.
- + “I Can” statements are posted in some classrooms during unit instruction to identify what students are to know and be able to do. (learning outcomes for students) Many students do know the focus of learning for the day in many subject areas.
- + Advanced math is offered beginning in Grade Three for students who meet specific criteria. Math instruction is advance one grade level. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Advanced math students take high school mathematics.
- + Students report science instruction is engaging and project-based with clarity of the curriculum. It appears to be rigorous. In science, formative assessments are being used consistently across grade levels as a result of our recent curriculum work.

- + **Mirrored assessments in math and ELA are being developed and piloted at all grade levels (formative assessment). Mirrored assessments will be given three times per year. In Reading and Math, MAP testing is used across the district to monitor student progress with learning targets aligned to the CCSS.**
- + **The district provides a strong support team to assist teachers and students meet learning expectations: reading specialists, special education specialists, digital learning coaches, social workers, psychologists, early childhood teachers, bilingual/EL teachers, and paraprofessionals. Reading specialists can provide PD for teachers during co-teaching and push-in instruction. There are beginning to be some push-in and pull-out instruction for reading and for EL services in classrooms.**
- + **Teachers use grade-level appropriate interventions (re-teaching, scaffolding, extra time, flexible grouping, guided reading, etc.) to address areas where students are struggling. A variety of reading interventions are being used across the grade levels, including Lexia, Reading Plus, Wilson, Foundations, LLI (leveled literacy instruction), Bright Surprises. Math interventions include strategies such as pre-teaching, re-teaching, and Math World (SRA).**
- + **Each school has a SST team that problem solves and recommends various interventions and strategies to help students experiencing difficulties be successful.**
- + **Students feel safe and secure. Students feel their teachers care and support them. Middle school students report they have a voice in what happens at school.**

### **Focus on Collaboration Strengths:**

- + **The board and superintendent have refreshed the district strategic plan to clarify and update mission, vision, core values and goals. The plan provides a “Big Picture” direction for the district and helps guide district decisions.**
- + **There is a growing positive relationship among board, management, and union leaders as the district moves forward.**

- + The vast majority of staff are very committed, dedicated, loyal and want the district to continuously improve. There is a strong sense of optimism throughout the district. Staff morale is slowly improving over time.
- + The district is working hard to improve communication both internally and externally. The district has a presence on social media, has worked to improve its web and other electronic communication, and encourages teacher websites. Families recognize improved communication.
- + Staff recognizes the need for collaboration opportunities. Many staff expressed being tired of living in the past and wanting to move forward. Staff are currently taking personal time to collaborate with one another as best they can. Teams are established and there is some time to meet. The Board provides teachers with an average of 300 minutes per week, which includes individual and collaborative planning time.
- + Staff members have the opportunity to serve on curriculum teams, SST teams, leadership/articulation teams, technology teams, school improvement teams, and others that allows an opportunity to provide feedback and direction for decisions.
- + Families interviewed feel students are safe and secure. Families interviewed recognize staff is dedicated and working hard. Families interviewed feel leaders and teachers provide timely response to their concerns or questions.
- + Families recognize class size has decreased and that there was a technology purchase a year ago to improve both learning and teaching.
- + The district is working hard to enhance its image in the community.

### **Focus on Results Strengths:**

- + There are overarching goals in the strategic plan that have been established by the Board

and district leadership. The district has a set of key indicators and measures aligned to the strategic plan goals to progress monitor and report district progress. District goals have targets. The Director of Technology is working with the district's leadership team to design a "district data dashboard" that will be posted on our website. The recent "State of the District Report" given at a board meeting in October is a great example of both progress monitoring and reporting. The district leadership measures the strategic plan by color coding (red, yellow and green progress). Sharing with the staff should be a next step. The district is looking to select a data warehouse to store data to make for easier use and improved access.

- + Schools do have school improvement goals. Some students can describe a goal they have set on the MAP assessment. Leaders are setting growth goals aligned to their performance as required by new state regulations. The district is working with teachers to meet the new PERA requirements and to be prepared to have teachers set growth goals aligned to their performance as required by new state regulations.
- + The district has begun to conduct data retreats and other meetings to share data and other information.
- + The district has significantly increased its accessibility to technology for students and staff through the purchase of Chromebooks, Yogas, iPads, Lenovos, Mimeos, document cameras, short-throw projectors, and increased bandwidth.
- + Overall student achievement is above state averages and normed assessment averages in proficiency. Student behavior is not a significant problem. Students for the most part treat one another and adults with respect. Class sizes have begun to get smaller.
- + The district administers the 5 Essentials state required satisfaction surveys. The district has met family percentages for administration of the surveys.

## SUMMARY OF OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES

**Among all of the opportunities for improvement within each category and for all core values, the assessment team finds these opportunities to be highest in priority. It is hoped that addressing these opportunities will yield a high future return on investment of resources in improving performance results.**

### **Focus on Learning Opportunities for Improvement:**

- △ While standards have been unpacked in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics, staff has insufficient content resources to teach to the standards. Much Instruction is textbook-driven rather than standards-driven. Teachers are lacking critical training and support to transition to a standards-based state required approach to instruction. ELA and math Trimester Plans need to be broken into common units of instruction similar to what is being done in science. The district plans to do this next year.**
- △ Essential learning outcomes for each unit of instruction are not given to students and their families prior to the beginning of the unit. Very few students and families understand what all students are to know and be able to do by the end of the unit. Students and their families are unaware of the rigor of the standards and the alignment of the standards to the college/career readiness within the Common Core.**
- △ There is little vertical articulation so that teachers see the scope and sequence of unit learning outcomes from grade to grade. (For example, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher needs to know the learning outcomes in the same subject strand in the grade before- 2<sup>nd</sup>, and the grade after-4th. There is not clear articulation of what students know and are able to do from grades 2 to 3, 5 to 6, and 8 to 9 when they change buildings. There is not good communication from school to school.**

- △ **Students, families and staff feel there are too many assessments. It is not always clear to students and their families the purpose of some assessments, how to interpret an assessment, and how the assessment is used to guide instruction.**
- △ **Teachers are not using classroom assessment data and information aligned to their curriculum learner outcomes to plan for differentiated instruction within the classroom or to plan with specialists the entrance and exit criteria for interventions/enrichments.**
- △ **It appears there are issues in special education and bilingual/EL education related to regular education. Not all students receive the state mandated grade level curriculum. Special education and bilingual/EL education appears to be separate and not integrated with the regular programs.**
- △ **Co-teaching and push-in instructional practices do not align with best practice as there is little time for planning between classroom teachers and the specialist, and there has not been sufficient time to develop a relationship between the co-teachers to ensure trust and respect.**
- △ **The Response to Intervention system is ineffective and inefficient. There is not a clearly understand fluid process for differentiation. Interventions are not short term and are not directly aligned to unit essential learning outcomes. Some interventions have gone on for years with little or no success. There are limited opportunities for enrichment. There is not a school-wide intervention/enrichment time each day.**
- △ **Students would like increased opportunities to engage in STEM, foreign language and more humanities instruction.**
- △ **Grading and homework expectations are not consistent across the district.**

### **Focus on Collaboration Opportunities for Improvement:**

- △ **The district is a system of schools rather than a school system. Schools are very site-based in their decision-making that leads to great variance in policies, processes, and procedures.**

- △ **Staff feel little connection to the strategic mission, vision, core values and goals. They are unaware of the Big Picture direction of the district. The plan “is theirs not ours.” Staff feel overwhelmed and sometimes confused about how the changes impact their day to day activities. It is fair to say that not every staff member has a clear understanding of where we are headed or the plan to get there.**
- △ **Change initiatives are not always transparent in the “Big Picture”. Many staff members are unaware of the “Big Picture”. Staff feel overwhelmed and sometimes confused about how the changes impact their day to day activities. Staff morale varies from building to building and situation to situation.**
- △ **Staff report a disconnect between the three schools with little coherence and alignment of programs and services PK-8. There has been considerable leadership turnover in the last ten years leading to instability of clear direction and loss of trust among many staff members.**
- △ **Cuts made several years ago resulted in 25% fewer staff, loss of professional development resources, a building closure, and lost of some programs and extra-curricular activities for students. Although our district is “recovering,” staff and community still struggle to release the emotional stress of the hard times the district lived through in recent years. Opposing views on failed referendums created difficult relationships for many people. Staff feel the quality of the educational programs offered several years ago was higher than what is being offered today.**
- △ **A shared leadership structure with processes to encourage shared decision-making is absent. The district we are not focused around PLC’s. There has been little training to clarify expectations of what a PLC is and how PLC time is to be used. Some staff members are resistant to change and make it difficult for teams to function even though a greater majority of staff embraces the mandated change. Some staff feel they have little input into district decisions. Staff does not feel they have opportunities to provide input on what programs and services should have priority consideration when resources are available in the future.**
- △ **There is currently no specific district wide improvement plan in place. There is a district wide strategic plan in place. However, the degree of direct staff engagement in that plan is limited,**

**except for administrators. District goals are not always the focus of the improvement teams at the building level.**

- △ There is insufficient time for grade level/department collaboration. Staff express that they cannot always depend on time for collaboration being sacred and usurped for other purposes. Collaboration time was lost during financial cuts and not restored to a level that meets staff needs. Beyond the needed time, staff report the necessity for effective and efficient teamwork. There are not clear expectations for collaboration team. The role of assessing how teams function has not been clearly defined. Teams have not participated in assessing the functionality of their work. Training has not been provided to clarify expectations and to ensure team effectiveness and efficiencies.**
- △ Training for staff to function as effective collaborative teams has been little to none. Staff has not been trained to utilize shared decision-making. Staff has not been trained to use the four PLC Questions to guide team meetings.**
- △ Understanding of the core values of the organization is still a learning process. There is no common practice for calling out a team member that is not supporting core values or decisions. There is not common practice for holding them accountable.**
- △ Families interviewed feel there are inconsistencies in communication leading to confusion. Some teachers use websites, some use social media, and some use newsletters each for the same purpose. At the middle school, having several teachers make this very difficult to follow communication.**
- △ Families interviewed feel little or no connection to the strategic mission, vision, core values and goals. They are unaware of the Big Picture direction of the district. Families interviewed feel the quality of the educational programs offered several years ago was higher than what is being offered today. Some families feel their child is not being sufficiently challenged. Families would like an opportunity to provide input on what programs and services should have priority consideration when resources are available for the future.**

- △ Professional learning with follow-up support and coaching has not been provided related to effective teamwork, using data and assessments to guide instructional decisions, and better understanding the Danielson Framework for Effective Teaching.

### **Focus on Results Opportunities for Improvement:**

- △ The district lacks a results orientation: Data is collected and recorded with little time for analysis and action aligned to the data at the school and classroom levels.
- △ There is a lack of understanding at all levels in how to set a SMART Goals (specific, measurable, actionable, results-oriented and timely).
- △ Most stakeholders are unaware of both district and school performance.
- △ For the past few years, the district has not benchmarked itself against researched-based best practices of quality school systems. They have benchmarked themselves against past district practices, some of which are not research-based and current.
- △ There is a lack of unit-based team, classroom, and student growth goals.
- △ There is not a consistent process for school improvement. School improvement plans are not aligned to the district strategic plan. Schools are not using the district key indicators and measures to disaggregate the data for their school to progress monitor and report. School and other level goals lack targets by which to progress monitor.
- △ Buildings create individual school goals through SIP teams, but the process is inconsistent across the district. SIP goals are not consistently in SMART goal format. Not all staff members are aware of district and building goals (including non-certified staff).
- △ Some teachers perceived the data meetings to be judgmental. Some teachers are uncomfortable with their meeting, regardless of scores. This depends on the teacher and/or the teacher's relationship with the administrator. The district has not built its capacity to have open

**conversations about individual data. There has been limited professional development to assist individuals and teams address goal-setting and action planning. Sometimes action steps to reach goals are developed, discussed and planned, but follow-through is limited. Timeline and check-in points are not developed consistently among the district's three schools. Progress monitoring is scarce.**

- △ There are achievement gaps: Bilingual/EL students, special education students and low income students vary from all other students on both the MAP and PARCC assessments. Student voice data is not being collected. Student growth is a challenge when looking at MAP assessment data.**
- △ There was little trend, cohort and comparative data shared or being used at the school level. Pension and state finances continue to weigh on minds.**
- △ Hard freezes (2011-2013) and increases in insurance (over many years) have created financial burdens on staff members.**
- △ While satisfaction data is being collected, stakeholders are not aware of the results. It does not appear it is used to plan for improvement.**
- △ Teachers are not comfortable with student growth data being part of their performance review.**

## NEXT STEPS

While this report is not intended to be prescriptive, this section provides some suggestions for addressing key opportunities for improvement. It provides suggestions that could serve as next steps. The strengths and areas of opportunity are based on set criteria framed by continuous improvement research. The priorities are not listed in any order. Each is equally important. Next Steps are framed by the experiences and opinions of the assessment team.

### Priority: Focus on Learning

#### **Continue the journey of common unit plan instruction for all subjects.**

- ✓ Align ELA and math Trimester plans to common unit plans.
- ✓ Develop common unit plans in other subject areas like you are doing in science.
- ✓ Develop a common assessment system aligned to the unit plans so students, families and staff can know what each student is learning aligned to the essential learning outcomes.
- ✓ Use unit common assessment data and information to plan for differentiated instruction,
- ✓ Use unit common assessment data and information to plan for interventions and enrichments.
- ✓ Use common essential learning outcomes for ALL students.
- ✓ Utilize the support team to assist with Tier I and Tier II short-term interventions and enrichments.
- ✓ Provide training to all staff for developing a standards-drive classroom.

### Priority: Collaborative Culture

#### **Establish a collaborative culture of trust, respect, and satisfaction.**

- ✓ **Improve staff morale** through improved communication and collaboration systems.
- ✓ Build on the positive energy and attitudes of a critical mass of staff and **do not allow a small minority to hold you back.**
- ✓ **Embrace change and continuous improvement** as it is an expectation in every public school system in the country.
- ✓ **Improve communication and collaboration among the district's three schools** as students move through the system and they need along with their families coherence and alignment of programs and services.

- ✓ Engage stakeholders in *appropriate decision-making*.
- ✓ *Provide time, training, follow-up and support* for making effective use of PLC collaboration time. Make sure expectations for PLCs are clear.

### **Priority: Results Orientation**

## **Invest in progress monitoring and reporting to continuously improve.**

- ✓ Transition from a reliance on MAP data to drive instructional decisions to *unit formative and summative assessment data and information*.
- ✓ Assist students in their knowledge and skills to *take responsibility for their learning*.
- ✓ Use *goals, measures and targets* to guide progress monitoring.
- ✓ Be certain the investment of *a talented support team has a return on its investment*.
- ✓ Know *how you, your team, your school and your district are performing*.
- ✓ *Provide training, follow-up and support* for goal setting, progress monitoring, adjusting and reporting.