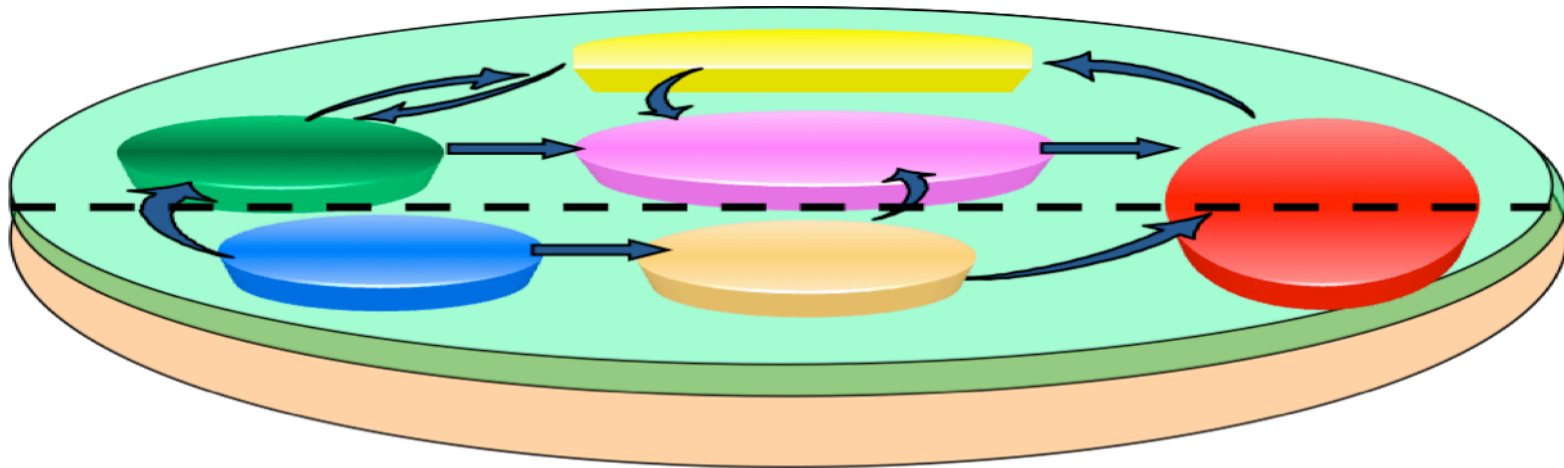


McClure Junior High School System Assessment Feedback Report

The following system assessment feedback report was developed for McClure Junior High School, Western Springs District 101, 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 school 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.

The criteria around which we conducted our visit are listed below. It is a synthesis of the research from the Baldrige Performance Excellence Criteria, the Correlates of Effective Schools, the Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities, and Standard Bearer. They represent the four best practice, continuous improvement frameworks. This school uses the Professional Learning Community Framework as its format.

Focus on Learning: We acknowledge that the fundamental purpose of our school 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.	
<i>A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum</i>	
A.	We set student learning expectations for staff to build shared knowledge regarding common core state standards, district curriculum guides, trends in student achievement, and expectations for the next course or grade. This collective inquiry enables each staff member across a grade or department to clarify what all students must know and be able to do as a result of every unit of instruction. The curriculum is horizontally and vertically aligned.
B.	We expect that each teacher give priority to the identified essential learning targets in every unit of instruction to guarantee that each student has equal access to those learning targets in all classrooms for the grade level or course. Text and other resources are aligned to the essential learning targets. Pacing guides identify what should be taught during each grading period.
C.	We expect that every teacher is able to assist each student and their parents (families) know the essential learning targets so they can assist in monitoring performance in relationship to those targets.
<i>Formative and Summative System of Assessments</i>	
D.	We ensure there is a 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.
E.	We ensure there is frequent and timely feedback regarding the performance of our students on team, school, district, and state assessments.
F.	We expect each teacher to monitor the learning of each student on all common essential learning targets on a timely basis through a series of district-developed and/or school/team-developed common assessments that identify what each student knows and needs to learn next.
G.	We expect teachers to use assessment data aligned to the student learning targets to differentiate instruction and respond to students when they demonstrate they have not learned or have learned and are ready for more challenge.
H.	We regularly recognize and celebrate individual and collective student growth, mastery, and success aligned to goal accomplishments.
<i>School-Wide Systematic Interventions and Enrichments</i>	
I.	We expect Instructional activities are engaging and differentiated to meet individual and small group needs within the classroom.
J.	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 essential learning targets.
K.	We ensure that students are required rather than invited to devote the extra time and receive the additional support until they are successful in their learning
L.	We ensure teachers extend and enrich the learning of students who have mastered common essential learning targets so every student is challenged.
M.	We ensure staff has sufficient training and follow-up support to address the needs of all student subgroups through Response to Intervention systems.
<i>Examine Policies and Procedures To Ensure a Focus on Learning</i>	
N.	We expect all teachers to have a thorough knowledge of their subject matter, possess expertise in a wide range of effective instructional strategies, and demonstrate commitment to closing achievement gaps.
O.	We expect the learning environment of the school to be safe, respectful, engaging, and support a climate of high expectations for all students to be successful learners.
P.	We provide opportunities for teachers to examine homework, grading, discipline, recognition, etc. to ensure systematic and systemic implementation that supports and encourages learning.
Q.	We expect all teachers to clarify the criteria by which they will judge the quality of student work, and practice applying those criteria until they can do so consistently.
R.	We provide sufficient training and follow-up support to assist teachers with expectations in the alignment of essential learning targets, assessments, and instruction.
S.	We organize resources of people, time and money with a focus on learning as opposed to a focus on teaching.

Focus on Collaboration: 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.	
<i>Building Shared Knowledge and Leadership: Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals</i>	
A.	We have developed and deployed mission, vision, values (collective commitments) and goals to set clear direction. There is a process in place for school-wide improvement planning. The school improvement plan is focused on refining teaching practices to improve student learning. Action plans describe the steps to be taken toward attainment of goals.
B.	We expect that behaviors and actions of all staff support the vision, mission, values, and goals of both the school and the district. The improvement plan is put into action with fidelity.
C.	We set clear direction and communicate a "Big Picture" so that everyone sees how current and new initiatives connects to that direction and how those initiatives align with district direction. Everyone understands how this/her work contributes to school improvement.
<i>High Performing, Collaborative Teams</i>	
D.	We expect work to be done through collaborative teams in which members work together interdependently to achieve common goals. We have developed and adhere to team norms in conducting our work.
E.	We provide time during the contractual day and school year for teams to meet. We support both vertical and horizontal team collaboration. We address transition and articulation from elementary to middle to high and beyond.
F.	We expect teams to be accountable for the decisions they make. Teams expect all students to make substantial learning growth each year. Teams expect all students to express confidence in their ability to grow and improve each year. Teams monitor and report student learning results and make adjustments when appropriate. Structures and processes are in place for shared decision-making.
G.	We provide sufficient training and follow-up support for team members to have the skills, tools, and strategies to make teamwork efficient and effective. We monitor and report team effectiveness and efficiency on a regularly scheduled basis.
<i>Creating Intentional Collaboration</i>	
H.	We promote a culture/teaching environment of personal growth and high performance. Extensive communication and collaboration ensures that all stakeholders are a part of the decision-making process. There is evidence of a high level of trust, respect and morale throughout the school community.
I.	We create a safe environment to report and compare data so as to learn from one another and share best practices. We promote collaboration rather than competition. The school recognizes and celebrates individual, team, and school success aligned to its goals. There is evidence that staff satisfaction is high.
J.	We expect that team time to be used engage in collective inquiry on questions specifically linked to gains in student achievement. Each team is called upon to generate and submit products, which result from its work on its goals and targets related to student learning. Our work and the work of teams are focused on the four PLC questions.
K.	We ensure professional development is job-embedded and ongoing. It explicitly addresses the needs of staff and is focus on assisting staff to improve students' learning results. It has adequate resources, reflecting that ongoing, job-embedded professional development is a district priority.
<i>Fostering Strong Partnerships</i>	
L.	We foster collaborative partnerships between and among the district office and all schools to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of students.
M.	We foster a two-way communication system between and among the district office and all other schools that includes an exchange of essential information and feedback related to that information.
N.	We foster collaborative partnerships with parents (families) and the community to engage them in decisions about the progress of school, school and student goal attainment. There is evidence that parent (family) satisfaction is high.
O.	We foster a two-way communication system with parents (families) and the community that includes an exchange of essential information and feedback related to that information.
<i>Examine Policies and Procedures To Ensure a Focus on Collaboration</i>	
P.	We enforce district job expectations and provide meaningful evaluation systems so that each employee can self-assess as well as receive supervisory assessment of their strengths and opportunities for improvement in relation to district expectations. The evaluation system addresses new state and federal requirements.
Q.	We organize and allocate resources of people, time and money with a focus on collaboration.

Focus on Results: We assess our effectiveness on the basis of results rather than intentions. Individuals, teams and schools seek relevant data and information and use that information to promote continuous improvement.

Developing SMART Goals

A. 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.	The school improvement plan and process serves as the centerpiece for examining how the school performs in comparison to district and state requirements.
C.	We align key data indicators and measures throughout the system—district to school to team/department/ to individual--- throughout the use of a systematic reporting system. The school's improvement plan goals align to the key data indicators and measures where performance is below expectations or requirements.
D.	Administrative performance goals align with district and/or school improvement plan and related SMART goals
E.	Teacher performance goals align with district, school, and/or team improvement plan and related SMART goals.
F.	Student performance goals align with assessment data and information that defines what they need to learn next (Common Core State Standards).
<i>Creating a Results Orientation</i>	
G.	We expect all staff to use assessment data to: a) identify students who need additional time and support for learning; b) discover strengths and weaknesses in their own job performance; c) measure and report progress toward goals, and d) define action plans.
H.	We create a safe data culture so students and staff feel comfortable sharing their results in an effort to learn from others;
I.	We view, monitor, and report progress to all stakeholders on a regular basis to identify what to celebrate and what to focus on next in terms of improvement.
J.	We expect staff to assist students take responsibility for their own learning by collecting data to monitor and track their performance compared to high expectations and performance results of others.
K.	All students know where they are in the progression of steps to meet their learning targets and what evidence will be required to demonstrate mastery of the next step.
L.	We collect, analyze, prioritize, and act upon student, parent, and staff satisfaction data to be certain it is addressing the needs and requirements of our stakeholders.
<i>Improving Results</i>	
M.	We have evidence to show our trend achievement results are improving compared to the past. Our achievement results include measures of growth.
N.	We have evidence to show our student cohort achievement results are improving from grade to grade. Our achievement results include measures of growth.
O.	We have evidence to show our achievement results are improving compared to others (state and other benchmark schools).
P.	We have evidence to show our results have narrowed or closed achievement gaps between groups of students.
Q.	Our school meets adequate yearly progress requirements as defined by federal and state legislation. Our students are ready for the next level (elementary to middle, middle to high school, high school to college/career readiness,
<i>Examine Policies and Procedures To Ensure a Focus on Results</i>	
R.	We examine policies and processes related to data collection, management and analysis to be certain they are effective and efficient. Data is easily accessible and user-friendly in its format.
S.	We benchmark our performance against similar and high performing schools.
T.	We organize and allocate our resources of people, time and money with a focus on 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 purpose of the visit was to provide the school with gap information in areas where the external team did not agree with the school self-assessment.

The Review 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 Review Team interviewed all stakeholder groups.

On the first day the Team interviewed:

- Principal and Student Services Administrator
- Team Leaders
- Association Leaders
- Parent Organization Leaders
- Chairs/ Co-Chairs
- Non-instructional Support Staff
- Instructional Support Staff
- Problem Solving Team/ Response to Intervention
- Social Emotional Learning/PBIS Discipline
- Building Self-Assessment Team

On the second day, the Team interviewed:

- Parents
- Students
- Teachers
- Classroom visits

The schedule was set by school leaders. Representatives interviewed reflected the demographics of the school. Approximately 250 stakeholders were interviewed.

Following interviews, the Team reviewed its findings and prepared an oral report to give the school 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 school within seven days of the visit.

CEC is available to assist the school in any way it chooses to follow up with suggested next steps. The school 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 school's system assessment visit.

This report summarizes the strengths and opportunities aligned to the continuous improvement criteria.

McClure School System Assessment team members.

Name	Position	Email Contact
Perry Soldwedel	Team Leader Consortium for Educational Change	perry.soldwedel@cecillinois.org
Kelly Casaccio	6 th grade Language Arts Teacher River Forest District 90	casaccioK@district90.org
Dick Daniels	Strategic Learning Initiative	nbadaniels@aol.com
Derek Desjardins	Challenge Teacher Glen Ellyn 89	ddesjardins@ccsd89.org
Carol Dopke	7th grade divisional coordinator Batavia District 101	carol.dopke@bps101.net
Laurie Hendrickson	6 th grade Language Arts Teacher River Forest District 90	hendricksonl@district90.org
Tracy Kalle	Literacy Teacher Glen Ellyn 89	tkalle@ccsd89.org
Kathryn Locigno	6 th grade Language Arts Teacher River Forest District 90	locignoK@district90.org
Pam McDermott	LMC Director Glen Ellyn 89	pmcdermott@ccsd89.org

Matt McDonald	Assistant Principal Marquardt 15	MMcDonald@d15.us
Karen Morris	Director of Educational Programs Strategic Learning Initiatives	kmorris@strategiclearning.org
Denise Olton	Science Teacher Glen Ellyn 89	dolton@ccsd89.org
Lisa Palese	Student Services Division Coordinator Batavia District 101	lisa.palese@bps101.net
Dana Ruginis	Assistant Principal Maercker District 60	druginis@maercker.org
Kelly Stewart	Reading Specialist Maercker District 60	Kstewart@maercker.org
Tina Steketee	Assistant Principal River Forest District 90	steketeeT@district90.org
Matt Willard	English and Social Studies Teacher Marquardt District 15	mwillard@d15.us
Mark Williams	Math Teacher Marquardt District 15	mwilliams@d15.us
Paul Wilson	Science teacher Glen Ellyn 89	pwilson@ccsd89.org

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:

- + Curriculum Leadership Institute has assisted K-8 language art teachers transition to the Common Core State Standards. Their curriculum documents serves as a model for other subject areas. K-8 mathematics teachers have begun the process this year with other subject areas to follow.**
- + There is a district expectation that teachers give priority to essential learning targets in every unit of instruction to guarantee that each student has equal access to those learning targets. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of their subject content.**
- + Teachers use assessment data to differentiate instruction and respond to students when they demonstrate they have not learned. There is frequent and timely feedback regarding performance of students on team and school assessments. Some classes have exit slips for essential learning targets.**
- + The district and school are focusing on student growth in addition to high achievement.**
- + Students use 10th period, email communication, before and after school, and/or one-on-one appointments to get help with their learning.**
- + Students enjoy coming to school and feel their teachers and administrators care**

about them and assist them to be successful. Parents feel teachers are meeting individual student needs. Students and parents feel teachers are accessible and always willing to help students succeed.

- + The reading specialist, math specialist, instructional support personnel and resource teachers support differentiation within and outside classrooms. The counselor, social worker and teacher advocates are available to meet student social emotional needs.**
- + The learning environment is safe, respectful, engaging, and supports a climate of high expectations for all students to be successful learners. Discipline problems are minimal and do not negatively impact learning.**

Focus on Collaboration Strengths:

- + Everyone in the school works hard to promote high expectations for students and for themselves to ensure student academic and social-emotional success. Morale is healthy and positive. Staff members enjoy working with one another. There is a sense of a satisfied, positive learning community. Teachers report a high level of collaboration and trust among team members.**
- + Team leaders, department chairs and co-chairs, Staff Senate, and district curriculum committees are examples of structures that empower shared decision-making. There appears to be a good balance between top-down and bottom-up decision-making. Teachers work well together and make decisions in**

the best interest of students. Administration has an open door policy and is approachable and responsive. Mentors are helpful to new staff.

+ Staff and teams are engaged as full participants in learning and as contributors to improvement processes. Staff and team performance evaluation is aligned to school and district goals. Teams meet twice weekly to focus on identifying student academic and social-emotional needs. **The opportunity for teachers and teams to take risks, experiment, and learn from mistakes is encouraged.** Team meetings identify students who have unique academic or social emotional needs that need to be addressed. **There are advocates for all students. Increasing numbers of students report they have an adult they can talk with or seek help from when necessary.**

+ Parents are very proud of McClure. There is a high degree of parent satisfaction. Parents feel their students leave McClure well prepared for high school. They feel McClure staff create student independence in the learning process. They feel there is a strong sense of “community.”

+ Professional development is job-embedded and ongoing. It explicitly addresses the needs of staff and is focus on assisting staff to improve students’ learning results. It has adequate resources, reflecting that it is a district and school priority.

Focus on Results Strengths:

★ Student achievement results are exceptional on both state and national-normed tests. McClure meets adequate yearly progress requirements as defined by

federal and state legislation. Students are ready for the next level (elementary to middle, middle to high school, high school to college/career readiness.)

- + McClure has two SMART Goals: Social Emotional Learning and Reading Growth. Team leaders meet with grade level teams to establish grade level goals. SMART goals are leading to a new school improvement process. Map reading, ISAT and LA Common assessments are used to measure reading growth. SRPS Climate Survey, AIMSweb behavior screener, attendance, office referrals, nurse visits, student feedback and observations are used to measure social emotional learning. There is alignment between district, school, team and individual goals.**
- + The district and school expect all staff to use assessment data to: a) identify students who need additional time and support for learning; b) discover strengths and weaknesses in their own job performance; c) measure and report progress toward goals, and d) define action plans.**
- + The district and school collect, analyze, prioritize, and act on student, parent, and staff satisfaction data to be certain it is addressing the needs and requirements of its stakeholders.**
- + Student attendance exceeds state averages. There is low student mobility. Discipline data indicates few issues or problems. Class sizes range from 22.5 in 6th grade to 27.3 in 7th grade to 23.1 in 8th grade. Operating and instructional costs per pupil are relatively low.**

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:

- △ There is **insufficient time for teachers to collaborate around curriculum, assessment, instruction and intervention/enrichment issues**. There is not currently a system for **ensuring that essential learning targets are given priority**. Some but not all subject areas plan unit instruction based on essential learning targets. **There is little cross-curriculum work**. Teachers report with the advent of the common core state standards, there has been a loss of project or performance assessments due to time constraints.
- △ There is **little enrichment support to assist classroom teachers meet student needs other than advanced placement courses in math and language arts**. Enrichment depends on the individual teacher's knowledge, skills and strategies.

- △ Teachers are not using assessment data aligned to the essential learning targets to differentiate instruction and respond when students demonstrate they have not learned or have learned and are ready for more challenge in most subject areas.
- △ There is no formal systematic way for students to monitor and track their own learning. Only a few students are using assessment data aligned to essential learning targets to set goals.
- △ Reporting information to students and parents includes grades but not standards-based reports. Grading practices have not been examined to ensure consistent application of scoring criteria. Students report homework is excessive, redundant, stressful, and time consuming.

Focus on Collaboration Opportunities for Improvement:

- △ There is not a formal school leadership team who serve as keepers of the school improvement plan and ensure shared decision-making. Grade level team leaders and certain other staff are sometimes called upon to act as a leadership team.
- △ There are many initiatives and some staff members have a difficult time understanding the interconnectedness or “Big Picture” of these initiatives.
- △ Levels of trust, respect and morale are not universal. However, there has been

much improvement. Recent negotiations definitely impacted morale negatively.

- △ There is not sufficient training and follow-up support for team members to have the skills, tools, and strategies to make teamwork efficient and effective. **Teams do not monitor and report their effectiveness and efficiency on a regularly scheduled basis. Not all staff (specials, overflow) is able to attend team meetings due to scheduling/supervision needs.** Not all grade levels have consistent special education personnel available during team time. Team time twice a week does not focus on the four professional learning community questions.
- △ **Parents do not serve on school academic decision-making committees.** Some parents feel the tracking system and selection process limits access to rigor for all students. **Some parents feel there is not the same kind of support for students “in the middle” that there is for those students are struggling or those students in advanced courses.**

Focus on Results Opportunities for Improvement:

- △ **The school improvement plan and process does not serve as the centerpiece for examining how the school performs in comparison to district and state requirements.** No specific schools have been identified as benchmark schools with whom to compare results.
- △ **Key data indicators and measures throughout the system—district to school to team/department/ to individual are not transparent.**

- △ **Current SMART goals lack indicators.** There has been little training for staff related to the creation of SMART goals and action plans. **Teams do not have a shared understanding of what an effective SMART goal and action plan looks like.**
- △ **Slightly less than half of school staff is comfortable in sharing classroom achievement results with their colleagues.** **The relationship among team members does not always make it safe and trusting to share data and information.** There was initial training for staff in the use of **MAP assessment data and information**, but new staff in recent years have had little formalized training.
- △ **Practices for assisting student's take ownership of their learning by monitoring assessment results aligned to essential learning targets is not systematic and varies from classroom to classroom.**

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

Staff has insufficient time to collaborate around curriculum, assessment, instruction and intervention/enrichment issues. They need time to share instructional strategies for ensuring that essential learning targets are given priority in unit plans. They need time to develop and share data from common assessments aligned to the essential learning targets. They need time to plan for both interventions and enrichments to respond to student needs. Teams have not established a formal systematic way to assist students in monitoring and tracking their own learning. There is no formalized student goal-setting process.

(The Four Professional Learning Community Questions)

Priority: Collaborative Culture

Staff has not had sufficient time to practice the essential characteristics of a continuously improving learning community team. There has been little follow through in the PLC Summit training. The relationship among team members does not always make it safe and trusting to share data and information. It is not clear that team members have the skills, tools, and strategies to make teamwork effective and efficient. Teams do not monitor and report their effectiveness and efficiency on a regular basis. There needs to be better balance between grade level team meetings and department meetings.

Priority: Results Orientation

Staff does not clearly see how the school improvement plan and process serves as the centerpiece for examining how the school performs in comparison to district and state

requirements. Key data indicators and measures throughout the system are not transparent. Not everyone sees how all of the initiatives connect. Not everyone can describe the “Big Picture” of where the school is headed. Similar and high performing schools have not been identified to benchmark performance results. There has been little training for staff related to the creation of SMART goals and action plans. Teams do not have a shared understanding of what an effective SMART goal and action plan looks like. Teams are not monitoring and reporting goal progress after fall, winter and spring assessments. Teams are not reporting if they are successful in reaching goal targets.