

# CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL: School Readiness Assessment Final Report

*Kansas City Public Schools Secondary and Signature School Reviews*

**Site Visit Date:** January 14, 2020

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# School Readiness Assessment Introduction

## School Readiness Assessment Purpose

Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) has partnered with Mass Insight Education & Research, a national non-profit, to conduct school reviews of all secondary and signature schools. The purpose of these reviews is to:

- Surface individual school successes, challenges, and opportunities to inform continuous improvement efforts; and
- Surface trends across secondary and signature schools to:
  - understand how secondary and signature options contribute to the overall experience and expectation of the KCPS community and help achieve KCPS' 5-Year Strategic Plan goals; and
  - inform the identification of systems-level changes and school supports.

Mass Insight's research-based School Readiness Assessment (SRA) supports and accelerates school improvement by informing the development of strong school improvement plans that address a school's highest needs, as well as informing district-level improvement to better meet the needs of students and schools. In alignment with the Mass Insight theory of action (described on page 4) and based on more than 10 years of national experience and research in the field of school improvement, Mass Insight has identified seven elements that we observe to drive school improvement and school readiness and ensure the success of all students. The SRA is structured to analyze the extent to which these elements are in place.

## School Readiness Assessment Process

The school review process follows three phases, including a comprehensive data/document review conducted prior to a campus visit; the on-site campus visit; and finally, analysis and report of findings.

Phase	Potential Activities
<b>Pre-Site Visit</b> <i>(December 2019)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Collect and review campus data and related documents to understand campus context, including principal, staff and student surveys.</li><li>● Coordinate visit logistics to ensure a successful site visit.</li></ul>
<b>Site Visit</b> <i>(January 2020)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Conduct interviews and focus groups with a variety of campus stakeholders (e.g. teachers, students, administrators, counselors, instructional coaches, families, etc.).</li><li>● Classroom, hallway, and common space walkthroughs (observations may not occur on the same date as your site-visit interviews and focus groups).</li></ul>
<b>Post-Site Visit</b> <i>(January- February 2020)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The site visit team synthesizes and analyzes visit findings that surface priority focus area recommendations.</li></ul>

## Overview of the Findings Report

This report begins with a **Data Profile** - a high level quantitative overview of the school's current demographics, culture and climate indicators, and recent academic performance. Next is a summary of **Strengths and Challenges** - the most salient and resounding headlines from Mass Insight's time on campus. These are not arranged by any particular element and may represent a confluence of factors that can help the school begin to prioritize strengths and challenges to focus on following the site visit. Mass Insight will also provide action-oriented **Recommendations** for how the school can improve and where they might prioritize efforts first. This might also be used to inform the revision or creation of a School Improvement Plan. Finally, the Appendix contains the **School Readiness Assessment Tool**, which provides specific evidence gathered during the review process and a rating (described in the next section) for each feature of each element. This section can be useful for delving into more specific and granular details. Mass Insight does not suggest attempting to tackle every feature all at once.

## School Readiness Assessment Evidence and Rating System

Mass Insight's SRA Tool (included in Appendix) is designed to analyze the extent to which a school has elements of our theory of action in place, in relation to an exemplar description of each element (and the features that make up that element) at the highest performing schools. The Mass Insight team will use the SRA Tool to document evidence based on information gathered during the SRA activities to assign a rating for each feature. Ratings are designed to describe the extent to which evidence aligns to the exemplar descriptions at the highest performing schools. The features rated lowest do not necessarily mean that those features are in the most urgent need of attention; the recommendations describe what Mass Insight suggests addressing first.

Rating Level Key:
<b>0: Not Meeting</b> (no, or extremely limited, evidence of this feature; work on this feature has not yet started)
<b>1: Somewhat Meets</b> (some evidence of implementation of this feature)
<b>2: Mostly Meets</b> (considerable evidence of implementation of this feature)
<b>3: Meets</b> (robust evidence of implementation of this feature)

## About Mass Insight and Our Theory of Action

Mass Insight is a national non-profit organization committed to transforming public schools into high-performing organizations and closing achievement gaps. Since 2007, Mass Insight has worked with schools, districts, and state education agencies to redesign systems and establish the conditions and capacity for district and school improvement. As part of this work, Mass Insight has conducted numerous School Readiness Assessments (SRAs) across the country.

In 2007, Mass Insight published *The Turnaround Challenge*<sup>1</sup>, a nationally-recognized research report and call to action that highlighted the need for intervention in America's lowest-performing schools. Since 2009, Mass Insight has worked with schools, districts, and state education agencies in Massachusetts and across the country to redesign the systems that support chronically underperforming schools and to drive gains in student achievement. Building from our research and more than ten years of experience in turnaround, we recently revisited Mass Insight's theory of action and identified seven theory of action elements that we believe must be in place to ensure schools are successful.

Mass Insight's SRA is structured to analyze the extent to which elements of our theory of action are in place in schools. We seek to understand what student outcome data reveals, analyze evidence and hypothesize why challenges and successes exist, and help schools prioritize where to focus next.

*We believe that if schools have:*

**Conditions:** Sufficient school-level control over people, time, money, and program to address the root causes of low performance;

**Planning:** Evidence-based, actionable improvement plans that address the root causes of low performance informed by a review of existing conditions and input from school, district, and community stakeholders;

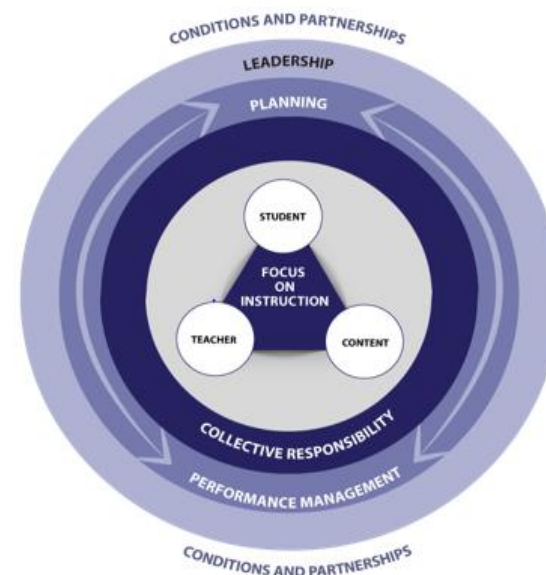
**Leadership:** A principal who can manage and communicate complexity while maintaining focus on the school's vision and key priorities;

**Focus on Instruction:** Processes and supports that help teachers work together to constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice so that students can engage in deep learning tasks;

**Collective Responsibility:** The school faculty and staff ensure there is collective responsibility for both the quality of instruction and student learning and success;

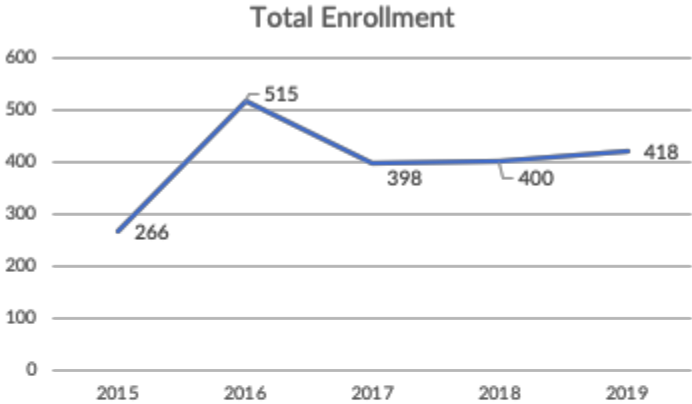
**Performance Management:** Consistent processes for using data to measure both implementation and outcomes to determine what's working and inform efforts to improve; and

**Partnerships:** Partnerships that help the school meet the multiple needs of teachers and students, *THEN schools will dramatically improve and student learning will increase.*



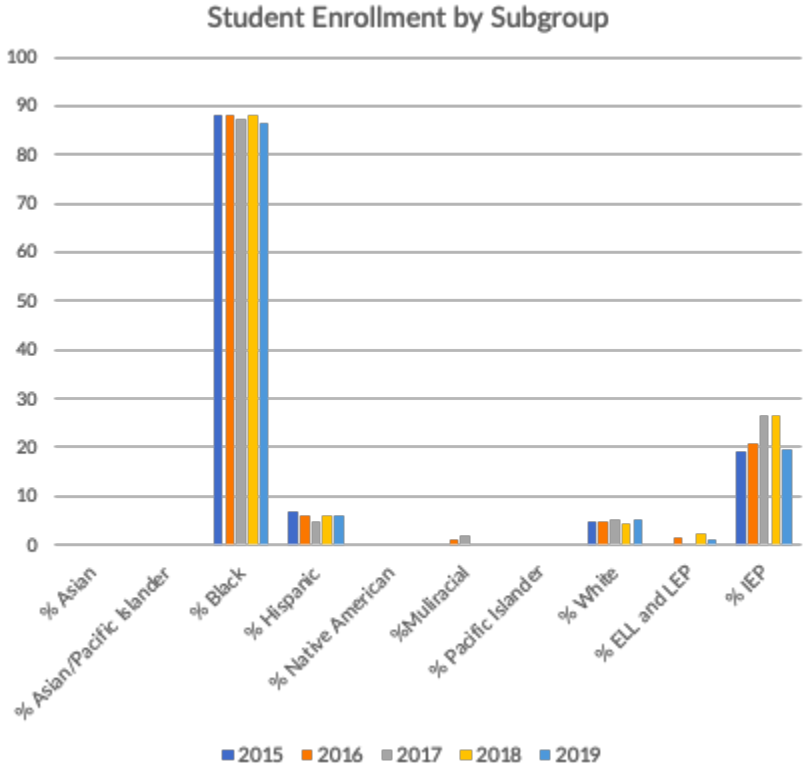
<sup>1</sup> Mass Insight Education and Research. Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, Inc., 2007, [www.massinsight.org/resources/the-turnaround-challenge/](http://www.massinsight.org/resources/the-turnaround-challenge/)

Student Enrollment and Attendance



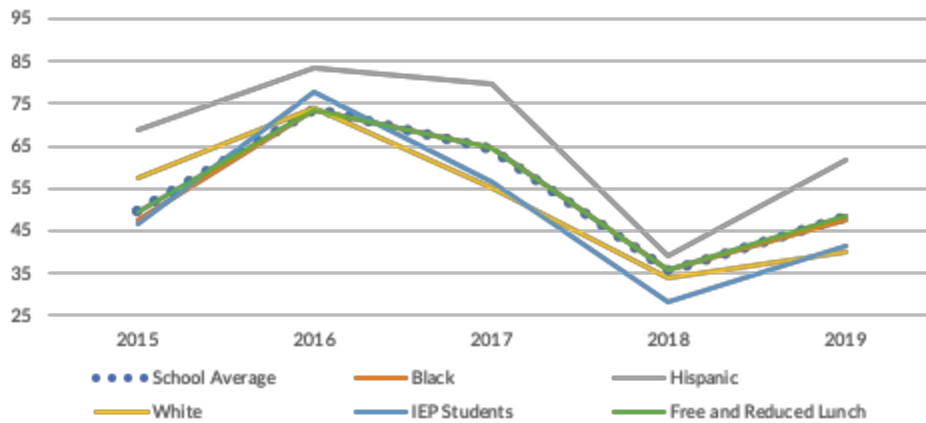
Student enrollment at Central Middle School decreased over the last 4 years and was 97 students lower in 2019 than in 2016, when both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were enrolled.

The majority of the student population is Black.



<sup>2</sup> Data contained within this data profile was publicly available on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s website: <https://dese.mo.gov/school-data>

Student Attendance Trend 2015-2019



The proportional attendance rate for students at or above 90% (displayed in the graph to the left) at Central Middle School over the last 5 years has decreased around 1% to 49% in 2019. Hispanic student attendance is consistently higher than the school-wide average and other subgroup attendance rates. White student and students with IEPs attendance rates have been consistently lower than the school-wide average for the last 3 years.

The total proportional attendance rate for the last 3 school years at Central Middle School was

- 2017 - 67.1%
- 2018 - 42.7%
- 2019 - 55.3%

which demonstrates a 11.8% decrease in student attendance over the last 3 years.

STUDENT MOBILITY	Fall Enrollment	Additional Enrollment	Transfers	Mobility Rate	Dropout Rate
2017	398	196	418	70.4	0
2018	400	164	372	66	0
2019	418	171	377	64	0

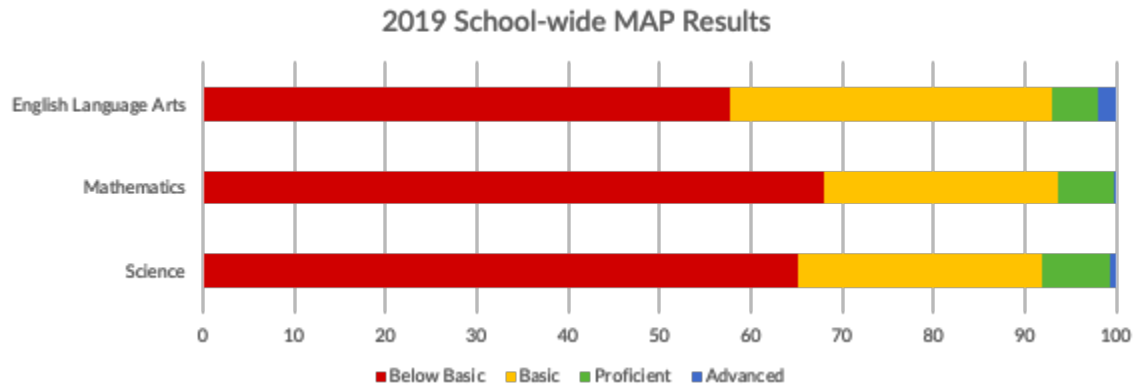
Student enrollment at Northeast Middle School has increased by 20 students over the last 3 years. While additional students enroll throughout the year, the number of transfers is high, resulting in mobility rates over 60-70% for the last 3 years. The dropout rate has been stable at 0% for the last 3 years.

## Student Discipline

DISCIPLINE RATES	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Enrollment	266	515	398	400	418
Total Number of Incidents	121	43	32	167	68
Incident Rate (per 100 students)	45.5	8.3	8	41.8	16.3
<b>Type of Removal</b>					
In-School Suspension (number   rate)	1   0.4	0   0.0	0   0.0	13   3.3	2   0.5
Out of School Suspension (number   rate)	120   45.1	43   8.3	32   8.0	153   38.3	66   15.8
Expulsion (number   rate)	0   0.0	0   0.0	0   0.0	1   0.3	0   0.0
<b>Length of Removal</b>					
10 Consecutive Days (number   rate)	103   38.7	42   8.2	28   7.0	148   37.0	54   12.9
More than 10 Consecutive Days (number   rate)	18   6.8	1   0.2	4   1.0	19   4.8	14   3.3

The incident rate has decreased over the last 5 years and was 29.2% lower in 2019 than 2015. The out of school suspension rate has decreased in the last 5 years, as well as the rate of students removed for 10 or more days.

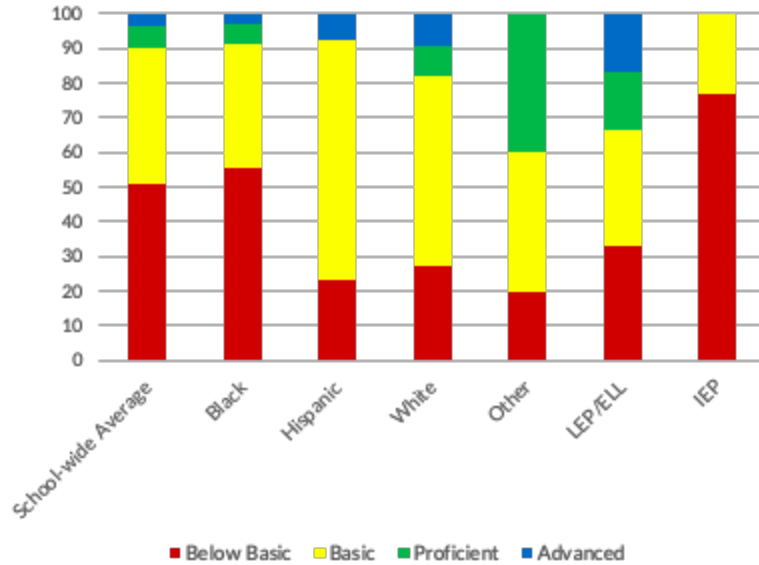
## Student Academic Performance



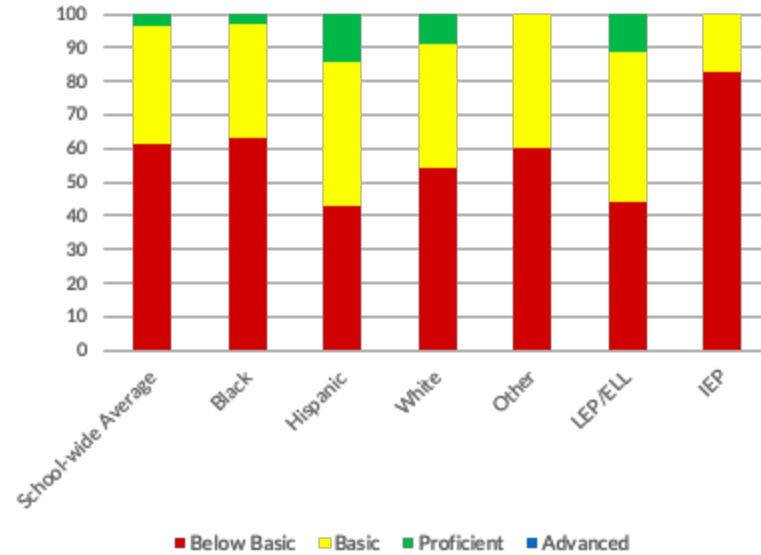
School-wide performance on MAP tests in 2019 showed 8.1% of students were proficient/advanced in English Language Arts, 6.4% were proficient/advanced in Mathematics, and 7.1% were advanced/proficient in Science.



7th Grade 2019 English Language Arts MAP Proficiency Rates



8th Grade 2019 English Language Arts MAP Proficiency Rates

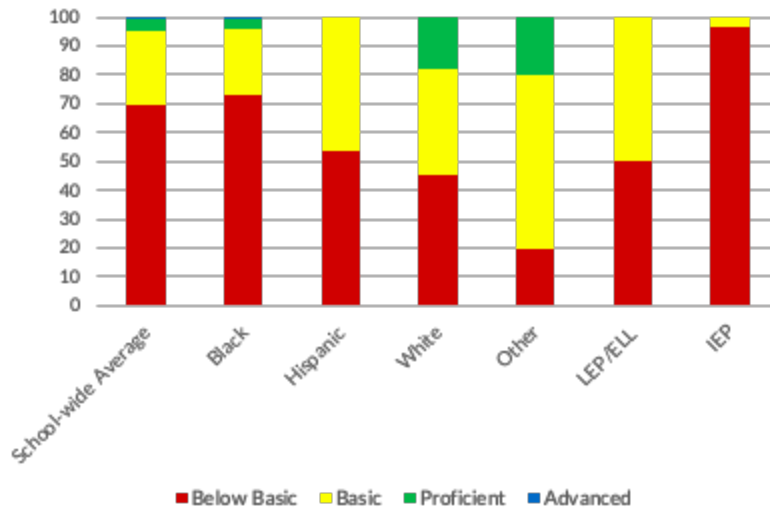


7<sup>th</sup> grade ELA MAP exams in 2019 showed 9.8% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient/advanced. 8.7% of Black students, 7.7% of Hispanic students, 18.2% of White students, 40% of other students, and 33.4% of LEP/ELLs were proficient. No students with IEPs were proficient.

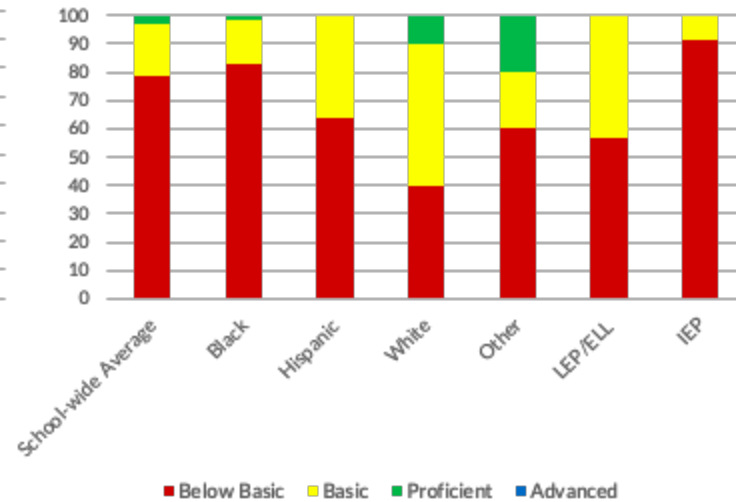
8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA MAP exams in 2019 showed 3.9% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient/advanced. 2.8% of Black students, 14.3% of Hispanic students, 9.1% of White students, and 11.1% of LEP/ELL students were proficient. No other students or students with IEPs were proficient.

*Note: the "other" descriptor refers to a racial or ethnic subgroup or combined subgroup of fewer than 10 students.*

7th Grade 2019 Mathematics MAP Proficiency Rates



8th Grade 2019 Mathematics MAP Proficiency Rates

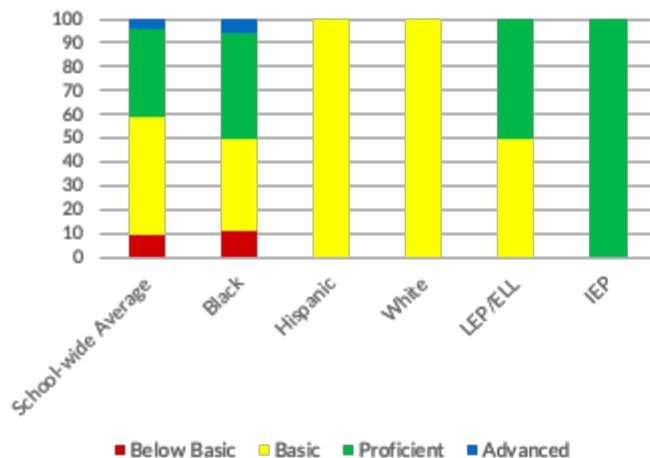


7<sup>th</sup> grade Math MAP exams in 2019 showed 4.9% of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient/advanced. 4% of Black students, 18.2% of White students, and 20% of Asian students were proficient. No Hispanic students, LEP/ELLs, or students with IEPs were proficient.

8<sup>th</sup> grade Math MAP exams in 2019 showed 2.7% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient/advanced. 1.9% of Black students, 10% of White students, and 20% of other students were proficient. No Hispanic students, LEP/ELLs, or students with IEPs were proficient.

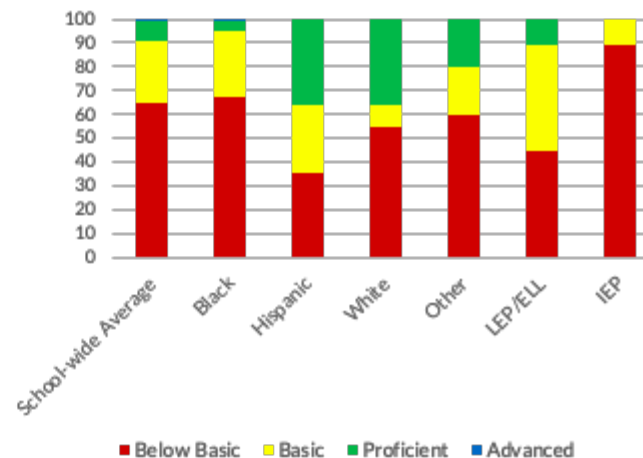
*Note: the "other" descriptor refers to a racial or ethnic subgroup or combined subgroup of fewer than 10 students.*

8th Grade 2019 Algebra 1 EOC MAP Proficiency Rates



8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra 1 EOC exams in 2019 showed 40.9% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient/advanced. 50% of Black students, 50% of LEP/ELLs, and 100% of students with IEPs were proficient. No Hispanic students, or White students were proficient.

8th Grade 2019 Science MAP Proficiency Rates



8<sup>th</sup> grade Science MAP exams in 2019 showed 9.1% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were proficient/advanced. 5.1% of Black students, 35.7% of Hispanic students, 36.4% of White students, 20% of other students, and 11.1% of LEP/ELLs were proficient. No students with IEPs were proficient.

Note: the "other" descriptor refers to a racial or ethnic subgroup or combined subgroup of fewer than 10 students.

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## Strengths and Challenges

### Strengths

- **PLCs are leading to increased collective responsibility over school improvement efforts.** Teachers report that meaningful time and attention has been placed on improving PLCs. Whereas in previous years, PLCs were largely unstructured and were happening infrequently, teachers now report that this time is used to review student data and plan for instruction. Moreover, the school is dedicating resources to send teachers to external conferences to learn more about PLCs, and an external service provider (Solution Tree) is providing support to help increase teacher capacity to lead effective PLCs.
- **There is an attentiveness to student behavior in the building.** School discipline is highlighted as a school improvement priority. To this end, a team has been established to deal specifically with these issues. As a result, office referrals and the total number of suspension days are down for the school when compared with year-to-date data from the previous school year. Teachers and students agree that the overall number of behavior incidents has decreased.
- **There is a strong sense of collective ownership for student learning in the building, and both staff and students embrace the responsibility of ensuring that students are successful within and beyond the school.** Instructional and non-instructional staff are driven to help all students succeed, while students embrace the creed's statement "I am my brother's keeper" and work to support one another academically and socially. Students report feeling supported and challenged by their teachers and their peers. Observations reveal that the school creed is both visibly posted and verbally referenced in classrooms and in common spaces by staff and students. 80% of staff survey participants believe that all staff share responsibility for the success of all students.

### Challenges

- **The instructional vision is not clear and commonly understood.** School leaders, teachers, and support staff highlight a wide range of elements when discussing the instructional vision of the school. These elements include but are not limited to using data to drive instruction, increasing the depth of knowledge in tasks, increasing rigor in the classroom, students leading instruction, and focusing on reflection and student accountability. There is an opportunity to clarify the instructional vision and align resources in support of that vision.
- **Although student behaviors have generally improved, this shift has not yet translated to consistently rigorous instruction across classrooms.** Staff and students report—and classroom observations confirm—that many students are often disengaged from the learning process. This may result from a lack of a common definition of what rigor looks like in the classroom. Although students have been grouped into cohorts, in the majority of classrooms observed, fewer than 50% of students interact with each other and their teacher. Additionally, while student learning objectives are visible in most classrooms, student tasks/activities are not always grade-level and standards aligned. Student feedback mirrors these observations, as a majority of students in the focus group express a desire for more challenging classwork.

- **There are gaps in support for special populations.** Although the change in the master schedule has reportedly led to some decreases in student behavior, it has caused some support gaps for students with IEPs. There is reported confusion about which students are supposed to be receiving specific support and where these students should go to receive said support. There is an opportunity to clarify procedures and protocols for student identification and processes by which these students are connected to support.
- **There is a need for more support for new teachers.** There is a lot of teacher turnover in the school, which results in high numbers of new teachers in the building. Although there is a mentoring program in place, it is not currently being implemented in a way that leads to new teachers feeling fully supported. Given that there is no formal onboarding process for new teachers other than what the district provides, there is an opportunity to revisit staff development and support structures that lead to retention of teaching staff.

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## Recommendations

- 1. Develop and communicate a schoolwide instructional vision that aligns with identified school priorities and that clearly outlines instructional expectations for teachers and learner expectations for students.** Teachers note that there is currently no shared definition of rigor or shared understanding of what rigorous instruction looks like; they also mention that no systems have been created to frame and align instructional practices across the school. An instructional vision could help the school define a) how academically successful students engage in the learning process; b) how successful teachers develop students and their own professional practices and engage students in rigorous learning; c) how successful leaders support and develop teachers and students and their own professional practice; and d) how families support and develop their children and their engagement with the school. As the instructional vision becomes adopted in the classroom, there is an opportunity to track increases in student engagement which may increase overall perceptions of student support and safety. Creating an instructional vision will ensure that all stakeholders—from students and families to teachers and leaders—can speak to their own roles and responsibilities, the roles and responsibilities of others, and the focus on high-quality classroom experiences for students.
- 2. Develop a plan for streamlining support for special populations.** Metrics for identifying and tracking the needs of students with special needs are not clear to all stakeholders. Some teachers report confusion around which students should be receiving specific reports, and others highlight uncertainties around what supports are available. Moreover, the current SIP does not name explicit strategies, markers, goals, or plans for supporting this subgroup of students. A formal plan for connecting students with special needs to aligned supports can a) help keep the school in compliance with all federal, state, and local laws; b) increase the equity of support distribution in the school; and c) potentially increase student performance on assessments. Overall, this plan could move the school closer to its goal of creating an environment where students feel safe, included, and welcomed.

## Appendix: School Readiness Assessment Tool

Mass Insight's SRA Tool is designed to analyze the extent to which a school has elements of our research-based theory of action in place, in relation to an exemplar description of each element (and the features that make up that element) at the highest performing schools. The Mass Insight team uses this SRA Tool to document evidence and analysis based on information gathered during the SRA activities to assign a rating for each feature. Ratings are designed to describe the extent to which evidence aligns to the exemplar descriptions at the highest performing schools.

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Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Rating	Discussion of Evidence
<p><b>Focus on Instruction:</b> Processes and systems help teachers work together to constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice, ensuring students engage in deep learning tasks.</p>	<p><b>School Model and Instructional Vision</b> <i>Signature schools:</i> The school implements a clearly defined and observable school model that meets student interests and demand.</p> <p><i>Secondary schools:</i> The school implements clear pathways for student progression through high school to college and careers.</p> <p>There is a clear instructional vision that aligns with the district-wide framework for critical thinking, problem-solving and cultural responsiveness for 21st Century learning, and the school model. It focuses on the success of all students, aligns with standards, and helps build an understanding of the actions that educators must take to accelerate student learning. The vision is widely understood and drives school decision-making. All teachers and administrators can describe how their work moves the school closer to meeting the vision.</p>	<p>1: Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The instructional vision, as articulated by some staff, is to promote high levels of learning, increase teacher collaboration through PLCs, and to use data to drive instruction.</li> <li>● Teachers and school leaders note that behavior used to be the primary focus of school improvement efforts, which resulted in less of a focus on instructional priorities.</li> <li>● School leadership wants the school to be a place where students want to learn, where teachers want to work, and where parents want to send their students.</li> <li>● Whereas 75% of staff members surveyed agree or strongly agree that “the school has an instructional vision (or vision for high-quality instruction) that defines the actions educators must take to accelerate student learning,” there is not currently common language in the school on what the instructional vision is.</li> <li>● Teachers report a range of elements in the instructional vision for the school, including students leading instruction, reflection and student accountability, and using Engage NY.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Focus on Instruction, continued.</b></p>	<p><b>Readiness to Learn</b>  The school implements consistent, equitable, and asset-based policies, procedures, and practices that foster positive learning school experiences that validate all students' social-emotional and cultural identities. As a result, students feel safe, valued, cared for, challenged, and supported at school. Student and family needs are identified and connected with resources and services to ensure all students can self-regulate and engage in learning with agency. The school has programs, structures, and extracurricular activities (such as looping, advisory, morning meetings, intramurals, clubs) to expand and nurture students' sense of belonging and ensure that every student has enriching experiences and strong relationships with adults.</p>	<p>1: Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A schoolwide behavior team is in place and has established a behavior incentive program and a discipline board with approximately 6-7 teacher and student members.</li> <li>● A building systems team is in place to review processes, such as hall freezes and other policies and procedures related to student issues, that lead to student behavior incidents such as students leaving class.</li> <li>● In the majority of classrooms observed, some students (&lt;75%) are observed to be emotionally unsafe in their classrooms and unsupported by an adult.</li> <li>● In the majority of classrooms observed, some students (&lt;75%) are observed to be physically safe in their classroom.</li> <li>● Whereas students report feeling safe and included in the school, instances of verbal bullying and physical altercations occurred during observations of transitions to classes and to the restroom.</li> <li>● Although staff note that new teachers are briefed on school culture, it is not evident that students' cultural identities are discussed; moreover, no teachers discuss ways in which students' cultural identities are affirmed.</li> <li>● 44% of staff surveyed agree with the statement, "Policies and practices support a safe and positive learning environment for all students." approximately 38% disagree.</li> <li>● Approximately 69% of staff surveyed report that policies and practices are not consistently and equitably implemented for all students.</li> <li>● Although the change in the master schedule was designed to decrease student behavior issues with the implementation of guided transitions for students, these systems at times lead to gaps in instructional time for students.</li> <li>● Approximately two out of every five staff members surveyed report that programs and structures (such as looping, advisory, morning meetings) do not currently ensure each student has a strong relationship with an adult.</li> <li>● Two reading interventionists, one math interventionist, and four City Year supports are available for students; however, teachers report gaps in communication and clarity on how</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Focus on Instruction, continued.</b></p>			<p>students should be identified for additional support. This gap occurs between district personnel and interventionists, who do not agree on how iReady results should be used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students report that teacher-student relationships are “not bad, but not great.”</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Teacher Development &amp; Feedback</b>  There are systems, structures, and practices that prioritize teacher development based on data and district priorities including trauma sensitive strategies. There are feedback cycles and follow-up. All teachers describe receiving frequent, consistent, coherent, and coordinated high-quality feedback on teaching that is grounded in an instructional vision and that will lead to accelerated learning for all students.</p>	<p>1: Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 87% of teachers surveyed report receiving frequent, clear, and actionable feedback about their instructional practice that helps them improve.</li> <li>● One-third of teachers surveyed disagree or strongly disagree that professional development (coaching, PD, observation/feedback, etc.) is coordinated and of high quality to improve professional practice.</li> <li>● School leaders provide feedback on instructional practice to teachers through the use of a TNTP-developed rubric.</li> <li>● Each teacher was reportedly required to receive at least 20 walkthroughs per month; that requirement has since been lowered to five per month; school leaders conduct these walkthroughs using the TNTP-developed walkthrough tool.</li> <li>● Teachers report that in the beginning of the school year, feedback through the walkthrough form came much too frequently to be effective or actionable. Now, school leaders are reportedly only required to conduct 20 walkthroughs per month, although it is not clear if teachers perceive a positive shift in the quality of feedback.</li> <li>● There is a Trauma Sensitive School Clinician in place who is at the school daily; the role is supported from the school's general operating budget.</li> <li>● Some staff report that PD often takes the form of general updates through staff meetings, which occur on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of every month; others, however, note that content-specific support is available.</li> <li>● Typical PD topics include schedules (updates and adjustments), presenting info on coping and working as a staff, and trauma sensitive conversations.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Focus on Instruction, continued.</b></p>	<p><b>Teacher Collaboration (PLCs)</b>  Teachers working in teams have time, systems and structures to maximize collaborative time in instructional teams (such as by grade level or content area). Teachers work towards commonly set and motivating goals that help all students progress towards the highest priority academic standards and improve critical thinking skills; these teams receive high-quality feedback and enjoy a trusting culture that includes open and constructive dialogue.</p>	<p>2: Mostly Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● PLCs reportedly did not occur during the previous school year; now, teachers indicate that PLC meetings occur three times per week for content-area teams and twice per week by grade level.</li> <li>● Staff report that a lot of time has been invested to make sure that PLCs are done right, with a focus on increased understanding of the learning cycle.</li> <li>● Typical PLC topics include discussions of student data and making instructional changes based on that data.</li> <li>● Approximately 42% of teachers surveyed indicate that the vision and purpose of PLCs is not clear at Central MS.</li> <li>● 58% of teachers surveyed agree that PLCs are a collaborative environment where all members of the PLC attend and actively participate in meetings.</li> <li>● Teachers express a desire for more training on the kinds of data review work that is expected in PLCs in order to translate the outcomes of PLC sessions into actionable items.</li> <li>● Two-thirds of teachers surveyed agree or strongly agree that their respective PLCs have a clear leader who structures and facilitates each meeting to maximize meeting time.</li> <li>● Less than three out every five teachers surveyed (approximately 58%) agree that PLC work directly connects to the standards students must master to be proficient/on grade level.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Focus on instruction, continued.</b></p>	<p><b>Curriculum, Standards &amp; Assessment</b>  Instructional work is guided by curricula and instructional resources (including technology) aligned to standards and aligned across and between grade levels. It is responsive to students' cultures, experiences, needs, and interests. Formative and externally-developed summative assessments are aligned with both standards and the sequence of instruction. These assessments yield frequent, accurate, and actionable data about student progress towards the highest priority standards.</p>	<p>1: Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whereas approximately 38% of Central MS staff agree that the school's curriculum is responsive to the needs, identities, and backgrounds of students, 38% of staff also disagree with this statement.</li> <li>Approximately 47% of staff surveyed do not perceive that summative/interim assessments at the school yield accurate and actionable data about student progress toward standard mastery.</li> <li>District-provided curriculum is viewed as unhelpful. Staff report having to be creative to make it work; that is, supplementing the curriculum with external resources.</li> <li>Teachers indicate that the curriculum changes often, making it difficult to know what the most current iteration is.</li> <li>Some staff share that the majority of staff do not deploy culturally competent practices in the classroom; and when conversations about these practices come up, there is a general lack of interest.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Data-Driven Decision-Making for Classroom Instruction</b>  The academic progress of all students is monitored by teachers and students. Systems, structures, and processes support teachers—individually and in teams (such as the Problem Solving Team (PST))—to frequently and routinely use a variety of student data, including disaggregated academic data, to pinpoint class and student needs. Data inquiry cycles drive on-going instructional decisions, including grouping, differentiation, enrichment, intervention, and personalized plans for meeting graduation requirements.</p>	<p>1: Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately one-third of the staff surveyed report that school systems, structures, and processes do not yet support them and their respective teams to frequently and routinely use student academic data to pinpoint class and student needs.</li> <li>Data from iReady data is reviewed by teachers and school leaders regularly; however, there is a perception that this data is neither accurate nor reliable.</li> <li>Some staff indicate a desire for more training on how to use spreadsheets to analyze data.</li> <li>75% of teachers surveyed report that they routinely use student academic data to drive ongoing instructional decisions, including grouping, differentiation, intervention, and enrichment.</li> <li>Teachers report reviewing quarterly and common assessment data to drive instruction.</li> <li>The instructional coach is the primary touchpoint for teachers on data discussions.</li> <li>There is a Problem-Solving Team (PST) composed of counselors, clinicians, and the school nurse who help resolve</li> </ul>

<p><b>Focus on instruction, continued.</b></p>			<p>severe student issues; however, staff report gaps in communication of students' needs to be able to best help them.</p>
	<p><b>Rigorous Classroom Practice</b>  All students describe, and are observed, learning high-level and grade-level appropriate knowledge and skills in classrooms where each student is challenged; teachers are observed bringing the school's instructional vision to life in their classrooms. All students demonstrate progress toward stated learning objectives through their work or responses.</p>	<p>0: Not Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Definitions of rigor in the school vary widely and are not student-focused, ranging from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reviewing lesson plans for the day and the associated activities;</li> <li>○ Reviewing the depth of knowledge of a standard;</li> <li>○ Ensuring that there are feedback sessions to ensure that lessons are on grade level and that best practices are being used; and</li> <li>○ Ensuring that teachers understand the objective(s) of the lessons they are teaching and can discuss these points with students.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● In the majority of classrooms observed, less than 50% of students interact with each other and their teacher.</li> <li>● In the majority of classrooms observed, less than 50% of students are engaged with the learning process, tasks, and materials.</li> <li>● Whereas student learning objectives are clearly articulated in some way (i.e., through the use of "Students will be able to"/"Explain why"/"I can understand"/"Analyze relationships among" language) and grade-level appropriate in the majority of classrooms observed, behavior management issues arising from transition and bathroom procedures limit instructional minutes in the classroom.</li> <li>● 50% of teachers surveyed do not agree that all Central MS students engage with grade-level appropriate knowledge and skills in the classroom.</li> <li>● Whereas, 92% of teachers surveyed report that they bring the school's instructional vision to life in their respective classrooms, this has not yet translated into high quality instruction in all classrooms.</li> <li>● 92% of teachers surveyed report that they routinely monitor all students' progress toward standard mastery.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Focus on instruction, continued.</b></p>	<p><b>Supports for Special Populations</b>          There is a strategy in action for ensuring that special populations of students—including students with disabilities and ELLs— are accurately identified, and receive integrated, inclusive, and high-quality instructional support. Students' progress is monitored to ensure that they are moving expediently towards success in an inclusion environment. A variety of models and supports, including interventions, ensure students are adequately challenged and ultimately successful.</p>	<p>0: Not Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Less than half of the staff surveyed agree or strongly agree that students with disabilities receive integrated, inclusive, and high-quality instructional support throughout the school.</li> <li>● The extent of support for English learners is unclear to staff.</li> <li>● There are approximately 70-80 students with IEPs at the school; there is one direct instruction teacher, and the majority of students receive support through co-taught classes.</li> <li>● In the co-teaching model, approximately 25% of a class are students with IEPs.</li> <li>● Some teachers perceive that not all students who need additional instructional support from interventionists are getting it as a result of the master schedule change.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There is confusion among teachers and students about where students should go.</li> <li>○ Push-in support is reportedly only available for science and history courses.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● There is a reported lack of co-teaching in some content areas, which results in support gaps for students.</li> <li>● Tomorrow's Promise Today (TPT) provides MAP Test support to students two days per week; instructional leaders explain that this intervention is intended to build teachers' capacity to provide similar support as the structure of PLCs is refined.</li> </ul>
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Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Rating	Discussion of Evidence
<p><b>Collective Responsibility:</b> The school faculty and staff ensure there is collective responsibility for both the quality of instruction and student learning and success.</p>	<p><b>Systems and Structures for School-wide Continuous Improvement</b> Leadership effectively implements systems and structures to cultivate shared ownership for school-wide continuous improvement for both the quality of instruction and each students' learning. A representative group of building leaders, teachers, and staff (e.g., ILT) takes ownership for implementation and progress monitoring of school improvement.</p>	<p>2: Mostly Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There is a Guiding Coalition that serves as the ILT; this team is comprised of three vice principals (VPs), the instructional coach, and a representative group of teachers (ELA, math, science, social studies, SPED, and electives).</li> <li>● The purpose of the Guiding Coalition is to raise issues brought up from PLCs to school administration; this team reviews school data, but structures for how the data discussions are intended to improve instructional practices are not evident.</li> <li>● The roles and responsibilities of the ILT are not clearly understood by staff.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>School-wide Beliefs and Trust</b> Staff have, and inculcate in students, the belief that all students can and will learn. This motivates all to continuously improve teaching and learning. Staff demonstrate individual and collective responsibility for student learning and behavior that extends beyond individual classrooms or departments and permeates the school. Staff intentionally promote the success for all students, which results in all students feeling valued, supported, and challenged to learn in and out of school.</p> <p>Interactions between adults in the building are positive and supportive, resulting in a sense of trust and partnership among staff. Staff own the success of all students. And there is a shared culture of continuous improvement for all students, staff, and schoolwide success.</p>	<p>1: Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff do not yet perceive that teachers share a common belief that all students can learn at high levels.</li> <li>● Approximately 44% of staff surveyed perceive that not all staff at Central MS demonstrate a responsibility for all students' learning and behaviors, beyond just the students in their classroom or grade level.</li> <li>● Some teachers report that social issues and community circumstances limit students capacity to fully engage during instructional time.</li> <li>● One-fourth of staff surveyed disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, "All staff at my school believe that all students can and will learn."</li> <li>● Approximately 53% of staff surveyed agree with the statement, "All staff at my school develop in all students the belief that they can and will learn."</li> <li>● The majority of staff surveyed (approximately 94%) feel empowered and responsible for the success of students.</li> <li>● Approximately three out of every 10 staff members surveyed indicate that there is a lack of trust amongst school staff.</li> <li>● Some staff report feeling like they are constantly "in survival mode" but appreciate the supportive environment of PLCs.</li> <li>● While some staff report feeling heard and valued by school leaders, others report not feeling welcome or recognized by school leadership.</li> </ul>

Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Rating	Discussion of Evidence
<p><b>Planning:</b> Evidence-based, actionable improvement plans that address the root causes of low performance, informed by a review of existing conditions with input from school, district, and community stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>Planning Processes</b> School stakeholders are actively engaged in evidence-based processes to identify and analyze root causes of low performance. These processes include honest conversations about how the school works and an examination of data, including disaggregated data. The processes produce no more than four major improvement strategies that planning participants believe can be implemented and will lead to substantial improvement.</p>	<p>1: Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School leaders conducted surveys and hosted focus groups with teachers and parents on what needed to go into the plan. It is unclear if an evidence-based process was used to identify and analyze the root causes of low performance when developing the school improvement plan (SIP).</li> <li>● There are teacher- and staff-led committees that focus on certain issues related to school improvement planning priorities: discipline, positive behavior, family engagement. Teachers can volunteer to work on committees.</li> <li>● The SIP contains four priorities: 1. Increase Student Achievement, 2. Improve Student Behavior, 3. Improve Staff/Admin Relationships, and 4. Increase Attendance.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>The School Improvement Plan</b> The school has one evidence-based, equity-focused actionable school improvement plan that addresses the root causes of low performance. The school plan focuses the school's energy and resources on no more than four strategies that will impact the instructional core and increase student learning. The plan identifies a set of action steps for each strategy, and, for each action step, assigns responsibility, provides a timeline, and identifies critical milestones. Teachers in the school can describe the school improvement strategies and explain how they expect the strategies to lead to improvement.</p>	<p>1: Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Although there is a SIP in place—and teams tasked with working toward SIP goals—it is not clear to all stakeholders how the priorities address the root causes of low performance. For example, one priority is “Increase Student Achievement;” however, the only strategy specifically aligned to this goal is the “administrative team will ensure tier 2 interventions are provided for students who need additional time to master concepts” which should “result in a 10% increase in the number of students scoring proficient and advanced on the 2020 MAP.”</li> <li>● Whereas three-fourths of the surveyed staff indicate that they know the school's top priorities for improvement, there is not yet common language around what these priorities are.</li> </ul>

Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Rating	Discussion of Evidence
<p><b>Performance Management:</b> Consistent processes for using data to measure both implementation and outcomes to determine what's working and inform efforts to improve.</p>	<p><b>Plan Implementation &amp; Management</b> A team of school leaders meets frequently and regularly to manage plan implementation and impact with a focus on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Have we done what we said we would do in the plan? If not, why not?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is it making a difference? What's the evidence?</i></li> <li>• <i>What do we have to do differently?</i></li> </ul>	<p>1: Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not clear how often the distributed leadership of the SIP teams—discipline, building systems, and parent involvement—come together to manage plan implementation and impact.</li> <li>• Although there is a plan in place, there is a lack of clarity in how the structure and work of the committees is driving progress toward implementation and impact of plan goals.</li> <li>• Some staff share that keeping staff involved in the process is a priority through looking at student data.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Monitors Key Indicators to Inform Decisions and Actions</b> The school identifies and monitors a limited number of leading and lagging indicators to measure schoolwide progress, early warning signs, and/or plan next steps. Data is relevant, timely, accessible, accurate, and disaggregated by subgroup. There are clear roles and responsibilities for data collection and reporting. Teams regularly analyze data to identify disproportionality, identify root causes, establish key actions, and track progress of action items for continuous improvement.</p>	<p>2: Mostly Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 63% of the staff surveyed report that school teams routinely monitor key data points to measure school-wide progress and at-risk student indicators.</li> <li>• The attendance team meets weekly to monitor student data.</li> <li>• The schoolwide behavior team consists of six to eight teachers who are responsible for the implementation of the behavior incentive program; the school is reportedly developing a discipline board of teachers and students.</li> <li>• The building systems group consists of 10-12 teachers and responsible for developing school policies.</li> <li>• The parent involvement team consists of approximately five teachers and focuses on improving family engagement.</li> </ul>



Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Rating	Discussion of Evidence
<p><b>Partnering:</b> <i>Partnerships that help the school meet the multiple needs of teachers and students.</i></p>	<p><b>Family and Community Engagement</b> The school operates with the understanding that students' most important influencer and advocate are their families. The school intentionally builds community and family partnerships that honor and recognize families' existing knowledge and skills. The school connects with and engages families through intentional programming (e.g., series of family nights), regular two-way dialogue in family accessible languages, and capacity building (e.g. Parent Liaisons and Parents-as-Teachers program) designed to strengthen family-school partnership and further student learning including in the creation of student academic, college, and career plans. Staff have respect and knowledge of cultural norms and act in ways that are welcoming and responsive to students and their families.</p>	<p>1: Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Three-fourths of the surveyed staff perceive that families are not intentionally engaged as partners in student learning.</li> <li>● Approximately 63% of staff surveyed agree with the statement, "The school communicates with families about student academic data." Staff share that the school uses robocalls and emails to communicate with families.</li> <li>● Approximately 63% of staff surveyed agree with the statement, "The school is welcoming and responsive to students and their families."</li> <li>● Approximately 88% of staff surveyed report that staff demonstrate knowledge of and respect for students' and families' cultural norms in communication and interactions.</li> <li>● The parent involvement group is focused on increasing parental engagement; current efforts include keeping parents informed through robocalls and emailed updates; however, school leaders report that parent engagement is currently low overall.</li> <li>● Some staff report that parents have the school number blocked, which makes it difficult to keep them informed about school events and student progress.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Strategic Partnerships</b> The school has a limited number of community and business partnerships that support specific school and student needs, such as providing students with real-world application opportunities, college and career exploration, and rewards for positive student behavior. Students have equitable access to resources and partnerships. The school regularly reviews the effectiveness of partnership programs and makes changes as needed to meet student needs. Partnerships are actively managed to streamline efforts and impact.</p>	<p>1: Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More than 40% of the staff surveyed report being unaware of the partnerships the school has and the resources they can access through them to support students.</li> <li>● The Center for Conflict Resolution provides support to students.</li> <li>● Solution Tree provides technical assistance to support PLCs in becoming more effective.</li> <li>● Two reading/ELA and two math interventionists are available to students through City Year during the school day and for after school tutoring; however, some teachers report that at times there is confusion on which students are supposed to be receiving this support. This partnership is monitored at weekly and quarterly meetings with school</li> </ul>

<p><b>Partnering, continued.</b></p>			<p>leadership and a manager from City Year by tracking student progress and corps member needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault (MOCSA) provides support to students whose lives have been affected by sexual abuse.</li> <li>● The school works with Aim4Peace to support violence prevention efforts.</li> <li>● It is unclear the extent to which other partnerships are actively managed or reviewed for effectiveness in meeting student needs.</li> </ul>
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Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Rating	Discussion of Evidence
<p><b>Conditions:</b> Sufficient school-level control over people, time, money and program to address the root causes of low performance to ensure all students can succeed.</p>	<p><b>Larger systems, structures, and practices (e.g. district, union, state, etc.) enable school-level control of conditions necessary to implement the plan and address the root causes of low performance</b></p> <p>The district recognizes that the school is the unit of improvement and allows for flexibility in the use of people, time, funding, and program so that the school can meet the needs of all students. Systems and structures are clear and aligned so that principals can focus on the success of all students. The district provides school leaders with the necessary support and ongoing capacity-building to achieve school priorities.</p>	<p>0: Not Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff report that, at times, threatening messages come from district personnel, which leads to decreased morale and gaps in trust.</li> <li>● The budget process reportedly takes place mainly at the central office and is based on an enrollment formula; there is a reported lack of input from school staff on what the school needs most.</li> <li>● There are monthly district PD opportunities for school leaders; however, these sessions are not consistently organized to provide specific tools to address the unique needs of schools.</li> <li>● Staff indicate that there is a district principal supervisor in place that provides strategic support to address behavior issues and high suspension rates at the school.</li> <li>● Staff indicate that there have been several changes at the district level as it relates to providing support to students who need additional assistance; they note that its current procedures make it difficult to narrow down which students need support.</li> <li>● Some staff share a perception that their jobs are under constant threat by some district leaders, naming that they constantly receive messages to move students academically.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Conditions, continued.</b></p>	<p><b>Sufficient school leader authority over conditions to implement the plan and address the root causes of low performance</b>  The principal has the authority to create staff configurations and work assignments in alignment with the school’s instructional model, design the right positions, and fill positions with the right people to do their most effective work. The principal has the authority to make changes to the school schedule such as PLCs, interventions, and/or other school-based professional development activities so that the school can meet the needs of all students. The principal has the authority to align the school’s financial resources with school plan priorities. The principal has sufficient authority to shape teaching approaches and related services around the school’s mission and the needs of all students.</p>	<p>2: Mostly Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School leadership led the overhauling of the school’s master schedule with designated bathroom times and procedures for students in order to decrease student behavior issues and to be responsive to teacher needs; students are now grouped into cohorts, and students are now escorted to class.</li> <li>● School leadership has the autonomy to select interventions that meet student needs, after the budget has been allocated.</li> <li>● School leadership is able to channel funding to bring in groups such as City Year and Tomorrow’s Promise Today (TPT) to help meet the needs of all students.</li> <li>● School leadership has also contracted services from the Center for Conflict Resolution to provide mediation support.</li> <li>● Solution Tree provides support to make PLCs more effective.</li> <li>● There is a Trauma Sensitive School Clinician who comes to the school daily to provide training to teachers on how to support students and also provides direct support to students who have experienced trauma.</li> <li>● Staff note that there is no set timeline for hiring and although there is sufficient authority to hire staff who meet the needs of students, many positions remain open for long periods of time.</li> <li>● Staff report that there is a lack of clarity from district personnel around how decisions about specific interventions are selected; they assume that these decisions are based on test scores but are not able to name which assessments are used to make the determinations.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Conditions, continued.</b></p>	<p><b>Enrollment and Configuration</b>  School configuration and/or application and student enrollment processes enable equitable access to a complete feeder. Families have data and access to make informed choices regarding the school/program that best meets their students' needs and interests. Principals have the ability to recruit students to their school and recruitment processes are equitable. The district and school principal cultivate a distinct, consistent brand presence for the school, resulting in positive stakeholder perceptions.</p>	<p>0: Not Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More than 40% of the staff surveyed disagree with the statement, "My school is an attractive/desirable option for students and families."</li> <li>● Neighborhood crime is cited as a contributing factor to negative perceptions of the school.</li> <li>● Uncertain enrollment data at times reportedly leads to miscalculated appropriations for the school budget.</li> <li>● The school entrance process is not clear to all stakeholders.</li> <li>● There is not a current plan in place to recruit students to the school.</li> <li>● Staff indicate that there are too many grade configurations in the district, which makes creating a cohesive pathway for students difficult; some staff also notes that having 6th grade at the school would be helpful in creating a clearer pathway.</li> </ul>
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Element	At Highest Performing Schools	Rating	Discussion of Evidence
<p><b>Leadership:</b>  Principal who can manage and communicate complexity while maintaining focus on the school's vision and key priorities.</p>	<p><b>Stakeholder Investment and Mobilization</b>  Principal effectively constructs and adapts communication and actions to inspire and invest diverse stakeholders in a clear, compelling, and inclusive vision for change. Staff receive timely and transparent updates on progress toward the vision. Staff understand the vision, their role in the vision, and rationale for changes. Principal builds a culture of collective responsibility for the success of every student by mobilizing and empowering teams that support and sustain the vision over time.</p>	<p>1:  Somewhat Meets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School leadership sends out a weekly Sunday update to keep staff informed about what's going on in the school for that given week.</li> <li>● Whereas more than 80% of staff surveyed report understanding and being invested in the school leader's vision for change/improvement, there is a lack of alignment in what teachers perceive and what school leaders report as the vision.</li> <li>● Whereas 56% of staff surveyed report that school communication is clear, consistent, and includes the why/what/how of changes, more than 30% disagree.</li> <li>● Staff share school leaders are open and willing to listen.</li> <li>● Teachers and leaders report that they are trusted to "do things in the best interest of students."</li> <li>● Approximately 63% of the staff surveyed indicate that they know how well the school is doing with the implementation and progress of improvement priorities.</li> </ul>

<b>Leadership, continued.</b>	<p><b>Sustained Focus on Results</b> Principal models and sets clear expectations for all staff, creating a culture of accountability for the learning of all students. Principal prioritizes efforts that advance progress of all students and school goals. Principal effectively advocates for the school needs with the district and reaches beyond the building to pursue needed resources and bring in best practices in order to meet the needs of all students.</p>	1: Somewhat Meets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The majority of staff surveyed (75%) report that the school leader models and sets high expectations for staff; however, instructional leaders indicate that a majority of teachers do not take accountability for their own actions and the results that follow.</li> <li>● More than 80% of staff surveyed report that the school maintains a focus on our goals and improvement efforts.</li> <li>● Whereas 56% of staff surveyed report that staff is held accountable for the success of all students, one-fourth of the staff disagree; instructional leaders suggest that the current collective bargaining agreement (CBA ) leads teachers to feel less accountable because of limitations placed on teachers' time.</li> <li>● Some teachers report that the instructional vision set by the school leader leads them to push students to reflect more about their work and to take accountability for their actions. It is not apparent, however, that all teachers perceive a culture of accountability for the learning.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Talent Management</b> Principal works with the district to forecast staffing needs and recruit quality, diverse candidates. Principal implements formal and rigorous staff selection, hiring, and induction processes. Hiring and assignment processes match staff to specific positions based on skill. Positions have clear roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations that align with the school's mission and plan, and hold staff to the success of all students. All teachers receive accurate and specific feedback through the evaluation process. Principal is intentional about retaining high-performing staff and designing and implementing staff succession plans.</p>	1: Somewhat Meets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One-fourth of the staff members surveyed disagree with the statement, "Roles and responsibilities of staff members are clear."</li> <li>● 75% of teachers surveyed report receiving accurate and specific feedback through the evaluation process.</li> <li>● The school leader regularly monitors the TalentED portal to check for teaching candidates; applications come in on a rolling basis.</li> <li>● Staff note that the district HR office participates in recruiting trips; however, there is not a clear strategy in place for recruiting staff.</li> <li>● Teacher turnover is high, which results in newer teachers serving students with the highest needs; these newer teachers indicate a desire for more instructional support and guidance.</li> <li>● There is currently no formal onboarding in the building for new teachers. Staff indicate that mentoring support would be helpful for newer teachers; the current offering is reportedly not meeting teacher needs.</li> </ul>

<b>Leadership, continued.</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff share that instructional leaders perceive that “a warm body is better than nobody” as it relates to teacher recruitment, placement, and retention; as a result, students may not always have access to the highest quality staff. Moreover, this translates into a focus on keeping all staff rather than focused effort to retain high-performing staff.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Resource Maximization</b> Principal is adept at maximizing resources to meet the needs of all students and accomplish school goals. Principal demonstrates persistence, ingenuity, and resourcefulness in identifying untapped resources in the areas of time, money, programs, and partnerships. Those resources advance outcomes for every student.</p>	1: Somewhat Meets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 38% of staff surveyed indicate that school leadership is adept and creative at maximizing resources to meet the needs of all students and accomplish school goals.</li> <li>The school leader has implemented incentives for students (school dances, food, etc.) in order to increase attendance; monthly attendance celebrations have also been implemented.</li> </ul>