

## Des Plaines Community Consolidated School District 62 System Assessment Executive Summary Report

*Assessing where your District is now on its continuous improvement journey*



It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters in the end.

Ursula K. LeGuin 1999

System Assessment Performed by  
the **Consortium for Educational Change (CEC)**  
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## INTRODUCTION

The following system assessment feedback report was developed for Community Consolidated School District 62 by the System Assessment External Review Team of the Consortium for Educational Change (CEC).

Using the best practice criteria of a correlation between the Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and the Baldrige Performance Excellence Education Criteria as lenses, the External Review Team reviewed information provided by the district self-study team and interviewed administrators, faculty, staff, students and parents/community to identify strengths and opportunities for system-wide District improvement.

This feedback report was developed through reflecting upon the indicators described in the next few pages. It is a response to written information provided by the district as well as from information gathered from interviews. It is not intended to represent the perspective of all district administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents.

Nor is this feedback report an “evaluation” of District 62 in terms of rating the district as successful or unsuccessful. Instead, it is a “critical friends” report that describes where the district is right now on a continuous improvement journey; a journey that will never end. The intent of this report is to describe strengths that the district can celebrate and opportunities where it can take next steps to become even better as a system.

This report’s accuracy is dependent on the quality and comprehensiveness of the information presented to the External Review Team by the District’s system assessment self-study team and those interviewed.

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

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

***District 62 asked to use the Professional Learning Community Framework as its format. That framework with its best practice Indicators is outlined below:***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On the first day, the Team interviewed district leadership:

- Superintendent and Cabinet
- Human Resources
- Curriculum and Instructional Services
- Student Services
- Data/Technology
- Finance and Facilities
- Human Resources
- Union Leaders
- District 62 Foundation Leaders
- Parent Council Leaders
- Coordinators and Instructional Coaches
- The Board participated in an individual survey response

On the second and third days, the Team spent a half day in each school and interviewed:

- Parents
- Students
- Teachers

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

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

**System Assessment Team:**

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## **SUMMARY OF OVERALL STRENGTHS**

**Among 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 Maps, student learning targets and essential questions in core content areas provide a framework to ensure consistency in curriculum implementation across the district. These are housed in Performance Plus for staff. They are developed with teacher input and aligned to state learning standards. Instructional Services has provided great leadership in aligning curriculum to state standards.**
- + Unit plans are to be developed and implemented in each school aligned to the curriculum maps, student learning targets, and essential questions. In addition, Performance Plus documents suggestions for differentiated activities which include the use of leveled texts, small group instruction, digital adaptive tools, etc. Teachers have access to online tools which support differentiation and individualized learning paths. Teachers are working on common formative assessments aligned to the student learning targets.**
- + ELA and Math Performance Tasks (K-8) are given 2-3 times a year to assess student understanding and inform instruction. MAP (K-8) fall, winter, and spring is used to determine growth and projections for meeting grade level standards to guide instruction. PARCC (3-8) is used to measure student college and career readiness. There are a variety of other assessments (AIMSweb, Fountas and Pinnell, COGAT,**

**ACCESS, etc.) to assist with program placement, interventions, and gifted placements.**

- + The district has a support system to offer a variety of services to meet student needs: Title I Instructional Associates, Extended Day Opportunities, Reading Resource Teachers, among others. Further support is offered through Problem Solving Teams. These services align with an intervention system to provide students who are at risk of meeting standards with opportunities for additional re-teaching or instruction. There are programs and services to meet the needs of English Language Learners and students with disabilities.**
- + Most elementary classrooms use differentiation strategies such as guided reading and centers to meet student needs. Flexible grouping is an expectation.**
- + The district uses Second Step and the Olweus anti-bullying program to address social emotional needs of students. Schools follow the PBIS model of support. Elementary students clearly articulated behavior rules, consequences and celebrations.**
- + There is a one-to-one technology initiative with coordination between the Chief Technology Officer and Instructional Services to be certain tech is integrated with instruction and teachers are supported and trained. There was a partnership with Discovery Education.**
- + Students interviewed expressed high satisfaction with their teachers and leaders. Students felt staff cared about them and provided them good academic, social and emotional support.**
- + The district Early Learning Center and Community School offer choice opportunities**

for students and parents. Both have waiting lists.

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

- + The district's Big Picture direction includes three pillars: Student Achievement, Effective and Efficient Operations, and Student, Family and Community Engagement. There are currently four goals aligned to the pillars. The district strategic plan will be updated next year. Posters displaying the four goals are in all schools and buildings.**
- + There are very strong labor-management relationships (BOE, management, three unions). There has been low BOE turnover. There is a commitment to continuous improvement and making decisions in the best interest of students.**
- + The district has a reputation and history for quality education. The current hiring practices with emphasis on certification in ELL and Special Education are exemplary. The staff is identified by leaders and parents as dedicated, hard-working, innovative, student-centered and collaborative.**
- + There are many structures and processes in place that encourage shared decision-making: District level committees, meetings with union leaders, meetings with school administrators, school staff meetings, PLC Mondays, Data Days, Leadership Teams, Team Leaders, as well as autonomy of grade level/department teams to determine how they accomplish district expectations.**
- + Most teachers have both personal and collaboration time at both elementary and middle schools every day. This is a major requirement for successful PLC work and D62 is one of few districts that provide this commitment to collaboration time.**

- + Staff report high morale, trust, and support when working and collaborating with their peers. Many describe their relationships as a professional family. There are many examples of teachers and other staff participating in committee work that studies and leads to district decisions. Union leaders report numerous opportunities to collaborate and problem solve with district leaders to avoid conflicts.**
- + Many parents interviewed expressed high satisfaction. Parents interviewed felt welcomed and respected. They reported both leaders and teachers were open to be approached at any time to answer a question or address a concern in a timely manner. Many parents interviewed felt their school was safe and had an inviting learning and teaching environment.**
- + The district Joint PERA Committee felt great about their development of plans to address the new requirements for teacher evaluation.**

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

- + The district aligns key indicators and measures to Goals throughout the organization. A new dashboard system is under construction. The district has multiple data sources where necessary. The district encourages use of data folders, scorecards, dashboards, and data templates to display data. The district is data rich.**
- + The district encourages targets to be set for MAP at the school and team levels. ECRA data is tied to student growth for performance for both teachers and building leaders.**
- + All schools have Rising Star Improvement Plans. These plans support the SMART goal process.**

- + The district and all schools have an expectation to meet three times a year through Data Days and schools have weekly PLC time to progress monitor student achievement and growth and to make decisions to meet student needs. These provide for celebration of what is working well and time for adjusting and addressing what needs attention.**
- + The district has a strong financial history receiving the state's high RECOGNITION rating. There are great fund balances. There has been careful and thoughtful financial planning.**
- + The district has invested in facility additions and enhancements. Facilities are clean and well-maintained. They are climate controlled. Classrooms appear conducive to teaching and learning needs. Custodians are proud of their work.**
- + Student achievement despite changes in student demographics is slightly growing and improving over time. Results are narrowing achievement gaps.**
- + The district benchmarks its financial and academic results against other similar benchmark districts that include Districts 53, 64 and 59.**
- + The district administers the 5Essentials satisfaction survey every other year to staff, parents and students (6-8).**
- + The evaluation plan ties growth to performance through School MAP criteria.**
- + Teachers reported a safe data culture within their teams to share data and best practices to learn from one another and build on each other's strengths.**

## **SUMMARY OF OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES**

**Among the opportunities 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 addressing these opportunities will showcase past investment of resources in improving performance results.**

### **Focus on Learning Opportunities:**

- △ Curriculum Maps, student learning targets, and essential questions are not being implemented consistently across all classrooms and schools. These serve as guidelines rather than expectations for some teachers.**
  
- △ Many teachers report some of the assessments they are required to administer provide them with little data or information to improve instruction and improve student growth and achievement. Some teachers feel they are spending a lot of time with both MAP and Performance Tasks assessments and not using that data to inform instruction. Many feel too much time is being spent on assessment reducing valuable instruction time. Formative assessments are not given priority as the best data source to guide daily and weekly classroom instruction. Procedures for re-taking assessment vary school-to-school and often teacher-to-teacher.**
  
- △ The Instructional Services Department identified a need to revisit the intervention and enrichment systems. Staff agree. Not everyone understands the roles and responsibilities of support personnel (coordinators, instructional coaches, special service personnel, etc.). Substitute needs pull teachers from collaboration and some teachers from offering their specific services. There is a need to define the criteria to be used for intervention and enrichment opportunities. Most interventions are**

**programmatic.**

- △ Many support teachers (ELL, Special Education, etc.) are busy with program interventions and assessing students with little time to co-teach or push into the classroom. Tier I and Tier II interventions appear to fall to the classroom teacher with little support other than for an I.E.P student.**
- △ There is a need to address the needs of high performing students with both enrichments and rigorous advanced learning opportunities.**
- △ Student demographics are changing and requiring new needs and services to help classroom teachers meet the needs of at least 80% of their students. Some schools raised the issues of equity for student services/resources (Title I vs non-Title I).**
- △ Parents interviewed are excited about a possibility of full-day kindergarten. Parents interviewed are hopeful for dual language or second language opportunities for their students in elementary school. Parents interviewed feel partnerships with the high school might better prepare students for high school success.**
- △ There is a need to assist staff with grading and reporting practices to ensure inter-rater reliability. There is also a need to assist parents understand standards-based reporting practices.**

### **Focus on Collaboration Opportunities:**

- △ Staff can articulate direction, but report there are too many competing initiatives with time and other resources limited to accomplish all of them. They feel overwhelmed and feel that few initiatives are being executed with fidelity. There appears to be**

**insufficient time, professional development, and other support to fully implement an initiative before moving on to the next. They do not always understand the rationale for the initiative or how the initiatives connect. The district reports that it has struggled in the past few years with prioritizing multiple initiatives.**

- △ Most communication in the district is one way. There is a lack of opportunity to provide feedback and input. The pace and timelines for decisions do not always allow for the two-way feedback. Many staff feel the district has been top down with its important decisions in the last several years. There is not rationale clearly understood throughout the district for major initiatives, changes or decisions.**
- △ Teachers report much of PLC and collaboration time is not theirs to work on unit plan instruction, discuss student needs, share best practices and progress monitor student growth and achievement. It appears PLC expectations are not clear and consistently practiced. PLC Mondays appear district controlled and do not always address staff needs.**
- △ The middle school redesign provides an opportunity to better serve both teaching and learning. The new schedule will provide more instructional personnel and strategies for making learning more personalized. Recent personnel decisions have impacted this initiative. Building leaders and teachers expressed fear and concern with recent practices of involuntarily transferring personnel from school-to-school or grade-to-grade level without rationale. Such practices are leading to increasing low district morale.**
- △ The district lacks a systems orientation. Staff worry about their autonomy to be different to address diverse student needs. It is not clear, however, that expectations across the district ensure and guarantee that it does not make a difference which**

**school a student attends or which teacher a student has. The district tends to be a system of schools rather than a school system.**

**△ There are increasing concerns about student behavior and engagement especially at the middle schools.**

**△ Students and parents are interested in more extracurricular sports and activities. Parents feel their needs to be better articulation with the high school. Parents feel more partnerships with the high school would be beneficial in using facilities, parent booster groups, etc. Parents are more satisfied at the elementary level than at the middle school level.**

### **Focus on Results Opportunities:**

**△ School Improvement Plans are not the centerpiece of improvement throughout the school. Stakeholders are not familiar with all the goals or actions. They appear to be written for compliance. This process does not get to the classroom level. Most staff have little or no knowledge of the SIP process or its results. There has been little training in writing SMART goals and action plans. Many staff members are unaware of the relationship between a goal and its strategies.**

**△ There are too many large-scale benchmark assessments that fall at the same time. It is not manageable to review all the data sources. There is a disproportionate balance between formative and summative assessments. The district has too many summative assessments.**

**△ Goals lack targets at most levels. If there are targets, many staff do not what they are and have little idea of their progress toward accomplishment. The district is often**

**short on the analysis piece and how to use the data to continuously improve. While many students set goals with their MAP assessments, few students set goals aligned to student learning targets aligned with unit instruction.**

- △ There does not appear to be a progress monitoring and reporting process aligned to school improvement. Schools do not have data dashboards aligned to the district dashboard to progress monitor and report growth and improvement. They are under construction. The district uses Tyler Pulse for a data dashboard, but only administrators have access to it. Access to ECRA data and analysis tools and knowledge of how to interpret them does not cascade throughout the organization.**
- △ There are achievement gaps among subgroup student populations.**
- △ There are increases in the frequency and level of student behaviors that are interfering with both teaching and learning.**
- △ There is little evidence that satisfaction data is being acted on and reported.**

## SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

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

### Priority: Focus on Learning

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

- ✓ Ensure that curriculum map student learning targets consistently drive unit plan instruction in all subject areas.
- ✓ Align formative and summative assessments to provide data to show how each student performs in relation to those student learning targets. Eliminate assessments that do not provide teachers with the data they need to drive instruction.
- ✓ Communicate to students and parent the student learning outcomes for each grade level.
- ✓ Use formative unit assessment data to differentiate curriculum and instruction
- ✓ Revise your Intervention and Enrichment programs and services to better meet the needs of all students. Integrate special education with regular education. Make sure all Tier I and Tier II interventions have entrance and exit criteria aligned to classroom unit plan learning outcomes.
- ✓ Use PLC meetings to plan for instruction aligned to where students are and where they need to be. Use unit assessment data to assist you in your planning.
- ✓ Invest in differentiation professional development to promote flexible grouping within the classroom and across the grade level team.

### Priority: Collaborative Culture

## Maximize the use of PLC and collaboration time to enhance two-way communication and collaboration.

- ✓ Ensure stakeholders see the Big Picture direction so they know where the district and school are headed. Align district and school goals. Prioritize annual initiatives to make them manageable and attainable.

- ✓ **Make sure everyone has access to the same messages. Streamline communication. Provide weekly communication updates to staff using the same communication tool. Address two-way communication strategies to ensure feedback and input into decision-making.**
- ✓ **Improve morale between the district office and building staff. Act on staff satisfaction data. Provide rationale for initiatives and decisions. Connect initiatives.**
- ✓ **Bring clarity to staff expectations for PLC time. Maximize the use of collaboration time allow staff to fully address unit plan instruction.**
- ✓ **Evaluate periodically team effectiveness with all teams. Act on results to improve teamwork.**

### **Priority: Results Orientation**

## **Use key data indicators and measures for progress monitoring and reporting to continuously improve.**

- ✓ **Be certain the School Leadership Team is clear about its work and how it interfaces with the school to guide improvement efforts. Develop and communicate the roles and responsibilities of all leadership teams and committees.**
- ✓ **Consider SMART goal training after unit plan work is well under way.**
- ✓ **Provide consistency in goal setting and the improvement process.**
- ✓ **Set clear expectations for progress monitoring and reporting on goal plans. Set targets.**
- ✓ **Define student expectations for goal setting and progress monitoring/reporting.**