

2010 TIERED INTERVENTION GRANT

PART I: COVER PAGE *(Complete and attach as the first page of proposal. If there are more than 3 participating schools the district may duplicate this page and attach it with the application.)*

Name of Lead Local Education Agency (LEA)/Organization:	Sheridan School District No. 2	
Mailing Address: 4000 S. Lowell Blvd, Denver, CO 80236		
District Turnaround Project Manager:	Ellen Hunter	
Mailing Address: 4000 S. Lowell Blvd, Denver, CO 80236		
Telephone: 720-833-6946	E-mail: hunter@sheridan.k12.co.us	
Signature:		
Program Contact Person:	Jackie Webb	
Mailing Address: 4000 S. Lowell Blvd, Denver, CO 80236		
Telephone: 720-833-6932	E-mail: webbj@sheridan.k12.co.us	
Signature:		
Fiscal Manager:	Pamela Frazee	
Telephone: 720-833-6641	E-mail: frazeep@sheridan.k12.co.us	
Signature:		
Region: <i>Indicate the region(s) this proposal will directly impact</i>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metro <input type="checkbox"/> Pikes Peak <input type="checkbox"/> North Central <input type="checkbox"/> Northwest <input type="checkbox"/> West Central <input type="checkbox"/> Southwest <input type="checkbox"/> Southeast <input type="checkbox"/> Northeast		
Total LEA Request: <i>Indicate the total amount of funding you are requesting. Please note: An individual budget will be required for each school site totaling to the amount listed below.</i>		
\$ 3,242,998.00		

PART IA: SCHOOLS TO BE SERVED *(Complete the following information with respect to the schools that will be served with a School Improvement Grant and attach as the second page of proposal.)*

To ensure success, it is imperative that each site undergo an external review so needs are clearly delineated before an intervention model is chosen, before the plan is prepared and (if applicable) before a provider is selected. If a site has not had an external review, put the amount of funding needed in the 'Review Needed' column below. The individual budget for the site should reflect costs for the evaluation review, but additional costs must be listed as 'TBD' until a plan can be created for specific activities and costs. Districts may only access funds for the cost of the review until the review is completed and an approved plan is in place.

Please provide the following information for each participating school (additional rows may be added), starting with Tier I schools:									
SCHOOL NAME	NCES ID #	TIER I	TIER II	TIER III	INTERVENTION (TIER I AND II ONLY)				
					Include requested amount per school				
					Turnaround	Restart	Closure	Transformation	Review needed
Fort Logan Elementary	80654001132	X			x				

***Please note: An LEA that has nine or more Tier I and Tier II schools may not implement the transformation model in more than 50 percent of those schools.**

PART IB: LEA/School Information and Signature Page

(Complete and attach as the third page of proposal. If there are more than 3 participating schools the district may duplicate this page and attach it after page 3.)

District Signatures

District Name: Sheridan School District No. 2

School Board President Signature:

Superintendent Signature:

School Information

School #1 Name: Fort Logan Elementary

Principal Name: Susan Resnick

Telephone: 720-833-6701

E-mail: resnicks@sheridan.k12.co.us

Principal Signature:

School #2 Name:

Principal Name:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Principal Signature:

School #3 Name:

Principal Name:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Principal Signature:

PART IC: Certification and Assurance Form

(Complete and attach as the fourth and fifth pages of proposal)

The School Board President and Board- Appointed Authorized Representative must sign below to indicate their approval of the contents of the application, and the receipt of program funds.

On April 21, 2010 , 2010 the Board of Sheridan School District No. 2 hereby applies for and, if awarded, accepts the state funds requested in this application. In consideration of the receipt of these grant funds, the Board agrees that the General Assurances form for all state funds and the terms therein are specifically incorporated by reference in this application. The Board also certifies that all program and pertinent administrative requirements will be met. These include the Office of Management and Budget Accounting Circulars, and the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requirement. In addition, the Board certifies that the district is in compliance with the requirements of the federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA), and that no policy of the local educational agency prevents or otherwise denies participation in constitutionally protected prayer in public schools. In additional, school districts that accept 1003(g) School Improvement funding for the **Tiered Intervention** grant agree to the following assurances:

- To use its School Improvement Grant to implement fully and effectively an intervention in each Tier I and Tier II school that the LEA commits to serve consistent with the final requirements;
- To establish annual goals for student achievement on the state's assessments in both reading/language arts and mathematics and measure progress on the leading indicators in section III of the final requirements in order to monitor each Tier I and Tier II school that it serves with school improvement funds;
- That if the applicant implements a restart model in a Tier I or Tier II school, it will include in its contract or agreement terms and provisions to hold the charter operator, charter management organization, or education management organization accountable for complying with the final requirements;
- To provide the Colorado Department of Education such information as may be required to determine if the grantee is making satisfactory progress toward achieving the goals of the grant (e.g., CSAP by State Assigned Student IDs). The district will report to CDE the school level data required under section III of the final requirements;
- To align current and future funding sources in support of improvement goals, including commitment to identify and reallocate existing district funds for the purpose of sustaining the improvement work after federal funds expire;
- To commit to developing a plan that demonstrates how the district will increase overall student achievement in the identified schools;
- To commit to addressing the findings outlined in the external review.
- To provide the leadership capacity to oversee the implementation of turnaround interventions;
- To provide a district level contact whose primary responsibility is the oversight and coordination of turnaround interventions in the schools;

- To participate in quarterly Professional Learning Communities focused on turning around schools;
- To monitor and evaluate the impact of all turnaround interventions;
- That by accepting grant funds, applicants agree to participate in the federal and state evaluation of Turnaround School Initiatives;
- To participate in a one-day networking conference during each year of the grant cycle to discuss implementation issues and access technical assistance. In addition, there will be an orientation meeting for all approved applicants;
- To submit to CDE an Improvement Plan for each identified school updated annually as a requirement for securing continued funding from year to year during the three-year term of this grant;
- To submit a revised budget annually, as well as an annual financial report;
- To participate fully in on-site visits conducted by CDE to every funded Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III school during the grant cycle;
- To not discriminate against anyone regarding race, gender, national origin, color, disability, or age;
- To maintain sole responsibility for the project even though subcontractors may be used to perform certain services; and
- To notify the community of the intent to submit an application and the application and that any waiver request will be made available for public review after submission of the application.

Funded sites will be expected to cooperate with CDE in the development and submission of certain reports to meet statutory requirements. *All grantees must work with and provide requested data to CDE for the Tiered Intervention Grant Program within the time frames specified.*

In addition, funded projects will be required to maintain appropriate fiscal and program records. Fiscal audits of funds under this program are to be conducted by the recipient agencies annually as a part of their regular audit.

IF ANY FINDINGS OF MISUSE OF FUNDS ARE DISCOVERED, PROJECT FUNDS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. The Colorado Department of Education may terminate a grant award upon thirty (30) days notice if it is deemed by CDE that the applicant is not fulfilling the requirements of the funded program as specified in the approved project application, or if the program is generating less than satisfactory results.

Ron Carter

Name of Board President

Signature of Board President

Michael Clough

Name of District Superintendent

Signature of District Superintendent

Jackie Webb

Name of Program Contact

Signature of Program Contact

PART ID: WAIVERS (Complete and attach as the sixth page of proposal)

Sheridan School District No. 2 requests a waiver of the requirements it has selected below. *Please note:* If the district does not intend to implement the waiver with respect to each applicable school, then it must indicate for which schools it will implement the waiver.

- X Extending the period of availability of school improvement funds.

- X “Starting over” in the school improvement timeline for Tier I and Tier II Title I participating schools implementing a turnaround or restart model.

- X Implementing a schoolwide program in a Tier I or Tier II Title I participating school that does not meet the 40 percent poverty eligibility threshold.

Ron Carter

Name of Board President

Signature of Board President

Michael Clough

Name of District Superintendent

Signature of District Superintendent

Jackie Webb

Name of Program Contact

Signature of Program Contact

Executive Summary

The Sheridan School District is requesting a \$ 3,242,998.00 investment over a three-year period to successfully implement and sustain the turnaround model at Fort Logan Elementary. In designing a comprehensive program that will address the needs of the school (inclusive of its staff, its student, and its community) as identified by the Expedited Diagnostic Review conducted in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education and review of internal data, the Sheridan School District's proposed turnaround plan will focus on four essential areas: 1) teacher effectiveness, 2) culture, 3) increased leadership capacity, and 4) bridging the opportunity gap (community outreach and integration). Focus against these four central areas have delivered results for turnaround schools and districts across the nation. The Sheridan School District is confident that Fort Logan Elementary will be equally successful. In addition, it is the Sheridan School District's commitment to utilize the turnaround efforts focused against Fort Logan Elementary to identify the best practices and systemic changes necessary to turnaround the entire district!

Part II: LEA Commitment and Capacity

Upon initially learning of the Tiered intervention opportunity, the Sheridan School District began to engage its key stakeholders to ensure that the implementation of the program was set-up for success should Sheridan receive the requested support for Fort Logan Elementary.

The District has been transparent in its planning process from the start. As part of the district's initial informational conversation with the Colorado Department of Education, district leadership included both the principal and a Sheridan Educator's Association representative from Fort Logan in the discussion. After learning more about the opportunity, the Board of Education was fully briefed and provided explicit guidance to pursue the opportunity. This set in motion a series of conversations with the Fort Logan Elementary staff, the Building Accountability Committee (which includes both staff and parents), the District Advisory and Accountability Committee, and the District Instructional Advisory Committee. All groups have been continuously updated on the progress of the proposal throughout the district's internal planning process.

To ultimately build a comprehensive plan that included the perspectives of all major stakeholder groups, the district implemented a three-tiered planning organization, consisting of three distinct sub-committees: 1) Turnaround Advisory Team, 2) Turnaround Implementation Team, and 3) the Sheridan Board of Education. The Advisory Team consisted of a diverse group of stakeholders, including teachers from across the district, parents, and community members. This team's final recommendations were submitted to the Implementation Team, which consisted of district leadership, to shape the plan and ensure that it was feasible, fundable, and legal. The final plan then went to the Board of Education for final approval. By creating this three-tiered process, the district was able to keep all major stakeholders engaged with the process, including the community. Upon final submission of this proposal, the final plan and the requested waivers will be placed on the school web site for public review. All materials will also be made available at the next regularly scheduled Board of Education meeting. Based on plan approval, the district will

host a community meeting to detail what staff, students, parents, and all other stakeholders should expect at Fort Logan Elementary entering the 2010-2011 school year.

While the Sheridan School District is fully committed to the requirements of the Tiered intervention grant principle (because it is philosophically aligned with our belief that we must always do what is best for our students), the district is easily able to demonstrate that it is equally committed to these requirements in action. The Sheridan School District can demonstrate readiness through its actions beginning in August of 2008, when it essentially initiated its turnaround process at Fort Logan Elementary.

In May of 2009, the district replaced the principal (instructional leader) of the building. In addition, the district replaced 50% of its instructional staff through non-renewals, reassignments in the district, and other actions in-line with the district's Master Agreement with the teacher's union. Additional changes in May of 2010 will bring the number closer to 60%. In addition, the district secured Board of Education commitment to the process quickly after learning about the opportunity and, as a result, Fort Logan Elementary was the site of the very first Expedited Diagnostic Review conducted as part of the qualifying process. Representatives from Sheridan have attended all activities associated with this grant application process, including webinars, provider fairs, and formal and informal meetings with contacts at the Colorado Department of Education.

In addition, throughout the planning process, the Sheridan School District has continuously focused on the final requirements associated with each model available to support the turnaround process. The decision to identify turnaround as the final model came only after fully evaluating both where the district has been and where the district is focused. As a result, the final requirements of the turnaround intervention option will be clearly included in the district's final plan.

In regards to identifying external providers that best fit the needs of the Sheridan School District, the district has committed a tremendous amount of resources against the screening process. Based on the approved provider list furnished by the Colorado Department of Education, representatives began scheduling initial conversations with several of the providers. These conversations continued through and expanded following the formal provider fair hosted by CDE. Members from both the Turnaround Advisory Team and the Turnaround Implementation Team interviewed all of the potential partners. Ultimately, the district conducted on-site visits and attended sample trainings for five external providers: Focal Point, Pearson, Flippen, Mosaica, and National Center for Time and Learning.

While the access to high-level, national experts is one of the best uses of these proposed grant dollars, the district is committed to aligning other resources to enhance the turnaround efforts in both Fort Logan Elementary and throughout the entire district. The draft of the 2010-2011 District Action Plan outlines specific goals and actions that will guide Consolidated Application for Title I, Title II, and Title III, as well as general funds. The Sheridan School District is committed to utilizing all available resources to create a comprehensive turnaround plan that serves the district as a whole. While there are no other Tier I or Tier II schools within the Sheridan School District that can be directly served through the Tiered intervention grant, the learnings, practices, and systemic changes realized at Fort Logan Elementary will eventually

impact every school in Sheridan. Efforts to align will begin immediately and be evident in both the district action plan and the district's Consolidated Application.

While the district is very involved with all of its school buildings, administration also acknowledges that there will need to be a high-level of autonomy at the building level to achieve the flexibility necessary to ensure that the plan is successful. Administration will position themselves in support roles to the Fort Logan principal as she leads the effort at school level. In addition, the final plan will provide high-level professional development and mentoring for the Fort Logan principal to arm her with the skills necessary to be successful in achieving the agreed upon goals. The Sheridan School District is also very capable of demonstrating the capacity to carry out the proposed interventions through scheduled Leadership Academies, strategically aligned district and school action plans (which are made available to the public), and progress monitoring assessments, such as EdPerformance, Common Based Quarterly Assessments, and Survey Data. Because the leadership in the Sheridan School District lives by a data-driven decision making process, the district is able to make significant mid-course corrections should aspects of any given program not be delivering the desired results. Because Sheridan is a small school district, it remains nimble and flexible in its ability to meet the needs of its students and ultimately drive increased student achievement.

In order to sustain the anticipated gains supported by the Tiered intervention grant, the Sheridan School District is committed to integrating as many best practices and successful methods into its daily operational practices. The district does not view turnaround as an incremental extension to its previous practices, but rather as a "once in a lifetime" opportunity to develop, embrace, and adopt true systemic changes that redefine the district's norms. As such, the district anticipates concluding the three year cycle and entering year four with a significant number of embedded practices that will form the foundation of both district and school action plans. The district also anticipates having a better understanding of how to leverage local resources and Consolidated Application against targeted, proven measures of impacting student achievement in Sheridan and maximizing all resources appropriately. The district will continue its commitment to providing its staff with the highest quality professional development in the state. There should be general benefits from a cultural shift, the increase in leadership capacity, and shared vision of what success truly looks like in Sheridan. However, there will also be tangible aspects that will remain in place, such as model classrooms in each grade and additional instructional coaching. The district's ability to sustain the benefits of this program long after the funding stops has been a key component of the district's planning process.

The district is committed to measuring progress through the continuous use of data. To support this, the district has already allocated funds (outside of the Tiered intervention grant) to integrate its data reports through Alpine Achievement. The district will also look to supplement this improved resource through the creation of a district and school-level data coach. It will be the responsibility of this person to train all employees (starting with those directly involved in turnaround efforts) how to access, synthesize, and utilize the wealth of data that the district generates to have a clear understanding of progress and how to ensure the district is tracking against its goals.

A combination of individuals and groups will be accountable for tracking progress and evaluating the program on a regular basis. It will be the expectation of the district that all partner agencies provide regular status reports against pre-assigned goals. However, it will ultimately be the

responsibility of Ellen Hunter, Sheridan School District Turnaround Specialist, to gather all information and report monthly to the Colorado Department of Education. Ms. Hunter brings a vast knowledge of education and organizational management to Sheridan and is highly-qualified to lead the district's turnaround efforts (including those that exist within the Tiered intervention grant).

Part III: Needs Assessment and Program Plan

The Sheridan School District is requesting a \$ 3,242,998.00 investment over a three-year period to successfully implement and sustain the turnaround model at Fort Logan Elementary. In designing a comprehensive program that will address the needs of the school (inclusive of its staff, its student, and its community) as identified by the Expedited Diagnostic Review conducted in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education, the Sheridan School District's proposed turnaround plan will focus on four essential areas: 1) teacher effectiveness, 2) culture, 3) increased leadership capacity, and 4) bridging the opportunity gap (community outreach and integration).

The Sheridan School District, a small urban district located in Arapahoe County, serves 1,640 students (grades K-12). The District is comprised of 67% Hispanic, 23% White, 4.8% African-American, 3.4% Asian-American, and 1.3% Native American. The Sheridan School District is impacted by poverty, with over 75% of students eligible for free and reduced lunch at any given time. Over 5% of Sheridan students also qualify as homeless based on the definitions provided by the McKinney-Vento Act. The diverse population includes English Language Learners (21.4%) and Special Education students (14.2%).

Census data from the City of Sheridan reinforces the notions of diversity and poverty. Over 45% of the population lives below the poverty line (11% of the population reports an annual household income of \$10,000 or less) and 25.6% of all families have "no husband present" in the home. The per capita income is \$16,635, compared to the state average of \$24,049. Property crime statistics are out of control, as over 8% of the population experience some type of property crime each year; the Sheridan Youth Community Task Force has cited the District's high dropout rate as a related factor.

While the challenges of lifting student achievement in high-poverty areas has been widely and thoroughly documented, the reality still exists that education still remains the best opportunity to break the poverty cycles in these types of communities. Sheridan is no exception to either of these statements. Poor performance has plagued the district and only fed the cycle. This must change and, as such, the Sheridan School District is committed to providing high-level post-secondary options for ALL Sheridan students through the continuous improvement of quality instruction.

Over recent years, Fort Logan Elementary has come to embody the need for drastic improvements in student achievement.

Summary of Student Achievement Data:

CSAP Reading 2009

Grade 3-64% **9%-below state average**

CSAP Math 2009

Grade 3-70% **1%-above state average**

Grade 4-36% 29%-below state average

Grade 4-56% 14%-below state average

Grade 5-41% 28%-below state average

Grade 5-36% 27%-below state average

AYP-2009

100% targets

Achievement and Growth Gaps

No significant gaps with the exception of Minority/Non 3rd grade reading

Trends: Fort Logan student achievement and growth data are significantly below the state average in all area with the exception of 3rd grade math. Further examination of student sub-groups also supports that achievement is depressed for all student sub-groups.

Summary of Perception/Process Data:

Expedited Diagnostic Review/SST noted that areas of greatest concern:

- Curriculum citing teacher confusion with instructional calendars due to misalignment with resources
- Assessment/Evaluation-Integration of data sources and unclear benchmark assessments are obstacles for teachers to utilize data to inform instruction
- Instruction-Delivery of instruction including rigor, pace, student engagement were not at a high level in most classrooms
- School Culture-High expectations for student learning is not evident, procedures for a safe-orderly environment in several classrooms to optimize student learning is not consistent.
- The Leadership-Needs to include training and development of teacher and student leaders in order to ensure implementation of school priorities as outlined in the school action plan.

Trends: Teacher effectiveness is an issue around the areas of curriculum, use of assessment data, and instructional delivery.

Summary of Demographic Data:

Free/Reduced Rate-92.6

English Language Learners by grade-3rd-57.84, 4th-56.31, 5th-46.84

Mobility-26%

Attendance Rate-94%

Trends: Fort Logan Elementary serves a student population of diverse learners including a high number of second language learners and students who live in poverty complicated by a relatively high mobility rate. On any given day, 6% of student population is not in attendance.

Root Causes: Based on combined data analysis matched with research from effective turnaround projects, root causes can be identified as ineffective systems around the following: (Specific actions related to the major improvement strategies are outlined in the action plan template-attachment D).

Teacher Effectiveness

“Good schools know how much teachers matter, and they act on that knowledge. They work hard to attract and hold good teachers; they make sure that their best are assigned to the students who most need them; and they chase out teachers who are not “good enough” for their kids”. (Haycock, 2006)

Culture

High expectations must be more than a slogan or a mental state. High expectations are represented by sets of explicit, observable behaviors that lead students to learn and attain at higher levels. These are evidenced not only by staff beliefs and actions, but by how teachers and administrators respond when some students do not learn. Most useful strategies will require the cooperation of the school as a whole: teachers cannot implement most of these strategies working alone in isolated classrooms. (*Lezotte, 2007*)

Leadership

There is a need to empower all staff to have a voice in the school. Make it a priority to develop a broad-based and inclusive distributed leadership structure rather than the current emergent leadership profile. Define the role of principal, as the instructional and learning leader in the building. Provide opportunities for the development of leadership skills focused on practices and decisions that support the mission and goals of the school improvement plan for all staff that have an interest in leadership.

Bridging the Opportunity Gap

Disadvantaged students typically enter kindergarten nearly a year behind on their first day of school. Half of these students are even more delayed. To close the learning gap by the end of 3rd grade, a student would have to have an average annual gain of 1.33 years every year for four years. These students' learning gap will not close without giving students more time to learn. To quote Katie Haycock, "High performing schools are obsessive about time, especially instructional time".

Expanded learning time (ELT) offers opportunities for schools to create strategic relationships that reach a new level of intensity and have a deep substantive impact on schools and teachers. In Massachusetts, after just one year of the Expanded Learning Time Initiative, which added 30 percent (about 2 hours) to a redesigned day in ten urban elementary and middle schools, the ELT schools not only improved their own performance; they improved faster than the rest of the state. The average proficiency rate jumped 44 percent in math, 19 percent in science, and 39 percent in language arts; Children need enough time to learn to build the skills and develop the knowledge and well-roundedness to work and thrive in the 21st Century.

By targeting these four areas for systemic change through the turnaround model, The Sheridan School District is committed to delivering results against the following goals:

- Fort Logan Elementary will meet the state average in reading, writing, and math annually or achieve a minimum 10% increase over previous year.
- Fort Logan Elementary median growth percentile will meet or exceed the 50% benchmark in all subject areas.
- Fort Logan Elementary will continue to meet 100% of AYP
- Fort Logan Elementary will continue to meet 100% of AMAO

Systemic Implementation Reviews will be conducted twice each year by the district administration and building leadership in conjunction with Focal Point to ensure implementation of effective practice as defined by the four major improvement strategies of the Fort Logan Turnaround Plan.

The tactical plan created by the Sheridan School District is directly aligned with and addresses the nine requirements of the turnaround model. Greater detail of the tactical plan can be seen in both the budget narrative and the Action Plan Template (Attachment D in RFP). However, the following outlines how each requirement is being met:

Replace the principal and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility	Completed in May 2009. New principal has been granted flexibility to operate building as needed to meet turnaround results.
Screen all existing staff and rehire no more than 50 percent	Completed in May 2009. With additional moves in 2010, total will approach 60% of staff replaced.
Implement strategies to recruit, place, and retain staff	Plan includes partnerships to recruit high-quality staff while also offering financial incentives for performance and compensation for additional time.
Provide professional development to facilitate effective teaching and learning	Plan includes embedded and non-embedded (such as summertime) professional development to ensure teachers are prepared to effectively meet student needs.
Hire a “turnaround leader” who reports directly to the Superintendent	Ellen Hunter was hired in July, 2009 as the district's turnaround specialist. She will be 50% dedicated to the efforts at Fort Logan.
Implement an instructional program aligned from one grade to the next and with State academic standards	Assessment work and curriculum alignment will ensure that instructional programs meet State standards.
Promote the continuous use of student data	Introduction of data coach and professional development on using data will reinforce district commitment to data-driven decision making.
Implement strategies that provide increased learning time	Implementation of expanded learning, language, and experiential opportunities for the purpose of increased student achievement.
Provide appropriate social-emotional and community-oriented services and supports for students	Implementation of enrichment programming in conjunction with community-based partners will provide this support for students.

As will be demonstrated in the budget narrative, the proposed plan is sustainable by the Sheridan School District after funding from this program stops because the vast majority of resources will be dedicated to systems improvements and professional training that can ultimately become embedded in daily operational practices in the district. Once adopted in this manner, there are no incremental costs associated beyond maintenance expenses that the district is committing to covering through appropriate cost centers. The major ongoing expense will be the expanded day and enrichment programs. The district is 100% committed to continuing the program established through the grant.

Initial timeline is outlined in Attachment D, However, based on further work with Turnaround Partners, a more detailed Implementation timeline will be included in the 2010-2011 district action plan and is subject to change based on final funding approval for the Tiered intervention grant. However, the Sheridan School District is 100% committed to having trainings and

necessary operational changes in place for full execution by August 10, 2010 – the first day of classes at Fort Logan Elementary for the 2010-2011 school year!

Part IV: Budget Narrative

The Sheridan School District’s proposed turnaround plan will focus on four essential areas: 1) teacher effectiveness, 2) culture, 3) increased leadership capacity, and 4) bridging the opportunity gap (community outreach and integration).

Funding associated with teacher effectiveness:

Integrated Assessment System – Creation of grade level assessments for all subject areas to continuously monitor student progress and integrate data-driven decision making into classroom to ensure appropriate mastery of skills. Executed through a partnership with *Focal Point* and purchased assessment materials from *Limelight*. Majority of work complete in year one with a shift to ongoing maintenance, which can ultimately be sustained by the district.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 37,500.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 12,500.00

Curriculum Alignment – Utilization of *Focal Point* to help guide district curriculum/resources with Colorado state standards by grade level and subject. Majority of work completed in first two years with a shift to ongoing maintenance, which can ultimately be sustained by the district.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 30,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00

Recruitment/Retention – Expenses associated with partnership with *Teach for America* to identify teacher candidates who have ability to be effective in turnaround environment.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 10,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00

Buyouts – During first two years, will work to help teachers who are not performing (despite high-level professional development and opportunities to improve) transition out of the district.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 75,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ -	\$ -

Effective PLC Training – Continuous training by *Focal Point* to ensure that Professional Learning Communities are being utilized effectively and yielding desired results.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00

High-level Instructional Feedback – Support provided by *Focal Point* to recalibrate what truly great instruction looks like in the classroom and to thoroughly coach and develop all teachers through feedback. Over time, support becomes less prominent and is ultimately embedded in all district day-to-day practices.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 242,000.00	\$ 181,500.00	\$ 121,000.00	\$ -

Performance Incentives – Directly aligned with model requirements, the district will introduce performance-based incentives for teachers. The goal would be to integrate this into normal teacher compensation plans across the district by year 4.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 25,000.00	\$ 37,500.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ -

Model Classrooms – \$5,000/year stipend to support training and mentoring to create a model classroom. Will add one classroom each year throughout the grant and then sustain. Goal is to have one model classroom for each grade 3 – 5 at Fort Logan.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 5,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00

Bridge Classrooms – \$3,000/year stipend to support training and mentoring to bleed the model classroom techniques to second grade (the level immediately preceding Fort Logan) and 6th grade (the level immediately following Fort Logan) to ensure consistency and improved sustainability of methods.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00

Funding associated with culture:

Developing High Expectations – Training provided through the Flippen group. Majority of work happens in the first two years to address immediate needs and then shifts towards a maintenance level the district can sustain.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 30,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 7,500.00

Safe and Orderly Learning Environments – Training provided through the Flippen group. Majority of work happens in the first two years to address immediate needs and then shifts towards a maintenance level the district can sustain.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 40,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00

“Pride Wear” – As an alternative to uniforms, providing students and staff with clothing that unifies and identifies them with Fort Logan while helping to build pride within themselves and the school. Established budget will be sustained by the district beyond grant funding.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 17,500.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 17,500.00	\$ 17,500.00

Funding associated with increased leadership capacity:

Leadership Academies – High-level professional development for the district administration, the Fort Logan principal, and various teacher leaders to build leadership capacity throughout multiple levels in the building.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00

Summertime Professional Development for Teachers – Budget for two incremental weeks of paid professional development for Fort Logan staff during the summer months. Includes staff compensation and training costs.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00

Funding associated with bridging the opportunity gap:

Planning – Utilization of the National Center for Time and Learning to support plan for allocating appropriate amount of time for core subject areas while integrating third party resources to expand the learning day (through both core academics and enrichment programs) in meaningful ways.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00

Program Coordinator – Salary and benefits for staff member dedicated to operating the community partnership enrichment/extended day program.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 55,000.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 55,000.00

Expanded Day Academic Opportunities – Salaries and supplies to operate academic based expanded day program to increase learning time. District is committed to fully sustaining the program beyond grant funding (but needs funding to establish).

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 75,000.00

Enrichment through Community/Family Partnerships – Costs associated with engaging community partners and outside agencies to enhance the enrichment opportunities provided to Fort Logan students. There will be an expectation for partner agencies to match a percentage of total cost in order to maximize the investment. District is committed to fully sustaining the program beyond grant funding (but needs funding to establish).

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 225,000.00	\$ 225,000.00	\$ 225,000.00	\$ 225,000.00

Additional funding associated with plan:

.5 Turnaround Specialist – Salary and benefits for person charged with being point person for turnaround efforts, tracking progress, and reporting to all vested stakeholders regularly.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 55,000.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 55,000.00

Fulltime Instructional/Data Coach – Salary and benefits for new position dedicated to helping teachers 1) improve their math instruction on a daily basis (a glaring need), and 2) understand how to utilize data to formulate lessons that best meet student needs.

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 85,000.00	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 85,000.00	\$ 85,000.00

Indirect Costs

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 101,283	\$ 90,090	\$ 79,125	\$ 0

TOTAL BUDGET (by year)

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
\$ 1,214,283	\$ 1,080,090	\$ 948,625	\$ 683,500.00

Cover Sheet for Colorado's Unified Improvement Plan for Schools

Organization Code:0123 District Name: Sheridan School District School Code: School Name: 3054

Section I: Summary Information about the District/Consortium

Directions: Complete the form with the appropriate data. Most of this data can be found on SchoolView: www.schoolview.org.

Student Performance Measures for State and NCLB Accountability

Performance Indicators	Measures/ Metrics	'08-09 Targets	'08-09 School Results	Requirements Met?			
Student Achievement (Status)	CSAP -- Reading (% P+A)	<u>State Average:</u> Grade 3-73% Grade 4-65% Grade 5-69%	<u>School Results</u> Grade 3-64% Grade 4-36% Grade 5-41%	9%-below state average 29%-below state average 28%-below state average			
	CSAP -- Writing (% P+A)	<u>State Average:</u> Grade 3-54% Grade 4-51% Grade 5-58%	<u>School Results</u> Grade 3-33% Grade 4-22% Grade 5-27%	21%-below state average 29%-below state average 31%-below state average			
	CSAP -- Math (% P+A)	<u>State Average:</u> Grade 3-69% Grade 4-70% Grade 5-63%	<u>School Results</u> Grade 3-70% Grade 4-56% Grade 5-36%	1%-above state average 14%-below state average 27%-below state average			
	Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP is the % PP+P+A on CSAP in Reading and Math for each subgroup)	Overall number of targets for School: 32	Overall % of targets met by School: 100%		Elem	Mid	High
				Reading	100%		
				Math	100%		
Student Growth	Median Student Growth Percentile	50 th Percentile or above	Reading-31 Writing-40	19-below state median growth percentile 10-below state median growth percentile			

			Math-29	21-below state median growth percentile
	% on Track to Catch-Up	n/a	Reading-21% Writing-25% Math-29%	
	% on Track to Keep-Up	n/a	Reading-46% Writing-55% Math-35%	

Student Performance Measures for State and NCLB Accountability (cont.)

Performance Indicators	Measures/ Metrics	'08-09 Targets	'08-09 School Results	Requirements Met?
Achievement Gaps	CSAP	As measured by the CSAP reading and math assessment, the difference in the percent of students scoring proficient and advanced between overall PA scores and students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, minority , and ELLs , will be less than 10 percent by the end of the 2008-2009	<u>CSAP Results</u> Reading- <u>Grade 3-</u> FRL/Total 57/64 Minority/Non 79/64 ELL/Non 61/64 <u>Grade 4-</u> FRL/Total 35/36 Minority/Total 32/36 ELL/Total 30 /36 <u>Grade 5-</u> FRL/Total 35/41 Minority/Total 37/41 ELL/Total 38 /41 Math- <u>Grade 3-</u> FRL/Total 64/70 Minority/Total 66 /70	Yes No Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes

			<p>ELL/Total 69/70 <u>Grade 4-</u> FRL/Total 55/56 Minority/Total 55/56 ELL/Total 55/56 <u>Grade 5-</u> FRL/Total 28/36 Minority/Total 32/36 ELL/Total 36/36</p>	<p>Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes</p>
Growth Gaps	CSAP	**As measured by the CSAP reading and math assessment, the difference in the median growth percentile between students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, minority , ELLs and Non, will be less than 5 percentile points by the end of the 2008-2009 school year	<p><u>Median Percentile</u> Reading- FRL/Non 21/21 Minority/Non 24/21 ELL/Non 38/26 Math- FRL/Non 21/21 Minority/Non 24/21 ELL/Non 38/26</p>	<p>Yes Yes Yes</p>
Post Secondary Readiness	Graduation Rate	*NA		
	Mean ACT	*NA		

	Dropout Rate	*NA		
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* Currently, districts set targets for schools on these indicators. The state will set these targets for schools in the 2010-11 school year.

Accountability Status and Requirements for Improvement Plan

Program	Identification Process	Identification for School	Directions for completing improvement plan
State Accountability			
* Not required in SY 2009-10.	Requirements for 2010-11 will be released at a later date. School plan type will be identified based on the state's review of the school's performance.	--	--
NCLB Accountability			
School Improvement or Corrective Action (Title I)	School missed same AYP target for at least two consecutive years**	School Improvement Year 1 *Fort Logan met all AYP targets 2008-2009	

** Not sure if the school has been identified under Title I? See <http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/AYP/results.asp> to check this year's list of identified schools.

Additional Information about the District

Comprehensive Review and Selected Grant History		
Related Grant Awards	Is the school eligible for a Tiered Intervention grant? If so, which intervention approach has been chosen?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Turnaround <input type="checkbox"/> Restart <input type="checkbox"/> Transformation <input type="checkbox"/> Closure
	Has the school received a School Improvement grant? What was the date of the grant award?	Yes, 2009-2010
School Support Team or Expedited Review	Has (or will) the district participated in an SST review or an Expedited Review? If so, when?	SST Review-Fall, 2008 EDR-November, 2009
External Evaluator	Has the district partnered with an external evaluator to provide comprehensive evaluation of the school? If so, include the year and the name of the provider/tool used.	

Improvement Plan Information

The district/consortium is submitting this improvement plan to satisfy requirements for (check all that apply):

- Accreditation
 Title IA
 Tiered Intervention Grant
 School Improvement Grant
 Other: _____

School Contact Information (Additional contacts may be added, if needed)		
1	Name and Title	Jackie Webb, Executive Director of Learning Services
	Email	Webb_j@sheridan.k12.co.us
	Phone	720-833-6932
	Mailing Address	4000 S. Lowell Denver, CO 80236
2	Name and Title	Susan Resnick, Principal
	Email	Resnick_s@sheridan.k12.co.us
	Phone	720-833-6701
	Mailing Address	4000 S. Lowell Denver, CO 80236

Section II: Narrative on Data Analysis and Root Cause Identification

Provide a narrative that examines the data for your school – especially in any areas where the school was identified for accountability purposes. This section should not exceed five pages. A data analysis worksheet has been included to help organize your analysis – you may complete the chart and attach it to your narrative. It will not count as one of the five pages.

Required elements of the data analysis. The narrative must:

- Acknowledge any missed targets and resulting accountability identifications. Much of this information is provided in section I.
- Discuss trends in the data and prioritize needs. This will entail digging deeper into the data and even looking at past years. Some required reports and suggested data sources are listed below.
- Identify root causes for areas of concern. Include explanations of what prevented the school from meeting its targets. This is a requirement for any missed NCLB targets under the Title I program.
- Examine annual targets and interim targets that will provide the school with evidence that it is making adequate progress to meet its targets – state-set accountability targets and district/school set targets – over the next two years (2009-10 and 2010-11).

Required reports. At a minimum, the school is expected to reference the key data sources posted on SchoolView (www.schoolview.org/SchoolPerformance/index.asp), including: (1) Growth Summary Report, (2) AYP Summaries (including detailed reports in reading and math for each subpopulation of students), (3) NCLB Highly Qualified Teacher data, and (4) Post Secondary Readiness data (i.e., graduation, ACT, dropout rates).

Suggested data sources. Furthermore, it is assumed that more detailed data is available at the school/district level to provide additional context and deepen the analysis. Some recommended sources may include:

Student Learning	Local Demographic Data	District Processes Data	Perception Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local outcome and benchmark assessments • Student work samples • Classroom assessments (frequency and consistency) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District locale and size of student population • Student characteristics, including poverty, language proficiency, IEP, migrant, race/ethnicity • Student mobility rates • Staff characteristics (e.g., experience, attendance, turnover) • List of schools and feeder patterns • Student attendance • Discipline referrals and suspension rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive evaluations of the school (e.g., SST) • Curriculum and instructional materials • Instruction (time and consistency among grade levels) • Academic interventions available to students • Schedules and class sizes • Family/community involvement policies/practices • Professional development structure • Services and/or programs (Title I, special ed, ESL) • Extended day or summer programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching and learning conditions surveys (e.g., TELL Colorado) • Any survey data (e.g., parents, students, teachers, community, school leaders) • Self-assessment tools (district and/or school level)

Data Analysis Worksheet

Directions: This chart will help you organize your data for the analysis and identification of root cause for the data analysis narrative. Ultimately your analysis will then guide the major improvement strategies you choose in section III. You may conduct a more comprehensive analysis by examining all of the performance indicators. At a minimum, you must address the performance indicators for the 2008-09 NCLB targets that were not met.



Performance Indicators	Measures/Metrics	Trends	Priority Needs	Root Causes	Annual Targets 2009-10 and 2010-11	Interim Targets and Measures	Major Improvement Strategies	
Student Achievement (Status)	CSAP (% P+A)	R 2008-2009 Grade 3-64% Grade 4-36% Grade 5-41%		Systems Issues: Curriculum Assessment/Evaluation School Culture Professional Development Leadership/Planning			Teacher Effectiveness Culture Leadership Bridging the Opportunity Gap	
		W 2008-2009 Grade 3-33% Grade 4-22% Grade 5-27%						
		M 2008-2009 Grade 3-70% Grade 4-56% Grade 5-36%						
	Overall AYP (%PP+P+A)	R	100%					
		M	100%					
	AYP for students on IEPs	R	100%					
		M	100%					
	AYP for ELLs	R	100%					
		M	100%					
	Student Growth	Median Student Growth Percentile	Reading-31 Writing-40					
% on Track to Catch-Up		Reading-21% Writing-						

		25% Math-29%				
	% on Track to Keep-Up	Reading- 46% Writing- 55% Math-35%				

Data Analysis Worksheet (cont.)



Performance Indicators	Measures/Metrics	Trends	Priority Needs	Root Causes	Annual Targets 2009-10 and 2010-11	Interim Targets and Measures	Major Improvement Strategies
Achievement Gaps	CSAP	Achievement gaps do not exist with the exception of 3 rd grade reading Minority/Non					
Growth Gaps	CSAP	Growth gaps do not exist					
Post Secondary Readiness	Graduation Rate	NA					
	Mean ACT	NA					
	Dropout Rate	NA					
English Language Development & Attainment	CELA	100%					
Highly Qualified Teachers	HQ data	School has met HQ targets for two consecutive years.			100%		

To get more information on state-set targets over the next two years, go to:

- Accreditation: This will continue to evolve as the state implements SB 09-163. Get updates at http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_accredit.htm or <http://www.schoolview.org/>.
- NCLB AYP: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/ayp/index.asp>
- NCLB Highly Qualified: The target will remain at 100% HQ core content teachers.

Section III: Action Plan(s)

Based on your data analysis in section II, prioritize the root causes that you will address through your action plans. Identify a major strategy (e.g., Adjust reading approach). Then indicate which accountability provisions it will address, including how the strategy will help the school to no longer be identified under that accountability provision. In the chart below, provide details on key action steps (e.g., re-evaluating supplemental reading materials, providing new professional development to school staff) necessary to implement the major improvement strategy. Details should include a description of the action steps, a general timeline, resources that will be used to implement the actions and implementation benchmarks. Implementation benchmarks provide the school with checkpoints to ensure that activities are being implemented as expected. If identified under Title I, include family/community engagement strategies and professional development (including mentoring) strategies as they are specifically required by NCLB. Add rows in the chart, as needed. While space has been provided for three major improvement strategies, the school may add other major strategies, as needed.

Major Improvement Strategy #1: **Teacher Effectiveness**

Indicate which accountability provision or grant opportunity is being addressed. For accountability provisions, include how strategy will help the school resolve the identification under that provision:

School Plan under Accreditation. Describe:

Title I School Improvement/Corrective Action. Describe:

Application for a Tiered Intervention Grant.

School Improvement Grant.

Description of Action Steps to Implement the Major Improvement Strategy	Timeline	Key Personnel (optional)	Resources (federal, state, and/or local)	Implementation	Review
Curriculum Alignment	5/10-9/13	Focal Point	Federal	Implementation 2x's/year	Review-
Assessment and Evaluation	5/10-9/13	Focal Point Pearson	Federal	Implementation 2x's/year	Review-
Recruiting and Retaining HQ	5/10-9/13	Focal Point Teach for America	Federal	Implementation 2x's/year	Review-
PLC's	5/10-9/13	Focal Point	Federal	Implementation 2x's/year	Review-
Incentives-growth	5/10-9/13	District	Federal	Implementation 2x's/year	Review-
Instructional PD-engagement, rigor, pace, strategies	5/10-9/13	Flippen Focal Point	Federal	Implementation 2x's/year	Review-
Model Classroom	5/10-9/13	Focal Point District	Federal	Implementation 2x's/year	Review-

Major Improvement Strategy #2: Culture

Indicate which accountability provision or grant opportunity is being addressed. For accountability provisions, include how strategy will help the school resolve the identification under that provision:

- School Plan under Accreditation. Describe: _____
- Title I School Improvement/Corrective Action. Describe: _____
- Application for a Tiered Intervention Grant.
- School Improvement Grant.

Description of Action Steps to Implement the Major Improvement Strategy	Timeline	Key Personnel (optional)	Resources (federal, state, and/or local)	Implementation Benchmarks
PD and Implementation-High Expectations	5/10-9/13	Flippen	Federal	Implementation Review-2x's/year
PD and Implementation-Safe and Orderly Env.	5/10-9/13	Flippen	Federal	Implementation Review-2x's/year
Student Pride Wear	5/10-9/10		Federal	

Major Improvement Strategy #3: Leadership

Indicate which accountability provision or grant opportunity is being addressed. For accountability provisions, include how strategy will help the school resolve the identification under that provision:

- School Plan under Accreditation. Describe: _____
- Title I School Improvement/Corrective Action. Describe: _____
- Application for a Tiered Intervention Grant.
- School Improvement Grant.

Description of Action Steps to Implement the Major Improvement Strategy	Timeline	Key Personnel (optional)	Resources (federal, state, and/or local)	Implementation Benchmarks
Expanding Instructional Leadership-Leadership Academies	5/10-9/13	Focal Point District	Federal	Implementation Review-2x's/year
Principal Mentor	5/10-9/13	Focal Point	Federal	Implementation Review-2x's/year
Mid-Year Implementation Review	5/10-9/13	Focal Point	Federal	Implementation Review-2x's/year

Major Improvement Strategy #4: Bridging the Opportunity Gap

Indicate which accountability provision or grant opportunity is being addressed. For accountability provisions, include how strategy will help the school resolve the identification under that provision:

- School Plan under Accreditation. Describe: _____
- Title I School Improvement/Corrective Action. Describe: _____
- Application for a Tiered Intervention Grant.

School Improvement Grant.

Description of Action Steps to Implement the Major Improvement Strategy	Timeline	Key Personnel (optional)	Resources (federal, state, and/or local)	Implementation Benchmarks
Flexible Scheduling	5/10-9/13	NCTL	Federal	Implementation 2x's/year Review-
Expanded Day Opportunitis	5/10-9/13	NCTL	Federal	Implementation 2x's/year Review-
Community Family Partnerships	5/10-9/13	NCTL	Federal	Implementation 2x's/year Review-

Expedited Diagnostic School Review

SCHOOL: Fort Logan Elementary School

Sheridan School District

GRADES: 3 - 5

DATES: November 11-14, 2009

Number of team members: 4

Number of interviews: 32

School/district administrators: 4

Instructional and content coaches: 1

Classroom teachers (regular and special program teachers): 23

Paraprofessional staff: 4

Number of short classroom observations/walkthroughs: 81 ² Expedited

Diagnostic Review—Fort Logan Elementary School—November 11-13, 2009

FINDINGS

CURRICULUM



The district recently provided the school with “Instructional Calendars” for each grade level in reading, writing, math, and science. These “calendars,” identified as the school’s curricula, articulate essential standards and benchmarks for all grades levels and are aligned with state standards and CSAP assessment frameworks.



A great deal of confusion exists among teachers as to which “master” to follow, i.e., to closely follow the district’s Instructional Calendars (district curriculum), or to primarily use the reading, writing, and mathematics core published programs and materials



Teachers believe the pacing for some of the school’s published programs is misaligned with the district Instructional Calendars.



In mathematics, teachers appear to overemphasize drill of basic math facts vs. the conceptual learning and higher-order thinking skills addressed in state standards and the Everyday Math program used by the school.

ASSESSMENT / EVALUATION



Benchmark Assessments in all core content areas are regularly scheduled and administered throughout the school year. Schedules for these assessments are articulated in the school’s assessment documents. Performance reports for these assessments are provided to teachers in a timely fashion.



While data regarding subgroups may be available in the district’s data warehouses, teachers are not consistently using data disaggregated by subgroups for analysis or programming purposes at the classroom level.



Currently the DIBELS and Ed Performance data systems are not integrated into Alpine Achievement Systems, creating difficulty for teachers to efficiently access all student data for a given child. Some teachers report they are not sure how to access the three district data systems in order to use them to identify student needs or classroom trends.



Processes for developing and/or using classroom formative assessments are not well defined or utilized by teachers.

Many teachers are beginning to use multiple response strategies recently learned through a district workshop with Anita Archer. Examples noted were the use of white boards, hand signals, and “think-pair-share” as tools to check for understanding.

Teachers suggest that the number and timing of benchmark assessments and the resulting time it takes to disaggregate the accompanying data may affect their ability to adequately analyze that data to inform instruction.

The use of data to identify individual student needs and design accommodations or differentiation strategies in the classroom appears to be limited.

Full staff meetings led by the principal or occasionally other district specialists are periodically used to discuss student performance data. Agendas are provided for staff meetings, but minutes or records of staff meetings are not formally provided.

Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings are scheduled weekly for each grade level. Agendas or protocols for these meetings are not consistently developed. Teams are beginning to use these meetings to analyze student performance data and plan instruction. Teams typically designate a note-taker for each meeting and records of meetings are usually kept. Follow-up and implementation of plans developed in these meetings is inconsistent.

3 Expedited Diagnostic Review—Fort Logan Elementary School—November 11-13, 2009

Some PLC teams are beginning to collect student exemplars and develop rubrics for examining student writing.

Conversations intentionally addressing achievement gaps are not evident, nor is there a common understanding of what actions effectively address achievement gaps.

INSTRUCTION

Sixty-minute blocks of time are allocated for core reading with twenty minutes for flex groups with the core reading teacher. Eighty minutes are also designated for math and writing respectively, along with thirty-five additional minutes for “word work” and spelling. These time blocks are made possible, in part, by a recent extension of the school day.

Implementation of a “teaching/learning cycle” framework for classroom instruction that assesses what students already know and are able to do, and then teaches new knowledge or skills to proficiency is not evident.

Teachers appear to expend more energy instructing students as opposed to facilitating and ensuring student learning, i.e., it appears that teachers emphasize performance in “teaching” rather than ensuring student engagement and performance in learning.

Active engagement of students in classrooms is not a common practice and a notable amount of time is spent by students with “seat work”.

When some students are engaged in small group instruction with the classroom teacher, visible levels of off-task behavior occur with the rest of the class.

Instruction is predominantly at the knowledge level vs. higher-order thinking.

Student/teacher interaction is often whole group with some students not visibly engaged in discussions. Additionally, there appears to be a low level of student accountability for learning.

Lower levels of rigor are evident in many classrooms and pacing of lessons is generally slow.

- Objectives are posted, but often not tied into the classroom activity or to application of learning beyond the classroom.
- It is not evident that common understandings of proficient performance expectations for student work exist among teachers and students.
- An agreed-upon “common language of instruction” throughout the school or common elements of lesson design are not apparent.
- Accommodations in the regular classroom for students with specific needs including special education, gifted, or ELA students are not generally evident.
- Other than grouping strategies, differentiation in classrooms is not readily evident.
- Engaging or differentiated instruction varies between reading and math, with lower levels of cognition and student engagement evident in math instruction.
- The WILSON program is used as a core replacement reading program for students needing intensive reading intervention, including those in special education. Instruction for these students is structured, targeted, engaging, and fast paced.
- The district is now developing an extended day (after school) program in literacy for strategic/high-need students. This program is beginning with 25 students at the school. The teachers involved in this program will deliver 30 hours of instruction using a comprehensive literacy instruction model.

4 Expedited Diagnostic Review—Fort Logan Elementary School—November 11-13, 2009

SCHOOL CULTURE

- Teachers articulate that they want students to learn, perform well, and are willing to learn and implement the strategies to reach that goal.
- The school facility, along with availability of equipment, technology, and materials, provides a positive physical environment for teaching and learning.
- The number of staff and leadership changes in the last ten years is significant and has had a visible effect on coherence of the school's educational program and continuity of focus and follow-through with initiatives.
- Many teachers demonstrate a willingness to operate as a more coherent, school-wide team. Examples include engagement with current professional development initiatives, school-wide implementation of adopted programs, a willingness to engage in collaborative (PLC) work, and working beyond normal school hours.
- Mutual team support and interdependence exists among most staff members.
- Staff members express a need for more structured time for planning, collaboration, and professional development.
- Staff understanding of the alignment of the district improvement plan/actions with the school improvement plan/actions, and the role of teachers in improving professional practice and student learning varies notably across the school. This lack of understanding leads to a sense of frustration by teachers in appreciating the "big picture" of where the school and district are "going" and the expectations of the staff about how to "get there."
- School-wide discipline standards and follow-through are inconsistent.
- A lack of rigor and lowered expectations for students to perform at high levels is evident across the school.
- The district is in the process of establishing an after-school program for approximately 18 students who are homeless. This program will focus on homework, literacy, and developing technology skills, and is designed to provide a safe environment after school that further connects these students (and families) to school.

Specials teachers are readily supporting the school and district core curriculum initiatives and serve as math and reading interventionists.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

An overarching professional development plan for intensive and varied training for all staff is emerging in the district. This plan will include a teacher academy that heavily emphasizes literacy skills of teachers, particularly in teaching writing. Additional trainings will be offered in the area of math. These offerings will be within the focus and expectation of the district professional development plan but voluntary for teachers.

The Fort Logan staff spent four days before the school year focusing on effective use of the literacy block time, particularly learning how to implement Every Child a Writer (ECAW), “word work”, developing vocabulary, and “Spellography.”

Induction of new staff includes training in strategies for sheltered instruction.

Teachers express a need for training in effectively using the district data management systems to disaggregate student data and plan for instruction.

5 Expedited Diagnostic Review—Fort Logan Elementary School—November 11-13, 2009

LEADERSHIP / PLANNING



The current improvement plan was developed by the principal and volunteer teachers during the summer. The planning process used analysis of student data along with the recommendations from the SST review last year to guide the development of goals and actions.



It does not appear there is analysis of data at a deep qualitative or quantitative level to design improvement actions or tactics, nor is there consistently an analysis of proven practices to address root causes of low achievement.



The staff articulates an awareness of the school improvement plan; however, it does not appear to serve as the primary guide for daily work of the school staff. Improvement goals are articulated in weekly newsletters and teaching staff are generally able to identify these broad goals. They are not readily able to identify specific actions or their role in implementing and owning the improvement plan.



Teachers suggest that the number of current district and school initiatives, plans, and actions impedes their ability to deeply and comprehensively implement all of them.



Two or three staff committees provide input to the principal regarding improvement plans and other decisions. These structures are not fully formalized nor do they clarify the role of teachers to serve as school leaders in collaboratively developing action plans, making school-wide instructional decisions, or planning professional development.



Many staff members suggest they do not have an understanding of who makes decisions or how and why they are made.



A number of staff report that momentum for improvement established through the SST review process conducted last year has not been sustained.



It appears that structures or processes are not in place to continually engage everyone in planning, communicating, and creating a learning community that engages the entire staff in coherent and focused work to accelerate learning throughout the school.



Staff report classroom visits by the principal occur 2-3 times per month. Some staff members who are scheduled for formal evaluations this year report that this process has not yet begun.



The number of leadership changes over the last 10 years (10-11 principals) has greatly impeded the ongoing, systemic improvement work of the school.

The School Support Team Report

The School Support Team report is an evidence-based report that is written around nine standards or key areas of school functions:

Academic Performance

1. Curriculum
2. Assessment / Evaluation
3. Instruction

Learning Environment

4. School culture
5. Student, family, and community support
6. Professional development and evaluation

Organizational Effectiveness

7. Leadership
8. Organizational structure and resources
9. Comprehensive and effective planning

Each Support Team uses an extensive rubric that identifies indicators for each standard and describes four performance levels. The information gathered from the school review (documents and artifacts, interviews, and observations) is used to complete the report according to the SST rubric.

There are three sections to the School Support Team report:

Section 1 of the SST report is the Executive Summary. This section includes logistical information about the school review, a listing of the nine standards around which the report is written, commendations / areas of note, themes and recommendations, and questions to consider as the school considers how it will follow up on the report.

Section 2, the Detailed Report, describes the team’s findings on the indicators for each standard, the sources of evidence used to substantiate the findings, and comments written by the team to clarify their findings. The numbers listed in the performance level column rate the school’s overall performance on each indicator of each standard in the rubric.

Section 3 of the report, the Landscape section, provides a “summary at a glance” of the rating results for each indicator. The Performance Level numbers in the Detailed Report are color coded on the Landscape report and indicate the following:

Level 1: Little or no development and implementation (Red on the Landscape section)

Level 2: Limited development or partial implementation (Black on the Landscape section)

Level 3: Fully functioning and operational level of development and implementation (Blue on the Landscape section)

Level 4: Exemplary level of development and implementation (Green on the Landscape section)

CDE SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAM REPORT

Fort Logan Elementary School – Sheridan School District 2

SECTION 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

October 20, 2008 – October 24, 2008

INTRODUCTION:

The school support team conducted a scholastic review of **Fort Logan Elementary School** during the period of **October 20, 2008 to October 24, 2008**.

In order to prepare an evidence-based report, the school support team activities included a review of the documents collected for the school portfolio and profile and interviews* with:

- School administrators (15)
- District specialists and administrators (16)
- Classroom teachers (53)
- Instructional and content coaches (12)
- Nurse, psychologist, social worker (12)
- Community partnership coordinators (2)
- Paraprofessionals and tutors (2)
- Secretaries, clerks, records, data (5)
- Food services, custodial staff, bus drivers (2)
- Parents (9)
- Student teachers, Teachers in Residence, substitutes (0)
- Students (40); and
- classroom walkthroughs and observations* (85)

***Number may represent the number of observations or interviews, not the number of teachers in the school, for example.**

The chairperson of the team was **Karen L. Benner** and team members were **Pamela Beeman, John Pacheco, Fred Wall, Iris Williams and Susan Rhodes-Yenowine**.

STANDARDS FOR THE SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAM REPORT

Academic Performance:

The following Academic Performance Standards address (1) curriculum, (2) classroom assessment and evaluation, and (3) instruction.

- Standard 1:** The school implements an adopted curriculum that is rigorous and aligned to state and local standards.
- Standard 2:** The school uses multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously inform and modify instruction to meet student needs and promote proficient student work.
- Standard 3:** Teachers engage all students by using effective, varied, and research-based practices to improve student academic performance.

Learning Environment:

The following Learning Environment Standards address (4) school culture, (5) student, family, and community support, and (6) professional growth, development and evaluation.

- Standard 4:** The school/district functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence.
- Standard 5:** The school works with families and community groups to remove barriers to learning in an effort to meet the intellectual, social, career, and developmental needs of students.
- Standard 6:** The school/district provides research-based, results-driven professional development opportunities for staff and implements performance evaluation procedures in order to improve teaching and learning.

Organizational Effectiveness:

The following Organizational Effectiveness Standards address (7) leadership, (8) organization and allocation of resources, and (9) comprehensive and effective planning.

- Standard 7:** School instructional decisions focus on support for teaching and learning, organizational direction, high performance expectations, creation of a learning culture, and development of leadership capacity.
- Standard 8:** The school is organized to maximize use of all available resources to support high student and staff performance.
- Standard 9:** The school develops, implements, and evaluates a comprehensive school improvement plan that communicates a clear purpose, direction, and action plan focused on teaching and learning.

ASSETS FROM WHICH TO BUILD: The School Support team would like to recognize the following assets that will serve the staff of Fort Logan Elementary School as they venture into efforts for raising student achievement:

- The staff members at Fort Logan Elementary are enthusiastic and have expressed a sincere desire to know what to do to make a difference in student achievement.
- The staff is hard working and there is potential for excellence that can be developed. The intention of the School Support Team recommendations is to help guide the work of the school and staff toward focused efforts that have the potential to impact student achievement. Intended to recommend actions and practices that have demonstrated results in raising student achievement.
- The design and length of the instructional blocks affords sufficient time to teach.
- The schedule provides opportunities for collaborative planning and teams to meet.
- The school has high-quality specials (Performing Arts, Physical Education, and Technology) in a time of budget limitations. These classes are truly impacting the overall learning by students AND the learning environment. Special activities, such as participation in AmeriTown, teach students many important life-skills and experiences.
- Staff members have access to data management systems that help manage and store a great deal of achievement data.
- The support staff members are an integral part of the school and have a positive impact on its learning environment.
- The school lunch is nutritious and satisfying. Students have an opportunity to select from a well-rounded variety of choices. The lunch program workers are positive, inviting, and helpful.
- The passage of the bond election to improve the physical facilities at Fort Logan Elementary shows that your community is support you and the education of its children.
- There is willing and capable guidance and support offered by Superintendent Michael Clough and Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Jackie Webb to assist the staff and administration of Fort Logan in its efforts to raise student achievement.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIC ACTIONS – MAJOR THEMES

There are significant focus areas that have emerged from the review of documents, observations and interviews by the school support team. They are intended to guide the school's improvement efforts. As the report was formulated, the review team agreed to provide the school with a challenging report. This determination was made, based on the reality that the declining student achievement at Fort Logan Elementary School is a serious concern, and that there were multiple statements by staff expressing, "Please tell us what to do". The following themes include aspects of several rubric standards and are strategically developed as a teaching framework for school improvement. The recommendations describe a high functioning school, one that gets results. It is hard work, but doable. Fort Logan Elementary School has the capacity to accomplish them.

1. Academic Performance

- a. Curriculum
- b. Assessment and Evaluation
- c. Instruction

2. Effective Learning Environment

- a. School Culture
- b. Student, Family and Community Support
- c. Professional Development and Evaluation

3. Organizational Effectiveness

- a. Mission and Vision
- b. School Improvement Plan
- c. Allocation of Resources
- d. Distributed Leadership and Collaboration
- e. Analysis of Instructional Effectiveness and Accountability

Note: It will be up to the Fort Logan Elementary School community to determine which, how many, and in what order the recommendations within these themes will be addressed.

The School Support Team recognizes that the staff has been flooded with many expectations. We recognize that staff may not always be sure of what their targets are, nor how to address these changing expectations, especially with the frequent turnover of principals in the past several years.

The School Support Team's intent, with the following recommendations, is to not only provide the staff with a list of things to do, but to intentionally formulate high-impact recommendations that have the potential to positively impact student achievement for Fort Logan Elementary School students.

The School Support Team offers no "Silver Bullets", and recognizes that the work is not easy and that a state of disequilibrium will transpire. We believe that this school can rise to the challenges that need to be met in order to turn the student achievement around for the students of Fort Logan Elementary School.

Major Theme 1: Academic Performance

Introductory Comments:

“Without question, what schools and teachers do or do not do makes the difference between student success and failure.”

McRel, 2006

The area of Academic Performance is critical to the work that must be done at Fort Logan Elementary School. Key components, as reflected in the research-based Comprehensive School Support Rubric, include:

- ✓ Implementation of an adopted curriculum that is rigorous and aligned to state and local standards and that the school provides access to a curriculum that emphasizes a challenging academic core for all students.
- ✓ The school uses multiple evaluation and assessment strategies to continuously inform and modify instruction to meet student needs and promote proficient student work. Assessments are frequent, rigorous, and aligned with district and state content standards. Students can articulate the academic expectations in each class and know what is required to be proficient.
- ✓ Teachers engage all students by using effective, varied, and research-based practices to improve student academic performance. Instructional strategies, practices, and programs are planned, delivered, and monitored to meet the changing needs of a diverse student population. Instructional services are provided to students to address individual needs and to close the learning gaps.

To quote Robert Marzano from his book, *The Art and Science of Teaching*: “Arguably the most basic issue a teacher can consider is what he or she will do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success.Three distinct but highly related elements include: (1) setting and communicating learning goals, (2) tracking student progress and (3) celebrating success. These elements have a fairly straightforward relationship. Establishing and communicating learning goals are the starting place. After, all, for learning to be effective, clear targets in terms of information and skill must be established. But establishing and communicating learning goals alone do not suffice to enhance student learning. Rather, once goals have been set it is natural and necessary to track progress. This assessment does not occur at the end of a unit only but throughout the unit. Finally, given that each student has made progress in one or more learning goals, the teacher and students can celebrate those successes.”

From Closing the Achievement Gap (Pete and Fogarty) this poignant introductory quote is noteworthy:

“What are the reasons for the achievement gap? The teachers say: ‘Not enough books. No parent involvement. No time. Too many kids. The wrong kids. Poor facilities. The kids are tardy, undisciplined, and unable or unwilling to learn. It’s not possible to turn things around.’ The kids say: ‘They don’t teach us as much as they teach the smart kids in the smart school.’”

Marzano emphasizes that too often teachers gently lower the requirements of their at-risk students, thinking they are helping the kids. Unintended messages accompany this practice. To students, this says, “You are not as smart as some of the other kids, so I’m not going to expect as much from you.”

Teachers MUST know, believe in, and implement practices that honor high expectations throughout the school for all students. Research has identified six school factors that are associated with achievement. These factors are ones that teachers and administrators can address. (Barton, Paul E. “Why Does the Gap Persist?” (2004) Essential factors include:

- Rigor of the curriculum,

- Teacher experience and attendance,
- Teacher preparation,
- Class size,
- Technology-assisted instruction, and
- School safety.

Findings:

Curriculum:

- The Instructional Calendars are the current curricula used by the staff and are aligned to the Colorado Standards for literacy, writing, science and math. These Instructional Calendars are articulated for grades K-5. School staff members are using the Instructional Calendars as a basis for lesson planning at grade level team meetings, but this process is not systematized throughout the school. The staff is beginning to become familiar with the content of the Instructional Calendars.
- The Instructional Calendar documents for all grade levels are not available for vertical articulation at all schools. Not all grade levels at Fort Logan Elementary School have the Instructional Calendars for K-5 in order to have clear understanding of expectations at each grade level for tight vertical articulation.
- The McGraw Macmillan and Everyday Math programs provide lessons that contain materials that are culturally responsive. These programs reflect differentiation to meet the variety of student needs and levels of proficiency; however, these tools to differentiate are not used by all staff.
- Classroom lessons rarely identify objectives that are linked to the standards so that students can articulate their own learning objectives and goals for the lessons.
- Not all students have access to the grade level curricula.
- Lesson plans are periodically checked by school leadership; however, some lesson plans contain lists of tasks without reference to specific power standards and learning objectives.
- Curricular alignment among academic programs (e.g. special education, electives/specials, gifted and talented, and ELA) is dependent upon the use of the Instructional Calendars, leaving the creation of the connections up to individual teachers.
- There are a few examples of proficient work around the school. Rubrics and explanations of scoring guides are not often posted in classrooms or discussed at staff or grade level meetings to identify and communicate proficient grade level work for learning targets.
- Seamless articulation is not observable at key transition points. It is not clear how often teams meet to facilitate discussions about transition points. When discussions do happen between schools, there appears to be little discussion about learning expectations, data, and student achievement, including accurate grade level performance data.
- In fifth grade, students participate in the Ameritown program. Students receive checks, learn how to save and invest money, how to interview for a job, and then go to the Ameritown location and perform their assigned duties of the job for which they were qualified and hired. These skills give students life and career experiences to encourage real world learning.
- Classroom materials, such as Everyday Math, present many opportunities for students to demonstrate independent, critical thinking; however, many opportunities for independent thinking are replaced by worksheets and group responses to materials.

- The Everyday Math program offers materials that are aligned to Colorado's Model Content Standards. While the McGraw Macmillan program offers materials that are aligned to the Colorado Content Standards, the implementation of the McGraw Macmillan literacy program through the use of the T-1 through T-5 system does not always provide students in each T level with access to grade-level core curricula.
- The T-group structure tracks students into homogeneous ability groups, and students often miss out on the first best instruction that teachers in heterogeneous classrooms provide and where interventions then are provided additionally for identified, targeted instruction.
- Implementation of the higher order thinking activities in the curricula is not extended to the students. Many classroom activities are teacher directed, and worksheet-driven.
- Some teachers are integrating computer skills, such as PowerPoint, into their content area lessons. There are some drill and practice programs to support reinforcement of literacy. In some classes, technology supports the taught curricula. Access to technology varies.
- Information literacy standards are integrated into Instructional Calendars. Most information literacy instruction is limited to the computer and library classes.

Assessment:

- Assessments used for progress monitoring of literacy include DIBELS, and Treasures unit tests. Everyday Math unit tests are used for progress monitoring. The district has initiated the use of Ed Performance Assessments for benchmarking student progress. Results are used in isolation, rather than included in a composite body of evidence. Test results are often informally analyzed. Few teachers have systems for aggregating individual, classroom, and grade-level data as a body of evidence for decision-making. Additionally, profiling of results by power standard to see individual, class, and grade-level trends is not evident.
- Teachers have access to Alpine Achievement to review student progress on CSAP. Utilization of this data, including disaggregation by sub-content areas and sub-group populations is limited. The Ed Performance data management system has not yet been accessed, nor has the data from the fall benchmarking been analyzed.
- There is no assessment plan for progress monitoring of writing. Teachers use various rubrics from such sources as, Six-Traits, Write Source, McGraw core literacy or modifications of these to score some student writing.
- Most assessment tasks are selected from publisher-prepared tests. Demonstration of performance by students is usually through paper/pencil tests and worksheets. Students occasionally have a project to complete.
- At times teachers provide coaching and small group guidance for some students during the unit test assessments.
- There is limited disaggregation of unit test results to provide teachers a profile of proficiency/performance by standard, power standard, and skill for individual students, by classroom, and by grade-level.
- Classroom assessment use is primarily teacher-determined. Monitoring of and feedback regarding the use of classroom assessment results through walkthroughs and accountability processes are not a leadership priority at this time.

- Other than DIBELS, there is little setting of growth targets for individual students, instructional and grade-level groups. Expectations to establish the trajectory of growth needed in order to make a year's growth or more in a year's time are not being determined in any content area. Profiling of data for this goal setting is not evident.
- Determination of common performance level descriptors has not yet been conducted, although there are district plans for this work to be done. There is limited consensus among staff of performance level expectations, resulting in inconsistency in determination of "what is proficient work and what does it look like" from classroom to classroom.
- Some classroom rubrics describe performance expectations; such as for writing, but criteria is not aligned horizontally or vertically. Checklists of required components, such as for a project, often are presented as a rubric. Not all students know what a rubric is.
- There is limited use of a variety of quick, effective formative assessment strategies to help determine direct feedback during and immediately following instruction. As a result, teachers may not be informed of students' level of understanding, the need for re-teaching, and formation of supplementary instructional support.
- Most classrooms do not use CSAP released items as a formative assessment, or use the CSAP constructed response rubrics to score student work. Use of released CSAP exemplars and scoring guides is not evident, nor do students have much access to grade-level models and exemplars. As a consequence, students and staff may not have a clear picture of CSAP performance expectations.
- While there are a few pockets of high expectations, there is greater evidence of "quality drift", which means that the level of expectation unintentionally declines as students progress through school. For example, when students reach grades four and five, they are being asked to perform at levels two-three years below grade level. Lack of rigor and a sense of urgency are pervasive throughout the school.
- Agreement on criteria to place students in instructional groups and to exit students from intervention placement varies. Classroom teachers determine placements based on teacher judgment, observation, and some data.
- A few teachers review assessment data with students, but goal setting and development of personal awareness and responsibility for improvement of performance is not a common practice. Feedback is most often through generalized statements to students. There is limited one-on-one descriptive feedback and conferencing with students that help them analyze and identify what they need to work on and how to improve their performance.
- Samples of student work are displayed; however, rubrics or performance criteria do not accompany the exhibited work.
- The school does not have a protocol, common data profile document, or electronic system to portray student progress against the power standards over time. Grade levels or content area teams have not defined what should be included in a body of evidence to indicate student learning for power standard targets. Some teachers have devised their own systems. Disaggregation of performance results is limited. Individual, group, class, and grade-level profiles by power standard are not available to determine gaps in achievement.
- Some teachers were trained in the use of Critical Friends processes for team collaboration, but are no longer using them. Teachers have few formal protocols or processes for analyzing student work samples to inform instructional decision-making.

- Teachers are beginning to use assessment results, in addition to DIBELS, to form instructional groups in literacy. The use of protocols for analyzing math data is just beginning to be initiated. Reflection on classroom practices to impact the teaching and learning cycle is limited.
- The T group structure is used for grouping of students for literacy instruction. Students are placed into one of five T levels, based on DIBELS data and teacher judgment. Regular flexible grouping of students is limited. Many students stay at the same T level throughout the year, and at times, over several years. For T-1 (ELL) students, ESL-trained teachers are often assigned. Assignment of teachers for each T level is sometimes made within the grade level or by principal decision.
- Within a T level, interventionists provide small group instruction during a portion of the literacy block. Flexible grouping of these students is more common.
- In math, there is little grouping for instruction. Much of the instruction is whole-class. Intervention support is provided during another instructional time.

Instruction:

- There is a predominance of whole-class instruction. Seat work typically consists of paper/pencil worksheets. Much of the instruction is teacher-led, with a question/answer format. Often, elicited responses are limited in complexity. Reference to a higher-order thinking taxonomy is not evident.
- There is limited use of a variety of research-based instructional strategies to meet various learning styles, processing needs, and stimulate student engagement in their learning. Evidence of cooperative learning groups, project-based learning, regular use of manipulatives, hands-on active learning, scaffolded instruction, and gradual release of responsibility for learning from teacher to student is limited. Differentiation of instruction for literacy is often perceived as being met through assignment of students to one of the T groups.
- There is limited development of intentional interdisciplinary connections or building of relationships for students to apply learning from one content area to another.
- Posting of lesson objectives is being implemented in varying degrees throughout the school. Introduction of the objective(s) as part of the lesson is varied. Teachers are being trained in writing student-friendly objectives and in the use of effective formative assessment and instructional strategies.
- Core instructional manuals help outline some required thinking, knowledge, and processes needed to develop proficiency of the learning targets. In addition to this information, teachers have not processed what must be scaffolded and how to scaffold development of necessary knowledge and skills as grade-level teams or through vertical articulation.
- DIBELS results are most commonly used for instructional planning and grouping in literacy. Unit test results are used for math grouping. CELA results are used for placement in T-1 for literacy.
- Teacher strengths are not always taken into consideration when making instructional assignments. This has become an elevated concern since the revised master schedule has been developed, with some teachers being assigned to provide interventions in content areas in which they do not feel qualified.
- While students are presented with some tasks similar to those on CSAP, the CSAP rubrics are not being used to score students' constructed responses. There is limited evidence that teachers are asking students to do planning through webbing, outlining, or other strategies prior to drafting their writing.

- Development of consistent, common academic vocabulary, including the terminology used in directions on CSAP items, is not strategic or intentional.
- School leadership is conducting classroom walkthroughs and is providing feedback based on the district's walkthrough criteria. Staff are receiving professional development on the implementation of several components of the walkthrough criteria, after which these will be included in the "looked fors" during the walkthroughs.
- Instructional coaches also provide feedback and support to new teachers in differentiating instruction.
- Several assessments are used to screen students as gifted or advanced learners. Criteria for T-5 placement may be contradictory to CSAP results (no advanced) or eliminate high ability LEP students.
- The Educational Technology and Information Literacy Plan was provided to the school during the SST review, when requested. School staff did not know of the plan.
- The school has a functional computer lab and each classroom has several computers for student use. Integration of technology as an instructional tool varies from classroom to classroom. Several teachers are using Smart Boards, document cameras, and assistive voice amplifiers.
- Classrooms have a variety of instructional resources, including solid core programs for literacy and math, both of which have recent copyright dates. Various support materials accompany the core programs as well as other supplementary resources. Workbooks are used for literacy and math, along with additional worksheets.
- The library has recently expanded its collection of non-fiction materials. It is noted that most of the library's collection is geared for K-3, with fewer materials available for intermediate and above readers.
- Determination of the criteria for purchasing core and supplementary materials includes guidance from the district office.
- There are several instructional resource rooms in the school, housing a collection of intervention materials and sets of books for guided reading instruction. No cataloging or checkout process of these materials was evident.

- Homework provides opportunities to practice skills such as math facts, spelling, and reading fluency. The school sends homework home on Mondays and expects the Homework Folder to be returned each Friday. Teachers have various incentive systems to encourage completion of homework. Parents want their students to have homework. Teachers ask parents to sign-off on reading logs.
- Triumphs, the intervention program to support the core reading program, is being implemented this year at some grade-levels. Horizons (Houghton Mifflin) is used at another grade level and is viewed as not being as aligned to the core program as Triumphs. Interventionists and special education teachers also use a variety of support materials to develop basic phonics and sight word skills. T-5 (advanced) students may not always have access to materials above their grade level. All students are to interface with the core story for 30 minutes/day.
- Special education students and severely low readers are placed into T-2. Interventionists work with students in several T levels during the literacy block and for double dosing in addition to the literacy block. Special education teachers function as T-2 literacy teachers and math interventionists. Math double dosing is provided in addition to the math instructional block.
- Monitoring for effectiveness of the intervention varies by teacher. T-level groups are homogeneous, primarily based on DIBELS, unit test performance, and teacher judgment for placement. T-level groups vary in size from 10 to 29 students. Some of the largest groups do not have instructional support beyond the teacher.
- Grade-level teams make T-level placement and transfer decisions. At times, the T-level teacher and interventionist determine them. While grade-level teams use a child study model to discuss selected students, there is no defined Pyramid of Interventions or formal Response to Intervention process.
- Summer school was not held this past year. Parents expressed disappointment. After-school tutoring may start after the first of the year. Some enrichment activities for gifted students occur after school.

Recommendations:

Curriculum:

- A curriculum outlines essential material to be learned to enable all students to have access to a common core of content knowledge. At each grade level, month by month, it is recommended that the Instructional Calendars be used as a base from which to build, align, understand, and implement a fully viable curriculum. A fully viable and guaranteed curriculum should include: established benchmarks and assessments, instructional strategies, well developed pacing maps, and instructional materials aligned to the curriculum. These all should be aligned both vertically

and horizontally. Specials/electives, gifted and talented, special education and ELL areas must all be part of the curriculum alignment process.

- Staff needs to understand the relationship of Benchmarks and Instructional Calendars to Colorado Content Standards and Assessment Frameworks.
- It is recommended that as the curriculum is delivered, differentiation of instructional strategies be included so that all diverse learners have equal access to first best instruction by the teacher in the regular classroom.
- It is recommended that all core programs such as Everyday Math and McGraw Macmillan literacy programs be implemented with fidelity and include opportunities for students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.
- It is recommended that all staff know and be familiar with the Information Literacy/ Educational Technology Plan, and integrate the standards into classroom instruction.
- It is recommended that grade level teams, which include specialists, have frequent, collaborative conversations, to include the construction of useful and in-depth curriculum maps for each core content area's units of study. These curriculum maps need to include all the components for implementation of a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Addressing fidelity to the implementation of the curriculum in classrooms needs to be part of each weekly curriculum grade level meeting. Common team planning at all grade levels will help foster this.
- All students must have access to a rigorous, standards-based curriculum, and that curriculum must be the same curriculum regardless of placement in classes. The T-group structure is a system of ability tracking. The system must be examined thoroughly to ensure that all students have access to rigorous, grade level work, with high expectations by the teachers for proficient achievement in literacy, as well as in all core classrooms.

Assessment:

- In order to ensure that students are learning, measurement of student learning is essential. Data from the various assessments being used in the school (body of evidence) are a critical source of information when making school and classroom decisions. All staff will need to learn the fundamental purposes and skills for becoming data driven. Teachers must have guidance and practice in making meaning of the collection of numbers and graphs in order to make concrete profiles of their students for instructional decision-making. Such user-friendly strategies, as outlined in Data-Driven Dialogue and in Using Data to Close the Achievement Gap, provide practical and effective ways to look at data, develop meaning, and determine actions. Data driven instruction ensures that individual student assessment data are used on an on-going basis to monitor and continually adjust instruction. Teaching without knowing that students have learned results in an incomplete instructional process. Standards-based practices focus on the teaching and learning cycle.
- It is important to disaggregate the data by various slices such as gender, ethnicity, special identified needs, sub-content areas and power standards. Additionally, training in how to access and use Alpine Achievement and the new Ed Performance data management system is necessary for teachers to utilize these powerful data management tools. Other useful resources include CEDAR and the school's Growth Model Profiles through CDE. All staff should utilize these data sources as well as the DIBELS website.

- Utilize the district’s breakdown by test item as profiled on the [CSAP Summary Report](#). This profile shows the number of points possible to be earned for each test item, the type of response required (Constructed Response or Multiple Choice), the specific skills required and how well the students in that grade and content area performed. Although the report profiles the number of times each benchmark is tested, it would also be helpful to know how many points can be earned for each benchmark and the percent of points earned by Fort Logan students.
- By disaggregating results of the Ed Performance Benchmark Assessments, CELA Proficiency Assessment and writing samples, teachers can profile their class by essential skills, power standards and levels of English proficiency. By organizing this information, it provides a means to:
 - see the individual student and classroom status of needs and strengths,
 - afford teachers a way to graphically monitor student progress,
 - evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, and appropriate selection of instructional materials, and
 - make instructional decisions.
- While considerable sources of data are available to the school, the staff may still be information poor. The deep and collaborative analysis of school-wide data to drive planning and actions is necessary to ensure [strategic and focused](#) work in the school and every classroom. It is recommended that the school embrace deep analysis of performance data to guide school-wide planning and decisions as well as daily teaching. It is essential that teachers have support to build understanding for how to use data to unveil the information to guide meaningful instruction through an articulated systematic, systemic process. The results of student assessments should be reviewed to assure that student learning is accelerated as a result of this structure. Goal setting toward achievement of a year’s growth or more, in a year’s time must be established. Setting benchmark goals at specific points along the way can guide what is working well and what needs to be changed to achieve the targeted trajectory. The same evaluation process for academic achievement should be applied to evaluate the effectiveness of the T group structures, interventions, and other structures and processes in the building. If students are not improving, there should be more careful analysis of the root causes. It is likely a bigger picture than whether or not students are demonstrating improved learning on specific skills. Regularly scheduled, on-site support from district personnel is also recommended.
- A best practice that can impact student learning is teacher collaboration to analyze student work. By analyzing where students’ strengths and needs are, based on pre-determined proficiency criteria, teachers can evaluate effectiveness of their instruction, measure the degree of learning by students, and make decisions regarding next instructional steps and supplementary instructional groups. Such collaboration is especially effective in evaluating student writing and constructed responses in reading and mathematics. It is especially important to use the CSAP scoring rubrics for constructed response and writing, as well as, their released anchor papers. Begin collecting grade-level exemplars that reflect various grade-level proficiency levels from work done by Fort Logan students, as well as, from high-performing schools.
- Analyze student performance data and trends, from broad levels of proficiency to specific skill strengths and deficits. Use these analyses to guide all school decisions from selection of classroom instructional strategies and instructional materials, placement of students, resource allocation, to staff development. This in-depth analysis can serve the school well and bring useful meaning of the contents in assessments to inform the teaching and learning cycle.
- All staff must believe that students can learn and achieve at high levels. A sense of urgency to impact the growth trajectory of ALL students is critical.

Instruction:

- Ensure that all students have knowledge of their own level of learning, have clear goals they are trying to achieve, and can articulate them.
- Involve students in their own learning. They should understand what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how it will benefit them. All students should be familiar with the standards, especially the power standards, primary benchmark targets, be comfortable using rubrics which clearly outline performance expectations, and know what proficient work looks like.
- Develop ways to profile student progress on the power standards. This is a first step in moving toward a valid standards-based reporting system. By profiling proficiency on each power standard, teachers and students are more able to target learning needs to improve overall achievement. Too, achievement reports that show student performance on these power standards validate actual level(s) of academic achievement.
- Having students self-evaluate their work by using their profiles of progress on the power standards, benchmark assessments, and rubrics for constructed response and writing, is one way to build student ownership in their own learning. It is important that intentional planning to develop awareness and gradual release of responsibility for learning be a consideration when developing the progress of lesson development in daily plans.
- It is important to develop higher order thinking skills, as well as, higher levels of complexity and thoroughness for oral and written comprehension and written expression of understanding. Scoring students' constructed responses regularly using exemplars and common, well-developed rubrics provides guidance for grade-level expectations for reading, writing, and mathematics.
- Teachers must teach to grade-level expectations, show students what grade-level quality or above work looks like, and provide strategic, intentional, and targeted daily instruction to systematically scaffold student learning.
- Continue to build the capacity of the library so that the collection better meets the needs of intermediate-level students.
- Direct instruction, guided practice, independent practice and differentiated instruction are components of a consistent design that supports student learning. Increasing student engagement in their learning is critical.
- Skilled use of specific strategies that can effectively support instruction is an identified area of need. Reading First literacy strategies, such structures as Step Up to Writing, Write Source, and Six Traits resources for the teaching of writing, and Everyday Math and Math Solutions strategies should be regularly used with fidelity across all classrooms. Daily inclusion of direct instruction in the five components of literacy (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency) is essential. It is recommended that specific, best practices be identified for all content areas and implemented throughout the school. Accountability for implementation must be assured, as well as evaluation of fidelity in implementation and effectiveness of impact on student achievement for Fort Logan Elementary students.
- When aligning and determining instructional strategies and classroom activities, use those recommended in the core resources as a starting point, knowing they have been developed by experts and carefully matched to the content in the book. Then, expand through additional resources and strategies.
- To acculturate the use of research-based best practices throughout the school with confidence and commitment, all instructional staff members need support through modeling, coaching, book

studies, and lesson studies.

- Feedback and follow-up to regular classroom observations by administrators and instructional coaches can support teachers' efforts to bring clarity and focus to their planning and daily instruction.
- It is imperative that all staff members understand the Response to Intervention model, their in-class responsibilities to provide support and reinforcement to at-risk learners, and the processes to use for collaborative problem-solving to make decisions regarding placement, interventions and additional support. It is so important to ensure that all special needs students, including gifted and talented, have the opportunity to access what they need to know and be able to do to advance their learning. Leadership needs to guide the implementation of a viable and skilled Student Intervention Team process to support teachers in this challenging task.
- In addition to establishing the protocol and processes for referrals, the Intervention Team needs to identify the levels of intervention and materials/strategies that will be used at each level of intensity using the Pyramid of Interventions model. Fidelity to the use of both the Response to Intervention and Pyramid of Interventions components is important.
- Results of intentional intervention after "first best instruction in the classroom" must be monitored for fidelity and effectiveness, with adjustments made through a strategic, intentional process.
- Overall, there needs to be an enhancement of current practices:
 - Intentional, collaborative grade-level planning and ensuring that teaching and learning promotes high expectations and grade-level achievement.
 - Thorough understanding and use of the essential practices of good instruction (Marzano).
 - Intensity of instruction, every day, all day.
 - Maximize the use of instructional time. Interruptions and distracting behaviors must be minimized.
- Fully implement the standards-based teaching and learning cycle. To help understand how the standards-based teaching and learning cycle functions, the following framework outlining critical tenets and needed actions to become fully standards-based is offered to the staff:
 1. What do students need to know and be able to do?
 - Identify essential skills/power standards.
 - Define and illustrate what proficient work needs to look/sound like.
 - Construct curriculum maps, pacing guides, ensure K-6 vertical and horizontal articulation.
 - Align curriculum frameworks/instructional guides and adopted materials with power standards in core content areas.
 - Articulate and communicate power standards to students with purpose and rationale.
 2. How will we teach the standards?
 - Focused, intense individual and collaborative work to design lessons targeted on power standards and essential skills.
 - Identify common, research-based effective instructional strategies expected throughout the school.
 - Develop a common academic vocabulary and language of instruction for each content area.

- Train, coach, monitor to ensure fidelity to implementation of research-based instructional practices.
3. How do we know if students are learning?
 - Clarify the difference between assessment OF learning and assessment FOR learning.
 - Articulate a continuum of measurements of student learning from “Checking for Understanding” to CSAP (use both formative and summative assessment data).
 - Understand how and what data is important to guide what work.
 - “Get down” into regularly measuring small, medium, and large chunks of learning.
 - Ensure student knowledge of their own results, levels of proficiency and goals for learning.
 4. What will we do if students don’t learn? If they are already proficient?
 - Clarify the purpose, context, and rationale for the functions of the school’s Student Improvement Team and processes (Response to Intervention philosophy, framework and beliefs).
 - Design, structure, and provide multiple opportunities to learn.
 - Use classroom differentiation.
 - Design strategic and systematic grade-level and content area interventions.
 - Structure research-based intervention models or programs.
 - Design and use a Pyramid of Interventions school wide, with specific components.

Being standards-based in practice is much more than knowing there are standards to teach, posting objectives in the classroom, or teaching district “aligned with standards” curricula. Being truly standards-based means that in all classrooms and instructional settings there is relentless engagement in a continuous cycle of teaching and learning that defines success as objectively demonstrated student performance on numerous measurements, from short classroom “checks for understanding” to the yearly CSAP. Being truly standards-based takes dogged determination to not simply cover a curriculum or complete activities, but to ensure students actually have learned each and every essential learning identified for each standard in all content areas. **Being standards-based means that every teacher, every day with every student, adheres to agreed upon practices and commits to the students, parents and colleagues that students can and will learn at grade-level expectations and perform at proficient and above levels.** (Benson)

Guiding Questions to Consider:

- ✓ Does staff know how to use the Instructional Calendars to target and teach the standards that are outlined for each month?
- ✓ Is staff aligning the Instructional Calendars with the adopted materials to ensure the power standards in each of the core content areas will be supported by strong instructional materials?
- ✓ How do the teachers identify and provide instructional opportunities for all students to learn essential skills/power standards?
- ✓ How are teachers constructing curriculum maps that lead to the delivery of a guaranteed, viable curriculum that support K-6 articulation?
- ✓ How can teachers articulate and communicate power standards to students with purpose and rationale?

- ✓ How well does the T group structure serve the needs of all students to have equal access to a rigorous, standards-based curriculum for their grade level?
- ✓ How should the ET/IL plan be communicated to all staff? Do all students have access to the information literacy and technology standards as a part of classroom instruction?
- ✓ How can we create a consensus and understanding about what it means to be standards-based in our school?
- ✓ How might we hold ourselves accountable for collaboration on behalf of the academic needs of all students?
- ✓ In what ways can we use collaboration to make our work more efficient, powerful and effective?
- ✓ Is each teacher clear about exactly what students should know and be able to do in the particular grade and content area being taught and what proficient work looks/sounds like? How can teachers define and provide for all students, examples of what proficient work needs to look/sound like?
- ✓ What might a clearly articulated RtI process look like in our building?
- ✓ How do we ensure that interventions are meeting student needs and resulting in higher student achievement?
- ✓ How are we supporting individual student needs through differentiation?
- ✓ How can we change instructional practices in order to advance student learning to accelerate students to grade level?
- ✓ How are teachers supported in the use of making data-driven decisions for their students?
- ✓ How do we share assessment information with students in ways that can help them set their learning improvement targets?
- ✓ How are we applying data information at the student level to make appropriate instructional decisions for a variety of student needs?
- ✓ How will students demonstrate their learning through a variety of ways?
- ✓ How do we know students have learned and achieved grade-level proficiency?
- ✓ Do we know if our classroom assessments are really measuring the knowledge and skills we have been targeting in instruction?

Major Theme 2: Effective Learning Environment

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

A school's learning environment is defined as "...school level variables that cannot be ascribed to a particular staff position or role..." (McRel, 2006).

One aspect of the learning environment is a safe/orderly climate, and such a climate is in place at Fort Logan Elementary School. Disruptive student behavior is rarely observed, children indicate they feel safe in the school and that there is at least one adult at the school in whom they would confide a problem. On the down side and important to note, children indicate they would not tell if they had a concern or complaint about the school.

Fort Logan Elementary School is a high poverty school that is not achieving high academic performance. In its 2006 summary of a meta-analysis of high poverty elementary schools in the United States (Schools that Beat the Odds), McRel reports indicators of effect sizes that are present in high achieving, high-poverty schools. These early findings include the following critical variables, and relevant effect sizes: school environment is found to have the greatest effect size (.67); instruction has the next greatest effect (.34); then is leadership (.23) and professional community (.02). Understanding the impact of these effect sizes relative to high student achievement in high poverty schools can support the school staff as it grapples with choosing the most powerful strategies to bring students to the highest levels of performance. This section of the SST report addresses School Culture, Parent and Community Involvement, and Professional Development and Evaluation.

School Culture

In high poverty schools that beat the odds, McRel reports that there are four components of the culture which have a positive impact on raising student achievement. They have been analyzed for effect size, with the following results:

- safe/orderly climate (.48)
- academic press for achievement (.26)
- parent involvement (.18), and
- assessment and monitoring (.02).

(While the effect size they found for parent involvement is rated .18, other studies indicate that the parent involvement effect size is closer to .10.)

As school staff members work together to plan to raise the level of achievement for all children, collaboration around effect size impacts will be an important consideration. With a safe and orderly climate in place in the building, examination of all facets of the academic press for achievement becomes the highest ongoing priority. A thorough review of current achievement levels of all students and students groups, particularly with regard to grade level, is a starting point for planning. It is clear that students will have to make far more than one year's progress in one year's time in order to exit the school at grade level. The situation is urgent. An immediate response is required. For many staff, much of the present structure and instructional practice will have to be abandoned and replaced with first best instruction and other research-based current practice. Other effect size impacts to be considered in the area of culture include involving parents for the purpose of removing barriers to learning, and assuring that assessment and monitoring of practices and results are continuously cycling forward.

Student, Family and Community Support

Family and Community Support can be powerful elements in the process of building a learning environment that results in high levels of academic achievement for students. The creation of a culture of expectations for the highest quality of instruction and corresponding levels of student performance is basic to genuine partnerships between the school, the families, and the community. Communication of school progress, challenges, and initiatives should be continuous and routine, as well as requests for needed support and involvement. Bridges to the language gap between teachers and parents are needed as well.

Professional Growth and Evaluation

Professional growth of instructional staff members is essential to the process of discarding ineffective instructional practices, and replacing them with powerful research-based practices. The Teach It-Learn It-Demonstrate It model that is being advanced by the district is key to the needed paradigm shift within all instructional programs. Professional development that is job-embedded and relevant to the use of data to drive instruction is essential. To fully support the district initiatives for improvement, the teacher supervision and evaluation plan and practices should connect to the school improvement goals for student learning.

Findings:

School Culture and Student, Family and Community Support:

- Some interior and exterior conditions may be problematic to the safety of students and staff. Exterior examples include:
 - a tetherball pole broken off near the base, with remnants posing a possible hazard to students in the play area,
 - window well covers in disarray,
 - a caved hole next to the building.Examples of interior concerns include:
 - unsecured chemicals and tools in the custodial room, which is left open and unattended at times, and
 - electrical and computer cords unsecured in some locations.
- The PBS Program, and the CATS initiative support a healthy, safe, orderly and equitable learning environment by encouraging quality student-to-student interactions throughout the school. There is a general climate of courtesy and respect throughout the student body. Positive relationships between teachers and students are evident.
- Staff members vary in their perceptions of student understanding of the Classroom Discipline Procedure, and some indicate a lack of equity in its application.
- Student behavior is recognized through the Stars/Bobcat Stars program. Photos of the winners appear in The Herald. While the Bobcat Stars program recognizes children for performance in the area of behavior, (and sometimes other strengths), there is no parallel program to recognize academic achievement. Students are unable to identify how children are recognized for high academic performance.
- School climate survey information is not available.
- While adults in the school express and model caring for the students, present levels of instructional practice may not inspire students' best work. Many teachers indicate that *some* students can learn at high levels of achievement. Access to high levels of achievement for all children is limited by low-level expectations. Limited academic achievement expectations for some students may deny them access to a nurturing learning environment that provides equity in inspiring their best efforts for performance excellence. Extensive portions of classroom work throughout the school are below grade level. Few opportunities for advanced levels of work are available to students.
- There is a focus on "bubble" children, with teachers recommending them for double dose instruction that may move them forward.

- Active student engagement in the learning process varies. Research-based strategies designed to fully engage students are not consistently implemented in all classrooms.
- Student work is generally posted by whole class group, rather than as individual exemplars of outstanding performance. In some cases, teachers "fix" student work by re-typing the content prior to display.
- The T-group structure tracks students into homogeneous ability groups, and students often miss out on the first best instruction that teachers in heterogeneous classrooms provide.
- Recognition by staff of the importance of understanding the varied learning styles of students is not evident. Staff members indicate they do not have the capacity to provide differentiated instruction for diverse subgroups.
- While some teachers indicate they lack access to collaborative reflection time, others are observed sharing their reflections through collaboration in the work the grade-level team shares. Teacher collaboration occurs within certain groups and /or grade levels. The school schedule provides common planning time for two of the three grade level teams. In addition to common planning time, teams use this time to have data dialogues with the math and literacy coaches. Non-teaching staff members cooperate with teaching staff around issues in their areas of responsibility.
- There are informal procedures in place to identify students who experience learning difficulties; however, there are no formal structures in place, such as a Response to Intervention study to assist students to find the targeted help they need to increase achievement.
- All staff members receive school-wide weekly e-mail updates. With the exception of some members of the cafeteria staff, all staff members are included in school meetings.
- There is no written communication plan in Fort Logan Elementary School to establish communication procedures with parents, staff and stakeholders.
- Communication to parents and stakeholders is inconsistent and varies. Teachers are asked to make five phone calls home to parents. Implementation of this task is inconsistent. Some parents reported receiving e-mail messages, while other parents reported that they had no access to computer technology.
- Student data on progress monitoring is not always shared with parents. Some parents are unable to identify the reading level or assessment scores of their children.
- The report card appears to be a confusing blend of standards, proficiency levels, grades and optional comments. Parents express a lack of understanding about the real skill levels of their children.
- Student leadership is available through membership on the student council; however, only one student from each class has a chance to participate. In some classes the teacher selects the representative, while in others there are speeches made, and a popular election held. Student leadership is also promoted through the fifth grade participation in the Ameritown program. Student-led parent conferences are an option for teachers that some may choose to implement.
- Issues of equity are not identified as a priority at Fort Logan Elementary at this time. Generally, issues of diversity and students' awareness of their own cultural roots and the backgrounds of others are addressed via the curriculum materials. The school celebrates Cinco de Mayo, and sponsors Parent Connections Nights. In addition, a translator, homeless coordinator and ELA parent group supports are provided.

- There are Parent Connection Nights that take place once per month and focus on math and literacy learning strategies, assessments, and skills. The Parent Connection Nights program is noted for its role in including parents in the life of the school; however, few teachers participate.
- The Homeless Coordinator finds students who are in need of services such as immunization, entrance into school, clothing, food, school supplies; and manages their cases throughout their time in the district.
- The Parent Liaison provides translation services for monolingual Spanish speaking parents. The liaison translates newsletters, report cards, parent conferences, and contacts made by teachers. The translator holds ELA parent meetings once per month in the school for Spanish speaking parents.
- There is little evidence of new or innovative approaches being tried to improve parent involvement in the school. Parent membership on the School Accountability Committee is limited.
- Few students other than some identified as gifted (G/T) have opportunities to be exposed to cultural experiences outside the school. Field trip options have been reduced and there is now uncertainty about what the future holds for students in this area.

Professional Development and Evaluation:

- There are no consistent processes or procedures in place to attract, retain or place staff. All teachers at Fort Logan Elementary are appropriately licensed and considered highly qualified.
- New teachers attend the district induction program and are assigned mentors. If needed, an outside mentor can be assigned to assist a novice teacher.
- Until the current year, the professional development plan changed with the turnover of each building principal. The new central administration has developed "critical actions" that will guide the new professional development plan. Analysis of data was conducted by central administration to determine professional development needs. The current plan aligns with the school and district goals. All teachers participate in required professional development. While the plan provides the opportunity to acquire and update knowledge, the plan has not been in place long enough to determine the effect on student learning. Classified staff members are not included in the building professional development.
- Professional development has not been evaluated for effectiveness in the past but the current plan includes plans for evaluation.
- Staff members have begun professional development focused on improving student achievement for all students. Although they are in the beginning stages, team meetings, collaborative work on instructional calendars, and the Wednesday professional development activities support the development of a professional learning community.
- Team meetings are used to conduct data discussions. Teachers may reflect on results of interventions and their effect on the achievement of students. Teachers use a protocol to conduct the sessions but not always the same protocol. Some meetings are led by an outside facilitator to provide modeling on how to conduct data dialogues.
- The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) provides some staff members with leadership opportunities. Opportunities are also provided through involvement in the data discussions held during team meetings and the Key Action Wednesday activities.

- Some past professional development opportunities have occurred over time and were followed up with coaching. Principal turnover has compromised the effectiveness of coaches and affected how coaching is delivered. Thus, coaches are not always used to maximum benefit.
- Fiscal resources are used to fund instructional coaching positions. While these positions can make a real difference in supporting teachers as they implement new instructional strategies, in the past, coaches have been used to perform other duties.
- Although the district has an adopted evaluation process, it has not been initiated at Fort Logan Elementary School during this school year. Many staff members can not remember when they have been evaluated.
- There is little evidence that the evaluation process affects changes in practices and increased student achievement in the school. Teachers do not articulate a connection between the evaluation process and student achievement results.
- When asked to identify components of the evaluation process, staff members are able to confirm that observations and feedback are part of the process. Teachers confirm that they are informed about the results of the evaluation process, when formally evaluated.
- The turnover in building administration makes past evaluations less useful in the professional development planning process. Staff members have developed professional and personal goals in the past but there is no evidence of the process being in place this year.
- The school administrator collaborates with his central office supervisors to select professional development that meets professional needs while building instructional leadership capacity.

Recommendations:

- Establish and monitor the implementation of a comprehensive, continuous safety review and repair process (cycle) for the physical facilities and grounds at Fort Logan Elementary School.
- Implement school climate surveys within the school family on an ongoing schedule (e.g., annually), and conduct community surveys to track community perceptions of the school's performance.
- Create expectations for high levels of achievement for all students. Review the requirements for students who perform below level to attain grade level performance (they must achieve far more than one year's growth in one year's time to catch up). Examine the true grade level expectations presently in place, and adjust upward to bring all students to grade level. Assure that extensions beyond grade level are available to all children, especially to advanced students.
- Create a "no excuses" culture for all students to reach high levels of achievement, in which the students fully engage in the learning process and seek to extend their participation beyond basic requirements. Foster pride in high academic performance by creating ways to recognize and celebrate student accomplishments.
- Establish multiple avenues for children to share in opportunities for leadership roles and responsibilities. Assure that students from all subgroups are equitably represented in leadership roles.
- Create authentic, frequent interactive school/home communication about student progress. Include students in parent/teacher conferences and provide an opportunity for them to share their learning targets and ways they are working to achieve them.

- Create consistency in the provision of programs that extend student learning (G/T, and after school supports for student learning). Make every effort to reinstate opportunities for after-school and summer school support.
- Develop a consistent staff hiring process so that all staff know and understand how positions are filled and teaching assignments are made. Make every effort to sustain a high quality staff and match the most qualified person with each area of need.
- The new professional development plan has the potential to improve instruction that will lead to an increase in student learning. Continue to implement the new professional development plan.
- To receive the maximum benefit, it is important that all professional staff participate in the training sessions and in team meetings. The active engagement with and equal participation of the building leadership is critical to demonstrating the value and importance of this effort.
- Foster a school culture of collaborative learning and dialogue. Work with the master schedule to find a way to allow for a common planning time for all teams. The team meetings should be devoted to looking at data and need to be facilitated by someone outside the team. Meetings should be attended by an administrator. Always use a protocol to analyze the data. The same protocol should be used by all groups within the school as they learn to disaggregate the Fort Logan data and use that data to identify achievement gaps. Identifying the gaps is where the work begins. Use your group discussions to strategize ways to eliminate gaps in achievement, evaluate your strategies and revise as needed.
- Teachers need to have a clear understanding of what students know and can demonstrate is taught before a student comes to them and what exit competencies they should possess at the end of the year. Opportunities for horizontal articulation (within grade levels including specials) and vertical articulation need to be developed with the primary school as well as the middle school.
- Continue to expand the development of the Professional Learning Community by focusing on the three questions that lead to quality instruction. What do students need to know? How do we know when they have learned it? What do we do if they haven't? (Teach it-Learn it-Demonstrate it)
- Implement a teacher supervision and evaluation plan that is connected to the school improvement goals for student learning.
- Support enhanced awareness of educational equity throughout the staff. Assure that staff members are aware that group prejudice might be reinforced by homogeneous or ability grouping. Take research-based steps to provide appropriate alternatives.

Guiding Questions to Consider:

- ✓ How will baseline climate survey data be helpful to us?
- ✓ What use can we make of cyclical community perception surveys?
- ✓ What must we know and be able to do in order to make dramatic gains in student achievement? How can we acquire the relevant knowledge and skills?
- ✓ What will it take for me to raise the academic expectations I have for all of my students?
- ✓ What school-wide strategies will be required to exit all of our students at grade level?

- ✓ How can the G/T program provide services during the instructional day and how can we all provide advanced students opportunities in our classrooms to enhance and extend their learning?
- ✓ How shall we promote, acknowledge and celebrate high academic performance?
- ✓ How might we establish a highly responsive communication plan to keep students and parents current on progress toward achievement?
- ✓ How can we expand student options for leadership in the school?
- ✓ What will it take to assure that issues of equity are embedded in our deliberations as a school staff?
- ✓ How can we assure that school leadership is distributed throughout the staff, rather than concentrated with a few staff members?
- ✓ What professional development will be necessary to support the district's student achievement initiatives? How will the instructional practice be monitored and supported as the training proceeds?
- ✓ Can we agree on a standard, school-wide protocol for team meetings and common procedures?
- ✓ How does regular attendance at parent/community meetings by teachers and administrators, such as Parent Connection Nights, ELA Parent Meetings, Accountability Meetings, promote valued partnerships?
- ✓ Are we creating a 'culture of demand' for our parents, so that the parents hold all of us accountable for the highest quality education for students?
- ✓ Does school committee parent participation reflect the diverse population of the community?
- ✓ Do teachers call home to update parents on student progress, commend students for high quality work, as well as to inform parents of discipline problems? How frequently are each student's parents contacted?
- ✓ How can we realize times for common team planning and related work for all grade levels? What structures are in place to allow us to share between teams?
- ✓ How will we hold each other accountable for implementation of new strategies?
- ✓ How do we demonstrate that we believe that every student can learn?

Major Theme 3: Organizational Effectiveness

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

Organizational Effectiveness involves the areas of improvement planning, school leadership, and the allocation and use of resources to support high performance. The organizational work of leadership needs to ensure that the school has clear direction, goals and action plans to improve student learning. Both administrative and teacher leadership are responsible to guide the work of the school (i.e. the teaching and learning processes) by providing direction and high performance expectations, by creating a learning

culture, and by developing the leadership capacity of staff. Additionally, school leadership is responsible to ensure the school maximizes the use of all resources to support high student and staff performance.

Leadership involves creating new organizational structures engaging in planning to carry out the mission and vision of the school. Five leadership principles have been identified as methods to guide the work of schools toward attaining greater achievements:

- *Communicate.* Transform the vision of the system from rhetorical flourish to daily reality.
- *Conquer.* Identify and remove the obstacles—including traditions, policies, prejudices and personalities—that stand in the way of the mission. Conquering need not involve alienation and unpleasantness, but it definitely requires a continuous mental audit of all the demands from inside and outside the organization to determine whether those demands are consistent with the mission.
- *Concentrate.* Focus energy, time, and resources on the most important initiatives, people, and ideas.
- *Coach.* Encourage the discouraged, challenge the complacent, and energize each individual in the organization toward a common mission.
- *Coordinate.* Marshal the resources of the staff so that each program, classroom, and individual contributes to the mission.

--Douglas B. Reeves, 2002

Cawelti advises, “Plans alone are seldom effective in raising student achievement. To make them viable, leadership must be vigilant in monitoring implementation, marshalling resources, making corrective adjustments based on data, and evaluating the effectiveness of the plan. Doing one or two things differently does not move schools to achieving high performance. They must do a number of things differently, all at the same time.” (2000)

Given the challenges Fort Logan Elementary School is facing, it is going to be increasingly important that there is a clear, focused, and strategic organizational plan and direction, i.e. a laser-like focus on a few strategic goals and actions that are supported and implemented by ALL staff. Leadership will need to create school-wide coherence of purpose and goals, a cohesive staff culture of high performance, and consistent staff implementation of priority actions at all levels.

Gains in student achievement can occur if the change is systematic; that means agreed upon, monitored, and non-negotiable for all staff. It is important for the school to move from the approach where the systems are loose or missing to one where systems are focused, deliberate and understood by everyone. Start with the development of a shared mission, vision, and beliefs that drive the goals and work of the school. Use the tools of systems thinking to establish planning processes, communication and feedback conventions, and monitoring and evaluation strategies of all efforts.

Findings:

Mission, Vision, and Beliefs:

- At this point the Fort Logan Elementary School does not have mission, vision or belief statements.
- Since no mission statement exists at Fort Logan at this time, the general public has not been presented with any drafts of possible mission or vision statements.
- Decision-making is not guided by any agreed upon, overall vision or mission at Fort Logan Elementary School.

School Improvement Plan:

- The school improvement plan that has been developed for the 2008-09 school year is based on needs as identified by the school’s data. There is limited evidence that this has occurred in the

past.

- This year the district developed a “45-Day Plan”. Included in the initial plan was the development of Instructional Calendars. Each grade level team is using "Key Action Wednesdays” to understand and start implementing the use of these Instructional Calendars.
- Goals in the school improvement plan are known by some staff members. Since not all staff members are aware of the school improvement plan, there is a lack of staff focus or a sense of responsibility to ensure the actions are met.
- The school improvement plan-
 - contains goals based on CSAP and DIBELS scores in reading.
 - is focused on increasing scores for the grade level but not for delineated sub-group populations.
 - contains action steps generally identifying differentiated instruction as important, but no specific actions are identified for disaggregated student sub-groups.
 - uses a SMART goal format.
- The school improvement plan was developed by school administration. At that time there was limited opportunity for involvement of teachers in the analysis of data for the development of the plan. There is little evidence that disaggregated data were analyzed and communicated to school staff and systematically incorporated into the school’s improvement plan by school leadership.
- While effective educational research-based processes, such as, differentiated instruction and the PLC process are mentioned in the school improvement plan, no specific actions to guide the delivery of these practices are identified in the plan.
- There are no specifically designated resources in the 2008-09 school improvement plan.
- The school improvement plan identifies the roles of individuals that are responsible for components of the plan. The responsibility for the action steps in the plan is shared among various staff members in the school and in the district.
- The focus of the staff for this fall is the Instructional Calendar. Some of the staff members are aware of the connection of this work to the school improvement plan.
- There is focused attention by district and school administration to match the needs of the school, as identified in the school improvement plan, with staff development.
- To the extent that the school improvement plan matches the elements of the district’s “45-Day Plan”, there are continuous accountability measures in both plans. Other than the connection to the “45-Day Plan”, it appears that the school improvement plan is not reviewed by the administration of the school on a routine basis. The school improvement plan has not gone through any changes, nor have there been any other emerging concerns identified that would be reflected in the modification of the plan.
- A part of the monitoring process of the school improvement plan is for the school administration to conduct 45 “Walkthroughs” (Spot Observations) a month. The “Spot Observation” form contains some general checks on using a variety of instructional strategies in the instructional strategies section.

Allocation of Resources:

- There are no set procedures for resource allocation. As principals have changed, each has managed the budget differently.

- The annual budget was developed primarily by the principal with some staff input. There are no procedures to standardize how the budget is developed. The allocation of resources is based on the number of students in a classroom or in a grade level. Currently there is not a philosophy for effective use of resources; rather the distribution is based on equal resources provided to each teacher.
- There is a discrepancy in the level of knowledge among staff members about the amount or availability of resources for each teacher. Teachers who have made it a priority to understand the budget process have access to budget information.
- Fort Logan Elementary School has an active PTO group that provides resources for the school and individual classroom teachers. Also, the local Optimist Club was identified as a resource that individual teachers have approached in the past for special field trips for a class or a grade level. There are additional supports provided by the Qwest Pioneers and by Mullen Mentors.
- The instructional assistants that are available to the school are assigned to playground duty and to work one-on-one with students having significant physical impairments.
- The school has made it a priority to hire literacy and math Interventionists through Title funds. Through district allocations of categorical funds special education, a health aide and the services of a psychologist are provided.
- The district and the school have made the resource commitment to allocate time for teacher collaboration and team planning.
- There is planning for after school tutoring to start sometime later in this school year. Summer school has been available in the past but was not available this past summer.
- The placement of students in classes is done by the teachers of the students at the end of the school year for the next school year. New students are placed in the homeroom class that has the lowest enrollment. Homeroom classes are balanced in order to provide a heterogeneous mixture of students. Consideration for placement is made for students with potential behavioral problems, as well as, to provide equal number of students for each teacher.
- While there is some attempt to match the needs of students with a particular teacher's teaching style, there is not a consistent effort to match students with learning gaps with the highest qualified teachers.

Distributed Leadership and Collaboration:

- The Instructional Leadership Team is the primary instructional committee in the school. There are no specific textbook, technology, or budget committees, etc. in the school at this time. At times, ad hoc committees may be developed to address a specific curriculum or instructional issue.
- A schedule for common planning time for teachers in each grade level was developed at the beginning of the school year. In addition, a schedule providing "Key Action Wednesdays" occurs twice a month for collaborative work on key actions.
- The staff at Fort Logan Elementary School has started to identify specific team planning time in the school year schedule. The impact of team planning on student performance is a topic of informal discussion among staff members and is at the beginning stages.

Analysis of Instructional Effectiveness and Accountability:

- There are some concerns by some staff members that the "T Group Structure" for literacy may not have the rigor for students to gain more than a year's growth in a year's time and therefore may be

- prohibiting some students from ever reaching proficiency.
- Class schedules are designed to provide each grade level with literacy block times where teachers move students into skills groups according to results on DIBELS assessments.
 - The efficient use of time to provide for bell-to-bell instruction is teacher dependent.
 - Some classroom interruption occurs with announcements over the Public Announcement system during instructional time.
 - The individual teacher has the option of adjusting the instructional time for extended and additional instruction within his/her classroom with the exception of the literacy block, specials, and math block times.
 - There is the loss of some instructional time due to assembly programs that may or may not have a direct correlation to the goals of the school improvement plan.
 - Teachers at each grade level are requested to turn in lesson plans to administration on a rotating schedule.
 - The focus of the school schedule is to provide an uninterrupted block of time for the “T group structure” in literacy.
 - Students are placed in tiered groupings during literacy blocks. There is some limited movement for some students between tiers throughout the year.
 - There is a beginning attempt to provide benchmark testing to determine student growth periodically during the school year.
 - There was little evidence that the CDE website has been utilized for CSAP related resources, such as item maps, released items, and scoring rubrics.
 - Data are analyzed using Alpine Achievement, Ed. Performance, CTOBS, and analysis provided from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) on CSAP tests.
 - Staff members indicate that it is possible to access data from school or home. At this time some staff members are able to access this data but other staff members have not done so or are unaware of how to access this data.
 - CSAP data are disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and primary language.
 - At this time in the 2008-09 school year data have not been collected in order to review or modify the plan.
 - Data that have been collected at this point in the school year is limited to measuring individual student achievement progress. Data have not been collected for the purpose of measuring achievement of the school goals.

Recommendations:

There is need for a systems approach to organize and address the work of Fort Logan Elementary School. It is imperative that basic systems and procedures be instilled at Fort Logan Elementary School in order to

provide a foundation for consistency and predictability in essential operations. The following recommendations guide the development of components for the organizational infrastructure of the school.

Mission, Vision, and Beliefs:

- The determination of the mission, vision, and beliefs of Fort Logan Elementary School needs to be of highest priority. These need to be developed immediately for the mission becomes the foundation for all instructional and operational decisions in the future. Clear procedures are needed to develop, communicate, and implement the mission, vision, and beliefs of the school. The mission development process needs to be inclusive of the staff at the school, the building accountability committee, and support the over-all mission, vision, and beliefs of the Sheridan School District

School Improvement Plan:

- Clear procedures are needed to develop, communicate, and implement the school improvement plan. This plan needs to be directed by the school mission statement, values, beliefs and goals. The process needs to be inclusive of the staff at the school and the building accountability committee. The school improvement plan needs to match the over-all direction and plans of the Sheridan School District. There is a need to continually monitor and communicate the ongoing progress of the implementation of the plan throughout the school year. The staff would be well served to be more fully aware of the plan in order to focus on prioritized elements to ensure full, deep, and long-term implementation of actions that have the most potential to improve student achievement.
- A system for staff development should align with the school improvement plan. It is important that the administrative leadership provide the staff with focus, clarity and organization along with monitoring and accountability for the implementation of practices that support the action steps of the school improvement plan.

Allocation of Resources:

- Clear procedures are needed to develop, communicate, and implement a school budget on an annual basis with flexibility to meet emerging needs. This budget process needs to be directed by the school mission statement, values, beliefs and goals. The budget process and the resulting budget need to be inclusive of the staff at the school, the building accountability committee, and match the over-all direction of the Sheridan School District. The resulting budget plan needs to reflect the most effective use of resources based on student need rather than a simple process of providing equal funds to all staff members. The budget process should be inclusive of financial, time, and staffing resources.
- Clear procedures need to be developed for the purpose of implementing a consistent staff hiring process and will provide all staff an understanding of how hiring and assignments are made. An effective hiring process will maximize the opportunity to hire the most qualified staff to implement the mission of the school and meet the needs of all students.
- Develop a process that places the students with the greatest need with the most qualified staff. Administrative oversight of the implementation of the process developed is important to ensure the fidelity of this process. It is recommended that assignment of teachers and support staff be reviewed, with a focus that ensures staff members are assigned because they have the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet the needs of their students.

Distributed Leadership and Collaboration:

- “The downfall of low-performing schools is not their lack of effort and motivation; rather it is poor decisions regarding what to work on.” (Elmore, 2003). It is important for the school to use an achievement-focused mission to guide all decisions and actions. A school that is headed in several different directions isn’t heading anywhere at all. Structure the work of the school to develop a laser-like focus of effort.
- Due to the lack of consistency in sustained leadership because of the high turnover rate of principals, an informal leadership structure has emerged in the school. This is a credit to the staff members that have taken this informal role.
- There is a need to empower all staff to have a voice in the school. Make it a priority to develop a broad-based and inclusive distributed leadership structure rather than the current emergent leadership profile. Define the role of principal, as the instructional and learning leader in the building. Provide opportunities for the development of leadership skills focused on practices and decisions that support the mission and goals of the school improvement plan for all staff that have an interest in leadership. .
- Fort Logan Elementary School needs to be commended for providing a school schedule that affords team planning for most grade levels and the “Key Action Wednesdays” for staff collaboration and staff development. Before this time can be most efficiently used, it will be necessary to develop the skills of collaboration for all staff members. Investigate protocols, such as the Critical Friends protocols, Professional Learning Community research, and offer modeling, and embedded staff development to enhance collaboration. To provide consistency, the principal should attend all team meetings to ensure this important skill, collaboration, is learned at a deep and sustained level.
- A clear communication plan needs to be developed that ensures that staff members, parents, and other stakeholders are aware of the mission, school improvement plan and current status of the action steps of that plan are clear to everyone. Consideration of the parental access to communication technology needs to be addressed in any communication plan.

Instructional Effectiveness:

- The “T group structure” needs to be evaluated as to strengths and weaknesses of the system. There is a concern that the current system may not provide equal opportunity for all students to reach grade-level standards. There is evidence through the data that many students are missing the opportunity to make more than a year’s growth in a year’s time. To “catch-up” students that are under performing, only making a year’s growth will ensure that these students will never reach proficiency. Investigate the research, past and current data to evaluate the “T Structure”.
- It is essential that the results of student assessments be reviewed to assure that student learning is accelerated as a result of this structure. The same evaluation process for academic achievement should be applied to evaluate other interventions and structures in the building. If students are not improving, there should be more careful analysis of the root causes. It is likely a bigger picture than whether or not students are demonstrating improved learning on specific skills.
- Study and apply the research related to differentiation and its impact on student achievement as well as the affective needs of students.
- Time is a valuable resource. Ensure that attention is drawn to the amount of time transitions are taking and the impact incidental interruptions, such as PA announcements, have on maximum use of instructional time.
- The Professional Staff Evaluation system needs to be designed to match the best researched standards-based instructional techniques and practices.

Guiding Questions to Consider:

- ✓ How have we defined and promoted shared leadership in the school?
- ✓ How is the staff supporting the administration as well as the administration supporting the staff?
- ✓ How are we monitoring the actions of our school to achieve our performance targets?
- ✓ Who is involved in what types of school decision-making?
- ✓ What data are used to help make decisions? Do we need more or different data?
- ✓ How are our programs equitable for all students?
- ✓ How are we using all our resources to maximize staff expertise, and promote opportunities for all students?
- ✓ How can we address the equity in instructional service for all students?
- ✓ How are decisions about resource allocations made?
- ✓ Is our school improvement plan a living document that guides our work, or is it a document on a shelf?
- ✓ How are our school improvement goals and action steps focused on student performance?
- ✓ Have we identified clear steps and resources needed to achieve these goals?
- ✓ How is implementation of the school improvement plan monitored throughout the year?
- ✓ How do we demonstrate to an outside observer that we are all committed to continuous improvement at this school?

IN CONCLUSION:

The School Support Team sincerely hopes that this report assists the school community in the goal of raising academic achievement for all students.

The team suggests the following resources to help guide your work:

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More resources about the nine standards used in this report are available at the Professional Development and School Support website:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/PDSSP/index.asp>

APPENDIX

A Summary of Research-based Practices that Support Raising Student Achievement

The research is clear on what schools can do to close gaps in achievement. Following is a synopsis of research in areas that have demonstrated positive impact on student achievement and which correspond to strategies applicable to Fort Logan Elementary:

- ❖ Full-day Kindergarten
 - ❖ All Students Need a Rigorous Curriculum Matched with Standards
 - ❖ High Expectations and No Excuses
 - ❖ Additional Learning Time
 - ❖ The Need for Interventions
 - ❖ Use of Data and Frequent Assessments
 - ❖ Positive Climate and Behavior Systems
 - ❖ Need for a Collaborative Culture
 - ❖ Teacher Quality
 - ❖ Parent and School Partnerships
- **Full-day Kindergarten** can afford the academic learning time needed to prepare for mastery of primary-grade reading and math skills. In doing so, such programs help circumvent subsequent needs for remediation or grade retention.
 - New learning must be integrated with past experiences and be project-based.
 - Children need to be involved in first-hand experiential learning with objects, other children, and adults.
 - Language development and appropriate pre-literacy experiences is essential.

- Offer a balance of small group, large group, and individual activities.
 - Assess students' progress through documented teacher observation and systematic examination of student work. Assess specific skill development through reliable and valid assessments.
 - Parents must be helped to understand how their child's social and learning abilities develop. Starting this partnership in preschool benefits the child.
 - Transitions from preschool to kindergarten and/or first grade must be seamless and smooth. (*Chicago Longitudinal Study*)
- **All Students Need a Rigorous Curriculum Matched with Standards**

Katie Haycock said in 2006, "Historically, there has been no agreement on what students should learn or what kind of work is good enough. An awful lot of our teachers – even brand new ones – are left to figure out on their own what to teach and what constitutes 'good enough' work."

A number of studies have shown that curriculum guides often do not translate into classroom practice. Because of time constraints and personal preferences, teachers often skip over materials designated in curriculum guides. Without thoughtful selection, some standards may be left out, while unessential material is included. McRel suggests that it may be necessary to carefully examine teachers' unit and lesson plans to see how well standards are being taught in the classroom. (*McRel, 2000*)

Research has also shown the importance of ensuring that standards and benchmarks are clearly communicated in each course, unit, and lesson. Marzano found in his 1998 meta-analysis that when students were clear in advance about what they were learning, their achievement was, on average, 34 percentile points higher on tests than control groups. This supports the need for teachers to explicitly make the connection between standards and every lesson taught.

Additionally, different standards and identified essential learnings require different types of knowledge, thus different teaching strategies are needed. "The best teachers are those who expand their repertoire of instructional practices to suit the particular kinds of knowledge addressed by specific standards". (*McRel, 2000*)

Teachers must also then select the most appropriate assessment for evaluating the degree to which students have learned the essential learnings and standards. Teachers must ask students to demonstrate their understanding of complex concepts, such as through constructed response questions that challenge the

complexity and depth of thought more than multiple choice or true/false. (McRel, 2000)

- **High Expectations and No Excuses**

High expectations must be more than a slogan or a mental state. High expectations are represented by sets of explicit, observable behaviors that lead students to learn and attain at higher levels. These are evidenced not only by staff beliefs and actions, but by how teachers and administrators respond when some students do not learn. Most useful strategies will require the cooperation of the school as a whole: teachers cannot implement most of these strategies working alone in isolated classrooms. (*Lezotte, 2007*)

Examples of efforts that contribute to realizing high expectations:

- Students are provided with exemplars of quality work.
- Students are required to repeat assignments and work until it meets the prescribed level of quality.
- Instruction is scaffold to support students reaching standards and higher.
- Concepts and skills are re-taught until mastery is achieved.
- Sufficient practice is facilitated to assure mastery and generalization.

Examples of “No Excuses” behavior:

- Staff members take responsibility for student learning as demonstrated by actions and initiatives that solve learning problems.
- Regardless of a student’s background, staff members do whatever works to make the student successful.
- Assessments are given to identify students in need of additional supports.
- Instruction is scaffold to support struggling learners.
- Interventions are put into place to address every student’s needs.
- Actions to address student lack of learning are undertaken with a sense of urgency.
- Direct resources, including time, to meet the standards.
- Create small learning environments.
- Use data to drive needed changes in instruction. (*Poverty & Race Research Action Council, 2001*)

- **Additional Learning Time**

Disadvantaged students typically enter kindergarten nearly a year behind on their first day of school. Half of these students are even more delayed. To close the learning gap by the end of 3rd grade, a student would have to have an average annual gain of 1.33 years every year for four years. These students’ learning gap will not close

without giving students more time to learn.

During the summer break, many students regress academically. This regression accelerates after the 6th week of summer. Recoupment in all subjects takes about 4-7 weeks in the fall. Low income students demonstrate significant regression during the summer. (*Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007*)

To quote Katie Haycock, “High performing schools are obsessive about time, especially instructional time”.

Schools that address the time issue:

- Guard every instructional minute in the day-
 - ✓ Reduce interruptions
 - ✓ Keep superfluous activities out of the school
 - ✓ Assign staff in ways to maximize instruction
- Provide a minimum of 90 minutes of literacy and 60 minutes of math instruction daily.
- Arrange for selected students to have an additional dose of intensive instruction during the school day.
- Split schedules to allow some students to have more time for learning.
- Provide before and after school tutoring and some small group instruction.
 - ✓ Tutoring programs using research-based practices make a difference. Non-research based tend not to accelerate learning for more students.

- **Need for Interventions**

We can predict poor results for many students if interventions are not provided. We must intervene to:

- Accelerate the learning rate
- Build background knowledge and vocabulary
- Build habits of thinking and learning

Mobility creates a need for interventions. 41% of changers are below grade level compared to 26% for stable students. (*Vail, 1996*) Students who move often do not have time to rebound between moves. (*Kerbow, 1993*) Mobile students take two years to achieve what stable students learn in a year. (*Brent & Diobelda, 1993*)

- **The RTI Model Provides an Example of an Intervention Strategy**
 - ✓ Tier I: Classroom Intervention
 - Typically implemented by classroom teachers/teams.
 - Interventions are tied to the core program.
 - Student progress is monitored to determine the need for changes in intervention.
 - Schools adopt a research-based core program to assure all students have exposure to the same skills and content. (Reading First)
 - ✓ Tier II: Small Group Intervention
 - Provided to students in need of specific skill or behavior assistance.
 - Use of research-based strategies and programs.
 - Use “flooding” to provide small group instruction on skills individual students need.
 - Additional time and instruction is provided to needy students.
 - Student progress is monitored to determine the need for changes.
 - ✓ Tier III: Extensive and Intensive Interventions
 - Provide intensive instruction using research proven programs and strategies.
 - Student progress is monitored to determine the need for changes.

Schools that apply the RTI Model:

- Have problem solving teams
- Have a system of formative assessment
- Monitor student progress frequently
- Have a pyramid or menu of interventions
- Have adopted research-proven intervention models for students with significant needs. (*RTI Self Assessment, June, 2007*)

- **Use of Data and Frequent Assessments**

Today's school leaders shift both their own focus and that of the school community from inputs to outcomes and from intentions to results. (*Rick DuFour*) High performing schools are obsessive about data. (*Haycock, 2006*)

Nearly every source reviewed related to closing the learning gap identifies the use of data as a characteristic of high performing schools. The use of data goes much deeper than simply acknowledging that there are differences between groups of students.

Effective use of data includes:

- Data are used to identify students in need of interventions (not just those on the bubble).
- Assessment data are used to find weaknesses in coverage.
- Assessment data are used to determine what and when skills and content should be taught.
- Data from frequent assessments are used to adjust instruction, re-teach, and increase focus.

Data from a variety of sources can provide additional information that is then triangulated with other data to assess achievement and climate issues:

- Attendance data (student and staff)
- Staffing assignment data, such as auditing school schedules
- Discipline data
- Student, parent, and faculty survey data

Frequent assessment is the norm in high performing schools. High performing schools assess students no less than quarterly; some assess monthly. These assessments are used to identify needed interventions, re-teaching and pacing. Katie Haycock says, "At every moment schools that assess frequently know which students are behind and are intensely focused on bringing them up".

Assessments can be used to motivate students. High performing districts, schools and classrooms use data in the ways that motivate students for:

- Goal setting
- Identifying areas of focus
- Making it clear to the students the learning targets they need to reach
- Frequent assessment data shared with students gives them a picture of their own progress. (*Stiggins, 2007*)

- **Positive Climate and Behavior Systems**

In second generation, orderly schools:

- Teachers receive training in culturally responsive ways to work with students.
- Staff training has been provided in areas such as cooperative learning.
- All staff recognize the need to make instruction related to the background and experiences of the students.
- Students' learning experiences are shaped to give them a sense that they are effective learners.

A Positive Behavior System (PBS), fully and consistently implemented, includes:

- Common school-wide behavioral expectations are taught, not just preached.
- Appropriate behaviors are reinforced, and inappropriate behaviors have consistent consequences.
- Data is used to identify needs, trends, and solutions.
- Interventions teach replacement behaviors.
- Adult supervision is used effectively.
- All adults support the school's system.

At high performing, low-income schools the teachers want to be there. These schools are not easy places, and folks work really hard. But, there can be lots of camaraderie, lots of stability, and lots of support. (*Haycock, 2006*)

- **Need for a Collaborative Culture**

“Throughout our ten-year study, whenever we found an effective school or an effective department within a school, without exception, that school or department has been part of a collaborative professional learning community”. (*Michael Fullan*) McRel states, “We must create schools in which teachers can become part of the solution. Time to work collaboratively is necessary”.

The most promising strategy for sustained substantive school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community. The path to change in the classroom lies within and through professional learning communities. (*Millbrey McLaughlin*)

We can achieve our fundamental purpose of high levels of learning for all students only if we work together. We cultivate a collaborative culture through the development of high performing teams. (*DuFour, 2001*)

What is Collaboration? “A systematic process in which we work together, interdependently, to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results. (*DuFour, Dufour & Eaker*)

In high performing schools:

- Teachers regularly observe other teachers;
- Teachers have time to plan and work collaboratively;
- New teachers get generous and careful support and acculturation;
- Teachers take on many other leadership tasks at the school. (*Haycock*)

Examples of collaborative time use includes:

- Examining student work,
- Creating common assessments,
- Mapping the curriculum,
- Studying and analyzing data,
- Sharing instructional strategies,
- Determining interventions for students who are not succeeding,
- Engaging in lesson study

- **Teacher Quality: Teachers Matter Hugely**

“Good schools know how much teachers matter, and they act on that knowledge. They work hard to attract and hold good teachers; they make sure that their best are assigned to the students who most need them; and they chase out teachers who are not “good enough” for their kids”. (Haycock, 2006)

Principals are hugely important, ever present, but NOT the only leaders in the school.

Some hurdles to overcome:

- Union contracts often assure senior teachers get to move to the easier schools.
- A University of Texas study found that teachers who leave districts for other nearby districts are more likely to do it to work with easier students than for more money.

High performing districts and schools:

- Provide support for new teachers through provision of quality induction programs, mentors, and coaches.
- Use embedded staff development strategies, such as coaching and PLC structures, to grow teacher competencies and avoid the drive-by one day in-services.

Ways in which some schools are addressing teacher quality:

- Teacher assignments are made to allow for balance between experienced, effective teachers and newer staff.
- Teacher mentoring assignments are monitored by principals to determine both activity and effectiveness.
- Initiatives are in place to reduce teacher absences.
- Class schedules allow for new teachers and their mentors to meet.
- Class schedules allow for time for groups of teacher to meet and collaborate.
- Principals consciously work to build and support teacher leadership in the building.

- **Parent and School Partnerships**

The Poverty & Race Research Action Council emphasizes the importance of understanding and implementing parent involvement requirements under Title I and other federal programs. It is important that a partnership-based school environment is created that considers parents and the community as part of the family. It is important there be a culture within the school that respects and cultivates family cultural values and traditions. Non-traditional forms of communication are used to reach out to parents and student and family community-based services are available at the school site.

Some strategies used by schools and districts to increase family involvement:

- Schools identify a number of ways and provide resources so that parents can support their child’s learning without having to come to school.
- Parents from diverse backgrounds are actively encouraged to serve on accountability committees and other committees in the school.

- Teachers are provided with information on cultures of their student population and their capacity to work with families is strengthened.
- Teachers are encouraged and supported in making home visits.
- Schools provide families with training and resources.
- Student involvement in extracurricular activities is encouraged.
- Ensure support of the principal in providing leadership for family engagement.
- Recognize that it takes time to build trust between families and schools.

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Colorado Department of Education
1003g School Improvement Grant Application
Sheridan School District Response to Feedback and Key Points

I. *The benchmarks used to measure the success of professional development and the support of the coaches should be based on change in teacher practices and student results. Elaborate and explain how that will be monitored.*

Professional Development for turnaround staff includes:

Curriculum Alignment (Focal Point)

-Lesson objectives that align with curriculum maps/teacher resources

Indicators of Success:

Out of 80 spot observations of classrooms in October 2010 by District leaders and outside instructional leaders including Focal Point team members, 80% of the teachers post an effective lesson objective and teach the aligned curriculum at least at the proficient level. The percentage will increase to 90% by April 2011.

Out of 80 spot observations of classrooms in October 2010 by District leaders and outside instructional leaders including Focal Point team members, 80% of the teachers conduct effective demonstrations of learning that are tightly aligned to the curriculum. That percentage will increase to 90% by April 2011.

Monitoring by Building Leaders and Focal Point Staff:

Monitor the use of instructional calendars and provide feedback to each teacher regarding her curriculum alignment at least twice each month

Support for Improved Practice:

Shared successful strategies in Professional Learning Communities (PLCSs) provide instructional coaching, peer support, opportunities to observe in model classroom,

Effective Design and Delivery of Effective Lessons (Flippen)

Indicators of Success:

Out of 80 spot observations of classrooms in October 2010 by District leaders and outside instructional leaders, including Flippen Team members, students in at least 75% of the classrooms are engaged in instruction within one minute from the time class or the lesson is planned to begin. Students in these classes are also engaged in instruction until the end of the class or lesson. This percentage will increase to 85% by April 2011.

Out of 80 spot observations of classrooms in October 2010 by District leaders and outside instructional leaders, 75% of the teachers use at least one multiple-response strategy every ten minutes. This percentage will increase to 85% by April 2011.

Monitoring by Building Leaders and Flippen Instructional Team:

Effective Use of Backwards Planning for lessons

Teach “bell to bell”

Use at least one multiple response strategy every ten minutes of class (by the end of the year, this should increase to every five minutes)

Support for Improved Practice:

Shared successful strategies in Professional Learning Communities (PLCSs) provide instructional coaching, peer support, opportunities to observe in model classroom,

Professional Learning Communities (Focal Point)

Indicators of Success

Teachers meet in grade-level PLCs at least twice a month

For each PLC, teachers use a standardized template that guides work and focuses on at least one of the following four questions: 1) what should students know and be able to do, 2) how do teachers know when the students have learned the objectives, 3) what do teachers do when students are not learning or not responding to the strategies used, and 4) what do teachers do when students learn ahead of their peers.

Monitoring by Building Leaders, Teacher Leaders, Focal Point

Attend PLCs regularly and validate for the teachers what is working well and provide feedback on how to make them more effective

Support for Improved Practice:

Principals, Data Coach, Teacher Leaders will provide formal and informal professional development (individualized support) on how to collect relevant student data and how to utilize data to inform instruction.

Capturing Kids' Hearts (Flippen)

Indicators of Success

Out of 80 spot observations of classroom in October 2010 by District leaders and/or outside instructional leaders, 80% of the teachers will utilize designated classroom procedures that maximize structure and predictability for students.

Utilizing the PBS Self-Assessment Survey, each school will increase 20% over implementation baseline established spring, 2010. All schools will achieve a minimum of 50% implementation for School-Wide Systems and Non-Classroom Settings Systems.

Monitoring by Building Principals, RtI Specialist, Flippen

Consistently monitor using the building walk-through document of implementation of designated classroom procedures that maximize structure and predictability for students.

Support for Improved Practices:

Principals, Data Coach, RtI Specialist, and Teacher PBS Leaders will provide formal and informal professional development (individualized support) on how to collect relevant student behavioral data and how to utilize data to inform instruction of expected procedures and processes to students.

II) *Provide an explanation for the capacity of and skills used by Teach for America to identify candidates who have the ability or the success to turn around struggling schools.*

The Teach for America (TFA) process begins by screening applicants for core philosophies and personal characteristics that support the idea of “Help Ensure Educational Opportunity for All” This screening provides Sheridan School District with candidates who support the core belief, “with the support of a great teacher, at risk students will achieve at the same rate as non-at risk students” In addition, Research has conclusively shown that Teach For America corps members' impact on their students' achievement is equal to or greater than that of other new teachers. Moreover, the most rigorous studies have shown that corps members' impact exceeds that of experienced and certified teachers in the same schools. After TFA candidates are selected, a rigorous performance interview is conducted by District, Building, and Teacher Leaders to determine the skill of the candidate. After candidates are selected to join the Fort Logan Instructional Team, the Sheridan Executive Director of Learning Services partners with the Curriculum Director from Teach for America to ensure that the skills necessary to be an effective teacher for struggling students are developed. Teachers recruited from Teach for America will receive on-going coaching support both from the TFA organization and from Fort Logan Building Leadership.

III) There are some concerns about the functioning capability of Focal Point to live up to its promise. They have at least two major 1003g contracts. The questions do not focus on the ability of the principal of Focal Point, but occurs when the work is done by others. Justify and satisfy the demands of Ft. Logan Elementary.

Focal Point met the high expectations to become an accepted Turnaround Partner. Sheridan School District will develop contracts with Focal Point, Flippen, and the National Center for Time and Learning. Within these contracts, specific deliverables and timelines will be outlined. In addition, within the contract, monetary penalties will be specified if deliverables including student achievement goals are not met. These contracts will be provided to Unit of Turnaround and Intervention Assistant Commissioner, Darryl Bonds to provide feedback and support.

Based on the work of educational leader Mike Miles, Focal Point has helped teachers and administrators in over 50 school districts work more effectively and raise student academic proficiency. Focal Point professional developers provide training in systems thinking, building leadership density, curriculum alignment, organizational effectiveness, action planning, and other school reform initiatives.

IV) Specify the formative assessment to be used to monitor progress, guide instruction, and be used to facilitate collaborative staff discussions. Be specific about the materials from Limelight. Evidence of alignment with CSAP? What is Limelight?

Assessment that will be utilized to determine student achievement for math and reading follow:

Summative:

1. CSAP data
2. EdPerformance

Progress Monitoring:

1. Common Based Quarterly Assessments-developed in partnership with Focal Point-benchmark to determine quarterly student achievement growth utilizing the Assess 2

Know Benchmark item bank After receiving the feedback from the Colorado Department of Education, Sheridan School District made a determination that it is imperative that the item bank have complete alignment with the Colorado State Standards. We will replace Limelight with Assess 2 Know.

2. EdPerformance-identification of specific skills needed at current student performance level.
3. Demonstration of Learning –developed in partnership with Focal Point utilizing the Classroom item bank from Assess 2 Know published by Riverside (Houghton-Mifflin Harcourt). The items will be utilized to develop 36 sets of electronic assessments that align to the instructional calendars. This will allow teachers to use this data to inform if students have mastered the essential skills within a two-week unit. The data will be brought to PLCs with the assistance of the data coach to center around the four questions 1) what should students know and be able to do, 2) how do teachers know when the students have learned the objectives, 3) what do teachers do when students are not learning or not responding to the strategies used, and 4) what do teachers do when students learn ahead of their peers.
4. DIBELS

V) *When considering the professional development pertaining to curriculum alignment, will the staff be taught to align or will the curriculum be aligned? Explain.*

A viable, aligned curriculum is the most important factor in raising student achievement (McREL, 2005). Alignment is the essential first step in the development of appropriate programming for all atypical learners, including students who are English Language Learners, Gifted and Talented and/or those students who have a disability. It is important that teachers buy-in and understand this process. One of the deliverables expected from the Focal Point Team is to provide a curriculum that is both aligned to the Colorado State Standards and to the research based reading and math series currently in place at Fort Logan. At the same time, teacher leaders from Fort Logan will be trained in curriculum alignment to better understand the importance and the process of curriculum alignment. Fort Logan Principal, Susan Resnick, will guide her staff in a strand trace in order for all staff members to understand the process as well.

The evaluation plan must be specific: (1) Identify expected outcomes/targets—interim and annual, (2) How you will measure those outcomes, (3) When you will measure the outcomes—both interim targets and annual targets, (4) what activities you will use to accomplish the expected outcomes.

The Evaluation Plan is divided into two major subcategories:

1. Implementation of action step as outlined by major improvement strategies
2. Student Achievement targets

Activities are outlined in Response #1 of Response to Feedback document

Action Steps	Timeline	Key Personnel	Implementation Benchmarks
Use of Instructional	Weekly	Principal/Building	By October 2010,

<p>Calendars-effective and aligned learning objectives</p> <p>Effective Lesson Design and Delivery</p>	<p>1x per month</p> <p>Formal Review 2x per year</p>	<p>Leaders</p> <p>Principal, Building Leaders, Flippen, Focal Point</p> <p>Principal, District Leaders, Focal Point</p>	<p>75% teachers will post effective learning objectives aligned to the instructional calendar This percentage will increase to 85% by April 2011.</p> <p>By October 2010, at least 75% of the classrooms are implementing effective lesson strategies as measured by Building Instructional Feedback Document. By April, 2011 percentage will increase to 85%</p>
<p>Professional Learning Communities-participation in effective PLCs</p>	<p>Weekly</p> <p>1x per month</p> <p>Formal Review 2x per year</p>	<p>Principal/Building Leaders, data coach, Building Rti Specialist</p> <p>Principal, Building Leaders, Focal Point</p> <p>Principal, District Leaders, Focal Point</p>	<p>Teachers will participate in PLCs 2 xs per month. Key personnel will provide feedback on effectiveness as measured by the PLC District template</p>
<p>Behavioral Procedures and Classroom Structures</p>	<p>Weekly</p> <p>1x per month</p>	<p>Principal/Building Leaders, Building Rti Specialist, Building Academic and Behavioral Coordinator</p> <p>Principal, Building Leaders, Flippen, Kay Cessna (Behavioral Specialist)</p>	<p>By October, 2010 student discipline office referrals will decrease by 20% as measured by SWIS data system</p> <p>By April, 2011 student discipline office referrals will decrease by 30% from</p>

	Formal Review 2x per year	Principal, District Leaders, Flippen	baseline data established September, 2010 as measured by SWIS data system
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Student Achievement Targets 2010-2011

Annual:

1) Annual-Fort Logan will meet the state average in reading, writing, or math OR achieve a minimum of 10% increase in proficiency over the previous year. Interim-EdPerformance and data from Common Quarterly Based Measures will be monitored quarterly to assess growth toward annual goal. This data will be studied to inform instruction during the bi-monthly PLC meetings.

2) Annual-Fort Logan will meet or exceed the 50th percentile as measured by the Colorado State Longitudinal Growth Measure in reading and math to ensure students are growing in skills at an adequate rate. Interim- Common Quarterly Based Measures data will be monitored quarterly to assess growth toward annual goal. This data will be studied to inform instruction during the bi-monthly PLC meetings.

3) Annual-Fort Logan will make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year. Interim-EdPerformance and data from Common Quarterly Based Measures will be monitored quarterly to assess growth toward annual goal. Data disaggregated by subgroup will be studied to inform instruction during the bi-monthly PLC meetings.

There are some specific budget items that need attention/justification:

1. *Justify the proposed buyout of teachers: \$75,000 in year one and \$50,000 in year two.*
This has been removed from the revised budget entirely.
2. *More specifics pertaining to the \$242,000 for High Level Instructional Feedback is required.*
Per revised budget, this total is being reduced to \$120,000. This expense secures 15 days of senior level support from Focal Point, 18 days of explicit coaching/mentoring for the principal and the model classroom teacher from Focal Point, and an additional 4 on-site support days for 8 months from Focal Point staff to provide additional instructional observations, coaching, feedback, and monitoring of progress against First-Best Instruction objectives and implementation.
3. *Give more specifics about the model classroom, its intended impact, and operation.*
The model classroom is intended to be a living, breathing example of what all of Fort Logan's classrooms should look like by the end of the turnaround process. The model classroom teacher will be expected to operate at the highest level in the building. Other teachers will be able to observe lessons, consult of strategies, and seek peer coaching from

this person. The intended impact is to raise the bar of what quality instruction looks like and establish that there are no excuses for failing to deliver results. There will be one model classroom in year one. An additional (in a different grade) will be added in year two. By year three, there will be a model classroom at each grade level within Fort Logan. This provides the opportunity to recognize and advance high-performing teachers and increase leadership at the teacher level. Ultimately, the model classroom teachers will be the lead teachers for each grade level and lead PLCs, as well.

4. *There is a sizeable expenditure associated with Safe and orderly environments and developing high expectations. Give specifics. Will the responsibility for creating both be left to a provider? If not, explain the process. If so, what is the teacher/staff responsibility in both areas?*

The dollars invested against creating safe and orderly environments works in conjunction with PBS to address the rampant behavior issues that compromise learning at Fort Logan. The plan centers on partnering with the Flippen Group to deliver best in class professional development and follow-up with the Fort Logan staff. The staff is accountable for implementing the program with fidelity, but the Flippen Group will be accountable for high-level training and support as discussed with the organization during the planning process.

5. *A better explanation for the two weeks of incremental professional development (a good concept) is needed.*

While everyone would agree that high-quality professional development must be embedded into the contract year, we start to run out of time as we look at the amount of support we need to provide the Fort Logan staff to accelerate the turnaround process. As a result, the Sheridan School District will schedule two additional weeks of mandatory training during the summer upon grant approval (teachers are currently holding dates). As part of this training, the Flippen Group will do a session on Effective Instructional Design and Delivery and an additional training on working with second language students. During this two week period, there will be additional trainings to reinforce behavior and instructional programs already in place. See schedule below:

DESIGN & DELIVERY OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION (MANDATORY FULL DAY)	DESIGN & DELIVERY OF EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION (MANDATORY HALF DAY)	MANDATORY SPED STAFF TRAINING (FULL DAY) 23rd	FULL STAFF PBS FOLLOW-UP WORK/ TRAINING (FULL DAY) 24th	FULL STAFF PBS FOLLOW-UP WORK/ TRAINING (FULL DAY) 25th
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FULL STAFF PLANNING SUMMIT (FULL DAY) JULY 26th	FULL STAFF PLANNING SUMMIT (FULL DAY) JULY 27th	FUNDATIONS (FULL DAY) JULY 28th	SMALL GROUP SESSIONS: - ECAW - WILSON - DIFF. INSTR. (ASSIGNED)	SMALL GROUP SESSIONS: - ECAW - WILSON - DIFF. INSTR. (ASSIGNED)
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6. *Expenditures for Bridge classrooms and “Pride Wear” are not allowable under this grant.* Bridge classrooms have been removed. However, “Pride Wear” are school branded clothing items for the students and work as functional uniforms for the students. We believe this item is allowable and would ask that it be reconsidered.

7. *There doesn’t seem to be a connection between the Program Coordinator and the academic needs of the school. Questions are asked as to whether this is an allowable expense—given the two issues above are not—and if allowable, how can this be sustained after the federal funds expire?*

It was our interpretation of the grant that extended instructional day and enrichment opportunities that are related to supporting the academic growth and background/experiential knowledge of our students were not only allowable but even mandatory in successfully executing the turnaround model. As a result, this person’s position would indeed be related to the academic needs of the school. Based on the models that have been established in Massachusetts, this person would serve as point in aligning enrichment and extended learning day programs with curriculum, gaining support of relevant community organizations, and leading the introduction of the Massachusetts model in Colorado (as nothing like this currently exists).

8. *Can the \$75,000 under the expanded day academics be sustained? More specificity about the activities in this area would be helpful.*

This amount has been reduced to \$40,000. These dollars would be spent against securing extended learning day support/teachers who could come in as a “second wave” to further help children who need additional time, attention, support with their work. If it yields results, the district can sustain the expense through alternative grant opportunities or general fund.

9. *The enrichment through community/family partnerships is not an allowable expense.* Based on the Massachusetts model (introduced to Sheridan by The Center for Time and Learning), community/family partnerships is an absolutely essential component to turnaround. This allows the District to tap other resources to amplify the educational experience being delivered. If the concern is that the district will simply be purchasing

memberships for students for local organizations, nothing could be further from the plan. The goal is to truly partner with local agencies that have educational roots/components to build valuable programming specifically geared to the needs of Fort Logan students. While this may involve using offsite locations based on resources, the majority would involve bringing resources into the Fort Logan building and implementing programs on-site.

10. *Justify the use of partial salary for Turnaround specialist since this individual was employed prior to the grant application. Is this supplanting?*

This current position in the district is not dedicated to Fort Logan. Putting a significant emphasis against this single school would require an entirely new position to be created which will be posted and interviewed for. We do not believe this would be supplanting.

11. *Can the data coach be sustained once federal funds expire?*

The data coach position has been reduced to a .5 position. The district may cover the additional .5 FTE to have this person work with other buildings at some point during the grant cycle. This would help the district budget and sustain the position beyond the three year cycle.

Finally, the following is a revised budget for year one. Dollar levels may shift between areas in subsequent years within the grant cycle as we ramp up (requiring additional funds) aspects of the plan while also adopting learnings as part of daily operations (requiring less purchased service expenses).

REVISED YEAR ONE BUDGET

Integrated Assessment Systems	\$ 37,500.00
Curriculum Alignment	\$ 30,000.00
Recruitment/Retention	\$ 20,000.00
Effective PLC Training	\$ 20,000.00
Principal/Instructional Coaching	\$ 120,000.00
Teacher Comp for Additional Time	\$ 48,000.00
Principal Stipend	\$ 5,000.00
Model Classroom Stipend	\$ 5,000.00
Developing High Expectations	\$ 30,000.00
Safe and Orderly Learning Environment	\$ 40,000.00
Student Pride Wear	\$ 17,500.00

Leadership Academies	\$ 15,000.00
Summertime Professional Development	\$ 40,000.00
Planning Consultation	\$ 25,000.00
Program Coordinator	\$ 55,000.00
Academic Extended Day	\$ 40,000.00
Community Partnership Enrichment Program	\$ 125,000.00
.5 Turnaround Specialist	\$ 55,000.00
.5 Instructional/Data Coach	\$ 45,000.00
Indirect Costs	\$ 77,000.00
TOTAL	\$ 850,000.00

**Tiered Intervention Grant
Additional Clarification
June 1, 2010**

- *Explain, “Teach the aligned curriculum at least at the proficient level” – what is the proficient level? And “teachers conduct effective demonstrations of learning that are tightly aligned to the curriculum” – what is effective demonstration?(page 1)*

-Focal Point will be providing a rubric and training to district leaders, principal and teacher leaders to specifically define proficiency levels of instruction.

-Effective demonstrations of learning are defined as “how will the students demonstrate that they have mastered the learning objective.” This ensures that teachers and students have knowledge of the level of learning, have clear goals they are trying to achieve, and can articulate them. Being standards-based is not to simply cover a curriculum, but to ensure students actually have learned each and every essential learning goal outlined within the instructional calendars. Support and feedback to instruction will be provided by building principal and members of the Focal Point team as defined on the building instructional feedback forms.

- *Define “regularly” as used in statement about attending PLC’s (page 2)*

-Teachers will participate in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on a weekly basis as documented by the building principal

- *How often will professional development on data be conducted? (page 2)*

-Formal training on data will be conducted at a leadership academy conducted in June 2010 to district leadership, building principal, and teacher leaders.

-Continued training and support will be offered by district leadership, principal, and data coach in the context of the PLCs, which will be conducted weekly

- *What are the procedures referred to that will “maximize structure and predictability for students”? (page 2)*

-Principal and all Fort Logan staff members will be working on establishing these procedures on July 29 & July 30

- *How was baseline data established for the PBS work? (page 2)*

-A PBS team from the Colorado Department of Education, led by Erin Sullivan conducted a baseline review for the PBS work.

- *Will Ed Performance be used as a summative or formative assessment? (page 3)*

-EdPerformance data can be utilized for summative and formative assessment.

Edperformance is a computer-generated test that is given to all students 3 xs per year.

The reports that are generated can be utilized at the district and school level to determine the proficiency level of students based on state standards. In addition, EdPerformance Series is also used as a formative assessment as it enables teachers to create an individualized learning plan for each student based on their particular needs. The skills

and concepts, aligned to state standards, help guide instruction by identifying the “next steps” for teachers, students, and parents.

- *Define relationship/correlation between the chosen assessments and CSAP – how will they provide you with predictability regarding your annual goals with CSAP?*

-Common Quarterly Based Assessments will be created by Focal Point and will be 100% aligned to the instructional calendars. The calendars and the assessments are based on the Colorado State Standards and Assessment frameworks. This will provide a quarterly benchmark to inform the District, Principal, teachers, parents, and students on their progress toward proficiency, which will be measure by the CSAP. In addition, Edperformance (currently in place in Fort Logan and the Sheridan School District) has conducted a study showing a 90+ correlation/predictability to CSAP. Data/information from these assessments will be utilized during PLCs to inform and adjust instruction.

- *Why the change from Lime Light to Assess 2 Know? Does this alter the budget amount?(page 4).How do you know that Assess 2 Know is aligned to the Colorado Standards (page 4)How do you ensure consistency in development of assessments? (page 4)*

-The reason for the change from Lime Light to Riverside Assess 2 Know is directly related to the ability to tie the assessments to a teacher/parent/student friendly data system. *Assess2Know Benchmark Item Bank* is a source of high-quality assessment items that are aligned to Colorado Standards. These items were specifically developed for high-quality interim or benchmark assessments in the core academic areas of Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies administered at the school level throughout the year to provide teachers with accurate, actionable results. Focal Point will be accessing this item bank to create high-quality rigorous assessments for Fort Logan. This item bank is fully integrated with Data Director to provide a comprehensive assessment management system. The items are searchable by all attributes within the system and can be selected based upon content standards, passage type, item type, or other attributes, such as cognitive difficulty levels, readability, and paper or on-line administration. The *Colorado Assess2Know* item bank includes items for grades 2-11 in Reading, Math and Social Studies and Science items for grades 3-11 aligned to Colorado standards. The blueprints for the Colorado Assess2Know Benchmark items for Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies have been thoughtfully reviewed by the Sheridan School District. Riverside Publishing has provided ample documentation of their process for comprehensive item development and their quality assurance process, which makes items free of bias and error, and maximally accessible to all learners. Riverside has analyzed every item for representational fairness, language usage, stereotyping, controversial or emotionally charged subject matter, and historical context.

Riverside also offers the *Assess2Know Classroom* item bank as a source of items that are aligned to Colorado standards and that can be used to create classroom tests and brief formative checks and quizzes. Again, this item bank is fully integrated with *DataDirector* and is also fully searchable by all attributes within the system and can be selected based on content standard(s), passage type, item type or other attributes.

The Sheridan School District, after considerable research and review, proposes to implement *DataDirector*, a web-based application, that will allow FL Elementary to streamline the data input and data gathering processes, and automate much of the data aggregation required for reporting and planning purposes. The user-friendly web interface will support teachers' and administrators' continuous use of data within PLCs and all phases of instructional planning and analysis. *DataDirector* is capable of creating reports that reflect virtually any data in the system (i.e., state and local assessment data along with demographic data, grade data, etc.) State standards are built into the system and can be linked directly to user-created assessments and exams. The Programs section allows for simple creation of student groups for intervention and for monitoring and tracking over time. Users can track attendance in a program, link any assessments to the program and easily track progress. *DataDirector* has been developed and refined by Riverside Publishing, a subsidiary of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Riverside Publishing has a long and successful reputation as a provider of high quality assessments and data management systems.

The implementation and use of *DataDirector* and the *Assess2Know Benchmark and Classroom* item banks will allow Fort Logan Elementary the use of data to plan, implement, and track turnaround data. The easily used system will allow all teachers to develop a high comfort and understanding in the use of data to inform their instructional practices and to enrich the data discussions within their PLCs.

The costs associated with *DataDirector* and the *Assess2Know* item/assessment banks are within our proposed budget. *Data Director* is delivered at a per student fee of \$5.25. The *Assess2Know Benchmark* item bank is delivered at a \$2.50 per student fee. The *Assess2Know Classroom* item bank is delivered at a \$1.75 per student fee. The anticipated cost of this implementation during the first year at FL Elementary, including training and professional development in use and understanding of the system is \$9,000.

- *You mentioned that Focal Point would be developing the assessments not your teachers (see response above)? Will Focal Point be delivering the aligned curriculum?*

-Focal Point will be delivering the aligned curriculum anchored to research-based teacher resources. Focal Point will also be responsible for developing the Common Based Quarterly Assessments District administration, building principal, and teacher leaders will be trained on curriculum alignment in order to understand the process and the importance of delivering a guaranteed and viable curriculum to all students.

- *Will there be other measures of the proposed behavior changes other than office referrals? (page 5)*

-Instructional feedback forms will also be utilized to provide direction to teachers/students in regard to proposed behavior change.

- *Be clear in your goal statements as to whether they are growth or status and that means for your annual targets (page 6)*

-By targeting the four areas for systemic change through the turnaround model, The Sheridan School District is committed to delivering results against the following goals:

- ✓ Fort Logan Elementary will meet the state average in reading, writing, and math annually or achieve a minimum 10% increase over previous year. (status)
 - ✓ Fort Logan Elementary median growth percentile will meet or exceed the 50% benchmark in all subject areas. (growth)
 - ✓ Fort Logan Elementary will continue to meet 100% of AYP (status/growth)
 - ✓ Fort Logan Elementary will continue to meet 100% of AMAO (status)
- *Again, provide correlation and relationship from the Common Quarterly Based Measures and Ed Performance to the predictability of achievement on the CSAP (page 6)*

-Common Quarterly Based Assessments will be created by Focal Point and will be 100% aligned to the instructional calendars. The calendars and the assessments are based on the Colorado State Standards and Assessment frameworks. This will provide a quarterly benchmark to inform the District, Principal, teachers, parents, and students on their progress toward proficiency, which will be measure by the CSAP. In addition, Edperformance (currently in place in Fort Logan and the Sheridan School District) has conducted a study showing a 90+ correlation/predictability to CSAP.

- *Provide the names of those from Focal Point that will be providing the services – (page 3 and 6)*

-The Focal Point Team comprises experts and practitioners in a number of areas. The team is led by Mike Miles, Superintendent of the Harrison School District in Colorado Springs. Over the last ten years, Mr. Miles has helped over 30 Colorado school districts improve instruction or raise student achievement. He also works with four large districts in New Jersey and with the New Jersey Department of Education to turnaround struggling schools and districts. Other members of the team include:

- Dr. Andie Kutinsky, former elementary principal and Director of Special Program in Boulder
- Kathy Van't Hul, former elementary principal and principal of a Blue Ribbon school
- Ted Knight, acting middle school assistant principal and former elementary principal
- Andie Ruskin, curriculum coordinator and instructional strategies coach
- Mary Beth Hamilton, distinguished teacher and instructional coach
- Janice McDermott, leadership coach and former Regional Manager for the Colorado Department of Education

Focal Point will also bring in other practitioners and educators when necessary.

- *We need much more detail and clarity about the extended day/community partnership element (page 8-9) Who, what, how much for each element – and how it is linked to the instructional day and supporting students academically*

-The Sheridan School District is modeling their Expanded Learning Time (ELT) after the Mass 20/20 effort. Members of the district's administrative team went to Massachusetts earlier this Spring for an in-depth consultation with staff at the National Center for Time and Learning, and an opportunity to visit a number of ELT schools within the Boston-area that are participating in the Mass 20/20 initiative. The opportunity to meet Christopher Gabrieli, spend time with Jennifer Davis and the staff of Mass 20/20 provided first hand knowledge of what an ELT school really looks like and what it would require to create one in Colorado.

In Massachusetts, "after just one year of the Expanded Learning Time Initiative, which added 30 percent (about two hours) to a redesigned school day in ten urban elementary and middle schools, the ELT school not only improved their own performance; they improved faster than the rest of the state. The average proficiency rate – that is, the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced on the statewide test known as the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System – compared to the schools' performance for the four previous years, jumped 44 percent in math, 19 percent in science, and 39 percent in English language arts."

The goals of redesigning the school day at Fort Logan Elementary are three-fold. First, it will provide students more time to learn and practice what they learn. Second, it will provide teachers more time to teach, collaborate, and prepare. Finally, it will engage the community in understanding, adopting, and sustaining the meaningful changes needed to address issues related to poverty, limited early opportunity, impoverished language, and other "external" barriers that impact student achievement.

Goal #1: An effort to ensure the success of each and every one of our students by strengthening and expanding opportunities for learning.

The demographics of the Sheridan School District clearly speak to the profound level of risk our students face as they enter school and pursue a 21st Century education. A preponderance of our students come from second-language and impoverished language backgrounds. They and their families live in poverty and do not have access to the same opportunities that are available to their more suburban peers. This "opportunity gap" is much more than a simple lack of early academic language experience; it is the long-term lack of prior knowledge, academic language and early learning experience that impacts their literacy and learning abilities well past their initial year of formal school attendance. By expanding the learning day, Sheridan Schools will have increased time to strengthen students' basic reading, writing and math skills, offer engaging experiences that will broaden and deepen what students learn, and set each student on a path to be competitive with their more affluent suburban peers in their pursuit of post-secondary options.

How will Sheridan Schools go about achieving goal one? Our plan is to extend the learning day initially to 5:00pm and ultimately to 5:30pm. The expanded time will be focused against having every student participating in what has been typically called our extended day program. This program will continue to offer small group, focused

instruction in core academic areas. In addition, we will expand our class offerings to include more focus on the arts and health. By using more visual and performing arts, we will help our students make important connection in mathematics, and with language and print materials. Expanded learning time programs can positively affect mathematics achievement by combining social and academic enrichment (Lauer et al., 2004). Since communication by nature requires interaction with others, expanded day programming offers an ideal environment for capitalizing on the positive effects of integrating social and academic development. We also plan to take advantage of the proven potential of “after school environments” in providing students with opportunities to learn from adults and peers through hands-on activities that hold interest and develop skills and a sense of competency (Critical Hours, 2003). There is ample support to believe that increased engagement in learning can result in higher academic performance, that students engaged in expanded or “after school” program are more engaged in learning and that, such programs have a special role to play in closing the “opportunity gap” especially in providing access to enrichment activities common to higher income students. Students who participate in extra-curricular activities and community-based service have higher academic achievement, even when other factors that affect school success are taken into consideration (Miller, 2003).

We plan to offer a combination of arts, health and academic programming during the expanded learning time. We are committed to integrating academics into each and every offering. For example, there is ample evidence that drumming can be used to teach fractions, and enhance mathematical understanding. Drama can be used to enrich vocabulary and language-based experiences. Keeping our students healthy by learning about wellness, safety and the power of physical activity can be accomplished through fun, engaging, and powerful group work in dance. There are ample examples of arts programs that have been successfully used to build team-learning, self-competency and active engagement in school (Harlem School project, et. al.)

In Massachusetts, the ELT portion of the school day is financed through state-level grants. The grants are based on enrollment and equate to \$1,300 per student. In the first year, we plan to expend the same amount as previously spent (\$45,000) in offering focused, small group academic skills programming. In addition, we expect to spend an additional \$125,000 with our community partners, who will take the lead in providing specific class offerings. For example, we hope to forge a relationship with the Denver Museum of Science and Nature and take advantage of their expertise in science. The cost of setting up a comprehensive science program and staffing it with external personnel will be partially funded through this additional \$125,000. We hope to create partnerships with area agencies and entities that have grant-writing experience and private funding opportunities to help offset the cost of this unique and powerful learning opportunity. We expect that a viable and vibrant ELT program will require multiple community partners. We will be approaching a variety of health organizations, i.e., The Children’s Hospital, Kaiser-Permanente, Teenworks, etc., and numerous science, social science, and arts-based agencies with what we believe will be a groundbreaking approach to community involvement in education. We know that building such working relationships and creating unique funding streams will take time and purposefully focused expertise. To

this end, we plan to hire a full-time ELT Coordinator, whose sole purpose will be to create and manage this portion of the school day. We have asked for \$55,000 toward this position. Because this portion of our ELT plan will be developed as we progress through the Turnaround cycle, it is challenging at this time to itemize just whom we might partner with and how we will develop what is likely to be unique funding and community partnerships.

We are planning to use \$225,000 to recreate what Massachusetts' schools use \$1,300+ per student to accomplish. Using the Massachusetts funding model, we would spend more than double the amount requested through this grant.

Goal #2: Provide Fort Logan teachers with more time to teach, collaborate, and plan.

Our multi-pronged approach to turning around Fort Logan Elementary is predicated on giving teachers more time. The use of an ELT model will allow us to bring in a "second shift" of learning facilitators through our community partnerships. This will allow us to schedule much needed collaboration time during the expanded school hours. The opportunity for having robust data dialogs and providing teachers with the time needed to meet in essential work groups and professional learning communities (PLCs) will be one of the many positive outcomes of the expanded learning day. By placing these essential teacher activities into the ELT portion of the day, teachers will be given more teaching time for core academics during the "first shift" of the day. By gradually integrating community partners into the daily schedule, students will experience a seamless transition into the later school hours and teachers will benefit from having partners to team with during the overlapping time periods. This kind of time also allows teachers to overcome the isolation of their profession. We believe that good teachers hunger for collaborative time, which increases their effectiveness and professional satisfaction. The Sheridan School District is committed to developing a cadre of excellent teachers, who can be easily recruited to this exciting new approach to educating children, and, as easily retained due to the opportunities the ELT model afford them. The opportunity for teachers to develop common approaches, talk about their students, analyze data, and think about what really works in their curriculum (and what needs to be changed) is absolutely essential for student success!

Goal #3: Create a systemic approach to addressing issues relating to poverty, limited early opportunity, and impoverished language that can be sustained and anchored into the community culture.

The true outcome of the ELT school model is to create high quality post-secondary options for ALL Sheridan students. We plan to create a community of opportunity, life-long learning and high expectations. The expanded learning day will set the expectation that ALL students can learn, ALL students can achieve and ALL students can access post-secondary options and challenges successfully. ALL families will expect ALL their students to attend college or other viable post-secondary options. We plan to engage parents more fully as our partners through increased community participation in arts and hands-on demonstrations. Students' excitement and eagerness to go to school will

increase attendance and our graduation rate. By attending more dance, drama, science demonstrations, etc., parents will be drawn into the learning community. We believe that parents are seeking opportunities to learn with their children and that an out-growth of the Expanded Learning Day will be expanded parental involvement and adult learning opportunities. There is a strong sense of “family” within the Sheridan School District and we hope to take advantage of this community value by providing engaging and possibly less threatening (as compared to student-parent-teacher conferences), venues for family participation.

- *How will you ensure that the providers work in-sync and not overlapping in their work?*

-Superintendent, Michael Clough has established the expectation that upon approval of the Turnaround grant, a date will be set to meet with Turnaround providers to outline all expectations/definitions/outcomes of each partner involved in turnaround to ensure that there is no overlap with the work.

- *The proposal is focused primarily on adults and there is not much evidence of direct effect to students in the classroom – please explain/justify*

- Every major improvement strategy and action step is based on the single question “what is best for our children”? These strategies were developed based on information from the School Support Team Report, The Expedited Review, examination of student longitudinal and status assessment data, and survey data. The Sheridan Turnaround and Advisory Team have spent hours looking at the research to determine: What are the highest leverage points for increased student achievement for our students? The entire district is focused on the mission and vision of Post-secondary options for ALL students. From this work, we have determined that the exclusive focus will be on the following items that will impact every aspect of the educational system for our Fort Logan students:

- 1) Teacher Effectiveness: Keep the quality of education the “main thing.” “The top-performing school systems recognize that the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction: learning occurs when students and teachers interact, and thus to improve learning implies improving the quality of that interaction.” How the World’s Best-performing School Systems Come out on Top, *McKinsey and Company (2007)*

Focused work on Teacher Effectiveness includes:

- Develop a culture of instructional feedback -what gets feedback, gets done better.
- Developing and delivering an aligned guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students.
- Instruction delivered to students that is engaging, high-paced, and rigorous.
- developing and expanding PLCs in order to improve instruction for students based on summative and formative data & highly effective instructional strategies. Organizational System’s expert Peter Senge states emphatically, “Kid’s learn in schools that learn.”

2) Leadership -Multiple research studies from 90/90/90 schools including the study conducted by Doug Reaves (High Performance in High Poverty Schools 90/90/90 and Beyond) make the following assertion: “While poverty and other demographic variables may be important, they are not determinative in predicting student success. The consensus of the evidence from very different perspectives is clear: effective teaching and leadership make a difference.”

Focused work of Leadership includes

- expanding instructional leadership.

- data-driven decision making-instructional decisions for students will be made as a result based on student data

- Leaders and teacher leaders will be trained and coached on providing instructional feedback. Once again, I will use the quote, “The top-performing school systems recognize that the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction: learning occurs when students and teachers interact, and thus to improve learning implies improving the quality of that interaction.” How the World’s Best-performing School Systems Come out on Top, McKinsey and Company (2007). The most effective way to improve instruction is through providing instructional feedback.

3) Culture-The reports from both the Expedited Review and the School Support team both noted the need to address high level learning expectations, “*While there are a few pockets of high expectations, there is greater evidence of "quality drift", which means that the level of expectation unintentionally declines as students progress through school. For example, when students reach grades four and five, they are being asked to perform at levels two-three years below grade level. Lack of rigor and a sense of urgency are pervasive throughout the school. While adults in the school express and model caring for the students, present levels of instructional practice may not inspire students’ best work. Many teachers indicate that some students can learn at high levels. Limited academic achievement expectations for some students may deny them access to a nurturing learning environment that provides equity in inspiring their best efforts for performance excellence.*”(Colorado Department of Education SST-2008) In addition, in high poverty schools that beat the odds McREL reports that the highest component of culture which has a positive impact achievement on raising student achievement is a safe/orderly climate (.48) The focus on culture will have a positive effect on student’s and more specifically on student achievement.

4) Bridging the Opportunity Gap- Please refer to earlier response related to *extended day/community partnership element (page 8-9)*