



School Quality Review Report

Lena Dunn Elementary School

Washington Community Schools

March 14-15, 2018

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I. Background on the School Quality Review

Public Law 221 (PL 221) was passed in 1999 before the enactment of the federal *No Child Left behind Act* (NCLB). It serves as the state's accountability framework. Among other sanctions, the law authorizes the Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE) to assign an expert team to conduct a School Quality Review for schools placed in the lowest category or designation of school performance for two consecutive years.

(a) The board shall direct that the department conduct a quality review of a school that is subject to IC 20-31-9-3. (b) The board shall determine the scope of the review and appoint an expert team under IC 20-31-9-3. (Indiana State Board of Education; 511 IAC 6.2-8-2; filed Jan 28, 2011, 3:08 p.m.: 20110223-IR-511100502FRA)

The school quality review (SQR) is a needs assessment meant to evaluate the academic program and operational conditions within an eligible school. The SQR will result in actionable feedback that will promote improvement, including the reallocation of resources or requests for technical assistance. The process is guided by a rubric (see Appendix B) aligned to the 8 Turnaround Principles. The school quality review includes a pre-visit analysis and planning meeting, onsite comprehensive review, and may include targeted follow-up visits.

State law authorizes the SBOE to establish an expert team to conduct the School Quality Review known as the Technical Assistance Team (TAT). Membership must include representatives from the community or region the school serves; and, may consist of school superintendents, members of governing bodies, teachers from high performing school corporations, and special consultants or advisers.

II. Overview of the School Quality Review Process

The School Quality Review process is designed to identify Lena Dunn Elementary School's strengths and areas for improvement organized around the [United States Department of Education's Eight School Turnaround Principles](#). In particular, the School Quality Review process focused on two or three Turnaround Principles that were identified as priorities by the school and its district.

The on-site review consisted of the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) visiting the school for two days. During the two days, the TAT (1) conducted separate focus groups with students, teachers, community members, and parents, (2) observed a professional learning community meeting with teachers, (3) observed instruction in 18 classrooms, and (4) interviewed school and district leaders.

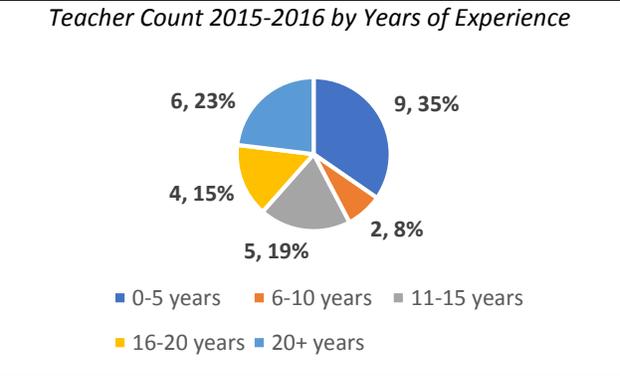
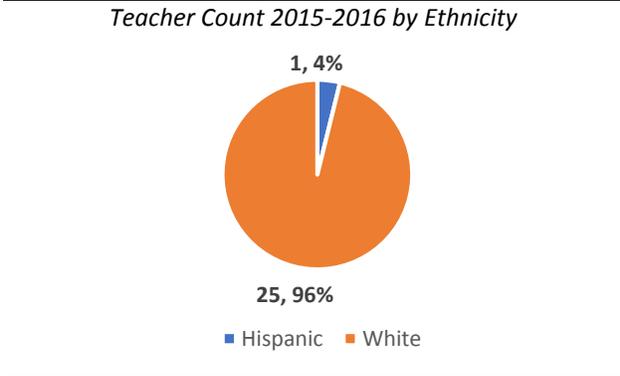
Prior to the visit, teachers completed an online survey, with 22 of 26 teachers participating. Parents were also invited to complete a survey, resulting in 11 responses. Finally, the school leadership team completed a self-evaluation. Both surveys and the self-evaluation are made up of questions that align to school improvement principles and indicators (Appendix B).

III. Data Snapshot for Lena Dunn Elementary School¹

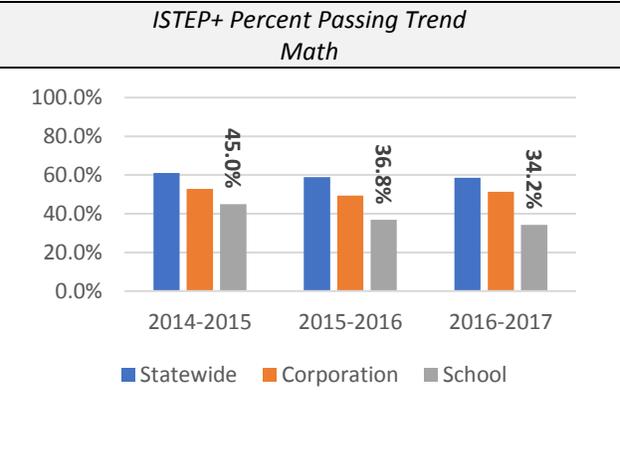
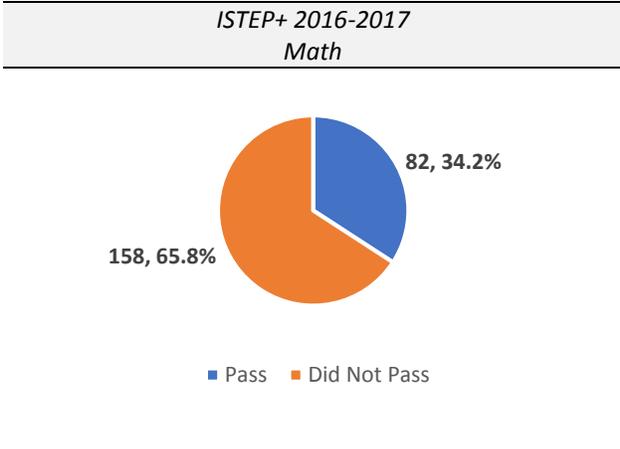
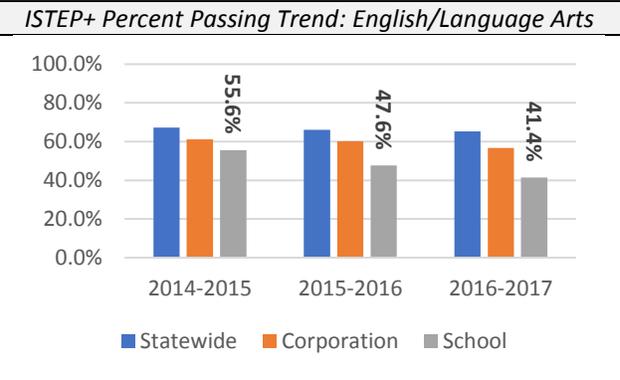
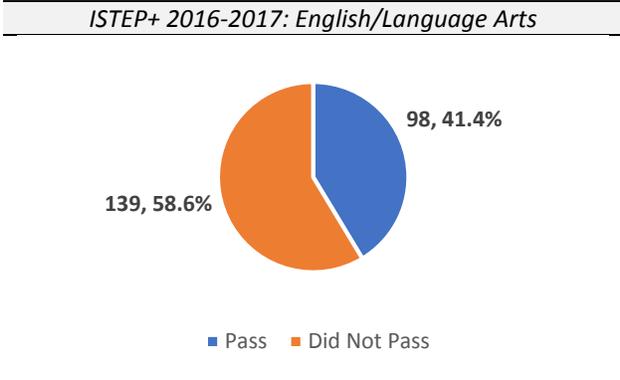
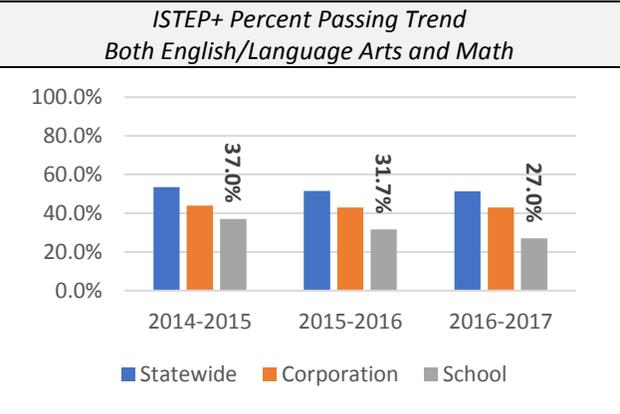
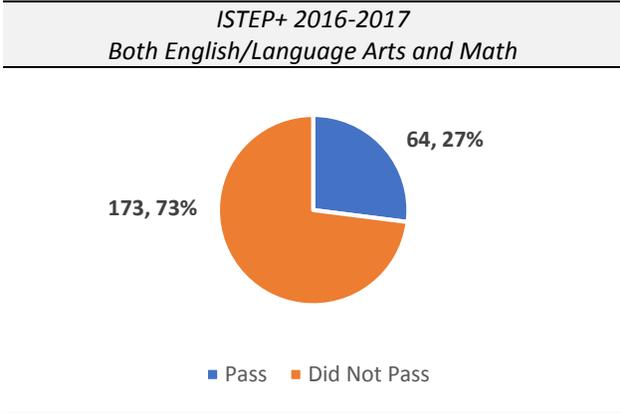
School Report Card							
<i>2015-2016 Report Card</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Weighted Points</i>	<i>2016-2017 Report Card</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Weighted Points</i>
<i>Performance Domain Grades 3-8</i>	42.70	0.5	21.35	<i>Performance Domain Grades 3-8</i>	37.80	0.5	18.90
<i>Growth Domain Grades 4-8</i>	65.80	0.5	32.90	<i>Growth Domain Grades 4-8</i>	74.90	0.5	37.45
<i>Overall Points</i>			54.3	<i>Overall Points</i>			56.4
<i>Overall Grade</i>			F	<i>Overall Grade</i>			F
Enrollment 2017-2018: 447 students							
<i>Enrollment 2017-2018 by Ethnicity</i>				<i>Enrollment 2017-2018 by Free/Reduced Price Meals</i>			
<p>16, 4% 28, 6%</p> <p>225, 50% 177, 40%</p> <p>■ Black ■ Hispanic ■ White ■ Multiracial</p>				<p>31, 7%</p> <p>26, 6% 390, 87%</p> <p>■ Free Meals ■ Reduced Price Meals ■ Paid Meals</p>			
<i>Enrollment 2017-2018 by Special Education</i>				<i>Enrollment 2017-2018 by English Language Learners</i>			
<p>117, 26%</p> <p>330, 74%</p> <p>■ Special Education ■ General Education</p>				<p>95, 21%</p> <p>352, 79%</p> <p>■ English Language Learner ■ Non-English Language Learner</p>			
Attendance							
<i>Attendance by Grade</i>				<i>Attendance Rate Trend</i>			
Grade	'14-'15	'15-'16	'16-'17	<p>100.0% —</p> <p>98.0% —</p> <p>96.0% — 95.6% 95.2% 94.7%</p> <p>94.0% —</p> <p>92.0% —</p> <p>2014-2015 2015-2016 2016-2017</p>			
K	94.7%	94.2%	94.7%				
1	94.7%	94.9%	95.1%				
2	96.2%	94.6%	94.3%				
3	95.8%	96.3%	93.9%				
4	96.2%	94.9%	95.1%				
5	96.1%	95.6%	94.5%				
6	95.9%	95.8%	95.2%				
School Personnel							

¹ The data included in this snapshot was retrieved from the Indiana Department of Education's Compass website on 03/11/2018

Teacher Count 2015-2016: 26

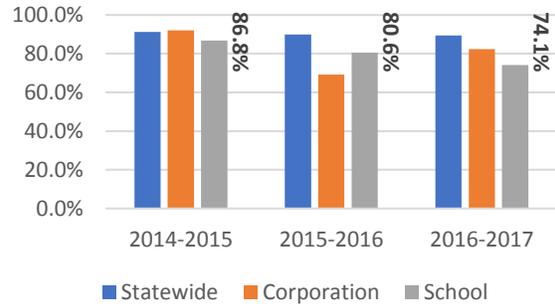
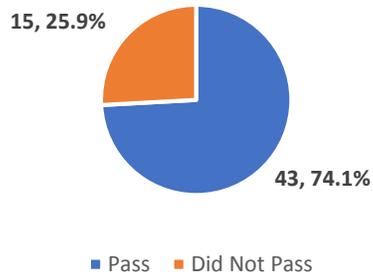


Student Academic Performance

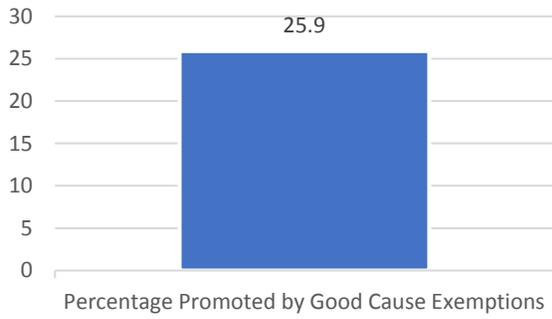


IREAD-3 2016-2017

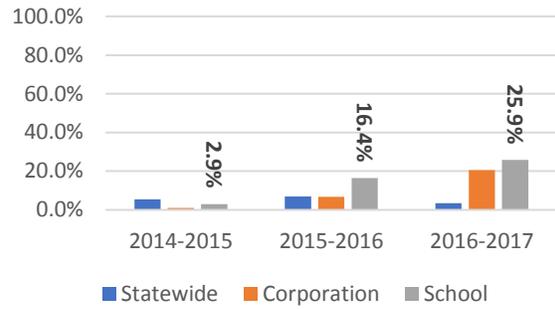
IREAD-3 Percent Passing Trend



IREAD-3 Percentage Promoted by Good Cause Exemptions 2016-2017



IREAD-3 Good Cause Promotion Exemption Trend



IV. Evidence and Rating for School Turnaround Principle #2: Climate and Culture

Background

The next three sections of the report illustrate the Technical Assistance Team's key findings, supporting evidence, and overall rating for each of the school's prioritized Turnaround Principles.

To thoughtfully identify these prioritized Turnaround Principles, school and district leaders used a "Turnaround Principle Alignment Tool" provided by the Indiana State Board of Education to determine the two to three Turnaround Principles that most closely align with the goals and strategies outlined in the school's improvement plan.

This report focuses on these three prioritized Turnaround Principles to provide a strategically targeted set of findings and recommendations. Additional evidence on the other five Turnaround Principles can be found in Appendix A of this report.

School Turnaround Principle 2: Climate and Culture

Evidence Sources

Classrooms Observations, Student Focus Group, Instructional Leadership Team Focus Group, Teacher Focus Group, Teacher Survey, Community Partner Focus Group, School Improvement Plan, Artifacts Provided by Lena Dunn Elementary School

Rating

1 <u>Ineffective</u>	2 <u>Improvement Necessary</u>	3 <u>Effective</u>	4 <u>Highly Effective</u>
<i>No evidence of this happening in the school</i>	<i>Limited evidence of this happening in the school</i>	<i>Routine and consistent</i>	<i>Exceeds standard and drives student achievement</i>

Evidence

Strengths	Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to information gathered from student, teacher, and community member focus groups, students and adults feel safe at the school and are ready to engage in teaching and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3, 2.1, 2.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence from the Instructional Leadership Team and teacher focus groups, meeting with the principal, and artifacts presented by the school revealed that students quickly receive supports for continuous personal and social-emotional growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2, 2.3, 3.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactions among teachers and students were observed to be positive and respectful during classroom visitations and in general observations throughout the building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.2, 2.3, 3.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has made, and continues to make, a concerted effort to build students internal locus of control regarding academic success, self-regulation of behavior, and a purpose-driven orientation for the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 3.6
Areas for Improvement	Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While high expectations for behavioral and academic achievement are communicated to staff, instructional strategies that incorporate rigor and cognitive challenge were present in only 10% of the classrooms observed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4, 2.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While high expectations for behavior and academic achievement are communicated to staff, instructional differentiation was observed in only 47% of the classrooms observed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4, 2.2, 2.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite the school's efforts to foster a culture rooted in a school pride and self-efficacy, conditions within and beyond the school (i.e. public perception of school, crime in area, teacher retention) inhibit these efforts to the detriment of staff, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4, 1.9, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 5.4, 8.1

student, and parent attitudes, as well as staff recruitment and retention.

V. Evidence and Rating for School Turnaround Principle #3: Effective Instruction

School Turnaround Principle 3: Effective Instruction			
Evidence Sources			
Classrooms Observations, Individual Staff Interviews, School Leader Self-Assessment, Student Focus Group, Instructional Leadership Team Focus Group, Teacher Focus Group, Artifacts Provided by Lena Dunn Elementary School			
Rating			
1 <u>Ineffective</u>	2 <u>Improvement Necessary</u>	3 <u>Effective</u>	4 <u>Highly Effective</u>
<i>No evidence of this happening in the school</i>	<i>Limited evidence of this happening in the school</i>	<i>Routine and consistent</i>	<i>Exceeds standard and drives student achievement</i>
Evidence			
Strengths		Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students executed transitions and responded quickly and appropriately to teachers' management techniques in classrooms, as documented during classroom observations. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1, 3.6 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As reported during the Teacher and Instructional Leadership Focus Groups, and as observed during the instructional planning session, teachers and the data coach use multiple sources of data for instructional planning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.8, 3.5, 4.5 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wall in the Data Room is used to monitor individual students' literacy progress and is updated "formally" every nine weeks and sooner as progress monitoring data is available. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5, 4.5, 6.3 	
Areas for Improvement		Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As determined through classroom observations and conversations with staff, students use technology-based programs for instruction and assessment, but as a replacement for, rather than an extension of standards-based, teacher-driven instruction. Explanations as to how student performance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.3, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5 	

<p>data from computer-assisted programs were systematically used to plan subsequent instruction could not be explained. During a student focus group, one student commented that he “wish[ed] we had more face-to-face time” with teachers.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As observed during classroom visits, learning objectives pertained to Indiana Academic Standards, yet clarity regarding what students were to understand and/or be able to do varied by classroom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.3, 3.1, 3.5, 4.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data from classroom observations revealed that students were on task (or doing) assigned tasks 83% of the time, yet meaningful engagement (i.e., processing that which they were doing so as to understand and be able to explain it with real-world relevance) was present less than 63% of the time. (On the classroom observation instrument this comment combines E.2 – 41%; E.3 – 20%; and, E.4 – 62.5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.3, 3.2, 3.4, 4.5

VI. Evidence and Rating for School Turnaround Principle #6: Effective Use of Data

School Turnaround Principle 6: Effective Use of Data			
Evidence Sources			
Classrooms Observations, Individual Staff Interviews, School Leader Self-Assessment, Instructional Leadership Team Focus Group, Teacher Survey, Teacher Focus Group, School Improvement Plan, Artifacts Provided by Lena Dunn Elementary School			
Rating			
1 <u>Ineffective</u>	2 <u>Improvement Necessary</u>	3 <u>Effective</u>	4 <u>Highly Effective</u>
<i>No evidence of this happening in the school</i>	<i>Limited evidence of this happening in the school</i>	<i>Routine and consistent</i>	<i>Exceeds standard and drives student achievement</i>
Evidence			
Strengths			Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers have on-demand access to data, presented in manner that is clear and easy to analyze. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As observed during the instructional planning meeting and in artifacts provided by the school, students’ academic progress is reviewed regularly with staff by the data coach. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5, 3.6, 4.5, 6.2, 6.3

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data, reflecting students' literacy progress, is displayed and used by staff to determine instructional groupings, as observed during the instructional planning meeting and through discussions with staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5, 3.6, 6.3
<p>Areas for Improvement</p>	<p>Aligned Turnaround Principle Indicator(s)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formative assessment instruments that provide for strategic analysis of student academic performance data across grade levels are neither consistent nor coordinated. (The iReady program does so, to some extent, for mathematics, but no such process exists for reading/language arts). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.5, 4.3, 6.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that student achievement data is used to drive professional development was not present. It was stated that staff selects professional development topics based on perceived need, but the process for using data to do so and a clear link to desired student growth and achievement were not evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.3, 5.5, 6.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protocols and systems for using data to measure the effectiveness of initiatives to improve climate and culture were not evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.3, 6.1

VII. Recommendations

Background

This section outlines an intentionally targeted set of recommendations that align to one or more of the school’s prioritized Turnaround Principles. Anchored in the United States Department of Education’s Turnaround Principles framework, these recommendations are representative of what the Technical Assistance Team believes to be the most immediate changes needed to accelerate growth in academic and non-academic student outcomes at Lena Dunn Elementary School. These recommendations should not be thought of as an exhaustive set of school improvement strategies, but rather as a part of the ongoing and continuous school improvement process.

Recommendation 1
Initiate a sustainable, systems-based school improvement process built on a framework of strategically developed resources and processes. For this recommendation, focus on human capital and family-school relations (not forgetting that the actual goal is student achievement).
Specifically: 1) Work with district leadership and develop a SMART goal for recruiting and retaining high quality staff, and 2) Develop a SMART goal for increasing and maintaining meaningful and robust family involvement.
Aligned Turnaround Principle(s)
1.3, 1.4, 1.9, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.6, 5.4, 8.1
Rationale

The mission statement for Lena Dunn, as reported in the 2017-2018 School Improvement Plan, asserts the school “is committed to providing quality effective instruction to ensure academic, personal and social growth for all students.” Subsequent explanation notes the importance of quality instruction, data collection and review, and collaboration. To this end, the school has devoted much time and energy toward building a climate where staff and students believe that all students are capable of success. Continuing this effort and building on the progress realized thus far are important for student achievement, as there is evidence to suggest that students’ self-efficacy predicts achievement.¹

While attending to the affective domain is essential, it is not the sum of that which is important for sustained confidence and motivation. If students’ attitudes affect academic performance, then it stands to reason there exists a reciprocal affect: Academic performance affects students’ attitudes. Stated another way, students who believe they are capable of learning are motivated to do so. However, to sustain this momentum, students must experience success, lest they become frustrated with their efforts. To create a framework where a cycle of self-efficacy-motivation-achievement exists for students requires

¹ Schunk, D.H. (2012). *Learning theories: An educational perspective* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

consistency of highly effective staff. This recommendation is directed at recruitment and retention of staff, as it pertains to achievement. Recommendation 2 pertains to the teachers' use of evidenced-based instructional practices and its relationship to student achievement.

The Technical Assistance Team heard repeated concerns about staff turnover, lack of parental involvement, and the community's negative perception of the school based on the school's geographical location. Together, these are germane to "social capital." Social capital is the "quality of social relationships in communities and how these relationships influence the quality of everyday life and...capacity to solve local problems."² Based on evidence gathered during the visit, social capital for Lena Dunn is low. Of the three expressed concerns, the school can work to advance the first two (parental involvement and public perception), but has the greatest control over internal human resources. Thus, the first SMART goal pertains to staffing. Reaching this goal will require creative and determined efforts with a firm resolve that it be attained. While developing the goal, the school and district might, but is not required to: examine efforts by similar districts who have been successful in staff recruitment and retention, investigate current staffing assignments, or explore available funding sources to attract staff to high-poverty areas, etc. As teacher candidates are considered, particular emphasis should be placed on selection of those who have the propensity and aptitude for teaching ethnically diverse, high-poverty populations.

The second SMART goal, within this recommendation, should work in concert with the first since there is a relationship between staff retention and the school community. A chief reason given for staff leaving Lena Dunn, according to teachers and school leadership, was the difficulty and increased effort required to work with struggling students who have little to no parental support. Indeed, study body demographics plays a role in teacher turnover.³ Community members added that lack of parental support hurts the school and is rooted in crime and poverty in the area. In this regard, consideration should be given to including key community and agency members (e.g. social service, law enforcement, etc.) in the development and monitoring of this goal.

A goal for increasing and maintaining meaningful and robust family involvement will directly impact students' success in school and reinforce efforts to recruit and retain quality staff. In one study, for example, increased reading achievement and attention were directly related to the quality of student-teacher and teacher-parent relationships in first grade. It further generalized that "increased focus on helping teachers connect with students and their parent is one means of helping children at risk for academic failure get off to a good

²The Essential Supports for School Improvement. (n.d.). Retrieved: April 02, 2018, from <https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/essential-supports-school-improvement>.

³ Simon, Nicole S., Johnson, Susan Moore. (2013). Teacher turnover in high-poverty schools: what we know and can do (Working paper: Project on the next generation of teachers). Retrieved from Semantic Scholar website: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6210/6fb22387ad72a41d26403ec6851b2f0fd71c.pdf>

start in school.”⁴ To the school’s and district’s credit, a part-time bilingual secretary and fulltime dean of students were added to the staff this year to extend the school’s effectiveness in serving the school community. This is a noteworthy step in building such trust.

Lena Dunn’s concerted efforts to boost student achievement by bolstering students’ positive attitudes about themselves have been mitigated by difficulty in recruiting and retaining quality teachers. Staff consistency is indispensable for productively building and maintaining positive teacher-student relationships, instructional effectiveness, fluently assessing data within and across grade levels and subjects, and understanding dynamics of the school community. The sum of these, when consistency is present, is a climate of success and a culture of high expectations for one’s self and others. Making this a reality through the development and attainment of carefully developed SMART goals is the next step for Lena Dunn Elementary School.

Recommendation 2

Initiate a sustainable, systems-based school improvement process built on a framework of strategically developed resources and processes. For coherence, this recommendation replicates Recommendation 1 because both are constituent components of a systems-based framework for school improvement. However, the goal under this recommendation should focus on teachers’ instructional capacity, as it relates student achievement.

Specifically: Assess teachers’ instructional effectiveness and coherently devise a structured professional development course of action with prioritize instructional practices to be honed to the point of proficiency.

Aligned Turnaround Principle(s)

1.8, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.3, 4.5, 6.3

Rationale

As noted in the first rationale, there is a reciprocal relationship between students’ attitudes and achievement. This recommendation centers on the importance of sound instruction and, by extension, its positive effects on student achievement. This recommendation also follows the rationale in Recommendation 1 in that highly effective teachers are the premium asset for any school. Recruitment and retention, as outlined above, must be coupled with strategic, on-going, and job-embedded professional development if such assets are to fully availed.

The school’s improvement plan’s goals are to: 1) develop and implement a lesson plan template (Leadership Goal); and, 2) utilize curriculum maps, use the vertical alignment guide, use the lesson plan template, and include critical components in lesson planning (Effective Instruction Goal). For both, leadership is designated as being responsible for providing

⁴ Huges, J., & Kwok, O. (2007). Influence of student-teacher and parent-teacher relationships on lower achieving readers engagement and achievement in the primary grades. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(1), 39-51. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.99.1.39

professional development. Emphasis in the school's most recent school improvement grant, however, concentrates professional development on data collection and disaggregation, Minds-in-Motion training, and a book study (*Mind in the Making-The 7 Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs*). While the latter goals are worthy, in and of themselves, information gathered during the visit suggested that immediate efforts must be directed toward "providing quality effective instruction" as indicated in the school's mission. In part, this aligns with the Leadership and Instruction Goals, above, particularly with respect to lesson planning. However, the impetus behind this recommendation is even more narrow, suggesting specific instructional practices be developed to the point of proficiency and consistency in practice, as research supports the idea that teacher effectiveness has a profound influence on student achievement.⁵

During the school quality review, the visiting team found several instructional practices absent during classroom observations. These included differentiation, meaningful student engagement, students' understanding of lesson objective relevance, and content rigor. It is important to note that the team's observations represent a "snapshot" of day-to-day instruction. Nevertheless, discussions with students, teachers, and parents reinforced the team's belief that these elements are not routinely present. For this reason, a more thorough assessment of instructional practices should be conducted by leadership so as to prioritize them for professional development planning.

Just as classroom lessons must be thoughtfully designed, so must professional development. Just as the needs of individual students must be considered, so must the needs of individual teachers. This is not to say that teachers choose professional development topics for themselves. Rather, such programs should concentrate on documented instructional needs and result in demonstrable performance improvement. Professional development, especially through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) can be very beneficial in fostering collegiality and supporting the process of building staff capacity. Even then, such undertakings should directly correlate to the needs of the school and result in accountable outcomes. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case, as there are few studies to show participation in PLCs translate into teachers' professional growth.⁶ This does not have to be the case for Lena Dunn, thus the recommendation to coherently devise a course of action that leads to proficiency in practice, specific to the professional needs of the school's teachers.

⁵ Nye, B., Konstantopoulos, S., & Hedges, L. V. (2004). How Large Are Teacher Effects? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 26(3), 237-257. doi:10.3102/01623737026003237

⁶ Hudson, Q. (2015). The Effectiveness of Professional Learning Communities as Perceived by Elementary School Teachers (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Walden University. Retrieved from: <http://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2345&context=dissertations>

Recommendation 3

Initiate a sustainable, systems-based school improvement process built on a framework of strategically developed resources and processes. As before, this recommendation is intended to be part of a comprehensive framework for recognizing improvement within a system, as opposed to in isolation. This specific recommendation addresses the use of data, as it pertains directly to student learning. During the visit, the team heard the term “initiative fatigue” several times when speaking with school and district leadership. For this reason, the recommendation is limited to how teachers use data from computer-assisted instruction and assessment programs.

Specifically: Align computer-based tasks with standards and ensure they: 1) are selectively assigned to reinforce and/or enrich learning of specific learning objectives, and 2) provide information that translates into timely and productive feedback for students. Monitor use of these resources to verify this occurs with fidelity.

Aligned Turnaround Principle(s)

1.3, 3.5, 3.6, 4.3, 4.5, 5.3, 5.5, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3

Rationale

The staff at Lena Dunn is determined to use data to help students. This was evident during the Data Meeting, in conversations with teachers and the data coach, and by the data wall used to update students’ reading progress. In addition, students maintain data folders and discuss their progress with teachers. Improving on these efforts, particularly as it relates to that which occurs in classrooms daily, will advance these efforts.

Observations by the Technical Assistance Team found students using computer-based instructional programs across classrooms throughout the day. According to school and district leadership, some of the programs (two were named) were implemented at the request of teachers. They added that vendors from both of these companies provided training for staff.

While extending and supplementing core, standards-based instruction with computer-assisted resources is a viable option for reinforcing and enriching students’ learning experiences, detriments can outweigh benefits. This is particularly true when a misalignment between core instruction and supplemental resources exists. Put another way, to make the best use of students’ time relies on tasks: 1) being directly aligned with learning objectives, and 2) furnishing sufficient information for teachers to provide timely, meaningful feedback.

Discussions with students and staff revealed that these characteristics for computer-assisted instruction are currently limited or non-existent. It must be acknowledged, however, that both resources are relatively new to teachers, who are in the process of recognizing how to fully implement them. Nevertheless, the team heard comments from students that illustrated a disconnect between objectives and relevance (e.g. “...it can get boring doing it for 30 minutes each day.” “I don’t really like it since the stories repeat and they can get really long.”). Additionally, during observations, students appeared to be passively compliant and moderately engaged while working on computer-based learning tasks. That is, they were

quiet but found to be moving from the task to looking at others, working on tasks with their heads on their desks, leaning back in their chairs, etc. When students were asked what they were doing, they could describe the task but few could explain how or tasks related to past or present lessons. Likewise, students used the term “sometimes” repeatedly when asked if teachers helped them when they had difficulty understanding a concept via a computer-based educational program.

In classrooms, students were observed being directed to technology devices and advised to “get on” a program. When asked how data from technology-based programs were aligned to objectives and how results were being used to provide feedback, teachers generally referred to the assigned tasks, themselves, but could not address educationally significant correlations. Again, however, the Technical Assistance Team found general data, in the form of reports (e.g. from the primary computer-assisted mathematics program) being shared meaningfully across grade levels. While this is noteworthy, it is indicative of data sharing, rather than data analysis leading to intentional shifts in classroom instruction.

Collectively, evidence gathered during the review showed technology-based instructional tasks being employed in a manner that provided limited support for students’ mastery of learning objectives. The above recommendation is intended to assist the school in remedying this issue and making full use of potentially valuable instructional resources for the sake of authentic student achievement.

VIII. Appendix A: Evidence for Remaining School Turnaround Principles

Background

We believe it is valuable for school and district leaders to have a summary of the TAT’s findings and evidence for each of the eight Turnaround Principles. As such, this section of the report outlines key findings and supporting evidence for each of the Turnaround Principles that were not identified by school and district leaders as prioritized Turnaround Principles for this school.

This information is intentionally provided in an appendix to reinforce the importance of the previously stated findings, evidence, ratings, and recommendations for the school’s prioritized Turnaround Principles.

School Turnaround Principle #1: School Leadership
Evidence Sources
Classrooms Observations, Individual Staff Interviews, School Leader Self-Assessment, Instructional Leadership Team Focus Group, Teacher Focus Group, Parent Focus Group, School Improvement Plan
Evidence Summary
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none">• According to themes from focus groups with staff members, the principal sets high expectations for students by ensuring the curriculum is aligned to the standards.• The master schedule enables students who are two or more years behind in math and/or English/language arts to be enrolled in intervention programs with sufficient time allocated to allow for adequate implementation (i.e., “WIN” time on the schedule).
Areas for Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none">• While a vision for high quality instruction is communicated to staff by the principal, observations made during the review revealed varying degrees of instructional quality. The principal observes staff and acknowledged these deficiencies, but no definitive course of action to address them was defined.• Although the school reaches out to parents and community and provides a great deal of useful information on the school’s website, the visiting team found limited use of means of communication (e.g. Twitter, consistent use of positive notes about students, class newsletters, etc.). This was expressed by three parents during the Parent Focus Group discussion.

School Turnaround Principle #4: Curriculum, Assessment, and Intervention Systems

Evidence Sources

Classrooms Observations, Individual Staff Interviews, School Leader Self-Assessment, Instructional Leadership Team Focus Group, Teacher Focus Group, School Improvement Plan, Artifacts Provided by Lena Dunn Elementary School

Evidence Summary

Strengths

- The school corporation developed standards-aligned curriculum maps (and is currently refining them), involving teachers from schools throughout the district.
- Teachers use reports generated from at least one technology-based instructional resource to analyze overall math achievement within the school.

Areas for Improvement

- No protocols exist for consistent student achievement data collection and analysis across grade levels, within the school, or between schools across the district.
- Uniform data about students' reading progress is not available from grade-to-grade, (e.g. progress in fluency, comprehension of non-fiction text, etc.) as no assessment instruments are in place to provide such longitudinal information.

School Turnaround Principle #5: Effective Staff Practices

Evidence Sources

Classrooms Observations, Individual Staff Interviews, School Leader Self-Assessment, Instructional Leadership Team Focus Group, Teacher Focus Group, School Improvement Plan, Artifacts Provided by Lena Dunn Elementary School

Evidence Summary

Strengths

- The school corporation recognizes the unique needs of Lena Dunn Elementary, with respect to its ethnic diversity and low socio-economic conditions. External resources (including technical assistance from the Indiana Department of Education) work with the school leader and staff to assist with school improvement efforts (e.g. curriculum map development, math process standards, etc.).
- Staff share information regarding instructional resources and student progress within and across grade levels so as to support one another.

Areas for Improvement

- The school leader is limited in selecting instructional staff for the building, as documented through conversations with school and district leadership and artifacts provided by the school.
- According to information provided by individuals and artifacts, professional development emphasis for the year was selected through discussion with staff, based on the perceived needs of the school. While collaborative discussion is beneficial, no substantive data, particularly in light of the need for professional growth found by the team during the visit, was used to inform these decisions.

School Turnaround Principle #7: Effective Use of Time

Evidence Sources

Classrooms Observations, Individual Staff Interviews, School Leader Self-Assessment, Instructional Leadership Team Focus Group, Teacher Focus Group, District Leadership Focus Group, Community Partner Focus Group, School Improvement Plan, Artifacts Provided by Lena Dunn Elementary School

Evidence Summary

Strengths

- As discussed during the District Leadership Focus Group, the school corporation has granted the school scheduling flexibility to allow staff to meet more frequently for collaboration and staff development (e.g. PLC, analysis of student data, etc).
- As observed during and Instructional Planning Meeting, an agenda is adhered to in order to maximize the use of time and productivity for reviewing student progress and determining appropriate instructional supports.

Areas for Improvement

- Although student conduct was compliant overall, classroom management practices varied by classroom, with instructional time lost in those rooms where students did not respond to teachers' procedures or directives.
- Despite the use of curriculum maps, which provide instructional guidance, and assessments, that provide student performance data, there was no evidence that students of high ability are consistently provided learning opportunities (including set times for collaboration and enrichment) appropriate to their academic needs.

School Turnaround Principle 8: Effective Family and Community Engagement

Evidence Sources

Classrooms Observations, Individual Staff Interviews, School Leader Self-Assessment, Instructional Leadership Team Focus Group, Teacher Focus Group, Community Partner Focus Group, School Improvement Plan, District Leadership Focus Group, Artifacts Provided by Lena Dunn Elementary School

Evidence Summary

Strengths

- As found in documentation provided to the visiting team and during conversations with focus groups, the principal and staff make efforts to involve families in meaningful afterschool activities (e.g. Book Bingo).
- The principal organized, with staff involvement, a community-based event featuring the founder of Kids at Hope, with the intent to promote understanding of the program and how it is being used at Lena Dunn to support students. Individuals from local agencies were specifically invited to establish connections and build working relationships with the school.

Areas for Improvement

- The school and district did not utilize an awarded 21st Century grant, to partner with local agencies, programs, and institutions to reduce barriers to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students.
- A limited number of School Quality Review Parent Surveys (11) were completed and returned to the school, demonstrating a critical issue with school-parent relations, as they pertain to necessary school improvement.