



# School Quality Review Report

*Tarkington Elementary School*

South Bend Community School Corporation

February 11-12, 2018

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## I. Background on the School Quality Review

Public Law 221 (PL 221-99) 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 (SQR) 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 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 aligned to [“5Essentials Framework for School Improvement” developed by the Consortium on School Research at the University of Chicago](#) (Appendix B). The school quality review includes a pre-visit analysis and planning meeting, two-day, on-site 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 Tarkington Elementary School’s strengths and areas for improvement aligned to the [“5Essentials for School Improvement” framework developed by the Consortium on School Research at the University of Chicago](#). The School Quality Review process focused on the “Effective Leaders” domain of this framework as well as two other domains from the framework that were selected as priorities by the school and its district.

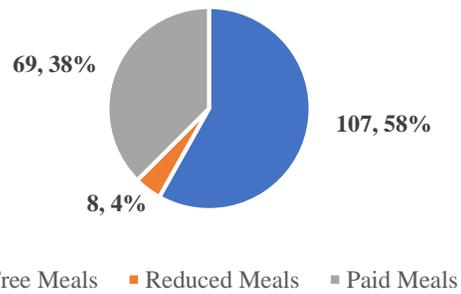
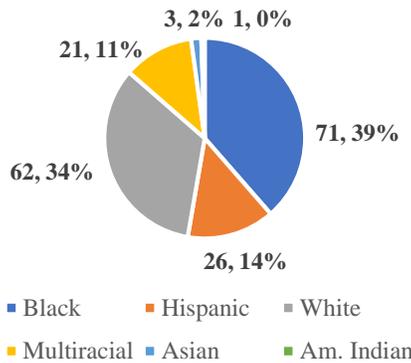
The on-site review consisted of the Technical Assistance Team (TAT) visiting the school for one day. During that day, the TAT (1) conducted separate focus groups with students and teachers, (2) observed a planning time with teachers, (3) observed instruction in 10 classrooms, and (4) interviewed school leaders.

Prior to the visit, teachers completed an online survey, with seven of 15 teachers participating. Parents and family members were also invited to complete a survey; 58 completed this survey. Finally, the school leadership team completed a self-evaluation. Both surveys and the self-evaluation are made up of questions that align to [“5Essentials for School Improvement” framework developed by the Consortium on School Research at the University of Chicago](#).

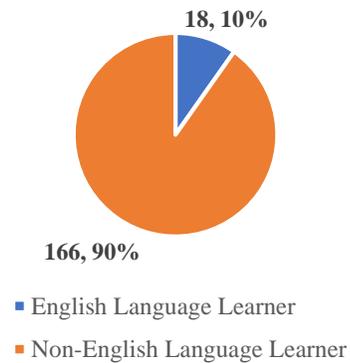
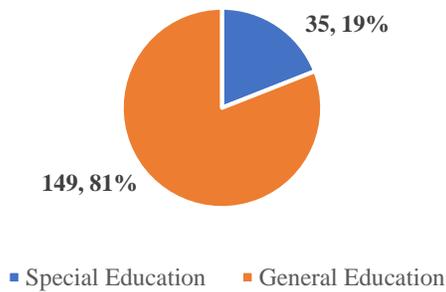
### III. Data Snapshot for Tarkington Elementary School

School Report Card							
2016-2017 Report Card	Points	Weight	Weighted Points	2017-2018 Report Card	Points	Weight	Weighted Points
Performance Domain Grades 3-8	36.00	0.5	18.00	Performance Domain Grades 3-8	34.60	0.5	17.30
Growth Domain Grades 4-8	68.50	0.5	34.25	Growth Domain Grades 4-8	77.30	0.5	38.65
Overall Points			52.3	Overall Points			56.0
Overall Grade			F	Overall Grade			F

Enrollment 2018-2019: 184 students	
Enrollment 2018-2019 by Ethnicity	Enrollment 2018-2019 by Free/Reduced Price Meals

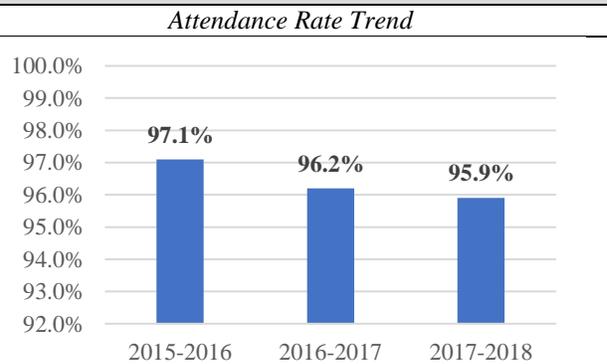


Enrollment 2018-2019 by Special Education	Enrollment 2018-2019 by English Language Learners
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### Attendance

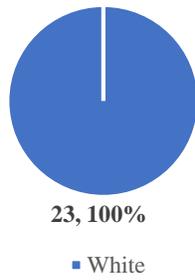
Attendance by Grade			
Grade	'15-'16	'16-'17	'17-'18
K	97.1%	96.1%	95.0%
1	96.7%	95.7%	95.9%
2	97.0%	96.7%	96.7%
3	97.3%	96.1%	96.4%
4	97.5%	96.1%	95.6%



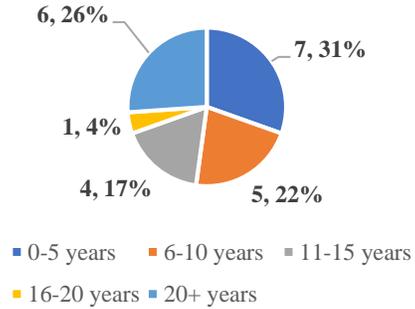
**School Personnel**

*Teacher Count 2016-2017: 23*

*Teacher Count 2017-2018 by Ethnicity*

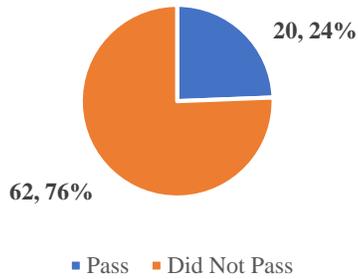


*Teacher Count 2017-2018 by Years of Experience*

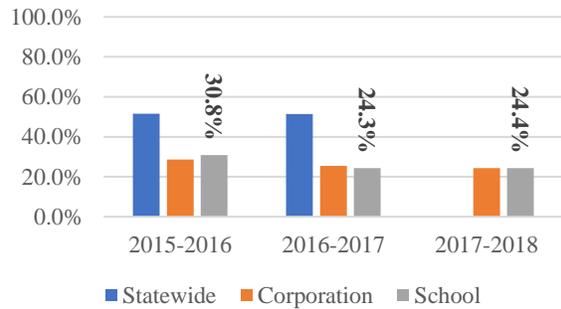


**Student Academic Performance**

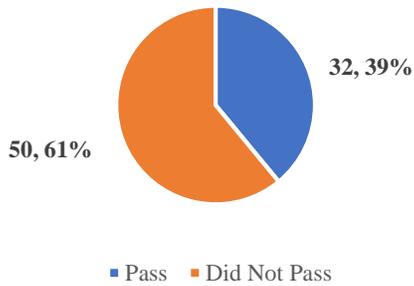
*ISTEP+ 2017-2018 Percent Passing Both English/Language Arts and Math*



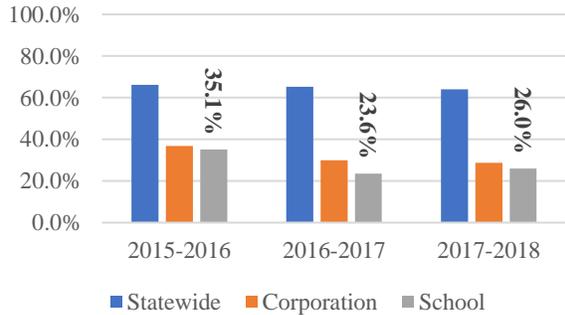
*ISTEP+ Percent Passing Trend Both English/Language Arts and Math*



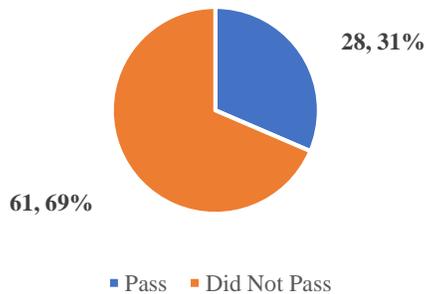
*ISTEP+ 2017-2018 Percent Passing English/Language Arts*



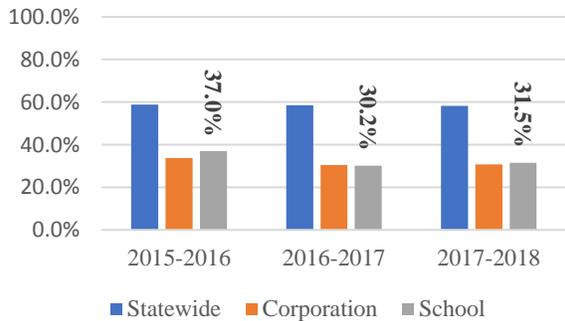
*ISTEP+ Percent Passing Trend English/Language Arts*



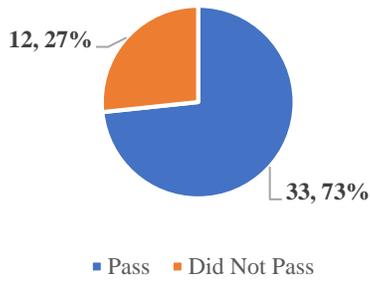
*ISTEP+ 2017-2018 Percent Passing Math*



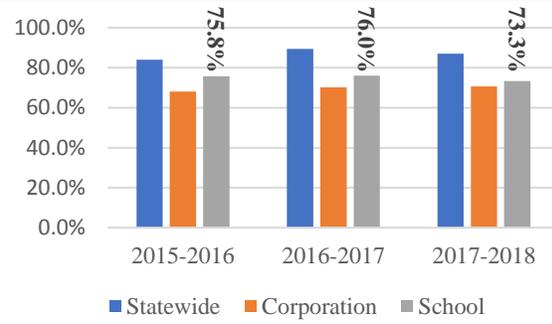
*ISTEP+ Percent Passing Trend Math*



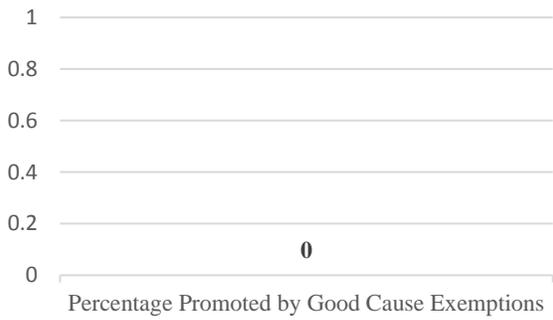
*IREAD-3 2017-2018 Percent Passing*



*IREAD-3 Percent Passing Trend*



*IREAD-3 2017-2018 Percentage Promoted by Good Cause Exemptions*



*IREAD-3 Promoted by Good Cause Exemption Trend*



## IV. Evidence and Rating for the Effective Leaders Domain

### Background

The next three sections of the report illustrate the Technical Assistance Team’s key findings, supporting evidence, and overall rating for the Effective Leaders domain and two other domains from the “5Essentials for School Improvement” framework that were selected as priorities by the school and its district.

To thoughtfully identify the two additional prioritized domains from the “5Essentials for School Improvement” framework, school and district leaders used a “School Improvement Essentials Alignment Tool” provided by the Indiana State Board of Education to determine the two other domains from the “5Essentials for School Improvement” framework that most closely align with the goals and strategies outlined in the school’s improvement plan.

This report focuses on these three prioritized domains from the “5Essentials for School Improvement” framework to provide a strategically targeted set of findings and recommendations. Additional evidence on the other two domains from the “5Essentials for School Improvement” framework can be found in Appendix A of this report.

Domain from the “5 Essentials for School Improvement” Framework: Effective Leaders			
Evidence Sources			
Classroom observations; teacher surveys; school leader self-assessment; meeting with principal; teacher focus groups; and student focus group. Documents provided by Tarkington Elementary School			
Rating			
1 <u>Ineffective</u>	2 <u>Improvement Necessary</u>	3 <u>Effective</u>	4 <u>Highly Effective</u>
<i>Insufficient 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 “5Essentials” Framework Indicator(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on caregiver survey feedback and focus group discussions, the leader models fair and equitable behaviors that foster trust across staff and with stakeholders.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.5</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The leader conducts informal and formal observations at key points in the year according to the School Leader Self-Evaluation and other documents provided.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.4</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classrooms are staffed with full-time, licensed teachers.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.4</li> </ul>

Areas for Improvement	Aligned “5Essentials” Framework Indicator(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A clearly defined vision of high levels of learning for all students and a coherent mission that defines how the school will realize this vision have not been established, as determined by focus group discussions and survey responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on evidence collected during focus group discussions, survey responses, and provided documents, a comprehensive plan for identifying professional development priorities and implementing an outcomes-based plan for building teachers’ capacity has not been constituted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.4</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is little to no evidence of coordinated action planning based on data at various points in the year as found through focus group discussions and survey data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.3</li> </ul>

V. Evidence and Rating for the Ambitious Instruction Domain

<b>Domain from the “5 Essentials for School Improvement” Framework: Ambitious Instruction</b>			
<b>Evidence Sources</b>			
Classroom observations; teacher surveys; school leader self-assessment; meeting with principal; teacher focus groups; student focus groups, caregiver surveys, and teachers surveys. Documents provided by Tarkington Elementary School			
<b>Rating</b>			
1 <u>Ineffective</u>	2 <u>Improvement Necessary</u>	3 <u>Effective</u>	4 <u>Highly Effective</u>
<i>Insufficient 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>
<b>Evidence</b>			
Strengths			Aligned “5Essentials” Framework Indicator(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The leader sets expectations that teachers follow the curriculum, as determined through discussions with staff and review of the School Leader Self-Assessment.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is evidence that multiple forms of assessment are used to measure student learning based on a review of provided documents and discussion with school personnel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.4</li> </ul>
<p>Areas for Improvement</p>	<p>Aligned “5Essentials” Framework Indicator(s)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on direct observations made by visiting team members, instruction in all classrooms demonstrated the lack of rigor and relevance commensurate with that of the Indiana Academic Standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.2</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and measurable learning objectives, directly aligned to academic standards, were not evident in classrooms during direct observations by the technical assistance team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.2</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is little evidence that teachers are implementing high-leverage instructional strategies to meet the needs of students, as determined by direct classroom observations and focus group discussions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.4</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While there is some evidence that teachers attempt to scaffold instruction, such attempts do not consistently support student mastery of content as found during direct classroom observations and focus group discussions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.3, 2.5</li> </ul>

## VI. Evidence and Rating for the Supportive Environment Domain

<b>Domain from the “5 Essentials for School Improvement” Framework: Supportive Environment</b>			
<b>Evidence Sources</b>			
Classroom observations; teacher surveys; school leader self-assessment; meeting with principal; teacher focus groups; student focus group; teacher surveys, and caregiver surveys. Documents provided by Tarkington Elementary School			
<b>Rating</b>			
1 <u>Ineffective</u>	2 <u>Improvement Necessary</u>	3 <u>Effective</u>	4 <u>Highly Effective</u>
<i>Insufficient 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>
<b>Evidence</b>			
Strengths			Aligned “5Essentials” Framework Indicator(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through direct observations and data gathered through surveys and focus group discussions, it is evident that the leader and teachers engage with each other and with students in ways that demonstrate mutual respect.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.4</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is evidence of school-wide routines, procedures, expectations, and traditions that encourage students to develop self-regulation and maintain a positive school culture.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.2</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observations by visiting team members revealed that students can safely and independently access resources, classmates, and adults necessary for learning in most physical spaces.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.3</li> </ul>
Areas for Improvement			Aligned “5Essentials” Framework Indicator(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on observations and information obtained during focus group discussions, a significant amount of instructional time is lost due schedule design and inefficient use of resources (i.e. space and staff).</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of existing procedures and discussions with school personnel revealed little evidence that a coherent and equitable system of behavior tracking and intervention is used to address behavioral and social emotional issues with students.</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.5</li> </ul>

## VII. Recommendations

### Background

This section outlines an intentionally targeted set of recommendations that align to one or more of the prioritized domains. Anchored in the [“5Essentials for School Improvement” framework developed by the Consortium on School Research at the University of Chicago](#), 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 Tarkington 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.

<b>Recommendation 1</b>
<p>As part of the school’s improvement plan, develop a comprehensive framework for continuous improvement in the context of the professional learning community process. This is a broad proposition, repeated in each of the following recommendations and serving as an umbrella under which each of these recommendations fall. For the first recommendation:</p> <p>Establish a coherent vision and mission that aspires for the optimal academic growth and achievement of every student. These should reflect the school community’s identified core values and guide every aspect of school decision-making and operations.</p>
<b>Aligned Domain(s) from the “5 Essentials for School Improvement” Framework</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective Leaders</li><li>• Ambitious Instruction</li><li>• Supportive Environment</li><li>• Collaborative Teachers</li><li>• Family Involvement</li></ul>
<b>Rationale</b>
<p>A vision devoted to high levels of learning for all students is the hallmark of a school fully devoted to the success of each and every child. A focused and unequivocal vision for student achievement forms a coherent unity of purpose, after which all stakeholders diligently strive. An essential responsibility for school leaders is to inspire stakeholders to embrace this vision. One source suggests that establishing such a compelling picture of the school’s future is the most potent leadership tool for a principal who is committed to developing a coherent and sustainable framework for continuous improvement.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>In the same fashion, a mission clearly defines the mechanisms by which a school will realize its vision. Like the vision, it is concise and emphasizes high levels of learning for all students. In fact, academic success is an essential ingredient in school’s missions. One study found that exemplary schools had missions that addressed challenging environments and focused on academic success. Conversely, academic success was included in the mission statements of</p>

<sup>1</sup> Kanold, T.D. (2011). *The five disciplines of PLC leaders*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

only 18% of the academically unacceptable schools and only 4% included having a challenging environment.<sup>2</sup>

At Tarkington Elementary School the environment is prime for establishing a positive learning culture, rooted in collective responsibility and centered on students' success. Staff and students are working diligently to establish a positive learning environment with a unified commitment to respect, responsibility, and safety. A smaller enrollment, coupled with highly sufficient staffing and plentiful resources, afford many opportunities for students to attain academic growth and achievement. Additionally, the school enjoys overwhelming support by caregivers, as found in Caregiver Survey responses. Despite this, a unified approach to securing high levels of student achievement is not present. This is not to say that the principal, teachers, and other staff are not working hard. To the contrary, they are. However, their attention seems to be fixed on the present rather than the possibilities that promise success. The comment, "we are not a failing school" is correct in many respects. The reality is, however, that levels of students' growth and achievement are not where they could and should be. Recognizing the current reality and moving forward with focus, intentionality, and an innovative spirit will allow the school to realize this promise of success. This begins with a guiding vision expressed with confidence.

During focus group discussions, neither staff nor students could articulate the school's vision or mission. While neither are present on the school's webpage, they are included in the 2019 Comprehensive Needs Assessment and School Improvement Plan. The vision statement notes that, "students [will] have a solid foundation of academic skills, social skills, learning habits and student efficacy to become a lifelong learner." The mission notes the school will, "provide a respectful classroom and school environment that fosters joy while nurturing creative and critical thinking through authentic academic experiences." Although these were unknown to participants in focus groups, respondents to the Teacher Survey expressed the belief that the principal, "uses data to establish a coherent vision that is understood and supported by the entire school community." This disconnect indicates that the stated vision and mission: (1) were not developed through collaboration with the school community, and (2) are not the focal point of all that the school does.

Some of the more pressing needs, addressed in the following recommendations, rely in large part on the above being addressed. Therefore, this recommendation is that a clear vision, with laser-like focus on high levels of learning for all students, be developed by stakeholders. To begin this process, the principal might consider five key practices found to be essential for effective school leaders by the Wallace Foundation:

1. Shaping a vision for academic success for all students.
2. Creating a climate hospitable for education.
3. Cultivating leadership in others.
4. Improving instruction.

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<sup>2</sup> Slate, J. R., Jones, C. H., Wiesman, K., Alexander, J., & Saenz, T. (2008). School mission statements and school performance: A mixed research investigation. *New Horizons in Education*, 56(2), 17-27. Retrieved September 26, 2018, from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ832903.pdf>.

5. Managing people, data, and processes.<sup>3</sup>

Although this recommendation primarily pertains to the first key practice, those that follow are necessary for the vision to become reality. Again, the school is well on its way to establishing a climate hospitable for education. Another resource for beginning this process is *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Communities at Work*.<sup>4</sup>

**Recommendation 2**

As part of the school’s improvement plan, develop a comprehensive framework for continuous improvement in the context of the professional learning community process. In doing so:

Consider the school’s CNA root cause findings and feedback from the school quality review. With these in mind, evaluate current instructional practices and devise a coherent theory of action for professional development that 1) prioritizes instructional areas for improvement, 2) differentiates professional development based on individual staff needs, 3) provides for ongoing, job-embedded feedback and coaching, and 4) monitors staff participation and growth.

**Aligned Domain(s) from the “5 Essentials for School Improvement” Framework**

- Effective Leaders
- Ambitious Instruction
- Supportive Environment
- Collaborative Teachers

**Rationale**

While many factors influence student learning, an indispensable and primary factor is classroom instruction. Highly effective classroom instruction is essential for all students to reach their fullest potential, regardless of their innate cognitive function or levels of readiness. Highly effective teachers understand the content of their subjects and are proficient in crafting learning experiences that promote mastery of declarative and procedural knowledge. Such learning experiences are carefully designed to maximize active engagement and lead students to apply knowledge to unique conditions. Such teachers accommodate a range of learning styles and incorporate forms of assessment necessary to plan the kind of subsequent instruction that reinforces and/or advances learning. Indeed, studies have documented the differential effect of teachers on student achievement gains. Such differences were reported to be over one third standard deviation in reading and nearly a half standard deviation in math.<sup>5</sup>

While a school quality review visitation captures only a snapshot of that which occurs in a school, multiple sources of evidence gathered during the visit found the absence of consistent

<sup>3</sup> *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning*. Wallace Foundation, 2013, pp. 6–15, *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning*. Retrieved March 3, 2019 from <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/The-School-Principal-as-Leader-Guiding-Schools-to-Better-Teaching-and-Learning-2nd-Ed.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> DuFour, Richard, et al. *Learning by Doing: a Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*. 3rd ed., Solution Tree Press., 2016.

<sup>5</sup> 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

robust instructional practices. That is to say at times promising practices were observed, yet given the preponderance of data, the magnitude and consistency of such practices were lacking. For example, in classroom observations where such determinations were able to be made, high expectations for academics were evident in only 14.3% of classrooms and differentiated instruction was found in only 50% of the visits. To the latter point, focus group discussions indicated that no specific high ability program exists in the school. Additionally, no instruction involving rigorous depth of knowledge was observed and higher level questioning by teachers was observed in only 33.3% of the lessons.

In the most recent school improvement plan, the staff identified areas of focus as reading, writing, and mathematics. The comprehensive needs assessment and plan are well developed and provide summative data as the bases for these conclusions. In the Comprehensive Needs Assessment root cause findings, school leadership identified the following specific issues pertaining to staff capacity:

Reading	<p>Our teachers need more strategies to implement explicit vocabulary instruction</p> <p>Our teachers need more strategies to implement explicit non-fiction reading instruction</p> <p>Our teachers need more strategies to teach guided reading</p> <p>Some of our teachers need more support with phonics instruction</p>
Writing	<p>Teachers need more strategies to explicitly teach the varied genres of writing (narrative, expository, persuasive, etc.)</p> <p>Teachers need more strategies to teach grammar skills</p>
Mathematics	<p>Our teachers need more strategies to teach problem solving strategies</p> <p>Our staff has not had a shared approach to providing problem solving skills to our students.</p>

These findings provide targeted, subject-specific skills upon which the school can and should concentrate. Additionally, however, there were more generalized teaching skills found to be in need of improvement. Lesson design (pacing, specific explanation of objectives, linking objectives to that which is familiar and relevant to students, evoking background knowledge, and closure), engagement, and differentiated teaching practices (content, process, and product) were particularly noted. Thus, the challenge for school leadership is to prioritize the order by which the above should be addressed and construct a strategic plan for methodically building teachers' capacity in a format consistent with best practices in professional development. Here, the school might consider the elements of effective professional development espoused by the Learning Policy Institute. They suggest that professional development is most effective when it: 1) Is content focused; 2) Incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory; 3) Supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts; 4) Uses models and modeling of effective practice; 5) Provides coaching and expert support; 6) Offers opportunities for feedback and reflection; and, 7) Is of sustained duration.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, school leadership must consider the value of ongoing observations as a means of identifying instructional priorities, providing targeted feedback, and monitoring teachers'

<sup>6</sup> Darling-Hammond, Linda, et al. "Effective Teacher Professional Development." *Learning Policy Institute*, Learning Policy Institute, 2017, [learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/effective-teacher-professional-development-report](http://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/effective-teacher-professional-development-report).

growth in light of the expectations set forth for them. Although school leaders at Tarkington are presently conducting information and formal observations, the review team could not find evidence that current staff performance appraisals translate into improved instruction. Included in this recommendation is that performance standards be devised and a collective commitment to student learning be established so all teachers know that which is necessary to attain the vision for student learning and are capable of doing so.

### **Recommendation 3**

As part of the school’s improvement plan, develop a comprehensive framework for continuous improvement in the context of the professional learning community process. In doing so:

Analyze current allocation of resources including staff, the facility, instructional programs, and schedule. Develop a strategic plan that maximizes resources so as to support the school’s mission. The plan should include considerations for staff assignments, devising a schedule that makes full use of time throughout the day, allocation of physical space (e.g. classrooms), and a process for monitoring the effective use of resources.

#### **Aligned Domain(s) from the “5 Essentials for School Improvement” Framework**

- Effective Leaders
- Ambitious Instruction
- Supportive Environment
- Collaborative Teachers

#### **Rationale**

A school’s educational program relies on the availability and judicious use of resources such as time, facilities, equipment, and staffing. Regardless of the extent to which such resources are available it is incumbent on school leadership to ensure they are employed in a way that maximizes their effectiveness on student safety and achievement.

The schedule used at Tarkington Elementary School has positive elements. For example, time allotted for reading in all grades is 120 minutes, well beyond the 90 minute minimum required for grades K-3. Ninety minute blocks are allocated for math instruction in grades K-3 and 60 minutes are provided for grades 4 and 5. Additionally, a 30-minute block is provided for targeted enrichment and intervention at all grade levels. While the schedule offers these assets, potential benefits were diminished by loss on instructional time and instructional effectiveness.

Regarding the use of time, consider the morning routine. Every morning, students and staff gather for a Morning Meeting in the gymnasium. To be sure, the idea of bringing everyone together in a “family setting” can go a long way in building and sustaining a unified culture. After the meeting, however, the team noted potential instructional time lost as students and teachers transitioned into classrooms. Once there, the necessity for announcements and other business within the classrooms compounded this issue. In three classrooms, it was noted that reading instruction, scheduled to begin at 8:15, did not commence until after 8:20. While this may not seem significant, it is surprising to realize that five minutes each day translates into 15 hours, or nearly three instructional days per school year.

Concerns with instructional time and effectiveness were observed during the WIN (What I Need) targeted intervention and enrichment block as well. Such blocks of time can allow teachers to concentrate on the unique needs of individual students and scaffold learning through the use of multisensory learning experiences or project-based activities. However, during this period, in over half of the classrooms visited, little to no coordinated differentiated instruction was found. Some students independently worked on the MindPlay program while others completed worksheets or engaged in various online math and reading programs. Visiting team members could not ascertain how teachers were leveraging these tasks to target learning needs or how they were able to obtain reliable data about students' progress. Given the admission by school personnel that no formal high ability program exists, this is considered to be an area for improvement.

Finally, the visiting team questioned the way in which staff coordinate instructional efforts and how non-general education staff are utilized throughout the day. Specifically:

1. The extent to which classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, and the special education staff collaborate and coordinate instruction was unclear. During discussions, no staff could provide a specific process for such coordination to yield efficacy.
2. There are times during the day that special area teachers (art, music, or physical education) have no designated responsibilities.
3. Although the technology coordinator assumes leadership responsibilities and provides some training for staff, there appeared to be times during the day when her duties were not of a nature that they could be assigned elsewhere.
4. Because of contractual obligations there are limited options for PLC meetings and professional development.
5. A full technology lab, equipped with high quality, current equipment is unused by staff and students.
6. A full literacy library, located in the computer lab, appeared to be seldomly used by classroom and special education teachers.

Based on the above, it is recommended that school leadership assess how time, talents, and physical resources are presently employed, and develop a strategic plan as described above. Sample considerations might include: 1) more effectively using the technology coordinator's instructional talents to teach small groups, mini-lessons, or full lessons in reading, mathematics, and/or STEM-based skills on a regular basis; 2) utilizing special area teachers to supervise students (and conduct meaningful learning activities) so as to create time for PLC collaboration; and, 3) consolidating the morning meeting and similar activities in classrooms in order to open time for subject-based instruction.

Tarkington Elementary School is fortunate to have access to resources that, when employed wisely, can provide increased opportunities for enriched instruction and meaningful collaboration. The team believes that great possibilities lie ahead for the school, given the level of parental support and commitment of school leadership and staff.

## VIII. Appendix A: Evidence and Ratings for Collaborative Teachers and Involved Families

### Background

We believe it is valuable for school and district leaders to have a summary of the TAT’s findings and evidence for all five of the domains in the “5 Essentials for School Improvement” Framework. As such, this section of the report provides a rating as well as key findings and supporting evidence for the “Supportive Environment” and “Involved Families” Domains.

This information is intentionally provided in an appendix to reinforce the importance of the previously stated findings, evidence, ratings, and recommendations for the school and district’s prioritized domains in the “5 Essentials for School Improvement” Framework.

Domain from the “5 Essentials for School Improvement” Framework: Collaborative Teachers			
Evidence Sources			
Classroom observations; teacher surveys; school leader self-assessment; meeting with principal; teacher focus groups; and teacher surveys. Documents provided by Tarkington Elementary School			
Rating			
1	2	3	4
<u>Ineffective</u>	<u>Improvement Necessary</u>	<u>Effective</u>	<u>Highly Effective</u>
<i>Insufficient 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 Summary			
Strengths		Aligned “5Essentials” Framework Indicator(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A positive and productive staff culture is present most of the time, as determined by general observations during the visit and data reviewed from provided documents.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1</li> </ul>	
Areas for Improvement		Aligned “5Essentials” Framework Indicator(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A process for selecting and designing professional development, differentiated for staff and focused on advancing student achievement, was not evident.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.2</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In discussions with the principal and teachers, feedback is offered by the principal after formal and informal observations, but a coherent systems of supports, such a coaching cycles, are not present.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.3</li> </ul>	

Domain from the “5 Essentials for School Improvement” Framework: Involved Families			
Evidence Sources			
Teacher surveys; school leader self-assessment; meeting with principal; teacher focus groups; caregiver surveys; and student focus group. Documents provided by Tarkington Elementary School			
Rating			
1 <u>Ineffective</u>	2 <u>Improvement Necessary</u>	3 <u>Effective</u>	4 <u>Highly Effective</u>
<i>Insufficient 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 Summary			
Strengths		Aligned “5Essentials” Framework Indicator(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to caregiver surveys and student feedback, there are consistent opportunities for families to be members of the school community.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school has established partnerships with a variety of community partners who support the school, as determined by information gained in student, teacher, and school leadership focus groups.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.3</li> </ul>	
Areas for Improvement		Aligned “5Essentials” Framework Indicator(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to the school leadership and teachers, broad family involvement in sponsoring and/or attending school events is inconsistent.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.2</li> </ul>	