Findings of Root Cause Analysis for Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools

High Point High School

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MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY 1865

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This report was prepared by the University of Maryland College Park Center for Educational Innovation and Improvement at the College of Education and in partnership with the Bowie State University College of Education and the Morgan State University School of Education & Urban Studies. The Root Cause Analysis process was facilitated by Dr. Wil Parker and Dr. Akeda Pearson, who also co-authored this report.

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to share outcomes of a Root Cause Analysis (RCA) conducted to support High Point High School in identifying underlying causes of school performance problems. The report provides an overview of the RCA process, school profile, problem statement, the RCA conducted at the school, and recommendations to address the root causes.

The Maryland Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Consolidated State Plan requires schools that have been identified for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) engage in an RCA process facilitated by a third party. CSI schools are defined as follows: the lowest achieving 5 percent of Title I schools, high schools that do not graduate one third or more of their students, or schools that have federal school improvement grants. High Point High School was identified as a CSI school due to low graduation rates. Outcomes of the RCA must be used to inform the development of intervention plans to improve school performance.

CSI schools that were identified in the 2018-2019 school year have three years to exit CSI status. CSI school leaders will receive a leadership coach to support the development and implementation of the intervention plan. CSI principals will be required to participate in the Leading for School Improvement Institute, which provides customized professional learning experiences to support school improvement. CSI principals will be required to engage in monitoring visits by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to ensure that progress is being made toward school improvement goals.

The MSDE established a memorandum of understanding with the University of Maryland College Park to facilitate the RCA process. The University of Maryland College Park collaborated with the American Institutes for Research to develop RCA tools and train field teams. Field teams consisted of researchers, data analysts, and education practitioners from Bowie State University, Morgan State University, Johns Hopkins University, and other organizations. Field team members worked with all CSI schools to go through an RCA process. MSDE will support each school to engage in a long-term continuous improvement process that includes RCA outcomes, recommended interventions, and evaluations of employed interventions. As part of this procedure, CSI schools were first required to go through a needs-assessment process that was used to drive the RCA work.

I. INTRODUCTION

RCA Process for CSI Schools

A Root Cause Analysis Facilitator Guide was developed to promote consistency in the root cause analysis process. The Facilitator Guide contains protocols designed to engage school leaders and stakeholders in identifying a specific problem and prioritizing root causes for the problem.

There was a four-step process used to facilitate the root cause analysis:

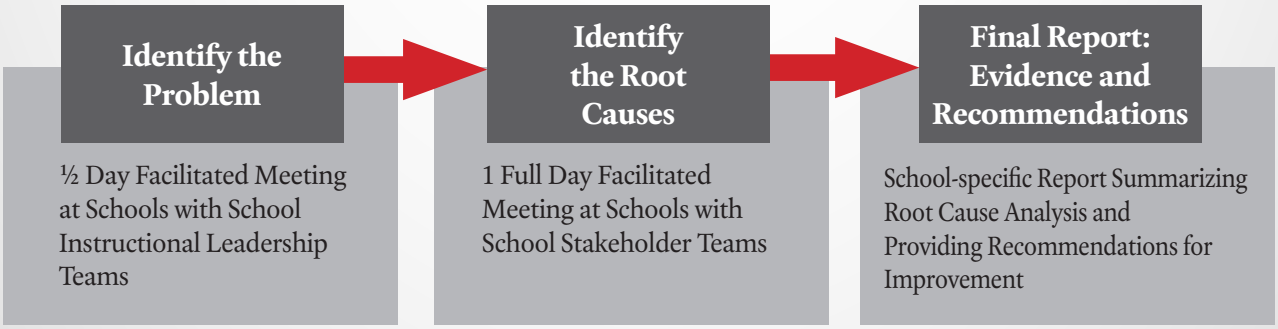
1. Craft a Problem Statement Based on Data
2. Brainstorm Causal Factors
3. Analyze Underlying Causes to Identify Root Causes
4. Prioritize Root Causes for Intervention

The root cause analysis process translates the successes and challenges identified through the CSI needs assessment into priorities to inform actionable improvement planning. The work with schools was staged in three steps: 1) identify the problem; 2) identify the root causes; 3) draft a school report with recommendations for improvement.

First, the RCA team worked with school leadership teams to craft a problem statement in a half-day meeting. Using the available school, school system, and state data, the school team selected a problem that relates to their CSI status and provides a direction for the root cause analysis.

Second, the facilitators returned to the school for a full-day meeting with the school's stakeholder team to better understand the root causes of the problem. Once the stakeholders worked through the process of determining the root causes, they prioritized those root causes based on importance, feasibility, and alignment to CSI status.

As a third and final step, the RCA teams created these school-specific reports with recommendations for addressing the problem and root causes in improvement planning.
An RCA starts with asking the question: What problem do we face that, if solved or mitigated, would most effectively lead to our desired outcomes (in this case significant improvement in



student outcomes that would lead to the school being removed from CSI status)? This "Problem Statement" is then studied and interrogated by a team of stakeholders through the RCA process that answers questions such as:

- Why do we get these outcomes?
- Who are the people involved in this problem?
- What policies, procedures, or rules contribute to this problem?
- What resources are currently engaging with this problem?
- What environmental issues impact this problem?

This process led to a small number of "root causes" to the problem designed to help school stakeholders design strategies and programs that are more likely to lead to significant improvement for students. In addition, the process will include conducting research on the problem and prioritized root causes and recommending evidence-based strategies for improvement.

II. SCHOOL PROFILE

School Name: High Point High School
3601 Powder Mill Rd, Beltsville, MD 20705
(301) 572-6400

Total teachers: approximately 160

Student Demographics								
Total Students	Asian	Black African Americans	Hispanic/ Latino	White	Other	% Economically Disadvantaged	% English Learners	% Students with Disabilities
2,630	78	565	1,932	44	11	80.73%	40.93%	7.93%

High Point High School
MSDE School Report Card Profile for 9-12

Academic Achievement		School Quality and Student Success		Graduation Rate		Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency		Readiness for Postsecondary Success	
% Proficient in Mathematics	14.3%	Students Not Chronically Absent	63.1%	Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate	62.9%	% English Learners Making Progress Toward Learning English	39.6%	Credit for Well-Rounded Curriculum	46.4%
Average Performance Mathematics	2.1								
% Proficient in English Language Arts (ELA)	35%	Access to Well Rounded Curriculum	48.3%	Five-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate	65.6%			On Track in Ninth Grade for Graduation	77.5%
Average Performance ELA	2.7								
Earned Points	11/30	Earned Points	7.3/25	Earned Points	9.6/15	Earned Points	4/10	Earned Points	4.9/10
Total Earned Percent:				40%					

To view this school's full report card, visit www.mdreportcard.org

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Description of the Process

Day one of the RCA process was facilitated on April 2, 2019. The meeting was an opportunity to develop trust amongst the educational stakeholders and provide transparency of the RCA process. Educational stakeholders included High Point High School's principal, staff, and school district personnel.

The primary goal of the first day involved the exploration of the RCA purpose and process to craft a problem statement. This goal extended into reviewing the MSDE CSI Needs Assessment Report and school data in an effort to identify leading challenges that would pinpoint one priority problem area for the RCA.

Specifically, the Maryland State School Report Card data, the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), and the school's needs assessment were reviewed and discussed. The Maryland report card revealed data measuring academic achievement, graduation rate, progress in achieving English language proficiency, readiness for post-secondary success, school quality, and student success. Students met the annual target for both academic achievement and progress in achieving English language proficiency. These results were encouraging to the participants. The negative results of the graduation rates have been a consistent struggle, especially in light of the recent increase in the graduation rates' percentages, which were not considered in the scoring process. The report card data also revealed that the student mobility rate was 28.5 percent, and 36.89 percent of the students were chronically absent.

The report card and the needs assessment both exhibited overall negative final results with low graduation rates, chronic absenteeism, and high mobility rates. However, growth is being demonstrated at High Point High School, which is not necessarily captured in the aforementioned reports. The graduation rates for all students have increased over the past few years. Neither report considers the growing number of English as a Second Language (ESL) newcomer students at the school who experience a disadvantage with language acquisition, lack credits, and who took non-credit bearing classes at previous schools. These factors automatically necessitate that these students will need at least five years to graduate, as per the Prince George's County Public Schools' (PGCPS) ESL Course Sequence. In addition, more than 80 percent of all English language learner (ELL) students enrolled at High Point High School are over-aged and under-credited, with the majority of these students enrolled in ninth grade.

The needs assessment publishes school assessment data. The majority of ELL students at High Point take the Algebra I state assessment in their second year of being in the US. Although the state assessments are based on a student earning a four or five, students can still meet the graduation requirements by scoring a three on the state assessment.

The WIDA is a screening test to determine English language proficiency upon entering a school district. As soon as students pass an ESL class, they move on to the next level, even if their WIDA access scores do not show proficiency at that level. In addition, students' course placement in other content areas is based on their ESL level, not on their WIDA level. At times a misalignment occurs between a student's ability level, as demonstrated by the WIDA proficiency level, and the content course(s) a student is taking. Nearly half of ELL students at High Point are enrolled in one of the higher-level ESL classes, with only 9 percent scoring proficiency in those higher-level courses. Students may be placed in one of four levels of ESL classes (see the chart in the Key Takeaways Table). The Newcomer level is where students with little to no proficiency in the English language are placed. It will take these students five years to progress through all the levels and complete the English classes needed for graduation. ESL Advanced is similar to an English 9 curriculum for general education students. It will take roughly three years of ESL classes for students to get to the same level as an incoming ninth grade student. The majority of ESL students at High Point High School are at the Newcomer level and must score at least a 4.5 on the WIDA access test to exit ESL. High Point's twelfth grade ESL students had a higher percentage exit rate of the ESL Program than other schools throughout the county, however, ninth to eleventh grade students had lower percentage exit rates.

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Problem Statement Criteria

Participants arrived at a problem statement by examining how CSI schools were identified, using data to understand why the school received CSI status, organizing data trends into themes, evaluating the feasibility of addressing those themes, and prioritizing addressable themes to identify the RCA area of focus. The problem statement was crafted based on the following criteria:

1. *How important is the problem to addressing our needs?*

   Importance is determined by whether student outcomes will be improved, teacher efficacy will be increased, and/or organizational systems will be improved.

2. *How feasible is it to address this problem?*

   Feasibility is defined by the availability of adequate resources, staff, and capacity, and whether there is sufficient support and buy-in.

3. *How aligned is the problem to our needs?*

   The problem statement should be related to the reason the school was identified as a CSI school. In addition, the school should be able to address the problem and its root causes by the effective selection and implementation of evidence-based practices.

Day One Summary

The facilitators achieved buy-in with stakeholders and guided them through deep dialogue of their current data and previous performance and indicators, with attention focused on the factors related to their identification as a CSI school. Key questions were asked, data themes were developed, and a problem statement was crafted based on the data.

The principal shared the effects of system change, and how policies, procedures, and rules dictate the work. Her reflections were especially meaningful when viewing the school as part of a system and working within the confines of school resources. She also elaborated on the institutional barriers while stressing that money was not a big issue. All stakeholders were committed to digging deep to get to the root cause of the school's challenges.

Overall, it became clear during the process, that the problem statement must address the issues of working with culturally and linguistically diverse learners who are adversely affected by a flawed evaluation system that does not address the ELL population. The ELL population does not have the expected foundations of learning and, as a result, these students perform poorly on state assessments. Although fourteen- to sixteen-year-old students have a greater chance of graduating in four years than do eighteen- to twenty-year-olds who are over-age and under-credited, both groups are at a disadvantage when taking state assessments. This disadvantage is especially true when considering the rates of graduating or not graduating in four years.

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Data Source	Key Takeaways
Maryland State School Report Card -MSDE CSI Needs Assessment Report	• Low graduation rate of 65% for all students, 49% for ELLs, and 73% for non-ELLs
World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)	• Percentage of students in each WIDA level and ESL course enrollment: • Entering 30% (WIDA) • Emerging 33% (WIDA) • Developing 28% (WIDA) • Newcomer 36% (ESL) – Level 1 • Beginner 15% (ESL) – Level 2 • Intermediate 27% (ESL) – Level 3 • Advanced 21% (ESL) – Level 4 • Exit Rate • Grade 9: 2%, Grade 10: 3%, Grade 11: 4%, and Grade 12: 6%
Maryland State School Report Card	• High mobility rate of 29% • High chronic absenteeism rate of 36.89%

Themes Across Data Sources (Topics) (1 being highest priority)	Ranking
A low graduation rate is evident, especially for adult students and under-credit students.	1
The school has chronic absenteeism.	2
The school is struggling to deliver high quality, meaningful instruction to ELL students, which is resulting in a high percentage of linguistically diverse learners who are struggling academically.	3
Instructional support for teachers	4

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Final Problem Statement

Multiple data sources indicate that a high percentage of ELL students are not meeting Maryland college and career readiness standards nor are they graduating in four years.

Evidence Base for Problem Statement

This section represents a brief research summary of the evidence related to the significance and/or impact of the problem statement identified above.

High Point High School is the image of our current society, a cultural milieu of individuals with language, learning, and cultural diversity as the bases for growth and prosperity. Nieto (2001) offers we must closely examine the socio-cultural and socio-political contexts of languages and customs to build opportunities for learner success. By embracing culture and language as a foundation, school reform and educational equity are not barriers to student success. After extended conversation and discussion, the research indicates that a school must embrace cultural, social, racial, and linguistic diversity in order to succeed (Nieto, 2001). As the links to academic growth become more associated with data driven results, the aspects of "who" is taught and "how" to teach them are closely associated to building opportunities to learn (Boykin & Noguera, 2011). Much of the rationale is positioned as school and district accountability, yet often the capacity to grow is imbedded in the practice of all stakeholders. The positions cited in this report are issues both nationally and globally. As districts move to embrace the lived experiences of all learners, learner identity becomes a connection to social identification as well as academic learning.

IV. ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Day Two Summary

High Point High School's educational stakeholders continued the RCA process on April 23, 2019, day two, with additional stakeholders including a Title I resource/mentor teacher, school counselor, Title I instructional specialist, the director of education from PGCPS' central office, and student and parent representatives.

The dialogue opened with a review of day one. Everyone was excited to continue the process and get to the root causes that resulted in High Point High School being on a CSI plan. They looked deeper at data and explored the following questions:

1) What resources are available to address the school's challenges?
2) What flexibilities might be allowed?
3) How can we carry out the work a little differently considering the uniqueness of our concerns?
4) What autonomy can the school have?
5) With 848 students over-aged and under-credited, and only 103 ELL students earning credit from summer school, what else can we consider for these students?
6) What can we do instructionally to support students with language acquisition and growth on WIDA, taking into account our mobility rate and student factors?
7) With a high number of students who have disruptions in their education, what can we do to support them? What resources can we obtain? (to consider: hiring an elementary reading specialist)

The principal and educational stakeholders had deep meaningful dialogue addressing the data and the three goals of day two that included finalizing the problem statement, generating a prioritized list of root causes, and soliciting ideas for improvement.

The facilitators continued with guiding the stakeholders to create themes based on the problem. This process revealed that many international students enroll at High Point over-aged because their graduation cohort is defined by their first time in ninth grade. Several students enroll for the first time at nineteen years of age but may have started high school in their home country at the age of sixteen. These students are trying to learn a new language and meet graduation requirements in a truncated amount of time. Even with a sound instructional program at High Point, over-aged and under-credited students do not have the support at the district level to graduate on time. In addition, the school's cohort numbers are doubling, and the graduation rates are increasing, but this growth is not captured or recognized by the state report card. Although the overall graduation rate percentage has increased by 2%, the number of students graduating has significantly increased.

The student's voice was very impactful to the group. She stated, "(I)f students don't have a goal in mind, they don't have anything to work towards. My peers who don't know the language yet are not invested in the school and/or don't know about activities that are offered. Students are missing the connection that an education will mean a higher lifestyle. Their only focus is on right now: I need to work to eat and have a roof over my head."

The stakeholders were subsequently divided into groups, and each group did a gallery walk to each of the Fishbone Diagram sections: systemic policies and procedures, instructional program, and socio-emotional factors.

Casual Factors

The "Fishbone" diagram represents the stakeholder group's initial assessment of all of the individual factors contributing to the existence or recurrence of the problem statement.

IV. ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

High Point High School Fishbone: Exploring Causes

Systemic Policies & Procedures

- Enrollment: School Overcrowded; Not Enough Instructional Days to Learn Content; If Students are Misplaced in ELA, they are Stuck
- Enrollment: Students Must Attend Classes Without Getting Credit; Grading Policy/Can't Transfer Grades
- Graduation Requirements: First-time 9th Graders can be in a Different Country but all Credits do not Transfer; Language Classes do not Count Toward Graduation; Not Enough Time
- Assessments: Long Delay in Score Reporting; Little Planning Ahead; Curriculum is not Aligned to State Exams.
- Budget: Transient Population with More Students in the Spring than in the Fall; Budget Based on September Enrollments
- Budget: Student-Based Budget & Staffing Plans due in March but Course Requirements are not due Until April and Cannot Staff Based on Students' Interests

Instructional Program

- Assessment Performance: Student Motivation; Lack of Students' Skills & Preparation; Lack of Teacher Pedagogical Knowledge; Lack of Understanding of Content & Standards.
- Assessment Performance: Technology Enhancement of Questions; Wording of Questions on Standardized Exams
- Graduation Requirements: Lack of Differentiation of Curriculum; Lack of Student Understanding of Graduation Requirements
- Lack of CTE Programs: Funding of CTE Programs, Specialty Programs; Facilities & Resources; Appropriate CTE Offering for Student Population
- Language Barriers: Studies Show Language Acquisition Takes 7 Years; Curriculum Needs Adjustments to fit Students' Needs
- Curriculum Development & Supports: Lack fo Prerequisites; Facilitates; CTE Programs; Professional Learning; Parent Engagement & Education

Social Emotional Factors

- Family Trauma: Abuse, Neglect & Gangs; Emancipation; Guardian is Extended Family Member (Lacks Parental Support)
- Psychological Stressors: Social Media; Depression; Bullying
- Safety: Gang Recruitment; Shooting Incidents
- FARMS/Poverty: Students must Assist Family Financially; Students Focus on Basic Needs Rather than Education
- Language Barriers: Barriers with Peers, Teachers, Counselors, & Academic Materials; Language Acquisition Takes Time
- Immigration Status: Mandatory School Requirements; Fear of Deportation & Separation; New Environment; Homelessness; Food Insecurity; Hygiene & Clothing; Lack of Parental Support, Oversight & Awareness

Systemic Policies & Procedures | **Instructional Program** | **Social Emotional Factors**

→ A High Percentage of Students in ELL Subgroup are not Graduating in Four Years.

IV. ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Prioritized Root Causes

Following several group exercises, the stakeholder group came to consensus on the priority root causes. These are the causes most critical to addressing the problem based on the criteria of importance, feasibility, and alignment.

Final Output. Prioritized Root Causes:	Ranking
The school has multiple flaws in the enrollment and crediting system policies and procedures.	1
Instructional programming is not well aligned to the needs of English language learners.	2
The student body has many undiagnosed and unmet socio-emotional needs, particularly as related to recent immigration experiences and socio-economic disadvantage.	3

Evidence Base for Prioritized Root Causes

Historically, High Point High School was designed to largely meet the needs of white, middle class students. As our democratic society has become more diverse, (special needs, immigrants, race, and culture) the expectation of the high school being equipped to satisfactorily educate this population is rarely realized. For example, the changing demographics are changing the classrooms. Collectively, the student population is becoming more and more diverse. The combined numbers of non-white students are approaching the majority (Payne, Hodges, & Hernandez, 2017). High Point High School is a case in point of the changing demographics of a single high school of approximately 90 percent non-white students. effective, teachers are likely to need targeted, ongoing support that is connected to their practice and the needs of their students.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Brainstormed Ideas for Improvement Planning from Stakeholders

At the conclusion of day two, the stakeholders had a brief opportunity to brainstorm ideas and strategies that might help to address the root causes identified. This brainstorming activity asked participants to list any good ideas they have. These ideas were not prioritized or identified as formal recommendations to the school.

To Address Systemic Policies and Procedures

- Review and revise residency requirements for eighth grade rollover to high school enrollment.
- Review and revise how the graduation rate is calculated with regard to cohort membership.
- Review and revise policies and procedures of the International Student Counseling Office.
- Provide autonomy for a flexible scheduling model for students with non-traditional schedule needs.
- Create a newcomer center for students to enroll in before they transfer to a traditional four-year school model.
- Review and revise the rolling admission process and compulsory age for students. Offer alternatives, such as staggering start dates.
- Consider providing priority staffing to CSI (high needs) schools for new hires. Consider providing compensation to teachers who stay at high-needs schools.

To Address Instructional Programming

- Review disaggregated assessment data to examine the impact of lack of language acquisition.
- Review and revise PGCPS ESL Course Sequence (revamp via flexible scheduling).
- Review and revise the "On Track in Ninth Grade" requirements for ELL students (specifically, ESL newcomer students).
- Provide professional learning to make connections to what is happening in the classroom (specifically with instruction to ELLs). Observe implementation of other models and best practices and incorporate more peer to peer observations.
- Provide professional learning to staff on cultural competency and awareness.
- Create criteria for hiring teachers and staff.
- Decrease the ratio of professional school counselors to students.

To Address Social Emotional Factors

- Increase the number of professional school counselors, pupil personnel workers, social workers, and family support services.
- Increase parent engagement and participation.
- Change the robo-call system to address parent needs and language.
- Develop and improve school practices to assist parents with enrollment, and educate parents on attendance, graduation requirements, and so forth.
- Provide students with additional exposure to post-secondary and career options.
- Increase the number of parent-teacher conferences built into the calendar (at least one per semester or one per quarter).
- Establish a community hub to disseminate resources and provide services for the school community.
- Revamp the communication of available resources to parents and students (e.g., Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative). Go into the communities.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Recommendations for Evidence-Based Improvement

Final recommendations for this report have been developed by the University of Maryland College Park in consultation with RCA facilitators and leaders at MSDE. Recommendations were developed using the following process:

- Reviewing the ideas, notes, and stakeholder perspectives gathered throughout the RCA process;
- Conducting a scan of the research literature related to the problem statement and prioritized root causes identified throughout the process. Although a comprehensive research analysis was outside the scope of this project, the team reviewed research using the standards of evidence model outlined in the ESSA to offer studies that had moderate or strong evidence of effectiveness (Level 1 or 2 on the ESSA framework);
- Compiling, organizing, and categorizing over 150 recommendations submitted by RCA facilitators.

These recommendations represent only a portion of the potential strategies and interventions that will become a part of the school's three-year improvement plan developed in concert with the MSDE Title I office.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

RECOMMENDATION	Four Domains Domain of Rapid School Improvement[1]
Use data-based decision-making to improve instruction and student achievement. Student performance data should be used to 1) understand the current ability levels of schools, classes, and students; 2) set improvement goals for schools, classes, and students; 3) determine strategies for accomplishing set goals; and 4) assess the effectiveness of the strategies (van Geel, Keuning, Visccher, & Fox, 2016). Using student data to drive instructional practices has the potential to increase student performance on standardized assessments when implemented under certain conditions (Carlson, Borman, & Robinson, 2011; van Geel et al., 2016). The following six research backed conditions should be taken into account: **1.** Understand that implementation takes time. School and district leaders should see data-based decision-making (DBDM) as a multiyear process and should expect to see the results of effective interventions in the second and third years (van Geel et al., 2016). **2.** Schools must build a culture around analyzing and using data effectively. School leaders and teachers can associate DBDM with accountability, negative judgments, and threatened job security and not with continuous improvement, which can lead to hostile environments and school cultures (Carlson et al., 2011). **3.** Effective DBDM requires full collective participation of the school community (Carlson et al., 2011). Staff should actively engage in co-constructing school changes that are responsive to local school contexts (Datnow, Hubbard, & Mehan, 1998). **4.** Teachers have been found to use formative assessment data to decide what content to reteach and to whom, not to fundamentally change how they teach or what curriculum they use (Goertz, Oláh, & Riggan, 2009). If fundamental instructional strategies or curriculum choices need to be changed, these must be identified and addressed as separate components of professional learning and school improvement plans. **5.** The success of DBDM interventions are highly related to the quality of the inferences drawn on the basis of the data; thus, data interpretation should be performed in collaboration with multiple stakeholders, particularly during initial data review (Anderson, Leithwood, & Strauss, 2010). **6.** DBDM has been shown to have greater effect on mathematics performance than it has on reading performance. Specifically, DBDM has been shown to have statistical and meaningful impact on standardized tests scores in mathematics, but empirical studies have only captured positive trends in reading performance (Carlson et al., 2011). The Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) Regional Educational Laboratory Program (see: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/data_use.asp) provides tools that would help the school staff adopt a data-driven culture, as well as provide tools to train staff on how to extract and analyze their data.	*Instructional Transformation*

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

RECOMMENDATION	Four Domains Domain of Rapid School Improvement[1]
Implement Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to explicitly teach SEL skills focused on self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making Employ a robust SEL program that is inclusive of all school-based staff, including but not limited to, administrators, teachers, school social workers, guidance counselors, and paraprofessionals. Effective school based SEL programs are comprised of five major components: **1.** Self- awareness **2.** Self-management **3.** Social awareness **4.** Relationship skills **5.** Responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2012). These components are more impactful when they are set in an environment in which organizational culture, climate, and conditions all support SEL (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). One goal of SEL programs is to improve the quality of interactions among individuals in schools and within classrooms; therefore, school-level social processes are important to examine when considering an SEL program. Moreover, some evaluation studies find that within low-income urban communities, school climate may be particularly salient (Aber, Jones, Brown, Chaudry, & Samples, 1998; Hughes, Cavell, Meehan, Zhang, & Collie, 2005). Though the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning endorses the use of evidence-based SEL programs in the context of systemic schoolwide and districtwide approaches (Devaney, O'Brien, Resnick, Keister, & Weissberg, 2006), it is necessary that a systemic approach to SEL programming entails integration of SEL across school activities, both in and outside of the classroom, and even reaching into the community.	*Culture Shift*

[1]*The MSDE uses the Center on School Turnaround at WestEd's Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement: A Systems Framework as a framework for continuous improvement. The framework identifies four areas as central to rapid and significant improvement: turnaround leadership, talent development, instructional transformation, and culture shift. The recommendations in this report are aligned to the four domains as a way to organize and frame the improvement efforts. For more information: https://centeronschoolturnaround.org.*

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

RECOMMENDATION	Four Domains Domain of Rapid School Improvement[1]
Provide high-quality differentiated instruction in all general education classes. Differentiated instruction serves a wide range of student abilities and needs in a single classroom. Studies suggest that differentiated classrooms produce similar or better results in reading compared to traditional classrooms (Connor et al., 2009; Reis, McCoach, Little, Muller & Kaniskan, 2011; Tieso, 2002). Research suggests that high-quality differentiated instruction includes the following features: 1) identification of each students' learning needs based on student performance data; 2) whole group instruction with various levels of examples and explanations, and subgroup instruction targeted at individuated students' skill levels with different levels and kinds of explanation and practice; 3) regular (informal and formal) assessment of student learning to identify new needs and goals following initial adjustment of instruction; and 4) continuous responsive adjustment of both what is taught and how it is taught based on the latest student assessment data (Alsalamah, 2017; Prast, Van de Weijer-Bergsma, Kroesbergen, & Van Luit, 2015; van Geel et al., 2019). Although much differentiation can occur through small and large group instruction in the regular classroom, some instruction may need to be more individualized based on student needs and will lead to pull-out interventions. Toward this end, randomized control trials on Computer Assisted Instruction programs, such as through TutorMate, have shown remarkably positive results on elementary students reading performance (Kortecamp, Harper, & Green, 2016).	*Instructional Transformation*

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

RECOMMENDATION	Four Domains Domain of Rapid School Improvement[1]
Adopt and implement policies, practices, and assessments that meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. It is important for educational systems to identify policies, practices, and assessments that are not equitable for all students. Failing to identify the aforementioned leads to institutionalized discrimination. In 2018, the Intercultural Development Research Association released an article with a solution that states, "Schools can study disaggregated course grades, test scores, resource inequities and course enrollment patterns to determine any differences between groups of students based on race, national origin, sex, gender, disability, language and religion. They can critically examine their own behaviors, policies and practices that may contribute to the inequities, such as prerequisite requirements that disparately prevent underserved students from enrolling in advanced courses. They also can provide deep training for teachers on cultural competency and implicit bias, focusing on both the individual and the institution" (Hinojosa, 2018). Ongoing research in public education shows a mixed match culture of students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Public education continues to lack the ability to meet the needs of the growing diverse student populations. The problem is exacerbated when students enter the system as a deficit model, i.e., over-aged and under-credited. Research further shows that students not engaged in public education develop a lack of social and cultural capital to be successful (Stanton-Salazar, 1997).	*Instructional Transformation*

VI. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Collaboratively with the Local School System (LSS) and stakeholders, CSI school teams will develop intervention plans that identify SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-Bound) intervention goals with measurable annual outcomes and progress indicators that will guide schools toward meeting annual targets and exit criteria in three years. The outcomes of the RCA must be used to inform the development of the SMART intervention goals and identification of evidence-based strategies included in the intervention plan. Any evidence-based strategy must meet the ESSA evidence requirements (Level 1, 2, or 3). Intervention plans will be approved by the school, LSS, and the MSDE, and monitored annually by staff from the LSS and the MSDE. Additional information and resources are available on the MSDE Resource Hub. https://www.marylandresourcehub.com

APPENDICES

Appendix A: List of Stakeholders

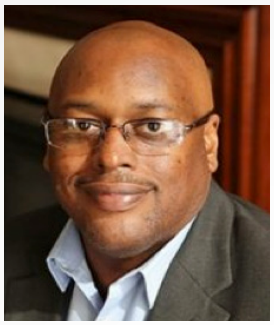
Day 1
April 2, 2019

Name	Position
Anthony Whittington	*Monitoring Accountant Data Management*
Monica Welch	*Professional Development Coordinator*
Nicole Isley-McClure	*Principal*
Daryl Anderson	*Assistant Principal*
Sherry Felix	*Title I Resource Teacher*
Pamela Bell-Smith	*Assistant Principal*
Cristina King	*Data Coach Title I Coordinator*
Charoscar Coleman	*Instructional Director*
Ann Craovaner	*Literacy Coach*
Tata Lobin	*Monitoring/Accountability*
Hampton Conway	*Instructional Technology Specialist*

Day 2
April 23, 2019

Name	Position
Anthony Whittington	*Monitoring Accountant Data Management*
Monica Welch	*Professional Development Coordinator*
Nicole Isley-McClure	*Principal*
Daryl Anderson	*Assistant Principal*
Sherry Felix	*Title I Resource Teacher*
Pamela Bell-Smith	*Assistant Principal*
Cristina King	*Data Coach Title I Coordinator*
Charoscar Coleman	*Instructional Director*
Ann Craovaner	*Literacy Coach*
Tata Lobin	*Monitoring/Accountability*
Hampton Conway	*Instructional Technology Specialist*
	Student
Natika Cromer	*Title I Resource/Mentor Teacher*
Donna Yearwood	*Professional School Counselor*
William Simpson	*Title I Instructional Specialist*
Isaac Castillo	*Director of Education*
Robert A. Colbert, Jr.	*Parent*

Appendix B: Bios of Facilitators



Wil Parker is an accomplished keynote speaker, presenter, and teaching clinician. He has given professional learning and keynote sessions throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and South America.

Parker is an assistant professor of educational leadership at Bowie State University. He serves as a liaison and resource for school districts, superintendents, ministers of education, school administrators, colleges, and universities to develop support programs, residency programs, and partnerships that cultivate accomplished teachers. He delivers professional learning and coaching to school districts on differentiated instruction as a member of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's Differentiated Instruction Cadre, and on his other areas of expertise including curriculum design, Common Core State Standards, teacher leadership, and school and district leadership.

Most recently, Parker created and implemented districtwide capacity-building initiatives to increase student and teacher learning in large urban school districts. His teaching and leadership experience, which includes an advanced placement biology teacher; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; International Baccalaureate; and an allied health careers professor in public schools, community colleges, and university teacher preparation programs. Parker's research agenda includes school leadership and teacher leadership development, urban school leader development, critical race theory, multicultural education, social justice, African American male teachers, and student athlete achievement.

Parker holds a doctorate in educational and organizational leadership from the University of Pennsylvania, a master's degree in science education from The George Washington University, and a bachelor's degree in biology from Tennessee State University.

Dr. Akeda Pearson is an awarded and results-oriented educational leader who has dedicated her life to the betterment of youth, women, men, and families. With over twenty-five years in the field of education and Christian ministry, she has had the pleasure to provide exceptional instructional expertise (especially equitable practices and cultural proficiency) to diverse school personnel, colleges, universities, faith-based organizations, and nonprofits. Dr. Pearson consistently provides trainings and strategic planning on all levels while fostering environments conducive to learning, operationalizing departments, training/mentoring educational leaders, cultivating proven community engagement strategies, and developing strategic plans for the implementation of data-driven programming as well as mobilizing communities. She serves as the Director of Advancement for Teaching and Learning at Bowie State University. She is also an education specialist/consultant, professor, advocate, community activist, entrepreneur, certified mentor, and author.

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Appendix C: Citations of research

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