



# Findings and Results of Root Cause Analysis for Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools

## Renaissance Academy

September, 2019



COLLEGE OF  
EDUCATION

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL  
INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT



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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. Sean Coleman and Lori Wilen, who also co-authored this report.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to share the outcomes of a Root Cause Analysis (RCA) conducted to support Renaissance Academy 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. Renaissance Academy 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

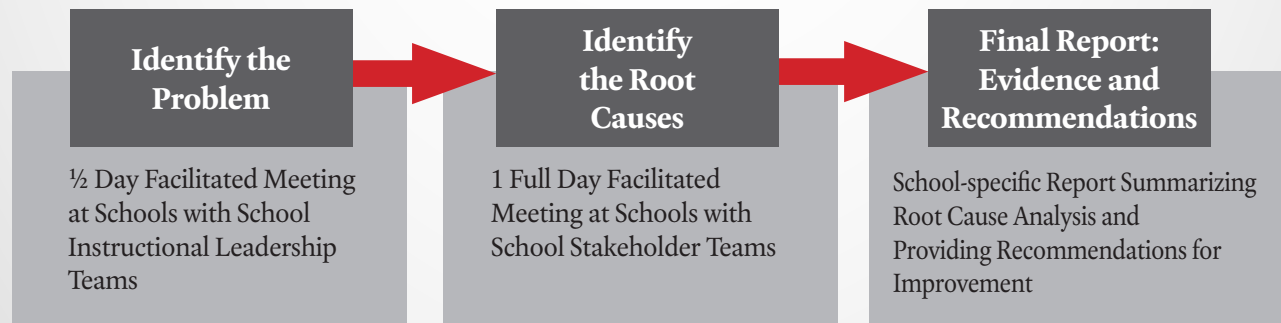
The root cause analysis process translates the successes and challenges identified through the CSI needs assessment into priorities to inform actionable improvement planning. The work with schools was staged in three steps: 1) identify

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.



## I. INTRODUCTION

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:** Renaissance Academy  
 1301 McCullough St, Baltimore, MD 21217  
 (443) 984-3164

Total Teachers: 15

### Student Demographics

Total Students	Asian	Black African Americans	Hispanic/Latino	White	Other	% Economically Disadvantaged	% English Learners	% Students with Disabilities
246	<10	241	<10	<10	<10	80%	<5%	34.88%

### Renaissance Academy 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	3.2%	Students Not Chronically Absent	15.3%	Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate	52%	% English Learners Making Progress Toward Learning English	N/A	Credit for Well Rounded Curriculum	100%
Average Performance Mathematics	1.7								
% Proficient in English Language Arts (ELA)	2.7%	Access to Well Rounded Curriculum	33.3%	Five-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate	55.1%			On Track in Ninth Grade for Graduation	32.7%
Average Performance ELA	1.5								
Earned Points	5.2/30	Earned Points	4.3/25	Earned Points	8.0/15	Earned Points	N/A	Earned Points	6.6/10
Total Earned Percent:				30%					

To view this school's full report card, visit [www.mdreportcard.org](http://www.mdreportcard.org)

## III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

### Description of the Process

A half-day meeting facilitated by a two-member RCA team was convened at Renaissance Academy on April 2, 2019 for day one of the RCA process. Members included the school leadership team, consisting of a local school system leader (i.e., principal supervisor, school improvement leader), and other key school staff. The primary goal of this meeting was to craft a “problem statement” that would drive the RCA. A problem statement is defined as a statement describing a situation, issue, barrier, impediment, or challenge that a school must address to significantly improve student outcomes, related particularly to those outcomes that led to the school being placed on the CSI list.

The goals of the first day were as follows: 1) to determine a problem statement to drive the analysis of the root cause, and 2) to identify stakeholders for day two of the RCA.

The primary data sources reviewed were the MSDE CSI Needs Assessment Report, the Maryland State School Report Card, and the School Climate Survey data and qualitative data from school stakeholders.

### Problem Statement Criteria

Participants arrived at a problem statement by examining how CSI schools were identified; by using data to understand why the school received CSI status; by organizing data trends into themes; by evaluating the feasibility of addressing those themes; and by 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 is 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. Also 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

On day one, the group gathered to share the story of Renaissance Academy and analyze data to determine the specific problems that have led to the school’s low graduation rates. The stakeholder team expressed concern that the data was not accurate and were uncertain that the RCA process would help the school yield better results. Additionally, there was confusion about how graduation rates were calculated, particularly for students who repeated one or several grades.

The team agreed a stronger culture shift was needed within the school for all stakeholders. There are challenges with student behavior that include roaming in the hallways, fighting, and disrespectful language and actions. Teachers and students need to have a different mindset about the importance of academic learning, school attendance, and assessments.

## III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

### Key Data Themes

Data Source	Key Takeaways
<b>School Performance Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for culture and climate change (students disrespecting each other, fighting, hall roaming)</li> <li>• Need for change in mindset about assessments</li> </ul>
<b>Maryland State School Report Card</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.2% mathematics proficiency</li> <li>• 2.7% ELA proficiency</li> <li>• 44.3% graduation rate</li> <li>• 15.3% of students are not chronically absent; absenteeism impacts assessments, learning, and graduation rates</li> <li>• Tardiness is a HUGE issue</li> </ul>
<b>Parent Survey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only 65 (out of 247) parents took the survey</li> <li>• Satisfaction with safety, physical environment, and learning climate increased (connection to students)</li> <li>• Family involvement and interactions have gone down, which is linked to administration and resources</li> </ul>
<b>Core Course Failure Rate Report (2018-2019)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More ninth graders failing 3 out of 5 classes</li> <li>• More twelfth graders passing 3 out of 5 classes</li> <li>• Many ninth graders are repeating ninth grade</li> <li>• Many over-age, under-credit students attend the school</li> </ul>

The team then discussed cohorts more specifically and noted the following:

- Out of 169 total ninth graders, 73 are first-time students.
- The school has a high rate of students dropping out in ninth grade.
- In the 2016 cohort, there were 39 seniors. Fourteen additional students belong to this cohort (total of 53).



### III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Themes Across Data Sources (Topics) (1 being highest priority)	Ranking
Dropout rates are high (especially in ninth grade).	1
Grade repetition is high (low percentage of first-time ninth graders leads to high number of over-age, under-credit students).	2
Academic performance is low.	3
Cohort identification is unclear.	4
Graduation rate is low.	5

#### Final Problem Statement

*The graduation rate is currently 44 percent, which is part of a five-year downward decline.*

#### 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.

The US Department of Education closely monitors graduation rates as part of an initiative that has increased the national graduation rate to an all-time high of 84.6 percent for students in the class of 2016-2017 who earned

diplomas in four years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Research suggests that students do not graduate or graduate “on time” due to numerous reasons (i.e., attendance, early course completion, etc.). Various sources indicate that students become less engaged because of out-of-school factors such as family responsibility, as well as in-school factors such as educators not effectively engaging youth. Overall, the schooling process continues to alienate students and families from the learning process (McKnight, 2015). Thus, the issues that lead to low graduation rates may be adequately addressed with more responsive school and learning environments, more individualized and timely supports for students, and more effective recovery programming.

## IV. ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

### Day Two Summary

Renaissance Academy convened on April 10, 2019 for day two of the RCA process. Day two was devoted to working with the school's stakeholder team (see Appendix A) to identify and prioritize the root causes of the problem so the causes could be addressed in the school's improvement planning efforts.

Stakeholders began the day by reviewing the problem statement developed by the instructional leadership team on day one. Following this review, they comprehensively brainstormed causal factors that contributed to the problem using a "Fishbone" activity. Individual causal factors were then organized into themes, and a causal factor statement was crafted for each theme. Using the "5 Whys Activity," stakeholders were encouraged to dig deeper into causal factor statements by asking "why" questions in order to arrive at underlying causes. Underlying causes were then collectively ranked in order to arrive at a prioritized list of root causes.

Specifically, the goals for day two included:

- Determine factors contributing to the problem statement.
- Identify underlying causes of the problem and determine which underlying causes are primary "root" causes.
- Prioritize the root causes for the importance of impacting student outcomes and the feasibility of implementing strategies to address them.

On day two, a larger team of stakeholders engaged in some rich discussion about why Renaissance Academy struggles to meet graduation rates. They crafted causal factor statements with themes ranging from the high rates of dysfunction within the school and community to the preparation teachers receive to work with challenging students. The team identified many challenges connected to district-level policies and procedures, including a lack of transparency about how graduation rates are determined and what happens when troubled students are placed in the school without the necessary supports.

Through the process, the team categorized, prioritized, and ultimately narrowed the large list of causal factor statements to six that were most within the locus of control for the staff. Several themes emerged during this process as well, including the lack of teaching experience of most of the teachers, the high rate of teacher turnover, the shortage of key staff, and the lack of an understanding of trauma-informed practices.

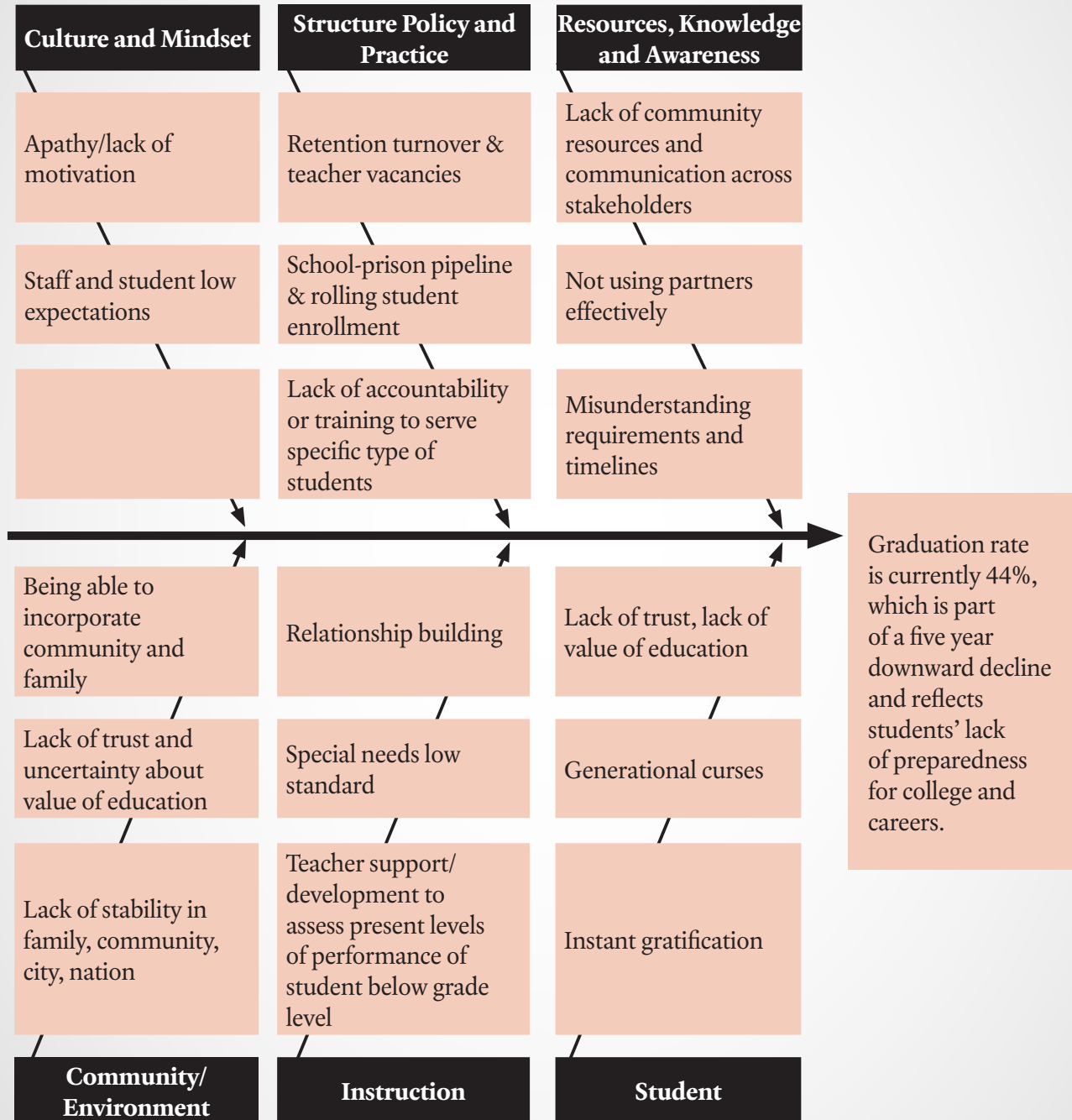
Ultimately, the team prioritized four underlying causal factors that, if addressed, would yield improvement in teaching, learning, and graduation rates.

### 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

### Renaissance Academy Fishbone: Exploring Causes



## 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
Teachers lack sufficient support in developing content knowledge and pedagogy to meet students at their current level and prepare students for the demands of graduation.	1
The school does not have a culture that fosters shared accountability and responsibility, which includes knowledge and understanding of shared data, practices, and policies that impact graduation rates.	2
The school has a poor reputation that does not attract and retain high-quality teachers who can then support new staff.	3
There is inconsistent buy-in for the school's rules and policies, along with a need to build positive relationships with students to facilitate the implementation of those rules and policies.	4

### Evidence Base for Prioritized Root Causes

Recent literature suggests that effective pedagogy and associated professional learning increases student learning, as well as teachers' capacity to teach or facilitate high-level student engagement, academic efficacy, and motivation for continued learning. Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) suggest that workshop-based professional learning alone is insufficient to support teachers' development. Therefore, ongoing coaching and teacher mentoring yield major contributing factors to sustained teacher development. Specifically, school systems are better able to retain teachers when ongoing support occurs with resources within the school (Daniel, Quartz, & Oakes, 2019). Even further, ongoing support may occur in various ways, such as coaching, modeling, and teacher professional learning communities (Darling-Hammond, 2016). Primarily, the goal of increasing teacher

effectiveness through ongoing professional learning is to yield better performance and achievement outcomes, such as test scores, motivation, and engagement (Gershenson, Holt, & Papageorge, 2016). Liu and Loeb (2017) found that effective teachers had a positive impact on students' school attendance which, in turn, influenced graduation rates.

The literature suggests that building student relationships represents an essential factor to enhanced academic outcomes, while also serving as a vehicle for effective instruction. Thus, facilitating care, respect, and support between teachers and students and students and each other remain paramount to increased academic learning outcomes and increased graduation rates (Shepard et al., 2012; Pianta, 2013). Pathways to building teacher and student relationships rely on educators showing care for the students (Sabol & Pianta, 2012), making connections to students' home and community environments

## IV. ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

through instruction and class climate (Coleman, Bruce, White, Boykin, & Tyler, 2017), and using cultural and meaningful connections between the academic content and students' cultural backgrounds (Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Coleman et al., 2017).

Renaissance Academy's second root cause, related to the culture of informed data, practices, and policies, reveals an essential component in increasing and sustaining enhanced academic outcomes (Newell & Akers, 2010). Developing school stakeholders' understanding of data, practices, and policies serves as a foundational aspect to data-driven decision-making regarding positive academic outcomes and attainment. Research in this area suggests that understanding the data and surrounding elements alone does not directly impact graduation rates. However, data-based decision-making within a systematic

data review, student support identification, and associated practice or support yields academic outcomes that may lead to higher sustainable graduation outcomes (Newell & Akers, 2010).

Renaissance Academy asserted that graduation rates directly correlated with the school's perceived "bad" reputation, which in turn influences the school's ability to attract and retain high-quality seasoned teachers. The research, as mentioned above, supports teacher quality and effectiveness impacting academic learning, performance, and graduation rates. However, studies also suggest that teacher retention is more closely related to the impact of principals' support, the importance of feedback, the need for supportive work environments, and the desire for relevant professional learning (Daniel et al., 2019).

## 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 Root Cause Analysis process;
- Conducting a scan of the research literature related to the problem statement and prioritized root causes identified throughout the process. While a comprehensive research analysis was outside the scope of this

project, the team reviewed research using the standards of evidence model outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to offer research that had moderate or strong evidence of effectiveness (Level 2 or Level 1 on the ESSA framework);

- Compiling, organizing and categorizing over 150 recommendations submitted by UMD/RCA facilitators.

These recommendations are offered by the University of Maryland College Park in consultation with MSDE. They 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 <sup>1</sup>
<p><b>Maximize professional learning focused on planning, instruction, and improving learning conditions for students.</b></p> <p>Establish or significantly strengthen a school-wide cycle of professional learning – coaching, observations, and team planning – that includes an aligned focus across core instructional activities. Several studies link teacher professional learning with improvements in instruction and quality of learning environments (Vescio, Ross, &amp; Adams, 2008). Professional learning opportunities are most effective when they are part of coherent school-wide efforts that link content, assessments, and reflection, rather than episodic professional workshops (Akiba &amp; Liang, 2016). Two effective professional learning strategies include professional learning communities and job-embedded professional learning.</p> <p>Professional Learning Communities: Teachers need time spent planning and learning with colleagues in collaborative planning time and/or professional learning communities (PLCs) that are focused on teaching and learning not on administrative or organizational demands. Research shows that PLCs are most successful when they are designed and supported with specific attention to leadership, group dynamics, trust, and respect (Vangrieken, Meredith, Packer, &amp; Kyndt, 2017). PLCs can form around topics that teachers can explore together, plan for, and build upon together using peer observations and deeper capacity-building on areas of need, such as social emotional learning or trauma-informed teaching. Authentic PLCs include the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated time for the PLC</li> <li>• Teacher-led and based on specific needs of students</li> <li>• Supported by school leaders with training and development activities</li> </ul> <p>Job Embedded Professional Learning: Research emphasizes the importance of professional learning that emphasizes explicit strategies for conducting active teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection rather than just abstract discussions (Darling-Hammond &amp; Richardson, 2009).</p>	<p><i>Talent Development</i></p> <p><i>Instructional Transformation</i></p>

<sup>1</sup>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<sup>1</sup>

**Implement one or more research-based strategies to promote positive school climate, including positive discipline, conflict management, anti-bullying, and positive youth development.**

*Culture Shift*

Research indicates that a positive school climate is strongly linked to student academic outcomes. For example, school climate can influence attendance, achievement, retention and graduation (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009; Stewart, 2008; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002). The US Department of Education has conceptualized school climate as broadly consisting of the domains of safety, engagement, and environment. These domains encompass students' perceptions of inclusion and belonging; incidents of bullying and the response of students and educators; school connectedness; peer to peer relationships, as well as relationships between teachers and students; school discipline practices; and the state of the physical facilities. According to the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (2019), "the strength of the linkages between school climate and academic achievement make it essential that all students have the opportunity to attend schools that provide a safe and supportive environment where they can thrive and fully engage in their studies" ([www.safesupportivelearning.ed.gov](http://www.safesupportivelearning.ed.gov)).

To address concerns regarding school climate, there are many resources available to educators that can guide efforts to foster a more inclusive and supportive school environment for all students, including Teaching Tolerance ([www.tolerance.org/professional-development/school-climate](http://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/school-climate)) and the National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments ([safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/action-guides](http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/action-guides)). In schools with indicators that the school climate needs to be improved, a wide variety of factors can contribute to poor climate conditions, and conversely, a wide range of strategies exist to address such conditions. These research-based strategies can include:

- 1) Adopting school-wide alternative, positive discipline systems with clear and well supported expectations and consequences for student behavior, such as Restorative Justice (Augustine et al., 2018; [www.alternativesyouth.org/programs/restorative-justice](http://www.alternativesyouth.org/programs/restorative-justice)), or Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS) (Epstein, Atkins, Cullinan, Kutash, & Weaver, 2008; [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org));
- 2) Mandating anti-bullying training for all educators and staff. Training should define what constitutes bullying and how to recognize when it is happening to students so they can effectively intervene ([www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov); [www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org));
- 3) Implementing conflict resolution strategies or school-wide program ([creducation.net/teachers](http://creducation.net/teachers)); and Integrating practices from the "Positive Youth Development" approach into the management of school co-curricular activities and student clubs: ([youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development](http://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development)).

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

### RECOMMENDATION

### Four Domains Domain of Rapid School Improvement<sup>1</sup>

**Adopt a school-wide progress monitoring system that uses data to track key academic indicators in order to identify students who are at risk of falling off track.**

*Culture Shift*

*Turnaround  
Leadership*

Monitoring and integrating multiple aspects of student data that can be used for direct implementation of student support strategies is an essential foundation for an effective progress monitoring system. Often schools establish inquiry teams and monitoring cycles to address monitoring needs, such as attendance, student performance at progress reporting periods, and on-track status for graduation (Gallimore, Ermeling, Saunders, & Goldenberg, 2009). A comprehensive and well-coordinated monitoring system of multiple indicators helps produce a complete picture of a student's progress that can then help predict student failure before it occurs. The following steps should be considered in establishing an effective data management system:

- Analyze attendance data to identify students who are at risk of chronic absenteeism. Create a school-wide attendance action plan that establishes a set of prescribed interventions and actions for teachers when students are absent and provides incentives for students with favorable attendance records.
- Establish a team to monitor the four-year cohort graduation list for each grade level and identify those students at risk of not graduating on time. Fully utilize an early warning system and develop an action plan to address all students who are off track for on-time graduation, and any students who are listed on the cohort but are non-attending. Research shows that identifying potential high school dropouts through an early warning data system can have a positive impact on graduation rates. The University of Chicago Consortium on School Research suggests that staying on track in ninth grade is a predictor of graduating in four years. Ninth graders who end the year on track are four times more likely to graduate than their off-track peers (Allensworth & Easton, 2006).

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES Regional Educational Laboratory Program (see: [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/data\\_use.asp](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/data_use.asp)) provides tools that would help the school staff adopt a data-driven culture and provides tools to train staff on how to extract and analyze their data.



## V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

### RECOMMENDATION

### Four Domains Domain of Rapid School Improvement<sup>1</sup>

#### **Adopt student-centered, active-learning instructional practices across all classrooms.**

#### *Instructional Transformation*

Although a considerable amount of research literature on effective learner-centered instructional practices is available, two leading researchers who represent the current field are Deborah Ball and Robert Marzano. Both Ball's "High-Leverage" practices and Marzano's spotlighted strategies are research-vetted frameworks that could be useful starting points with teachers.

The first strategy for improvement is the elevation of instructional practices across classrooms to engage students as active agents of their own learning. Researchers highlight the importance of activating students' "voice" and "choice" in enlivened classroom learning and engagement, as well as designing and delivering lessons that reflect students' cultural knowledge and experiences and are connected to their adolescent lives (Dary, Pickeral, Shumer, & Williams, 2016; Pyle & Wexler, 2012; Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006). Examples of such instructional strategies include: student goal-setting, student-led discussions, and student voting ([www.marzanoresearch.com](http://www.marzanoresearch.com); [www.teachingworks.org](http://www.teachingworks.org)).

Other research-based engagement strategies include the following: project-based learning, inquiry based learning that allows students time to delve deeply into questions and content, relevance-making connections to the real world outside of school, high expectations through rigorous content, students engaged in their own progress monitoring, and students exercising choices (Taylor & Parsons, 2011).

## VI. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Collaboratively with the Local School System (LSS) and stakeholders, Comprehensive Support and Improvement (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 root cause analysis 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 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) evidence requirements (level 1, 2, or 3). Intervention Plans will be approved by the school, LSS, and the Maryland State Department of Education (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

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>Day 1</b> <b>April 2, 2019</b>	Laurel Cratsley	<i>Social Studies Teacher</i>
	Tenne Thrower	<i>Family and Community Engagement Specialist</i>
	Davon Rice	<i>English Teacher</i>
	Tahira Rooks	<i>School Social Worker</i>
	Nicole Matthew	<i>Science Teacher</i>
	Erica Goodridge	<i>Teacher Mentor/Instructional Support</i>
	Tammatha Woodhouse	<i>Principal</i>
	Antwon Cooper	<i>Teacher Mentor</i>
<b>Day 2</b> <b>April 10, 2019</b>	Shelton Stanley	<i>Mathematics Academic Content Liaison</i>
	Tammatha Woodhouse	<i>Principal</i>
	Laurel Cratsley	<i>Social Studies Teacher</i>
	Mike Revell	<i>Specialized Instructional Support</i>
	Jeff Covington	<i>Assistant Principal</i>
	Nicole Matthew	<i>Science Teacher</i>
	Erica Goodridge	<i>Teacher Mentor</i>
	Antwon Cooper	<i>Teacher Mentor</i>
	Shelton Stanley	<i>Mathematics Teacher</i>
	Kristen Yoder	<i>Art Teacher</i>
	Giselle Maiden	<i>School Counselor</i>
	Megan Kashdin	<i>Title I Coordinator</i>
	Tyesha Clark	<i>Physical Education/ Health Teacher</i>
	Christine Atakora	<i>Community Partner</i>
	Atiba Nkrumah	<i>Community Partner</i>
Mark Mason	<i>Youth Service Supervisor</i>	
Eidel Nicmolls	<i>Math Teacher</i>	
	<i>Student</i>	

## APPENDICES

### Appendix B: Bios of Facilitators

#### **Sean Coleman, Ph.D.**

currently serves as Director of the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership and is Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Studies and Leadership at Bowie State University. Previously, Coleman served as the founding program coordinator to the Human Development Degree Program at the University of the District of Columbia, answering the mayor's call to increase early childhood educators' highly qualified training and designation. Coleman's research and evaluation experience at the Center for Research of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR) at Howard University and the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University involved the development and implementation of various reliable assessments related to cultural phenomenology, cognition and learning, and best practices in instructional pedagogy. Coleman was the director of Assessment & Evaluation and Training for CRESPAR/Capstone Institute where he facilitated the development and implementation of comprehensive school reform initiatives nationally and abroad, along with several other initiatives related to K-12 and postsecondary education. While at the Washington, DC Public Charter School Board, Coleman provided direct oversight and support to a portfolio of charter school boards as they worked toward school success and student achievement. Coleman's career began as a certified elementary school teacher, which also included new teacher induction instructor, professional development facilitator, new teacher induction committee member, grade-level chairperson, and school-based management team member.



**Lori Wilen** has worked in a wide variety of educational settings, all in the Washington, DC Metro region, for over twenty years. Wilen obtained her Master's in Education from Harvard University in School Leadership. Her



undergraduate degree is from the University of Maryland, College Park in Elementary Education with a concentration in Spanish. She began as an elementary classroom teacher in Washington, DC Public Schools (DCPS) and ended her classroom teaching career a decade later in a DC public charter school. Wilen then worked for Expeditionary Learning (now EL Education) as a school designer, supporting schools in implementing rigorous and engaging academic learning and building the socio-emotional and leadership components of the whole school. After graduate school, Wilen returned to the DC region to work as an instructional coach and then later managed instructional coaches in DCPS. She was then asked to lead the roll-out of the Common Core in mathematics for the District as the director of STEM. Since the birth of her oldest child, Wilen has served as an educational consultant in the region. She has supported teachers as leaders and learners, written curriculum for aspiring educators, and has evaluated many of the charter schools in the area with the charter school board. Wilen has two young children and greatly enjoys yoga and meditation.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix C: Citations of research

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