



Findings of Root Cause Analysis for Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools

Lockerman Bundy
Elementary School
Baltimore City
Public Schools

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COLLEGE OF
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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 Daniel Russell and Jane Ehrenfeld who also co-authored this report.

These resources, developed with federal funds i.e. Title I, are considered open source and made available for use or modification as users or other developers see fit.

I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to share the outcomes of a Root Cause Analysis (RCA) conducted to support Lockerman Bundy in identifying underlying causes of school performance problems. The report provides an overview of the RCA process, school profile, problem statement, root cause analysis 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 a root cause analysis process facilitated by a third party. CSI schools are the lowest achieving five 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 (SIG). Lockerman Bundy was identified as a CSI school as one of the lowest achieving five percent of Title I schools. Outcomes of the root cause analysis 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 are also required to participate in the Leading for School Improvement Institute which provides customized professional learning experiences to support school improvement. CSI principals are also 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.

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 (AIR) to develop RCA tools and train field teams. Field teams consisted of researchers, data analysts, and education practitioners from Morgan State University, Johns Hopkins University, Bowie State 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 analyses, recommended interventions, and evaluations of employed interventions. As part of this process, 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

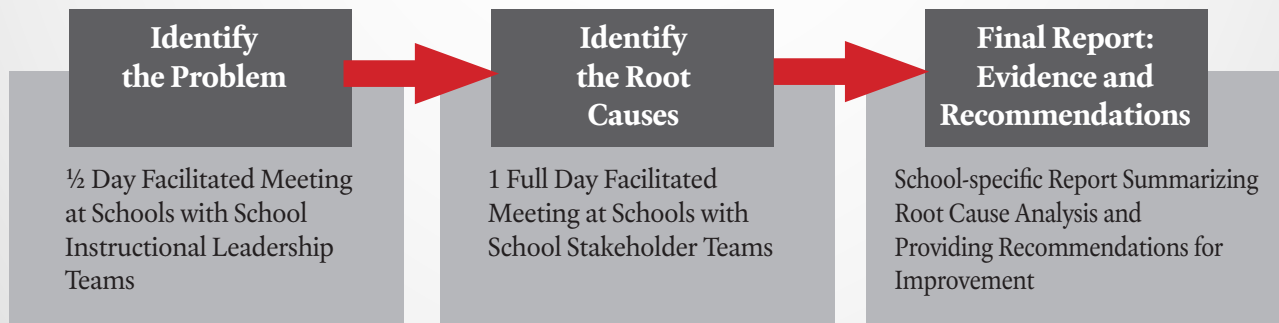
The root cause analysis process translates the successes and challenges identified through the CSI needs assessment into priorities to inform actionable improvement planning. The work with schools was staged in three steps: 1) identify

the problem; 2) identify the root causes; 3) draft a school report with recommendations for improvement.

First, the UMD/BSU/MSU 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 UMD/BSU/MSU 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 the outcomes that we currently do?
- 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: Lockerman Bundy Elementary School
 301 N Pulaski St
 Baltimore, MD 21223-1557
 Phone: 410-396-1364
 Total teachers : 14

Student Demographics

Total Students	Asian	Black African Americans	Hispanic/Latino	White	Other	% Economically Disadvantaged	% English Learners	% Students with Disabilities
265	<10	263	<10	<10	<10	80.52%	<5%	8.23%

Lockerman Bundy Elementary School MSDE School Report Card Profile for PreK-5

Academic Progress		School Quality and Student Success		Academic Achievement		Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency	
Student Growth Percentile in Math	34	Students Not Chronically Absent	54.6%	% Proficient in Math	25%	% English Learners Making Progress Toward Learning English	N/A
Student Growth Percentile in ELA	58			Average Performance Math	2.5		
Credit for Well Rounded Curriculum N/A	0%	Access to Well Rounded Curriculum	0%	% Proficient in ELA	16.3%		
				Average Performance ELA	2.3		
Earned Points	12	Earned Points	1	Earned Points:	6.9	Earned Points	N/A
Total Earned Percent:				26%			

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

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Description of the Process

The first step in the RCA process was to convene a half-day meeting that was facilitated by a two-member UMD/BSU/MSU team. This meeting convened on April 9, 2019 for Day 1 of the RCA process. The convening included the school leadership team, consisting of a local school system leader (i.e. principal supervisor, school improvement lead) and other key school staff. The primary goal of this meeting was to craft a “Problem Statement” that would drive the root cause analysis. A Problem Statement can be defined as a statement describing a situation, issue, barrier, impediment, or challenge that a school must address to significantly improve students outcomes related particularly to those outcomes that led to the school being placed on the CSI list.

The goals of the first day were to 1) determine a problem statement to drive the analysis of the root causes; and 2) identify stakeholders for day two of the RCA.

The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) met for half a day on April 9th, 2019 to examine Lockerman Bundy school-level data and to select a Problem of Practice. The ILT included the following stakeholders: Tiffany Cole (Principal), Nicole Scruggs (DMC specialist), Erica Robinson (literacy lead), Darnise Mickey (3rd grade teacher), Fareeha Waheed (special education teacher), Bernadette Samaco (Pre-K teacher/lead).

The primary data sources reviewed were the MSDE CSI Needs Assessment Report, the MD 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

Like other schools in Baltimore, Lockerman Bundy is struggling with an increase in homelessness and mobility among students. As these factors rise, so does chronic absenteeism (45.4% of the student body is chronically absent). Weather, holidays, and other factors also affect attendance. The staff was curious as to whether students who have better attendance also have better scores; the assumption was that these two factors are highly correlated.

With respect to academics, the staff noted that math is an area of strength, relative to literacy. There is a feeling that the iReady literacy targets do not correlate to PARCC literacy targets, and therefore is not helpful in preparing students for PARCC. There was also concern about foundational literacy skills, and the need to build these before students even begin preparing for PARCC in third grade.

The staff worked together well and there was strong consensus throughout the conversation around the challenges. There was no dissent when the problem statement was crafted, and the staff agreed that literacy was a major challenge for the school.

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Key Data Themes

Data Source	Key Takeaways
Report Card	0 points on access to well-rounded curriculum. The full ten points were lost due to entirely to a technical reporting mistake. This was a big issue, as it is possible the school would not have been in CSI status absent this error.
Needs Assessment	<p>Big increase in homelessness Mobility rate is increasing each year Attendance is dropping as homelessness increases How are the students who have been here for longer doing? Weather, holidays affects attendance</p> <p>Academics: Math is better than literacy Lots of fluctuation Staff turnover – only in third grade Wondering about relation of mobility rates to scores Alignment of iReady and PARCC Math data is stronger Staffing is a strength Current year data looks similar</p>
Parent Survey	Strong data, especially compared to the district (94% overall rating in comparison to the 88% district average)

Themes Across Data Sources (Topics) (1 being highest priority)	Ranking
Homelessness/Absenteeism	1
Foundational literacy; literacy skills in general	2
PARCC Scores	3
Alignment between curriculum/iReady and PARCC	4

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Final Problem Statement

In grades 3-5, 83.7% of students did not score at the Meets or Exceeds level on the 2018 Maryland English Language Arts assessment.

Evidence Base for Problem Statement

This represents a brief research summary of the evidence related to the significance and/or impact of the Problem Statement identified above.

In Maryland, and elsewhere in the nation, the dialogue on schools has become focused on ensuring that the learning trajectory for all students is aimed toward college and career readiness and postsecondary success. An accountability system is the State's primary way of ensuring that schools and LEAs are making progress towards attaining state goals. If there are student groups not proficient, not making adequate progress toward proficiency, or not graduating, then the accountability system should highlight equity gaps. In order to meet these goals and comply with the requirements set forth in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Maryland will establish long-term goals and annual measurements of interim progress in three areas: academic achievement based on a performance composite, graduation rate, and

progress toward English language proficiency. The methodology for calculating the long-term goal will be the same for all schools and for all student groups. Maryland is proposing the timeline for the long-term goals as 2030. The students graduating in 2030 will have entered kindergarten in the 2017-2018 school year and will have been instructed and assessed on the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards (MCCRS) from kindergarten through high school. Maryland did not use students beginning in Pre-K to establish the timeline since Maryland does not have universal Pre-K. The long-term goals will be accomplished when a full generation of school-aged children have been educated under the rigorous MCCRS as well as the ESSA State plan. Each long-term goal has annual measurements of interim progress to assist schools and LEAs in determining if adequate progress is being made toward the long-term goal. The long-term goals and annual measurements of interim progress will be pivotal in driving school improvement work for all schools, all students, and all student groups. The lowest 5% performing schools identified by the Maryland State Every Student Succeeds Act can benefit from strengthening early literacy, which will lead to sustained reading capacity in the later grades (Torgesen et al., 2007).

IV. ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Day Two Summary

On Day 2 the team built on themes discussed in Day 1. There was a robust discussion of the need for more professional development, coaching, and support for strong instruction, and that emerged as the top priority for intervention. There was concern, too, that teachers play too many roles at the school, and that makes it harder to do their core work effectively. And there was consensus around the need for classroom-embedded support (from coaches and colleagues), especially for project-based learning and to implement instruction based on more rigorous, standards-aligned curriculum.

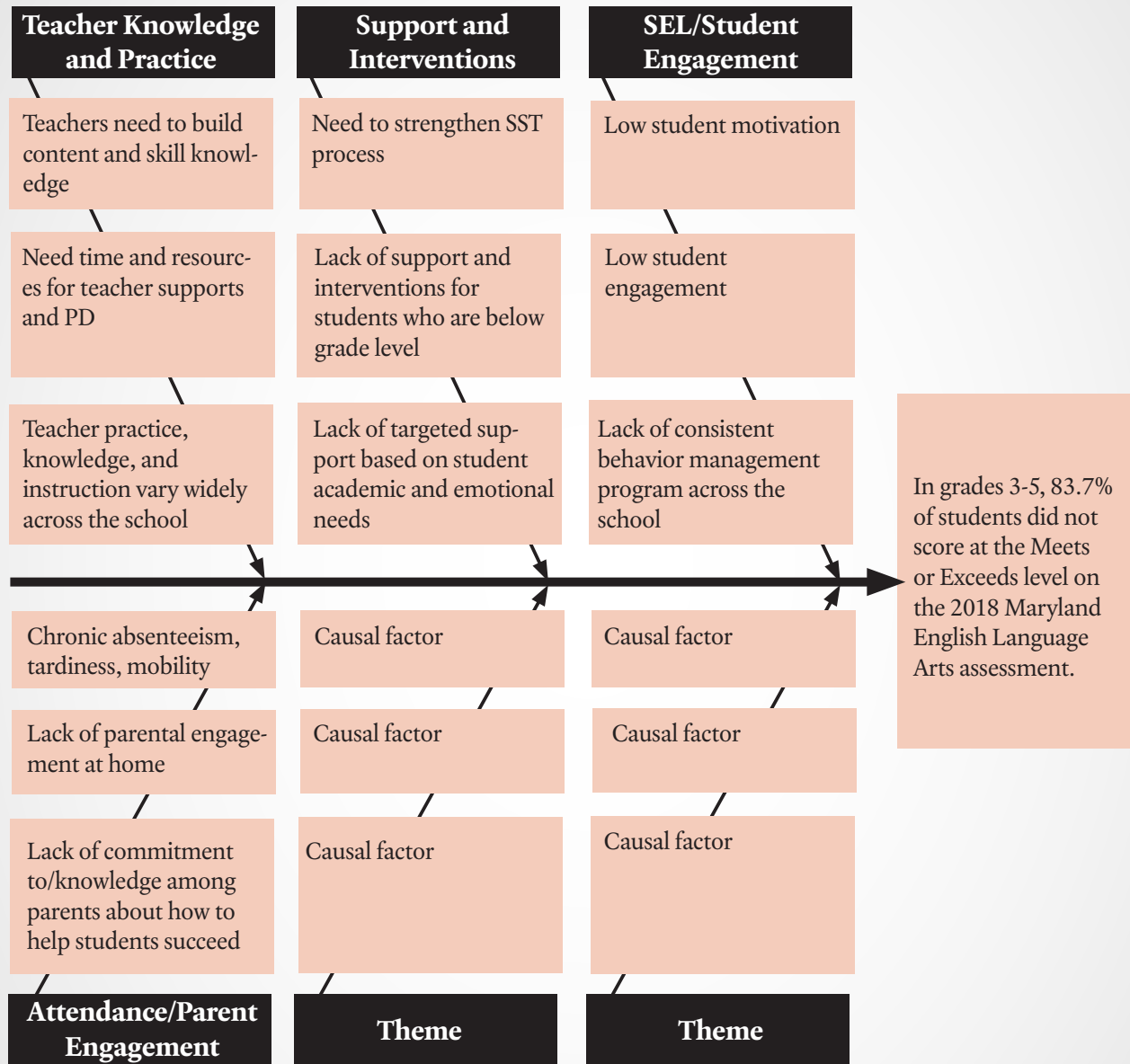
The other main theme that emerged was around student life and health, with a focus on socioemotional learning/mental health and on attendance/parental involvement. The staff discussed a variety of concerns and wrestled with how much the school could do to affect these mostly external factors. There was also some conversation that veered towards blaming the students for the challenges at the school, which the facilitators redirected towards other 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

Lockerman Bundy Elementary School: Exploring Causes



IV. ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

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
Quality of teacher instruction is not being systematically assessed nor is systematic and ongoing support being offered to help develop teacher capacity using resources such as training/PD, coaching/mentoring, or customized planning	1
Teachers and support staff lack depth of knowledge about reading acquisition (brain development, physical development, skill development) that leads to a lack of targeted academic supports and inconsistent intervention practices.	2
Lack of support among all stakeholders to support student social and emotional learning.	3
Time and space have not been allocated/scheduled at defined intervals to communicate and strategize around current data and practices to address high student absences and tardiness. AND Generational attitudes towards the value of education as well as access/opportunity for parents to engage with student learning.	4

Evidence Base for Prioritized Root Causes

When it comes to teacher professional development (PD), improved teaching and learning are most effective when they are tailored to the individual needs of teachers. Additionally, PD is more effective when it is collaborative and inquiry based (centeroninstruction.org). Such collaborative structures are typically led by instructional coaches, often through professional communities of practice. Instructional coaching provides teachers

with the support they need to build collective leadership and continuously improve teacher instructional capacity and student learning. Sailors and Shanklin (2010) note that in order to raise literacy levels, schools and districts began investing in coaches to improve teaching instruction. Furthermore, Sailors and Shanklin highlight a growing body of research that points to the positive impact that instructional coaching has on improving teacher instruction on literacy and in turn, increasing student achievement in reading.

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.

Instructional Supports

- Creation of a system that incorporates real-time feedback for classroom instruction with the implementation of targeted job-embedded coaching
- Targeted scaffolded professional development plan to focus on both individual and shared areas of growth for teachers.
- Focus on strengthening the early literacy curriculum
- Professional Development targeting educational equity
- Target opportunities to expand on existing interventions that demonstrate statistically significant impact (ie. Experience Corps, Reading Partners)
- Master schedule includes intervention block (school-wide)
- Matching Tier III interventions to student need
- PD on tiering process
- Flexible grouping

Socio-emotional Supports

- Strategically focus on socio-emotional learning domains in planning for student outcomes.
- Establish clarity of roles for all stakeholders and incorporate a common training
- Utilize collaborative planning protocols to capture the voice of multiple stakeholders
- Focus on SEL domains in planning (or picking one)
- Role clarity for all stakeholders, common training
- Collaborative planning

- Continue/enhance mindfulness work
- Assessment of strategies
- Add to ILT agenda
- Advisory/all staff has a group of students they track and meet with throughout the school year
- Wellness/restorative corners
- PD from experts on staff/partners
- Ensuring open lines of communication
- Staffing choices around SEL

Recommendations for Evidence-Based Improvement

Final recommendations for this report have been developed by the University of Maryland College Park in consultation with UMD/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 PLANNING

RECOMMENDATION	Four Domains Domain of Rapid School Improvement ¹
<p>Use data-based decision-making to improve instruction and student achievement.</p> <p>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 et al., 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 seven research backed conditions should be taken into account:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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, Olah, & 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. DBDM has been shown to have statistical and meaningful impact on standardized tests scores in math, but empirical studies have only captured positive trends in reading performance (Carlson et al., 2011). <p>The 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 and provide tools to train staff on how to extract and analyze their data.</p>	<p><i>Instructional Transformation</i></p>

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

RECOMMENDATION	Four Domains Domain of Rapid School Improvement ¹
<p>Provide strong literacy instruction in English Language Arts courses and across the curriculum.</p> <p>Research suggests that for students to become fluent readers they need to build both foundational reading skills and comprehension skills.</p> <p>Key components for improving reading skills include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit instruction of academic language • Instruction on decoding words, word parts, and letter sounds • Reading multiple sentences daily • The use of reading comprehension strategies • The use of textual organizational structures • An engaging and context rich setting for reading (National Reading Panel, 2000; Foorman et al., 2017; Shanahan, 2010). <p>The instruction of reading must extend beyond the language arts classroom or lesson. Teaching students the function and structure of language as they are used in multiple content areas and domains is also part of a robust literacy program. While this focus has typically been focused on the secondary level, building a foundation for literacy in the content areas is important for future success in multiple subjects (Moss, 2005).</p>	<p><i>Instructional Transformation</i></p>

¹The 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 PLANNING

RECOMMENDATION	Four Domains Domain of Rapid School Improvement ¹
<p>Maximize professional learning focused on planning, instruction, and improving learning conditions for students.</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, & 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 & Liang, 2016). Two effective professional learning strategies include professional learning communities and job-embedded professional learning.</p> <p><i>Professional Learning Communities:</i> 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 et al., 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 PLC’s include the following features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated time for the PLC • Are led by teachers and based on specific needs of students • Are supported by school leaders with training and development activities <p><i>Job Embedded Professional Learning:</i> Research emphasizes the importance of professional learning that emphasizes explicit strategies for conducting active teaching, assessment, observation, and reflection rather than includes abstract discussions (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009).</p>	<p><i>Talent Development</i></p> <p><i>Instructional Transformation</i></p>

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

	Name	Position
Day 1	Kimberly Hill-Miller	<i>Principal</i>
	Bree-L Ukoha	<i>Literacy Coach</i>
	Rashida Phillips	<i>Teacher</i>
	Briana Punte	<i>Mathematics Teacher</i>
	Tawanda Bridgeforth	<i>Teacher</i>
	Sonya Goodwyn-Askew	<i>Instructional Leadership Executive Director</i>
	Wilson Carson	<i>Teacher</i>
	Mack D. Jones	<i>School Turnaround Specialist</i>
Day 2	Name	Position
	Kimberly Hill-Miller	<i>Principal</i>
	Briana Punte	<i>Math Teacher</i>
	Bree-L Ukoha	<i>Literacy Coach</i>
	Tawanda Bridgeforth	<i>Teacher</i>
	Sonya Goodwyn-Askew	<i>Instructional Leadership Executive Director</i>
	Mary Kashdin	<i>Title 1 Coordinator</i>
	Tenne Thrower	<i>Family & Community Engagement Specialist</i>
	Amber Clemmons	<i>Literacy Academic Content Liaison</i>
	Paul Zelando	<i>Math Academic Content Liaison</i>
	Ian Radke	<i>Language Arts Teacher</i>
	Mary Ward	<i>Expedition Corp Team Leader</i>
Mv. Kizer Ball	<i>Reading Partners</i>	
Constance Young	<i>Office of Early Learning</i>	

APPENDICES

Appendix C: Citations of research

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APPENDICES

