

# Commissioner's Network Operations and Instructional Audit Report

Clinton Avenue School  
New Haven Public Schools  
May 13, 2015



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## Part I: Introduction

On March 25, 2015, the Commissioner initially selected Clinton Avenue School to participate in the Commissioner's Network, pending legislative authority to extend and expand the Commissioner's Network to include a fourth cohort of schools. Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-223h(b), the New Haven Board of Education (NHBOE) established the Turnaround Committee. On May 13, 2015, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) conducted, in consultation with the NHBOE, the Clinton Avenue School Governance Council, and the Turnaround Committee, an operations and instructional audit of the school in accordance with C.G.S. § 10-223h(c). The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the audit.

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### Commissioner's Network Overview

The Commissioner's Network is a commitment between local stakeholders and the CSDE to dramatically improve student achievement in up to 25 schools. To that end, the Network offers new resources and authorities to empower teachers and school leaders to implement research-based strategies in schools selected by the Commissioner. Network schools remain part of their local school districts, but the districts and the CSDE secure school-level flexibility and autonomy for the schools in exchange for heightened accountability. Schools participate in the Network for a period of three to five years. At present, 16 Cohort I, II, and III schools are participating in the Commissioner's Network.

Network schools make targeted investments in the following areas:

- **Talent:** Employ systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers, and support staff.
- **Academics:** Design and implement a rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels.
- **Culture and Climate:** Foster a positive learning environment that supports high-quality teaching and learning, and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process.
- **Operations:** Create systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.

As part of the operations and instructional audit, auditors identify school strengths and weaknesses in the areas of talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations. Audits are conducted by impartial and experienced educators who produce unbiased and objective reports supporting school planning and transformation efforts.

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### Operations and Instructional Audit Overview

Pursuant to C.G.S. § 10-223h(c), the operations and instructional audit shall determine the extent to which the school:

- (1) has established a strong family and community connection to the school;
- (2) has a positive school environment, as evidenced by a culture of high expectations and a safe and orderly workplace, and has addressed other nonacademic factors that impact student achievement, such as students' social, emotional, arts, cultural, recreational and health needs;
- (3) has effective leadership, as evidenced by the school principal's performance appraisals, track record in improving student achievement, ability to lead turnaround efforts, and managerial skills and authority in the areas of scheduling, staff management, curriculum implementation and budgeting;
- (4) has effective teachers and support staff, as evidenced by performance evaluations, policies to retain staff determined to be effective and who have the ability to be successful in the turnaround effort, policies to prevent ineffective teachers from transferring to the schools, and job-embedded, ongoing professional development informed by the teacher evaluation and support programs that are tied to teacher and student needs;
- (5) uses time effectively, as evidenced by the redesign of the school day, week, or year to include additional time for student learning and teacher collaboration;
- (6) has a curriculum and instructional program that is based on student needs, is research-based, rigorous and aligned with state academic content standards, and serves all children, including students at every achievement level; and
- (7) uses data to inform decision-making and for continuous improvement, including by providing time for collaboration on the use of data.

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## **Audit Process and Methodology**

The operations and instructional audit involves three phases of data collection and review:

- (1) The CSDE obtains and auditors review school artifacts, data, and documentation to gain a better understanding of the school's history and context. The CSDE collaborates with school and district leaders to administer a teacher survey.
- (2) The auditors conduct a school site visit to observe school systems and classrooms, and meet with members of the school community. During the site visit, auditors conduct interviews and focus groups with a representative set of school and community stakeholders, including school and district administrators, staff, students, family members, community partners, and members of the School Governance Council and Turnaround Committee.
- (3) The auditors synthesize and use all available data to generate the operations and instructional audit report, identifying strengths and growth areas around talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations.

Please note that while this Audit Report identifies areas for improvement, it does not prescribe interventions or offer recommendations. The Turnaround Committee is responsible for developing a Turnaround Plan that addresses the deficiencies identified in the audit.

## Part II: School Information

Clinton Avenue School serves 666 Kindergarten through Grade 8 students in New Haven. The school is located in the Fair Haven section of New Haven. Approximately 74 percent of the students are Hispanic and 20 percent are Black. Thirteen percent of the students are identified as needing special education services, and 34 percent are English language learners. Seventy-two percent of the students in the school are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Student achievement at Clinton Avenue is well below state and district averages in all grade levels and subject areas tested. The current principal is in her eighth year at Clinton Avenue, having previously served as an assistant principal and high school teacher. The current assistant principal is in his first year at Clinton Avenue.

### School Data Profile

The following chart provides a summary of the Clinton Avenue School current and historic data, including information about student enrollment and demographics, personnel, school climate, school performance, and student academic achievement.

<b>Enrollment Data (2014-15):</b>				
Grades:	K-8	5-Yr Enrollment Trend:	+9	
Student Enrollment:	666	Mobility Rate:	3.9%	
<b>Personnel Data (2014-15):</b>				
# of Administrators:	2	% of Teachers "Below Standard":	0%	
# of Teachers:	35.4	% of Teachers "Developing":	0%	
# of Support Staff:	6.3	% of Teachers "Proficient":	93%	
# of Psychologists:	0.6	% of Teachers "Exemplary":	7%	
# of Social Workers:	0.5	3-yr Teacher Retention Rate:	95%	
<b>School Day Per Year (2014-15):</b>				
Total # of Student Days Per Year:	180	Instructional Minutes/Day:	926.3	
Total # of Teacher Days Per Year:	184	Extended Day Program	Yes	
<b>Student Demographic Breakdown (2014-15):</b>				
% Black:	20.0	% Male:	52.5	
% Hispanic:	73.8	% Female:	47.5	
% White:	5.9	% ELL:	33.5	
% Other:	0.3	% Special Education:	13.2	
% F/R Meals:	72.4	% Eligible for HUSKY Plan, Part A:	NA	
<b>School Climate Data:</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>2013-2014</b>	<b>2014-2015</b>
Student Attendance Rate:	93.5%	94.0%	91.5%	91.8%
Chronic Absenteeism Rate:	20.2%	15.2%	29.4%	32%
Total # of ISS/OSS/Expulsions:	22	57	5	41

Teacher Attendance Rate:			94.2	93.1
<b>School/District Index:</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
School Performance Index (SPI):	53.0	57.7	56.8	52.7
District Performance Index (DPI):	58.7	60.9	62.2	60.1
<b>CMT at or above Goal:</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
Grade 3 – Reading	9.4	11.3	13.2	11.8
Grade 5 – Reading	27.9	29.4	54.1	32.5
Grade 8 – Reading	63	44.4	36.4	47.6
Grade 3 – Math	48.1	38.1	32.9	14.3
Grade 5 – Math	51.2	51.0	67.5	36.8
Grade 8 – Math	59.3	26.7	36.4	35.0

## Part III: Audit Findings

Part III of the Audit Report provides a summative analysis of audit findings in the areas of talent, academics, culture and climate, and operations.

Domain:	Indicators:	1	2	3	4
1. <b>Talent:</b> Employ systems and strategies to recruit, hire, develop, evaluate, and retain excellent school leaders, teachers, and support staff.	1.1. Instructional practice		✓		
	1.2. Evaluation and professional culture		✓		
	1.3. Recruitment and retention strategies		✓		
	1.4. Professional development		✓		
	1.5. Leadership effectiveness		✓		
	1.6. Instructional leadership	✓			
2. <b>Academics:</b> Design and implement a rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels.	2.1. Academic rigor*	✓			
	2.2. Student engagement*		✓		
	2.3. Differentiation*		✓		
	2.4. Curriculum and instruction aligned to CCSS		✓		
	2.5. Supports for special populations		✓		
	2.6. Assessment system and data culture			✓	
3. <b>Culture and Climate:</b> Foster a positive learning environment supporting high-quality teaching and learning, and engages families and the community as partners in the educational process.	3.1. School environment			✓	
	3.2. Student attendance	✓			
	3.3. Student behavior		✓		
	3.4. Interpersonal interactions			✓	
	3.5. Family engagement			✓	
	3.6. Community partners and wraparound strategy		✓		
4. <b>Operations:</b> Create systems and processes promoting organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.	4.1. Adequate instructional time		✓		
	4.2. Use of instructional time*			✓	
	4.3. Use of staff time		✓		
	4.4. Routines and transitions		✓		
	4.5. Financial management		✓		

*\*Ratings for these four sub-indicators are based largely on a composite or average score generated from all classroom observations.*

1	Below Standard
2	Developing
3	Proficient
4	Exemplary

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## Talent

The following section provides quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the cumulative ratings provided in the chart on Page 7.

### Summary of Strengths:

- **Staff Commitment:** Clinton Avenue faculty and staff demonstrated a culture of professionalism. Teachers and administrators described the school's collaborative and supportive staff as strengths. Students reported teachers often give up their own time before school, after school, and during lunch to provide assistance to struggling students. Teachers new to Clinton Avenue indicated they feel more supported by colleagues at Clinton Avenue than they had at schools in which they had previously worked. Clinton Avenue has a 95 percent three-year retention rate, which suggests that a large proportion of teachers have made a long-term commitment to the school. Nineteen staff members have been employed by the school for ten or more years. Teachers value the collaboration time afforded to them through data and grade-level team meetings, but teachers of specials (e.g., physical education, music, art) expressed a desire to collaborate with grade-level teacher teams for interdisciplinary projects. While the staff commitment to Clinton Avenue is evident, it is difficult to reconcile the declining student achievement.
- **Evaluation and Coaching Process:** The district's teacher evaluation system (TEVAL) is communicated through the school's teacher handbook. The principal and assistant principal each evaluate half of the school's teaching staff. The principal evaluates support staff. On a teacher survey administered prior to the audit site visit, two thirds of teachers agreed with the statement, "Teachers are held accountable for their performance." New Haven Public Schools (NHPS) supports instructional coaching at Clinton Avenue and provides one literacy and one math coach. The coaches work well together in a team effort to ensure teachers receive the coaching support they need based upon formal and information evaluations. Coaches provide leadership and facilitate grade-level data team meetings, assist with Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI), observe classrooms, and provide feedback to teachers. Coaches also serve as testing coordinators reducing the amount of time available for instructional coaching. Coaches, however, lack clear, consistent and high-quality expectations from leadership about what constitutes effective instruction. Additionally, one third of staff in the building do not feel that they are held accountable for their performance.

### Summary of Growth Areas:

- **Instructional Leadership:** The Clinton Avenue administration consists of a building principal and an assistant principal who is new to the school in 2014-15, but not new to the district. District leaders described the quality of instruction at Clinton Avenue as an area for improvement and greater focus. While TEVAL is well communicated to the teaching staff, teachers were not able to communicate a common vision for effective instruction. When asked to describe what effective instruction looks like, the school principal turned to documents used in the TEVAL process. On the teacher survey, only 58 percent of staff members (N=28) agreed that: "There is a common vision of what effective instruction looks like at this school." Only 58 percent of staff members (N=28) agreed that: "School leaders effectively communicate a clear mission, vision,



and set of school-wide priorities.” Only 54 percent of staff members (N=26) agreed that: “Administrators provide regular, helpful, and actionable feedback to staff.” Teachers reported that the assistant principal provides consistent feedback on instruction, provides clear communication about what constitutes effective classroom instruction, and seeks staff collaboration. Sample lesson plans presented as artifacts to the audit team lacked a common format or common set of expectations for what is to be included, and quality of lesson objectives was variable and not always aligned to the Common Core.

- **Support for Quality Instruction:** The school has two coaches who are responsible for providing feedback on instruction and coaching and two administrators who provide feedback based on TEVAL observations. The math and literacy coaches reported the district requires them to complete two six-week coaching cycles per year during which selected teachers receive one-to-one coaching. Coaches reported that due to constraints on their time not all teachers participate in coaching cycles. While teachers reported they are receptive to additional coaching, it was evident that coaches lack time for quality coaching due to other responsibilities, including coordination of and administration of testing, facilitation of grade-level data teams, and facilitation of SRBI interventions. Even though grade-level data teams are scheduled to meet twice monthly for 45-50 minutes, coaches reported meetings often occur less frequently due to school holidays and usually last for 30 minutes because of time for transitions, further limiting supports for quality instruction. Because literacy and math coaches are evaluated by the district supervisors instead of school administration, the coaching model in place at Clinton Avenue is not aligned to a common school vision.
- **Professional Development (PD):** Teachers reported PD during 2014-15 has predominantly focused on implementation of running records. Teachers have also received PD on the implementation of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model, a research-based and validated instructional model proven effective for addressing the academic needs of English language learners. Teachers reported that prior to 2014-15, twice monthly staff meetings focused on PD. In 2014-15, staff meetings have focused on Smarter Balanced Assessments and school improvement planning. On the teacher survey, only 44 percent (N=21) agreed with the statement: “The PD I received this year has improved my professional practice and allowed me to meet the needs of my students.” Because data team meetings are inconsistent, teachers miss the opportunity for additional PD gained through data analysis and data-informed decision-making. Teachers reported they do not use common planning time to collaboratively plan or observe classroom instruction of colleagues. Teachers reported a need for professional development to support the implementation of the dual language program. Staff implementing the dual language program reported that they have had only one PD opportunity. Teachers reported a lack of formal structure for common preparation time. Except in the case of grade-level data team meetings, there is no common vision for use of common preparation time. Teachers reported using common preparation time for individual classroom preparation and extra help for students.
- **Mentoring and Induction:** While teachers tend to stay at the school, teachers attributed this to a sense of community and dedication to the students, and not due to a common focus on instruction and support needed for quality instruction. No formal mentoring and induction exists for new teachers to understand a common vision for effective instruction. Staff reported that they provide support for each other but this is not part of a formal system. Teachers and

administrators reported that Clinton Avenue School is often the school where teachers who have been unsuccessful at other New Haven Public Schools are employed, making it especially important to plan and implement a strong mentoring and induction system.

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## Academics

The following section provides quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the cumulative ratings provided in the chart on Page 7.

### Summary of Strengths:

- **SRBI process:** District leadership, school administration, and teachers agreed that the school does a good job using data to identify students who require interventions for academic support. On the teacher survey, 79 percent (N=38) agreed that: “The school has and consistently uses data to measure student progress, identify necessary interventions, and provide teachers with data to inform instruction.” Eighty-three percent (N=40) agreed that: “Teachers use student assessment data and checks for understanding to differentiate instruction. “ During the audit, teachers were observed completing progress monitoring checks with individual students while peers completed small group or independent practice. PD provided by the district on the implementation of running records supports teachers’ use of data to inform instruction. The school’s SRBI team meets every six to eight weeks to analyze student achievement and reorganize intervention groups. While this suggests teachers have embraced a data culture and use data to inform the SRBI process, data-informed differentiation in Tier I instruction to support all learners was lacking in most classroom observations.
- **Student Engagement:** In nine of the 10 observed classrooms, students were actively engaged in small group, whole group, or independent learning. Teachers had well-established routines for transitioning from one activity to another. Students were well-behaved, resulting in maximum use of instructional time. Students in the student focus group reported they enjoy school, especially science and mathematics.

### Summary of Growth Areas:

- **Academic Rigor and Differentiation:** Sixty-three percent (N=30) of teachers agreed that: “Instructional quality and academic rigor are consistently high at this school.” However, in the 10 observed classrooms, none of the teachers were using higher-order Depth of Knowledge question stems in whole-group or small group instruction, and independent assignments required students to answer basic procedural or recall questions. This suggests a lack of a common understanding and vision for what constitutes rigorous classroom instruction. Limited differentiation did exist in some classrooms where small group instruction or Reader’s Workshop was taking place. While NHPS has adopted Common Core-aligned curricula, some teachers reported they struggle with pacing in large classrooms with varying student performance levels. Teachers spoke at length about the difficulty in teaching students in large classrooms of 27 students when students are reading at multiple reading levels. The school principal indicated that about 20 percent of the teaching staff may not have high expectations for all students, and one instructional coach stated that instead of allowing teachers to focus on

what students cannot do, she “works mightily” to help most teachers know that students can accomplish through high expectations. One staff member indicated that because the students at Clinton Avenue are at a disadvantage they should not be held to the same standards as other students statewide. District leadership also reported a lack of consistency in academic rigor and that most classrooms are providing students with instruction that looks more like intervention, focusing on tutoring for skill development rather than rigorous higher-order questioning and thinking. District leadership expressed a concern that many Clinton Avenue students will elect to attend Wilbur Cross High School after completing eighth grade and may not be prepared for the challenging project-based learning environment at the high school and may not have sufficient practice with blended learning. Proficiency levels achieved on the Connecticut Master Test (CMT) also speak to low levels of rigor and academic achievement. In 2012-13 (the last year of CMT administration before the shift to Smarter Balanced Assessments), Clinton Avenue SPI was 52.7, which reflected a downward trend from 57.7 in 2010-11. Finally, teachers in the two-year old dual language program at Clinton Avenue expressed the need for additional professional development and collaboration in order to implement the program with fidelity and success.

- **Resources for Interventions and Special Populations:** District leadership, school administration, instructional coaches, and teachers reported a lack of adequate and appropriate resources for interventions and special populations. District leadership admitted that Clinton Avenue does not receive resources typical of other New Haven schools, especially magnet schools in the district. The school is currently receiving wraparound services from BOOST, an initiative currently funded by the United Way. However, funding for BOOST will expire in June 2015, and the school may lose these services. Teachers stated the desire for a bilingual instructional coach who could assist in providing instructional strategies to meet the needs of the school’s large bilingual population. On the teacher survey, 29 percent (N=14) agreed that: “The school adequately meets the needs of its special education students and English language learners.” Special education teachers reported that while they are currently able to provide Tier II and Tier III supports for special needs students, it does not allow them adequate time to identify and provide supports for students in need of services. Teachers report that the addition of an interventionist to provide support to SRBI intervention groups would enhance the school’s capacity to move students through the stages of SRBI to identify and provide special services and Tier III interventions. Currently, the school’s psychologist is a part-time employee. Teachers reported that given the high-needs population, a full-time psychologist is needed. Bilingual teachers reported the need for interventionist who supports both English and Spanish development for English language learners. Regular education teachers also reported the inadequate technology resources, both hardware and software, available to assist with interventions.

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## Culture and Climate

The following section provides quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the cumulative ratings provided in the chart on Page 7.

### Summary of Strengths:

- **Learning Environment:** Clinton Avenue is a well-maintained facility. Classrooms were generally inviting, bright, and clean. Student work was displayed in the hallways and in classrooms. The hallways were quiet and students were engaged in their work. Students and staff take pride in their school.
- **Family Engagement and Support:** Parents indicated there are multiple opportunities for family engagement. Parents said teachers communicate often through email, at pick up, and by phone. During teacher and administrator focus groups, staff indicated a strong sense of collaboration and support for one another. The principal and assistant principal appeared to have positive relationships with school stakeholders, including students, staff, families and community partners, and work effectively to build pride in the school as a community.
- **Interpersonal Interactions:** The interactions between students and staff were generally positive and respectful. Students were engaged in the classroom, and teachers had a good rapport with students. Students indicated there was someone in the school that they trusted and could seek out when they needed help. Student Council provides students with a voice in the school, which helps foster positive relationships with staff and among students.
- **Wraparound Services:** The school has fostered a positive partnership with BOOST that has enhanced wraparound services. The BOOST program has worked to involve parents and bring resources into the school. BOOST sponsored multiple non-academic supports, including family movie night, family math night, holiday sing-a-longs, winter extravaganza, family health workshops, and report card conferences. However, the district reported this program will not be continuing next year, requiring the district to plan for a similar support system.

#### Summary of Growth Areas:

- **Behavior Management Plan:** While teachers reported they handle most behavior problems in their classrooms, staff, students, and administrators lacked a common understanding of a behavior management policy. Incidents of in- and out-of-school suspensions are relatively low at Clinton Avenue compared to other district schools, and administration communicated a desire to use restorative justice principles; however, staff indicated inconsistency in administrative response to office referrals and a lack of support for classroom misbehavior. Students expressed frustration about a small number of students who frequently misbehave and also about students who cause damage to student bathrooms and laptops. Staff expressed the need for an additional person to focus on student behavior.
- **Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism:** The school has some strategies to increase attendance. However, the school lacks a tiered approach to reduce the rate of chronic absenteeism (32% year-to-date in 2014-15) and increase student average daily attendance (91.8% year-to-date in 2014-15). School leaders and staff seemed to lack a focus on student attendance and a clear plan to increase attendance.

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## Operations

The following section provides quantitative and qualitative evidence to support the cumulative ratings provided in the chart on Page 7.

### Summary of Strengths:

- **Support of Students:** Students were appreciative of their teachers' willingness to meet during lunch or after school to provide extra support. Students also indicated their teachers show them multiple strategies to solve problems and make sure students understand the work they are completing. Staff indicated that they are dedicated to the students at Clinton Avenue.
- **Established Classroom Routines:** Classroom routines were established, and students moved smoothly and quickly through transitions. This enhanced the use of instructional time. There were few disruptions or off-task behaviors during transitions in the observed classrooms.

### Summary of Growth Areas:

- **Resourcing/Equity:** As noted previously, district leadership, school administration, instructional coaches, and teachers reported a lack of adequate and appropriate resources for classroom instruction, interventions, and special populations. District leadership admitted that Clinton Avenue does not receive resources typical of other New Haven schools, especially magnet schools in the district. District leadership also reported students who arrive to NHPS after the beginning of the school year lack school options and are relegated to attend Clinton Avenue where space is available.
- **Class Size and Enrollment Processes:** Staff expressed frustration at the large class sizes at Clinton Avenue (27 students per classroom). The school has a high population of English language learners and students requiring special education services. Teachers suggested the large class sizes make it more difficult to provide appropriate instruction for all students. District leaders, school staff and parents reported that Clinton Avenue tends to be one of the overflow schools for the district. The district leaders indicated the district is aware of this and looking for ways to reduce class sizes at high-needs schools like Clinton Avenue School.
- **Resources for Interventions:** There is a lack of resources to adequately support intervention for students. Special education teachers have a high caseload, and there is only one teacher for the school's English language learners. Staff expressed a need for a bilingual coach, Spanish intervention materials, culturally-relevant materials, and technology to support instruction. Teachers also cited scheduling issues, which exclude some students who need interventions in Read 180.
- **Technology:** The school lacks necessary technology to enhance students' education. Clinton Avenue has few laptops and desktop computers available, and some are inoperable. Additionally, laptop carts are shared by so many classrooms that it is difficult for teachers to schedule time for their use. Staff expressed frustration by the lack of functioning printers and copiers in the building. Students would benefit from lessons during which they could engage in using Smart Boards, tablets, and/or laptops.

- **Instructional Time:** The audit team observed a loss of instructional time in the morning due to the late arrivals of some buses and poorly-established routines. When buses arrive late, class begins without students, and students miss breakfast. Routines could also be improved at lunch and dismissal in order to gain valuable instructional time.

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The audit team would like to express its sincere appreciation to the Clinton Avenue community for all of its hospitality on the day of the site visit. We appreciate the openness and transparency demonstrated by members of the school community. There is a willingness and desire on the part of staff, parents, students, and community members to improve the school.

## Appendix A: Operations and Instructional Audit Rubric

TALENT				
Indicator	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
<b>1.1. Instructional Practice</b>	Teacher effectiveness is inconsistent and highly variable from classroom to classroom. There are significant concerns about instruction. Staffing decisions do not reflect teacher effectiveness and student needs.	Instructional quality is moderate; however, teacher effectiveness is variable from classroom to classroom. Staffing decisions do not always reflect teacher effectiveness and student needs.	Most classes are led by effective educators, and instructional quality is strong. There are some systems in place to promote and develop teacher effectiveness and make appropriate staffing decisions.	100% of classes are led by deeply passionate and highly effective educators. There are strong systems in place to promote staff efficacy and make staffing decisions driven exclusively by student needs.
<b>1.2. Evaluation and Professional Culture</b>	There are significant concerns about staff professionalism. Staff come to school unprepared, and there is little sense of personal responsibility. There is a culture of low expectations; individuals are not accountable for their work. Evaluations are infrequent, and few if any staff were formally evaluated 3 or more times in the previous year. Instructional leaders do not provide regular feedback to staff.	There are some concerns about professionalism. Some staff come to school unprepared. Some teachers feel responsible for their work. Some teachers were formally evaluated at least 3 times in the previous year, but most were not. Leaders communicate some expectations for and feedback on performance, but do not consistently follow-up to see whether or not the feedback is acted upon.	The school is a professional work environment. Most staff are prepared to start the school day on time with appropriate instructional materials ready to go. Most individuals feel responsible for their work. Most teachers were formally evaluated at least 3 times in the previous year in alignment with SEED expectations. Leaders provide feedback and hold individuals accountable for effort and results.	100% of staff are prepared to start the school day on time with appropriate instructional materials ready to go. The vast majority of staff feel deep personal responsibility to do their best work. All teachers were formally evaluated at least 3 times in the previous year. Leaders conduct frequent informal evaluations and provide meaningful feedback. Individuals are held accountable for their performance.
<b>1.3. Recruitment and Retention Strategies</b>	The school and/or district lack systems to recruit and attract top talent. Retention of high-quality staff is a significant concern. The school lacks systems and strategies to retain top teachers and leaders.	The school and/or district have components of a plan for recruitment and retention of quality educators (e.g., mentoring, induction). The plan is not fully developed or consistently implemented.	The school and/or district have systems for strategic recruitment and retention. Efforts are made to match the most effective educators to the students with the greatest needs. Retention of high-quality teachers is high.	The school and/or district effectively implement a long-term plan for recruitment and retention. Efforts are made to match the most effective educators to the students with the greatest needs. Deliberate, successful efforts are made to retain top talent.
<b>1.4. Professional Development</b>	Professional Development (PD) opportunities are infrequent and/or of inconsistent quality and relevance. PD does not align to staff's development areas and/or students' needs. As a result, teachers struggle to implement PD strategies. There is no clear process to support or hold teachers accountable for the implementation of PD strategies.	PD opportunities are provided; however, they are not always tightly aligned with student and adult learning needs. The quality of PD opportunities is inconsistent. Sometimes, teachers report that PD improves their instructional practices. Teachers are not generally held accountable for implementing skills learned through PD.	The school offers targeted, job-embedded PD throughout the school year. PD is generally connected to student needs and staff growth areas identified through observations. Most teachers feel PD opportunities help them improve their classroom practices. Most teachers are able to translate and incorporate PD strategies into their daily instruction.	The school consistently offers rich and meaningful PD opportunities that are aligned to student needs and staff growth areas identified through observations. Teachers effectively translate PD strategies into their daily instruction. The school has a process for monitoring and supporting the implementation of PD strategies.
<b>1.5. Leadership Effectiveness</b>	Leadership fails to convey a school mission or strategic direction. The school team is stuck in a fire-fighting or reactive mode, lacks school goals, and/or suffers from initiative fatigue. The school community questions whether the school can/will improve.	The mission and strategic direction are not well communicated. A school improvement plan does not consistently guide daily activities and decision-making. The community generally understands the need for change, however actions are more often governed by the status quo.	Leadership focuses on school mission and strategic direction with staff, students, and families. The school is implementing a solid improvement plan and has a clear set of measurable goals. The plan may lack coherence and a strategy for sustainability. Leadership conveys urgency.	Leadership focuses on school mission and strategic direction with staff, students, and families. The school has a manageable set of goals and a clear set of strategies to achieve those goals. The plan is being implemented and monitored with fidelity. Leadership conveys deep urgency.



TALENT				
Indicator	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
<b>1.6. Instructional Leadership</b>	Few staff can articulate a common understanding of what excellent instruction looks like. School norms and expectations are not clear. Instructional leaders do not demonstrate a commitment to developing consistent and high-quality instructional practice school-wide.	Some staff can articulate a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like. School norms and expectations are enforced with limited consistency. Instructional leaders demonstrate some commitment to improving instructional practice school-wide.	Most staff articulates a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like. School norms and expectations are consistently enforced. Instructional leaders consistently demonstrate a commitment to improving instructional practice school-wide.	All staff articulates a common understanding of what effective instruction looks like. Educators relentlessly pursue excellent pedagogy. Instructional leaders have communicated and enforced high expectations school-wide.

ACADEMICS				
Indicator	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
<b>2.1. Academic Rigor*<sup>1</sup></b>	Most observed lessons are teacher-led and whole group. Teachers rarely engage students in higher-order thinking. Most students demonstrate a surface-level understanding of concepts. Observed lessons are indicative of low expectations and little sense of urgency.	Some observed lessons are somewhat student-centered, challenging and engaging. Teachers engage students in some higher-order thinking. Many students demonstrate only a surface-level understanding of concepts. Teachers demonstrate moderate expectations and some urgency.	Observed lessons are appropriately accessible and challenging for most students. Teachers engage students in higher-order thinking, and students are pushed toward content mastery. Lessons begin to engage students as self-directed learners. Teachers communicate solid expectations.	All observed lessons are appropriately accessible and challenging. Teachers push students, promoting academic risk-taking. Students are developing the capacity to engage in complex content and pose higher-level questions to the teacher and peers. Teachers promote high expectations.
<b>2.2. Student Engagement*</b>	Few students are actively engaged and excited about their work. The majority of students are engaged in off-task behaviors and some are disruptive to their classmates. Observed lessons primarily appeal to one learning style. Few students are truly involved in the lessons.	Some students exhibit moderate engagement, but many are engaged in off-task behaviors. Some observed lessons appeal to multiple learning styles. Students are involved in the lessons, but participation is more passive than active. Students are easily distracted from assigned tasks.	Most students are engaged and exhibit on-task behaviors. The observed lessons appeal to multiple learning styles. Students are involved in the lesson, but participation is, at times, more passive than active. A handful of students are easily distracted from the task at hand.	All students are visibly engaged, ready to learn, and on task. Students are clearly focused on learning in all classrooms. The lessons appeal to and seem to support all learning styles. Students are actively engaged in the lessons and excited to participate in classroom dialogue and instruction.
<b>2.3. Differentiation and Checking for Understanding*</b>	Most teachers take a one-size-fits-all approach and struggle to differentiate their instruction to meet individual learning needs. There is no evidence around the use of data to inform instruction and minimal efforts to check for student understanding.	Some teachers are differentiating at least part of the observed lessons; however, the practice is not consistent or widespread. There is some evidence of the use of student data to adapt the learning process. Some teachers use strategies to monitor understanding.	Most teachers employ strategies to tier or differentiate instruction at various points in the lesson. Most teachers use data or checks for understanding to differentiate the learning process on the fly. Teachers take time to support students struggling to engage with the content.	Teachers consistently and seamlessly differentiate instruction. Teachers use data and formal/informal strategies to gauge understanding, and differentiate the learning process accordingly. Tight feedback loop between monitoring efforts and instruction.
<b>2.4. Curriculum and Instruction Aligned to Common</b>	The school lacks a rigorous, standards-based curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and/or the curriculum is not being implemented with fidelity. As a result, pacing is inconsistent. The percentage	The school has curricula for some grades and content areas, some of which are rigorous, standards-based. Curricula are implemented with some fidelity. Teachers struggle with consistent pacing. The percentage of	Rigorous, standards-based curricula exist for almost all grade levels and content areas, and are being implemented consistently across classrooms. Teachers demonstrate consistent pacing. The percentage of	Rigorous, standards-based curricula exist for all grade levels and content areas. Curricula are aligned with the CCSS and are being implemented with a high degree of fidelity throughout the school. The percentage of

<sup>1</sup> Ratings for the four sub-indicators marked with an asterisk (\*) are largely based on a composite or average score generated from all classroom observations.



ACADEMICS				
Indicator	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
<b>Core State Standards</b>	of students at or above goal on state assessments is > 10 points below the state average.	students at or above goal on state assessments is 6-10 points below the state average.	students at or above goal on state assessments is within 5 percentage points of the state average.	students at or above goal on state assessments meets or exceeds the state average.
<b>2.5. Support for Special Populations</b>	The school is inadequately meeting the needs of its high-needs students. IEP goals are not regularly met. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is not fully considered when making placements. The school lacks appropriate interventions and supports for ELLs. There are significant achievement gaps between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments, and no evidence of progress.	The school typically meets the needs of its high-needs students. Most special education students meet their IEP goals, but LRE is not always considered when making placement determinations. The school typically meets the needs of its ELLs, and attempts to track progress and set content and language mastery goals. There are significant gaps between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments and marginal progress over time.	The school consistently meets the needs of its high-needs students. Special education students regularly meet their IEP goals and LRE is a critical factor in placement determinations. The school meets the needs, tracks progress, and sets content and language mastery goals for all ELLs. There are small gaps between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments, and some signs of progress toward closing the gaps.	The school is successfully closing the achievement gap for its high-needs students. General and special education teachers work collaboratively to support students. The school tracks the effectiveness of language acquisition instructional strategies and adjusts programming accordingly. There is no achievement gap between subgroups and non-identified students as measured by state assessments.
<b>2.6. Assessment Systems and Data Culture</b>	The school lacks a comprehensive assessment system (including summative and benchmark assessments). Teachers rarely collect, analyze, and/or discuss data. The school lacks or fails to implement SRBI protocols linking data to interventions.	The school has some consistent assessments; however, there are major gaps in certain grades and content areas. There are some efforts to collect and use data. SRBI systems and processes are somewhat present.	The school implements a clear system of benchmark assessments. Some teachers are developing familiarity with regularly using formative assessments to differentiate instruction. The school has emerging processes in place to use the data to inform interventions.	Teachers consistently administer assessments throughout the year. Assessments are standards-based and provide real-time data. Teachers embed formative assessments in their daily lessons. The school has strong processes to collect, analyze, and use data to inform interventions.

CULTURE AND CLIMATE				
Indicator	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
<b>3.1. School Environment</b>	The school fails to create a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. Communal spaces and classrooms may be unkempt, rundown, unsafe, or sterile. Many classrooms are neither warm nor inviting and lack intellectual stimulation. Little to no student work or data is displayed to help convey a sense of pride and high expectations.	The school struggles to provide a welcoming environment conducive to high-quality teaching and learning. Large sections of the school are not clean, bright, welcoming, or reflective of student work. Though the school has some data and student work displayed, efforts to brand the school and convey high expectations are very minimal. Sections of the school need significant attention.	The school generally provides a welcoming learning environment. Most of the facility is in good repair and conducive to teaching and learning. Most classrooms and common spaces are bright and clean, displaying data and student work; however, some sections lack visual stimulation. The school has made an effort to foster school identity through branding and consistent messaging in classrooms and communal spaces.	The school provides a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. Common spaces and classrooms are bright, clean, welcoming, and conducive to high-quality teaching and learning. Data and student work are visible and present throughout the school, inspiring students and teachers to do their best work. There is clear branding and consistent messaging throughout the school, promoting school identity and pride.
<b>3.2. Student Attendance</b>	The school has few, if any, strategies to increase attendance. Average daily attendance is ≤ 88% and/or chronic absenteeism is > 20%.	The school has some strategies to increase attendance. Average daily attendance is between 89% and 93%	The school has multiple, effective strategies to increase attendance. Average daily attendance is between	The school implements effective strategies to increase attendance and on-time arrival. Average daily

CULTURE AND CLIMATE				
Indicator	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
		and/or chronic absenteeism is between 16% and 20%.	94% and 97% and/or chronic absenteeism is between 11% and 15%.	attendance is > 97% and chronic absenteeism is ≤ 10%.
<b>3.3. Student Behavior</b>	A school-wide behavior management plan may exist, but there is little evidence of implementation. Student misbehavior is a significant challenge and creates regular distractions. Disciplinary approaches appear to be inconsistent; students and staff do not have a common understanding of behavioral expectations. Discipline is mostly punitive. The rate of suspensions/expulsions as a proportion of student enrollment is greater than 20% (total # incidents/total enrollment).	A school-wide behavior management plan is in place, and there are some signs of implementation. Student misbehavior is a challenge and creates frequent disruptions. There may be confusion among students and staff regarding behavioral expectations. Discipline is primarily punitive, and there is inconsistent reinforcement of desired behaviors. The rate of suspensions/expulsions as a proportion of student enrollment is between 15% and 20%.	A school-wide behavior management plan is in place and effectively implemented most of the time. Student behavior is under control. Misbehavior is infrequent, with periodic distractions to instruction. Most students behave in a calm and respectful manner. Students and staff have a common understanding of the behavior policy. There is positive reinforcement of desired behaviors. The suspension/expulsion rate is between 10% and 14%.	A school-wide behavior management plan is consistently and effectively implemented. All students behave in a calm, orderly, and respectful manner throughout the school day. Classroom distractions are minimal, and immediately and appropriately addressed. Rewards and consequences are clear and appropriate, and are consistently applied across the school. The suspension/expulsion rate is < 10%.
<b>3.4. Interpersonal Interactions</b>	There is a weak sense of community. The quality and types of student, adult, and student/adult interactions raise concerns. There are signs of divisiveness or hostility among students and with staff. There are minimal signs of connections between students and staff; interactions are largely transactional or triggered when students are off task.	There is a moderate sense of community. Students are somewhat respectful toward one another and adults. There is some teasing and divisiveness; however, it does not define school culture. Communication between students and staff is somewhat positive. There are some connections between students and staff.	There is a good overall sense of community. Students are generally respectful toward one another and adults. Interactions are mostly positive. There is minimal teasing and divisiveness. Communication between students and staff is generally positive and respectful. There are signs of connections between students and staff. Most staff seem invested in their students.	There is a strong sense of community. Students are respectful and courteous of one another and adults. Student interactions are overwhelmingly positive and polite. The school has an inclusive and welcoming environment. Student/adult interactions are positive and respectful, demonstrating strong relationships. Staff seems invested in the well-being and development of students.
<b>3.5. Family and Community Engagement</b>	The school offers infrequent opportunities to involve parents in the school community. Family involvement is minimal. Teachers rarely reach out to families regarding their child's academic progress.	The school offers several family events throughout the year. Roughly half of families participate in school activities. More than half of all teachers reach out to families regarding their child's academic progress.	The school offers periodic, meaningful opportunities for parents/families to engage in student's education. Most families participate in school activities. Most educators communicate regularly with families.	The school frequently engages parents/family as partners in student's education. Almost all families participate in school activities. Nearly all educators communicate with families on a regular basis.
<b>3.6. Community Partners and Wraparound Strategy</b>	The school offers inadequate supports to address students' nonacademic needs. There are limited wraparound services. The school makes little or no effort to engage community partners to expand services offered through the school.	The school offers some support to address students' nonacademic needs through wraparound services. Community and partner engagement is spotty and event-specific.	The school offers a range of wraparound services to address students' nonacademic needs. The school has several sustained community partnerships.	The school has a clear process for evaluating students' needs and connecting students to appropriate wraparound services. The school has sustained community partnerships to help address student needs.

OPERATIONS				
Indicator	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
<b>4.1. Adequate Instructional Time</b>	There is not enough time in the school schedule to appropriately meet students' academic needs. There is a significant amount of wasted time in the school calendar and daily schedule. The schedule includes ≤ 5 hours of instruction per day, and ≤ 60 minutes of ELA time. <sup>2</sup>	Students would benefit from increased instructional and/or intervention time. The school calendar and daily schedule could be improved to increase time on task. The schedule includes > 5 and ≤ 5.5 hours of instruction per day, and > 60 and ≤ 90 minutes of ELA time.	The school has taken steps to increase instructional time on task through extended learning opportunities. The school calendar and daily schedule are well constructed. The schedule includes > 5.5 and ≤ 6 hours of instruction per day, and > 90 and ≤ 120 minutes of ELA time.	The school has multiple extended learning opportunities available to students. The school implements a thoughtful and strategic school calendar and daily schedule. The schedule includes > 6 hours of instruction per day, and > 120 minutes of ELA time.
<b>4.2. Use of Instructional Time*</b>	Staff and students use time ineffectively. Misused instructional time results from misbehavior, poor scheduling, and inefficient transitions. There are missed opportunities to maximize time on task. Observed teachers struggle with pacing and fail to use class time in a constructive manner.	Staff and student use of time is somewhat effective. Some students are off task and there are missed opportunities to maximize instructional time. Lesson schedules are moderately well planned, paced, and executed. Teachers could be more skilled and/or methodical in the use of class time.	Most staff and students use time well. A handful of students require redirection; however, the majority of students transition quickly to academic work when prompted by the teacher. There is minimal downtime. Lessons are well planned, paced, and executed. Teachers are adept at managing and using class time.	Staff and students maximize their use of time. There is no downtime. Transitions are smooth and efficient. Students transition promptly to academic work with minimal cues and reminders from teachers. Teachers meticulously use every moment of class time to prioritize instructional time on task.
<b>4.3. Use of Staff Time</b>	Educators lack adequate and/or recurring professional development and/or common planning time. Common planning time is currently disorganized and the time is not used effectively. As a result, staff members are unable to develop and/or share practices on a regular basis.	Most academic teams have common planning periods (less than 1 hour/week); however, the school has failed to secure vertical and horizontal planning. Collaborative planning time is used at a basic level (e.g., organization of resources or topics not directly related to classroom instruction).	All academic teams have common planning periods (1-2 hours/week) and they are seldom interrupted by non-instructional tasks. Staff members use this time to discuss instructional strategies, discuss student work, develop curricular resources, and use data to adjust instruction.	All educators have weekly common planning time for vertical and horizontal planning (more than 2 hours/week). Common planning periods are tightly protected and only interrupted by emergencies. The school has established tight protocols to ensure that common planning time is used effectively.
<b>4.4. Routines and Transitions</b>	The school is chaotic and disorderly. The safety of students and staff is a concern. The school lacks critical systems and routines. Movement of students is chaotic and noisy with little adult intervention. Adults are not present during transitions; therefore, there is very little re-direction.	The school is somewhat chaotic and/or disorderly, particularly in certain locations and during certain times of day. Some staff make an effort to maintain procedures and routines; however, staff presence is minimal and redirection of misbehavior is lacking.	The school environment is calm and orderly in most locations and during most of the day. Rules and procedures are fairly clear, consistent, and evident. Routines seem somewhat apparent and institutionalized. Adults are present to reinforce norms.	The school environment is calm and orderly. Rules and procedures are clear, specific, consistent, and evident. Routines are largely unspoken and institutionalized. Adults are consistently present to reinforce norms.
<b>4.5. Financial Management</b>	The school and/or district do not make sound budgetary decisions based on student need and projected impact. Budget decisions are largely governed by past practice and do not account for sustainability. There is little to no evidence around school and/or district	Budget decisions are sometimes focused on factors unrelated to student needs and school goals. A number of expenditures and initiatives lack a plan for sustainability beyond the current school year. School and/or district leaders do not effectively	The school and/or district have emerging strategic budgeting practices. The school and/or district have begun to repurpose funds to align expenditures more closely with school goals and student needs. Sustainability may pose a concern.	The school and district engage in strategic budgeting. The school and district invest in high-yield, research-based initiatives aligned to student needs and school goals. There is a clear sustainability plan for all major expenditures. School/district leaders

<sup>2</sup> The total amount of ELA instructional time per day at the secondary level can include reading- and/or writing-intensive coursework.

**Note:** The rubrics draw from the CSDE's School Quality Review and Network Walkthrough Tool, and Mass Insight Education's School Readiness Assessment.

OPERATIONS				
Indicator	Below Standard	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
	leaders successfully advocating for school resource needs.	advocate for school needs or pursue additional resources.	School/district leaders effectively advocate for school needs and pursue additional resources.	effectively advocate for school needs, and build strategic relationships to pursue needed resources.