

Program Evaluation

Academics



2019-2020

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Academics Program Evaluation January 2020

Introduction

The academics program represents the heart of the Shawnee Mission School District. Student learning is the foundational reason we exist as an organization. The work below represents the combined effort of the Departments of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment and Special Education. Together, we strive to support student learning for all students. In line with our strategic plan, our goal as a district is that every student will have a personalized learning plan that supports them in being college/career ready and having the interpersonal skills important to life success.

It should also be noted that the implementation of plans described below also requires collaboration on the part of teachers and administrators. Specifically, the future success of learning in the district rests on the successful implementation of professional learning communities (PLC) in every school. Contrary to popular belief, a PLC is not a meeting at a specific time. Instead, according to Richard Dufour, a professional learning community represents “an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve.”

All curriculum work is necessarily collaborative, and that is certainly true in Shawnee Mission. None of the work described in these pages is the result of any one person or even department. It is the result of the combined effort of teachers and administrators from across the district who selflessly put the needs of students first in their classrooms and in their lives.

This report is organized around the strategies and actions steps of the district’s Strategic Plan. Our intent has been to attempt to flesh out the plan with specifics regarding what our teams have been working on and indicating a direction that we are headed in each of the areas for which our departments are responsible.

Thank you for taking the time to look through this report. We are grateful for the opportunity to share it with the Board of Education.

Evaluators

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Strategy 1

We will reimagine teaching and learning to guarantee relevant personalized learning.

1:1:1

Formalize a shared definition and common language for personalized learning.

In line with the state definition, a team of teachers has created the following definition for personalized learning:

Personalized learning places the whole child at the center of instruction. It is informed by strong educator/student/family/community relationships to provide equity and choice in time, place, path, pace and demonstration of learning.

This definition has implications for the teaching and learning process. It assumes both that teachers intentionally-design instruction based on the academic standards and that they develop strong relationships with their students, which make learning relevant. With these two conditions met, teachers can create rigorous learning opportunities by enlisting students to have meaningful opportunities to influence the direction of their learning.

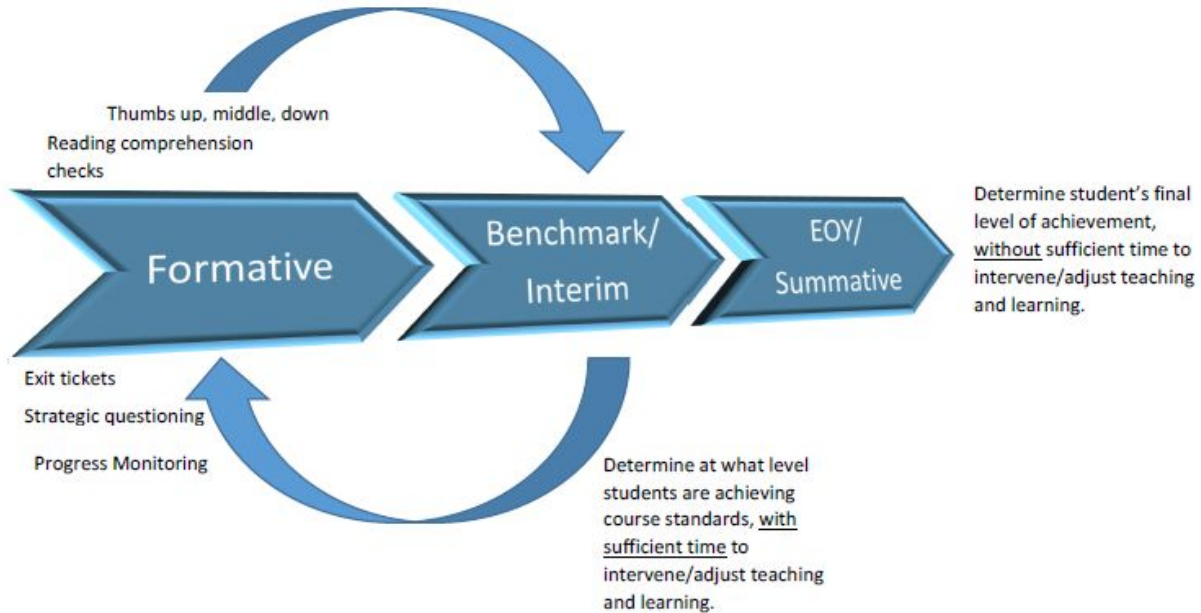
Personalized learning benefits students by giving them ownership of their learning. “Communities and employers need people who can self-regulate and are self-directed. Educators and families need to guide students to set goals and work to achieve them while also giving them a choice so they learn how to make their own decisions. Student ownership promotes learning” (KSDE, *Kansans Can Personalized Learning Definition*, October 2019)

It is no longer adequate to send students into the world having memorized answers to test questions. To be successful after graduation, students need to become lifelong learners. We can help them achieve that goal by building authentic relationships, building a rigorous and relevant curriculum, exploring a variety of career interests, and keeping them engaged in the learning process.

1:1:2

Create a framework to fully support personalized learning.

Based on the definition above, the next step will be to create a framework, including an intentional feedback loop to support and monitor implementation. A team of teachers and patrons has been identified, and that group will meet later this quarter to begin the work.



1:2:1-4

Relevant learning experiences and life-long learning opportunities.

This year, the Shawnee Mission School District has undertaken a major initiative in partnership with the Kauffman Foundation. Kauffman brought together 15 school systems on both sides of the state line with the stated goal of increasing the number of students who leave high school ready for college and career. The focus of the initiative is to increase student attainment of market value assets (MVA), which they define as industry valued and recognized skills acquired in high school that create a more seamless transition from school to postsecondary education and/or the workplace.

Students who leave high school with a diploma and market value assets are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education/training and successfully navigate the journey from school to employment without getting lost along the way. Market value assets make further education and training, and ultimately, a job, more affordable and more attainable.

-Kauffman Foundation, Real World Learning: Market Value Asset Calibration Matrix

To be considered a market value asset, Kauffman considered the following criteria:

- Work output has recognized value within industry or postsecondary
- Student performance is evaluated by multiple stakeholders, some external to education
- The student grows capabilities in multiple "KC Portrait of a Graduate" dimensions
- The process of obtaining the asset adds to the student's social capital

Examples of market value assets include internships, client projects, college credit, regionally-vetted industry-recognized credentials, entrepreneurial experiences, and other activities that are still emerging or have not been neatly categorized at this point. Based on our initial assessment, about 25% of Shawnee Mission graduates currently earn one or more market value assets. Eventually, we would like to see all students graduate with at least one MVA.

Shawnee Mission applied for and received a grant for the 2019-2020 school year. The grant supports our efforts to develop a plan to increase the number of students who graduate with an MVA. As part of that grant, the district has participated with other grant recipients on a total of four trips to visit and learn about other school systems across the United States who are exemplars of supporting student acquisition of market value assets. Thus far, the district has sent representatives to Chicago, San Diego, Dallas, and the Seattle/Tacoma area. Each visit has been hosted by personnel from Getting Smart, a national organization partnering with the Kauffman Foundation and headed by Tom Vanderark, former superintendent in the state of Washington and former Executive Director of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

By the end of the school year, Shawnee Mission and the 14 other school systems will make Shark Tank-style pitches for additional grant dollars to be able to implement new systems to support student attainment of MVAs. Kauffman has made clear that in order to benefit from additional grant dollars on this project, the proposals will have to be bold, a sharp contrast from the way we have traditionally operated.

The Special Education Department is dedicated to finding opportunities for secondary students with disabilities to obtain increased access to job skill development. The district has established partnerships with a variety of local businesses to allow for onsite job skill training for students both in our high schools as well as students in our post-secondary program.

1:3:1-2

Identify/define essential competencies to become the curriculum.

Revise curriculum documents and resources to reflect competencies.

This item represents the heart of the work done by the Curriculum and Instruction Department. Curriculum work is never done. As standards change, and as instruction becomes learning, which becomes student results, there is always a need to revise and update the curriculum maps in order to meet student needs. Cadres of dedicated teachers representing all grade levels, all feeder patterns, and a diverse set of subgroups collaborate throughout the school year and often during the summer to polish this work.

Last school year, much of the work was focused on identifying Priority 1 standards. Because each content area has so many standards that it is impossible to focus on all of them and do them justice, we need to identify the ones that will be the highest priority for our students to learn. These are the standards that represent the essential knowledge, skills, and behaviors every student must acquire in order to succeed in subsequent units, semesters, years, courses, and ultimately in life outside the context of school. These standards represent the assured student competencies that each teacher needs to help every student learn and demonstrate proficiency by the end of the grade level. They are identified because they have endurance beyond the current grade level, they apply across disciplines, they represent foundational prerequisite concepts necessary for the next level of learning, and they are likely to be encountered on standardized assessments. The remaining standards we call Priority 2. We still teach them; they support, connect to, or enhance the Priority 1 standards. They are taught within the context of the Priority 1 standards, but they do not receive the same degree of emphasis. They often help students understand and attain the more rigorous and comprehensive Priority 1 standards.

With work on prioritizing standards done last year in the areas of math and ELA Pre-K - 12, the work of curriculum cadres over the past year has primarily been about supporting instruction through the development of proficiency scales and common assessments. Proficiency scales help teachers to identify the progression of learning that students go through to understand a particular concept. It is used to monitor and track a student's progress on a standard over the course of time and over multiple pieces of work. It differs from a rubric in that a rubric is used to grade a single piece of work and to provide feedback on multiple skills or standards.

Once a proficiency scale is developed, the next step our cadres take is to develop common assessments. In math, the assessments are created in an assessment platform the district purchased called Unify. Dr. Erin Smith and the elementary math cadres worked hard throughout the summer on vetting items and getting them in the system. All of the assessments are adapted from the approved curriculum materials. Cadre members and a few other willing volunteers were able to try out these assessments with their classes and then reflected with their colleagues on the process. Feedback from teachers continues to improve the validity and reliability of the assessments. In English Language Arts, the assessments are created in Wonders, which is our district approved instructional resource. Like their math colleagues, ELA cadres led by Darcy Swan invested a lot of time through the summer to get to this point. Proficiency scales and assessments are also in development in other elementary and secondary content areas.

All elementary teachers received access to the draft proficiency scales and common assessments in their core areas at the beginning of the second semester. We have asked elementary grade level teachers to test drive the draft documents and provide feedback. Our goal is to have every teacher try at least one proficiency scale and one common assessment during the second semester and provide feedback on them. Our teams will then use that

feedback over the late spring and summer to strengthen the documents and create final drafts which will be rolled out in the fall.

Prior to the beginning of school for 2019-2020, early childhood/pre-K educators worked with leadership and learning team members to develop proficiency scales for each of the priority standards in the areas of literacy, phonemic awareness, communication, math, social emotional development, and approaches to learning. Additionally, a new common standards-aligned report card was developed for pre-k to replace a developmental checklist. The new report card was designed to offer a more authentic assessment in the child's natural environment allowing us to be more accurate in knowing what skills the children have generalized and are able to use across their day in a variety of ways. This new report card also was designed to enhance dialogue opportunities with parents regarding their child's progress. Pre-K teachers implemented the proficiency scales and new report card at the start of the school year. Teachers are providing feedback as the year progresses and we will make necessary adjustments based on this feedback for the 2020-2021 school year.

In addition to the work in academic areas, the academic team has been working on a plan for incorporating social-emotional and character development standards into the curriculum. Because of their importance to student learning and success beyond the classroom, we are calling these the Cornerstone standards. A Cornerstone cadre has been unpacking the state's Social-Emotional Character Development standards (**SECD**) and identifying priorities with a goal of developing a plan to seamlessly incorporate them into the various curricular areas.

At the same time as we have been focusing on curriculum mapping and developing documents and processes to support instruction, we have also made literacy instruction a priority.

Dyslexia

The unanimous Kansas State Board of Education recently approved policies designed to support students who have difficulty learning to read, especially those with dyslexia. Specifically, these policies aim at improving reading instruction, teacher preparation, professional learning, and assessment measures. The Shawnee Mission School District has been diligently working in this area for the past two years, and we have already taken steps forward in the areas of reading instruction, diagnostic assessment, and professional learning in the science of reading and dyslexia.

While the district anticipates additional information and resources will be provided by the Kansas State Department of Education, we believe these policies are a step in the right direction for the future of Shawnee Mission students. Our district continues to be committed to providing researched-based instruction utilizing evidenced-based resources, refining our tiered system of supports for all students, providing focused professional learning in Structured Literacy and the Science of Reading for Shawnee Mission staff, and supporting our families in the steps necessary to help their children find college and career success. Quarterly trainings

have been established to bring general education and special education staff together to work explicitly on literacy skills.

The RTI district leadership team will continue researching and evaluating the best instructional practices, research-based strategies, and evidence-based resources to meet the needs of students with deficits in literacy, including reading and writing. Currently, we have invested in 95% Group intervention materials and professional learning in order to help teachers understand the science of how the brain learns to read.

_SMSD		ELA		_All Grades		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
All Students (13973)	2016	18%	31%	35%	16%				
	2017	21%	30%	34%	15%				
	2018	21%	30%	34%	15%				
	2019	21%	30%	33%	15%				
White/ Caucasian (8837)	2016	11%	28%	41%	20%				
	2017	13%	27%	40%	20%				
	2018	13%	28%	40%	19%				
	2019	14%	28%	39%	19%				
Hispanic (2730)	2016	32%	39%	23%	6%				
	2017	35%	37%	23%	5%				
	2018	35%	36%	24%	5%				
	2019	36%	37%	22%	5%				
Black / Afr. Am (1240)	2016	40%	38%	18%	5%				
	2017	42%	36%	18%	4%				
	2018	43%	34%	18%	4%				
	2019	42%	34%	20%	##				
Asian (342)	2016	17%	30%	36%	18%				
	2017	16%	31%	36%	16%				
	2018	13%	28%	40%	19%				
	2019	15%	29%	32%	24%				
Multi/ Other (824)	2016	18%	33%	36%	14%				
	2017	21%	32%	33%	14%				
	2018	21%	31%	35%	13%				
	2019	24%	29%	33%	14%				
Free Lunch (3789)	2016	35%	38%	22%	5%				
	2017	38%	35%	22%	5%				
	2018	39%	35%	22%	4%				
	2019	39%	36%	21%	4%				
Reduced Lunch (1119)	2016	22%	37%	33%	8%				
	2017	28%	35%	29%	7%				
	2018	30%	36%	27%	6%				
	2019	30%	36%	26%	8%				
ELL (1072)	2016	40%	39%	17%	##				
	2017	42%	37%	18%	##				
	2018	53%	35%	11%	#				
	2019	60%	33%	6%					
Disabled (1057)	2016	58%	26%	12%	5%				
	2017	60%	24%	12%	##				
	2018	58%	24%	14%	4%				
	2019	60%	24%	13%	##				

1:3:3/6

Implement high-impact, research-based instructional strategies and provide professional development.

There are a number of ongoing professional learning opportunities offered in the district. These opportunities include both job-embedded and after-school, optional course offerings for staff. Professional learning opportunities are developed based on teacher feedback from an annual survey and in response to the needs of students as indicated by academic data.

The Leadership and Learning Department provides district-led professional learning during teacher pre-service through an Instructional Fair. Sessions target areas of the strategic plan to ensure our students are college and career ready. Job-embedded professional learning is available ongoing through our Instructional Coaching program. Teachers working with a coach will engage in one-on-one learning in this peer model framework. Principals are provided professional learning in the areas of leadership, instruction, and assessment that they replicate in their respective buildings.

Teachers new to the profession participate in a two-year mentoring program which includes professional learning in high-impact areas as well as an assigned teacher mentor. Mentors will meet with new teachers throughout the year and provide support and coaching to the mentee. The second year of mentoring, requires the mentee to engage one-on-one in coaching cycles with the building instructional coach in areas identified by the mentee. 130 new teachers engaged in the 2019-20 Mentor Program.

Employees new to the district attend a 3-day, New Teacher Academy to onboard successfully as a new hire in the Shawnee Mission School District. Teachers receive professional learning on district curriculum, instructional resources, and tools such as Skyward. Each session is designed to ensure new employees begin their career with Shawnee Mission School District on a solid foundation. Approximately 190 new teachers participated in New Teacher Academy in 2019.

Our Curriculum and Instruction Department offers content-specific professional learning in the areas of literacy, math, science, social studies, English Language Learner supports and social-emotional learning. For example, professional learning in math instruction has built teacher capacity in the areas of number sense, problem solving and reasoning, and formative assessment. Professional learning has also supported teachers providing math intervention with workshops targeted around the multisensory math approach.

Teachers are offered multiple opportunities for professional learning in the area of literacy instruction. These include specialized trainings for elementary reading specialists and innovation specialists who serve as building interventionists for students who need remediation

and/or enrichment. Trainings focus on the science of reading and foundational reading skills as well as project-based learning and STEAM. Librarians also engage in professional learning in areas that support core content areas, makerspace, and resource curation.

Teachers have opportunities to further their learning with optional professional development sessions such as our Summer Impact Institute, Tech Thursdays, and after-school catalog courses. The self-select sessions allow teachers to engage in topics and preferred learning modalities for teacher-directed professional learning.

Classroom Instruction That Works: Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement by Robert Marzano, Debra Pickering, and Jane Pollack was originally published in 2001, and it quantified how instructional strategies when used appropriately, accelerate student learning. Almost two decades later, now in a second edition, the work is one of the most important books on implementing research-based practice in the profession.

Beginning this semester, Shawnee Mission has adopted a new classroom walkthrough instrument published by the Mid-Continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) based on Marzano's research.

Strategy 2

We will relentlessly create a fully unified, equitable, and inclusive culture.

2.3

Promote positive relationships which honor diversity and equity.

The Leadership and Learning Department is committed to supporting the work of Student Services to ensure an equitable and inclusive academic program.

We continue to find ways to support all of our district's learners. Both ELL and Special Education partner with buildings to ensure students have access to the core curriculum and engaging experiences with high-quality and relevant instruction is delivered in an inclusive and welcoming environment. There have been targeted training focusing on curriculum development and increasing teachers' capacities to meet students' instructional needs.

Curriculum Development

ELL teachers at the middle school and high school level are engaging in creating curriculum for the ELL courses. They have followed the same process as the other content area curriculum teams to:

- Unpack the English Language Proficiency Standards
- Identify Priority 1 Standards
- Create curriculum maps that support students' skill development in the four Language Domains (Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing) of the English Language

We will continue this important curriculum work with the development of proficiency scales and common assessments at the secondary level and engaging elementary teachers in curriculum work.

Increasing Teachers' Capacities

We are committed to providing teachers with the support and resources needed to increase their confidence and skills to meet the ELL students' needs. We have increased collaborative opportunities for the ELL Instructional Coaches to partner with the building Instructional Coaches to increase their capacity to provide ongoing support for teachers.

The district is dedicated to creating opportunities for special education teachers to increase their student achievements. We know, dedicating time to provide explicit professional development opportunities targeting IEP development, various instructional approaches will further enhance our teachers' skills.

Professional Development

The ELL Instructional Coaches continue to provide high-quality professional learning sessions on topics that support equity and an inclusive culture for all students. Professional Development topics presented include:

- Supporting English Language Learners Through Effective Co-Teaching
- Using Biography Driven Instruction in Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Creating a Culturally Responsive Classroom Accepting of All Students
- Integrating Language Support and Strategies in Content Instruction to Support ELLs
- Designing Lessons to Meet the Needs of English Language Learners

Special Education Teachers at the elementary, middle and high school levels have participated in trainings over the course of the school year and have future trainings planned. Trainings have included:

- 95% group training
- IEP development
- Modeling of lessons
- Special Education in General Education
- Managing Paras
- Screeners (PSI, PASI)
- Principles of Behavior/Mand/Card Sort
- Related service provider CEU opportunities
- Data Collection

Continuum of Services and Resources

In addition to providing training to both certified and classified staff serving within the special education department. A review of the current service delivery model, as well as location of services available, is in process. A staff workgroup representing each level of services ranging from ECSE (age 3) up to 18-21 services also including related service providers to review services as well as identify resource needs.

Strategy 4

We will design systems that support our mission and beliefs.

4:1:1-2

Define and state the purpose and role of district and building leadership groups.

Stakeholder engagement is an important part of the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA) Model and has been a critical focus of the district's strategic planning process as well. We utilize various stakeholder leadership groups to carry out important continuous improvement responsibilities at both the school and district level.

Building Site Council- made up of stakeholders including parents, staff members, students, and community members.

Purpose: to serve as an advisory committee and provide input during each step of their school's continuous improvement process. Responsibilities include:

- **Review** - Building-level student learning data
- **Monitor** - Provide input and feedback to the Building Leadership Team on school improvement initiatives
- **Review** - School Improvement goals/action plans
- **Recommend** - Considerations to support the school's improvement plan

District Site Council- comprised of members from the Building Site Councils.

Purpose: to provide input and feedback on the District School Improvement Process through:

- **Review** - District-level student learning data
- **Monitor** - Progress and provide input
- **Review** - District improvement goals/action plans outlined in the Strategic Plan
- **Recommend** - Considerations to support the district's Strategic Plan

Building Leadership Teams- these teams are comprised of educational leaders from each school.

Purpose: To lead the school's improvement efforts through:

- **Engagement-** leading staff through data analysis and facilitating the building needs assessment
- **Goal Setting-** identifies the building's goals based upon needs and data
- **Action-** development of an action plan for each goal

- **Implementation-** of the action plans
- **Analysis-** monitors the effectiveness of the action plans and school's improvement efforts
- **Communication-** shares progress with Building Site Council and other stakeholders

KESA District Leadership Team- this committee is made up of educational leaders representing various grade levels and content areas across all feeder patterns.

Purpose: To support the implementation of the district's continuous improvement process and to oversee the KESA responsibilities required for accreditation. Responsibilities include:

- **Oversight and Approval-** of building-level KESA work
- **Data Review-** analyzes the data from the District Needs Assessment and establishes the district's goals and action plans
- **implementation-** oversees the implementation of the action plans
- **Analysis-** monitors the effectiveness of the action plans and the district's improvement efforts
- **Communication-** shares progress with District Site Council

These leadership groups are integral to the continuous improvement process and help support the mission and objectives of the strategic plan.

4:1:3

Establish a framework to support collaboration across the district.

A Vertical Team is a group of educators at various grade levels who work together to help more students acquire the academic skills necessary for success. ELA and Math Vertical Teams have been established in each feeder area, representing teachers from elementary, middle, and high school. A Lead Teacher on each team facilitates the group's collaboration. The teams have established goals to improve instruction and student outcomes based on district benchmark data. The vertical collaboration has led to increased communication among teachers in the feeder area and greater cohesion in instruction.

4:3

Implement a district-wide Response to Intervention system.

Response to Intervention (**RTI**) is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction

and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. The Shawnee Mission Strategic Plan guides our work in the implementation of a district-wide RTI system that ensures academic and social-emotional growth for all students. A critical action step is the creation of a district-wide RTI Instructional Team with diverse members who serve diverse roles. The RTI District Instructional Leadership Team (**RTI-DLT**) is comprised of forty classroom teachers (both elementary and secondary), Instructional Coaches, Innovation Specialists, Reading Specialists, district coordinators, special education representatives, Social Workers, English Language Learning coaches, and building administrators. We also have ten parent volunteers who can choose to attend the work sessions or provide feedback to work completed at that session. The RTI-DLT will meet six times throughout the 2019-20 school year to determine our current reality and identify gaps in our RTI system of support for students.

The RTI-DLT was first tasked with the consideration of creating a job description for a Response to Intervention Coordinator to lead the district process of multi-tiered supports for students. The RTI-DLT reviewed job descriptions of RTI Coordinators from other districts and collaboratively authored a job description that was submitted to Cabinet for review.

Future goals for the RTI-DLT include the review of current resources for RTI in Shawnee Mission (Handbook for Student Success), continue to define each tier explicitly, and identify evidence-based resources that meet the academic and social-emotional needs of all students. To complete this work, we will consider creating smaller sub-committees from the RTI-DLT for literacy, math, and social-emotional learning. The goal will be to assess gaps in current intervention protocols and assess needs around reading disabilities, including dyslexia. This work will include planning for future professional learning in the areas of dyslexia and Structured Literacy. The math sub-committee will assess current gaps in math instruction and resources and determine the best ways in which to fulfill gaps within tiered math instruction and intervention. The Social-emotional learning sub-committee will evaluate the needs and gaps to be addressed in this area as well. Lastly, the RTI-DLT will review the current assessment protocol and determine strengths and challenges.