



**State College Area
School District**

State College,
Pennsylvania

Discover! Pursue! Excel!

► 2014-2017 Strategic Plan



2014 –2017 Strategic Plan
State College Area School District
State College, Pennsylvania

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The State College Area School District believes that the education of youth is a **shared task** involving our parents, community groups, schools, and students themselves.

Excellence cannot be attained unless the ideals of **equality and human dignity** are honored and promoted. Thus, the quest for educational excellence will be complemented by a corresponding commitment to the fundamental principles of our **democratic society**.

Abstracted from the
SCASD Statement of Purpose

CHAPTER ONE

About State College Area School District

State College Area School District ("SCASD") had an enrollment of approximately 6,800 students in kindergarten through grade 12 during the 2012-2013 school year. The district has nine elementary schools, two middle schools (grades 6-8), and one high school (grades 9-12).

The district's diverse student population reflects the communities that it serves. During the 2012-2013 school year:

- 84 out of every 100 students (84%) were non-Hispanic White.
- 6 out of every 100 students (6.5%) were Asian.
- Approximately 3 out of every 100 students (2.6%) were Black or African American.
- 3 out of every 100 students (2.9%) were Latino/Hispanic.
- About 4 out of every 100 students (3.5%) were Multiracial (Mixed Race).
- Less than 1 out of every 100 students were Native American or Pacific Islander.
- About 12 out of every 100 students (11.7%) were Special Education students.
- 20 out of every 100 students (20%) came from socio-economically disadvantaged, or low-income, homes.
- About 3 out of every 100 students (3.4%) were English Language Learners.
- Out of every 100 students, about 51% were Male, and 49% Female.

State College Area School District employed about 1,325 faculty and staff; approximately 670 of them were teachers and administrators. A nine-member Board of School Directors governs the district.

CHAPTER TWO

Executive Summary

This strategic plan was developed by a broad cross-section of the State College Area School District (SCASD) community. The overarching purpose of the strategic plan is to chart a clear course for building a stronger, more effective, and more responsive school system; the plan aims to accelerate our commitment to sustaining a school system where all students – without exception – **discover, pursue, and excel**.

The planning process started in February 2013, and involved three interconnected planning teams.

- The **District Steering Committee** consisted of parents, students, teachers, administrators, district staff, and Board members, as well as business, higher education, and community representatives. That team focused primarily on defining the Goal and Benchmarks for student learning and development, and reaffirming the mission and core values of the district.
- The **Instructional Focus Team**, comprised principally of teachers, administrators and school-based staff, focused on articulating the core instructional practices essential for accomplishing the student learning outcomes defined by the Core Planning Team.
- A number of **Sub-Committees** identified the supporting strategies and actions that reinforce the core instructional programs and/or provide complementary operations and services to students and schools. Those teams proposed specific recommendations that address areas such as: Educational Services and Professional Development; Learning Enrichment & Gifted Support; Special Education; Technology; Counseling Services; Certified School Nurse offerings; and Communication.

The highlights of each team's deliberations are summarized below; detailed recommendations follow in Chapter 5.

Achieving Strong Results for Students

At **SCASD**, we exhibit a **passion for empowering every student** – every day – with individualized opportunities for **growth and success in a connected world**.

Our Goals are clear:

- Significant academic and personal growth for every student
- College- and career-ready graduates
- Achievement in arts, sports, clubs and activities
- Safe and supported learners
- Demonstrate commitment to self, community and global citizenship

Our 2017 Benchmarks reflect our belief in the potential of our students to meet high expectations; furthermore, the benchmarks are in alignment with the aspirations and expectations of State College parents and taxpayers.

By 2017:

1. At least 18 out of every 20 students (90%), at every grade level, report that they look forward to coming to school every day.
2. All students report that they are passionately engaged in challenging activities.
3. At least 19 out of every 20 students (95%) have meaningful connections to school through extra-/co-curricular activities or community involvement.
4. All students demonstrate acquisition of 21st Century Skills and authentic learning (including academic, non-academic, and citizenship experiences).
5. At least 15 out of every 20 under-performing students (75%) achieve grade-level success in English Language Arts (ELA), Math and Science, based on multiple measures.
6. All students (100%) demonstrate at least one year's growth every year, based on multiple measures.
7. Comprehensive plans for successful student transitions between organizational levels exist and are communicated, implemented, reviewed, and revised on a yearly basis.
8. All graduates are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and understanding to participate as active citizens in a global society.

Vital Signs of Student Progress

To ensure that our students are making steady progress toward our Goal and Benchmarks, we will monitor the following indicators of continuous academic *growth*, academic *tenacity*, and socio-emotional *resiliency*:

- A. Student **perseverance, determination and passion for learning**
- B. Student **critical thinking, collaboration and problem-solving**
- C. Student **voice and reflectiveness**
- D. Closing the **achievement gap** and enhancing **growth for all students**
- E. **Successful transitions** (across learning experiences & environments, including grade-to-grade, levels, newness to school/district, post-secondary, etc.)

Clarifying the Instructional Focus

All students will learn at high levels when instruction meets their needs. If we aim to accelerate student achievement, we must focus on continuous improvement of teaching practices, leadership practices, and organizational practices, because they are the precursors to student learning.

The “Four Pillars” of our Instructional Focus

The Four Pillars of our Instructional Focus frame our instructional vision and guide our professional practices. For each pillar, we have articulated teaching practices, leadership practices, and organizational practices that guide what we must do well in every classroom, in every school, and district-wide to ensure success for all students.

Our first Pillar – **CULTURE OF TRUST, RELATIONSHIPS AND COLLABORATION** – focuses on building trust and relationships, with open communication that promotes effective collaboration among all partners in the teaching and learning community.

Our second Pillar – **RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING** – ensures that curriculum, instruction, and learning are shaped by a growth mindset and guided by the principles of differentiation.

Our third Pillar – **HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL** – promotes beliefs and practices that reflect universally held high standards and shared responsibility for continuous growth and improvement.

Our fourth Pillar – **WELCOMING AND SAFE CLIMATE FOR LEARNING AND WORK** – recognizes that learning occurs best in safe environments that support the needs of all students and adults; it advocates for a welcoming climate where positive academic and prudent personal risk-taking are encouraged.

Together, the Four Pillars of our Instructional Focus serve as the building blocks for strengthening and sustaining a standards-aligned core instructional system throughout our school district.

Building an Empowering Infrastructure

Developing and sustaining a highly effective, standards-aligned instructional system requires an empowering infrastructure to support day-to-day activities of students, teachers, leaders, and staff. Schools, in particular, need responsive operations, services and structures that offer students and staff access to professional development as well as complementary enrichment, intervention, extracurricular, and co-curricular services for students.

The following are some of the strategic goals for building an empowering infrastructure to support the core instructional programs.

Regarding Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Professional Development:

- Establish a K-12 Curriculum Council to guide curriculum, instruction and professional development, including transitioning to Pennsylvania's Common Core State Standards.

- Provide consistent and easy-to-understand assessment information to teachers, students, and parents.
- Ensure that differentiation is the norm in all classrooms, as evidenced by timely feedback, support, and evaluation of teachers and by differentiated supervision.
- Establish opportunities for growth and collaboration through professional learning communities and networks.

Regarding Learning Enrichment and Gifted Support:

- Provide all general education teachers professional development about differentiating in ways that meet the needs of the most able and talented learners.
- Develop a website to include up-to-date policy and procedural information regarding Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support and Chapter 16 Program.
- Ensure that all administrators and classroom teachers complete the online Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support and Chapter 16 course.
- Invite parents to complete the online Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support and Chapter 16 course.

Regarding Special Education:

- Narrow the “achievement gap” in reading between general education students and the identified, at-risk populations.
- Provide all students with autism an appropriate Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with the availability of related services, identified supplementary aides, and *specially designed instruction* in the least restrictive environment.
- Provide a framework for the provision of behavioral support for all students based on effective practices and with attention to interventions for struggling learners.

Regarding Student Services (including School Counseling & Nursing):

- Develop and implement a K-12 behavioral counseling curriculum with common understanding, language and practices for all stakeholders.
- Communicate health, safety and wellness information to district faculty and staff, parents and guardians, and students.

This strategic plan is a reaffirmation of our long-standing commitment to continuous improvement of every aspect of our school system, so that, over time, we sustain SCASD's culture of excellence. The ultimate aim of our district remains unchanged and unchanging, namely: to prepare students for lifelong success through excellence in education. Our 2014-2017 strategic plan is the roadmap for the next phase of our journey.

Paying Attention to Our Intention

Getting things done well demands discipline. Consistent performance is the outcome of a disciplined approach to executing the organization's essential functions. Thus, a core responsibility of district and school leadership is making sure that all the components work together toward the goals outlined in the strategic plan.

To realize the bold agenda outlined in this strategic plan, the school district and its partners must commit to disciplined implementation of the plan; consistent monitoring of progress to enable course-corrections in a timely manner; public reporting to sustain commitment of internal and external stakeholders; and motivating and honoring efforts and accomplishments.

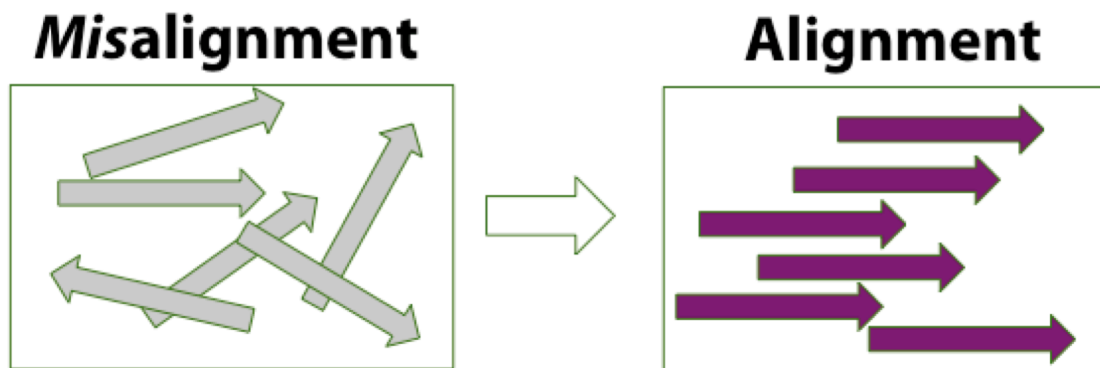
CHAPTER THREE

The Planning Process

Why Plan

A primary aim of planning is unity of purpose, or **alignment**. Without a plan, there is no focus or clear direction. A results-focused plan is the first step toward making the future you envision manifest as your reality.

Regardless of the level of planning – long-range strategic planning, continuous school improvement planning or operational planning – the intent is the same: *getting people, practices and programs on the same page, going in the same direction, at the same time*. This alignment process enables the school system and its community partners to develop a continuous improvement plan that focuses everyone on the district's core mission: *to prepare students for lifelong success through excellence in education*.



Setting the Compass

This system-wide strategic planning process was commissioned by Robert J. O'Donnell, Superintendent of State College Area School District (SCASD). The overarching purpose of the planning exercise was to reaffirm the district's goals and benchmarks for student learning and achievement, and to outline the roadmap for accomplishing them. The planning process embraced the diverse "voices" of a representative cross-section of the SCASD community, including students, parents, business leaders/stakeholders, community representatives, Penn State University partners, and SCASD teachers, leaders, staff, and Board members.

Furthermore, the strategic planning exercise gave the district an opportunity to respond to a number of comprehensive planning requirements set by the Pennsylvania Department of

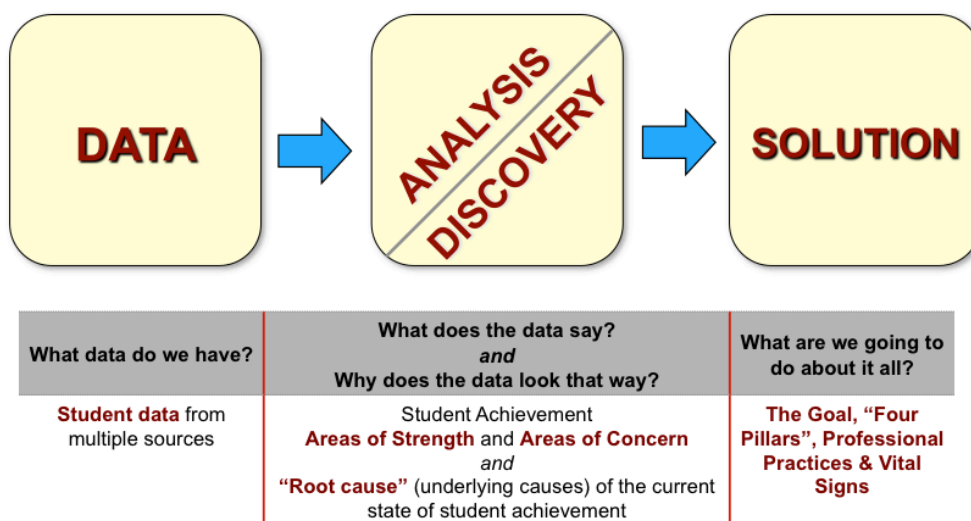
Education (PDE), and to incorporate those state expectations into a single comprehensive continuous improvement plan.

Embracing Diverse Voices

A **District Steering Committee** of about 50 people – broadly representative of students, school district employees, parents, community stakeholders, union leadership, and Board members – spearheaded the development of the overarching strategic plan. A second team – the **Instructional Focus Team** – comprised mostly of teachers, school administrators, and central office personnel – spearheaded the development of the Instructional Focus (i.e., the articulation of the teaching practices, leadership practices, and organizational practices to be implemented system-wide). In addition, several **Sub-Committees** focused on the assessment of current practices in several key areas and proposed recommendations for improving services and operations in areas such as Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction and Professional Development; Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support; Special Education; Technology; School Counseling and Nursing; and Communication.

Mr. Mutiu O. Fagbayi (President/CEO, Performance Fact, Inc.) developed and facilitated the planning process. Performance Fact's strategic planning framework emphasizes in-depth analysis of student data from multiple perspectives; identifying the "root causes" of the current state of student achievement; developing concrete solutions to address the "root causes"; and aligning services and operations around the core mission of the school system: To prepare students for lifelong success through excellence in education.

A Data-driven, Continuous Improvement Planning Process



CHAPTER FOUR

Assessment of Current State

In this Chapter, we highlight key findings from assessments of the current state of student learning, professional practices, and several aspects of district-level services, operations and supports.

Analysis of Student Data

The District Steering Committee analyzed the current state of student achievement based on data from a variety of state and local assessments (Figures 1 to 7). The committee identified areas of strength and areas of concern based on longitudinal (three-year) student data in core subjects and across student subgroups.

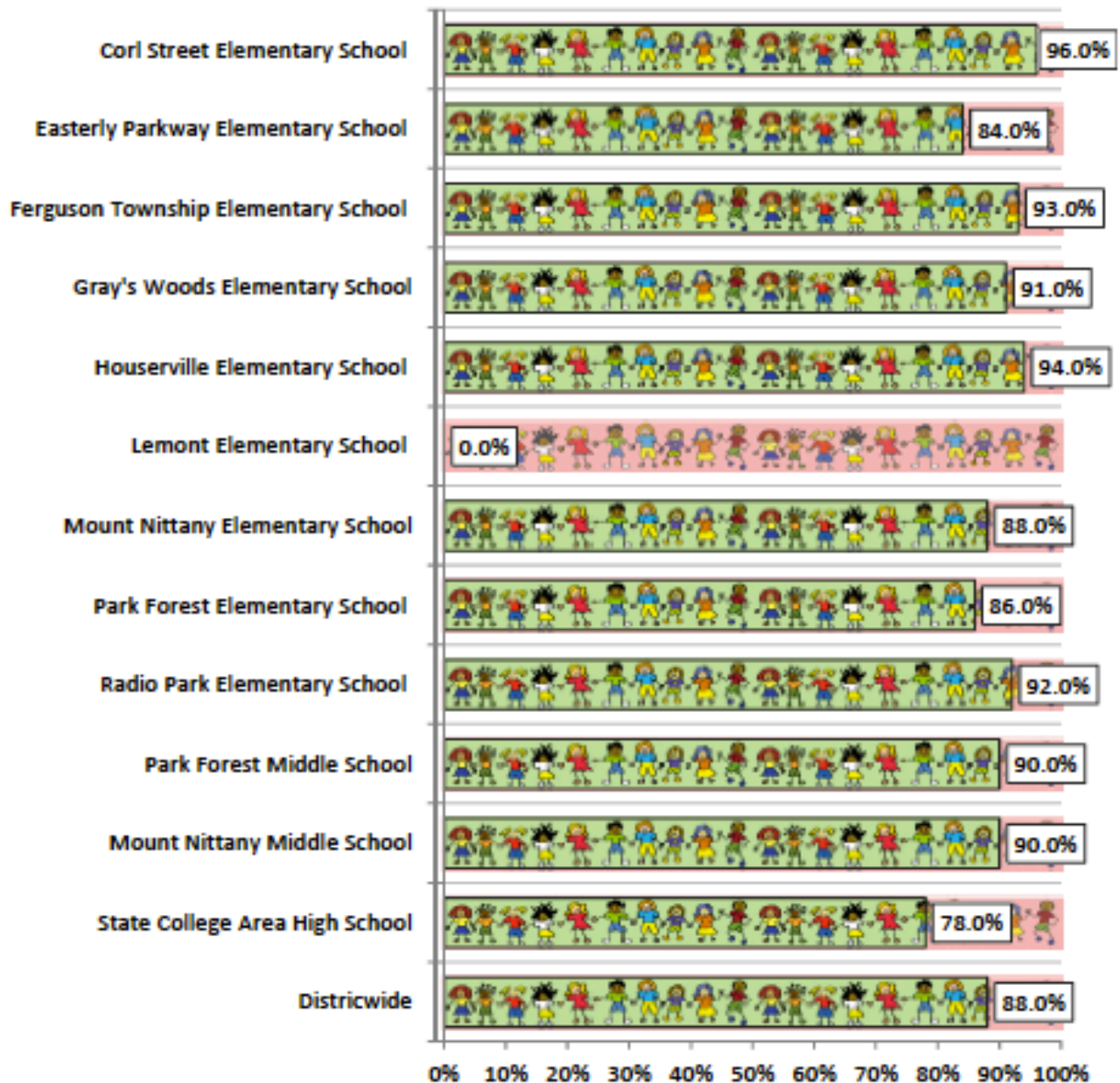
Highlights of the data analysis included the following:

- District-wide, nearly 18 out of every 20 students (88%) were proficient/advanced on the statewide reading and mathematics tests in 2012.
- At the high school level, about 16 out of every 20 students were proficient/advanced on the mathematics tests (78%) and reading tests (81%).
- Across elementary schools, the percentages of students proficient/advanced in mathematics ranged from 84% to 96%; in reading, the range across elementary schools was 78% to 90%.
- Several student subgroups – most notably, African American, Hispanics, English Language Learners, special education students, and students from low socio-economic backgrounds performed at significantly lower levels than their White and Asian counterparts, across most grade levels (based on 2012 results).
- Compared to the mean scores for Pennsylvania and USA, SCASD students scored about 50 points higher on the SAT critical reading, mathematics, and writing examinations.
- During the past three years, SCASD students scored higher on the ACT than the statewide average in English, mathematics, reading, and science. The ACT examinations measure student's readiness for success during first year of college.

A comprehensive analysis of student achievement and development – including the *Pennsylvania Youth Survey* – is available as addenda to this strategic plan document.

Figure 1: Percentage of Students Proficient/Advanced on 2012 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) Mathematics Tests

MATHEMATICS (2011-2012 SY)



Note: Lemont Elementary School includes kindergarten through grade two. Therefore, its students do not participate in the PSSA.

Figure 2: Percentage of Students Proficient/Advanced on 2012 PSSA Reading Tests

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (2011-2012 SY)



Note: Lemont Elementary School includes kindergarten through grade two. Therefore, its students do not participate in the PSSA.

Figure 3: Percentage of Students Proficient/Advanced on the PSSA by Grade (2010-2012)

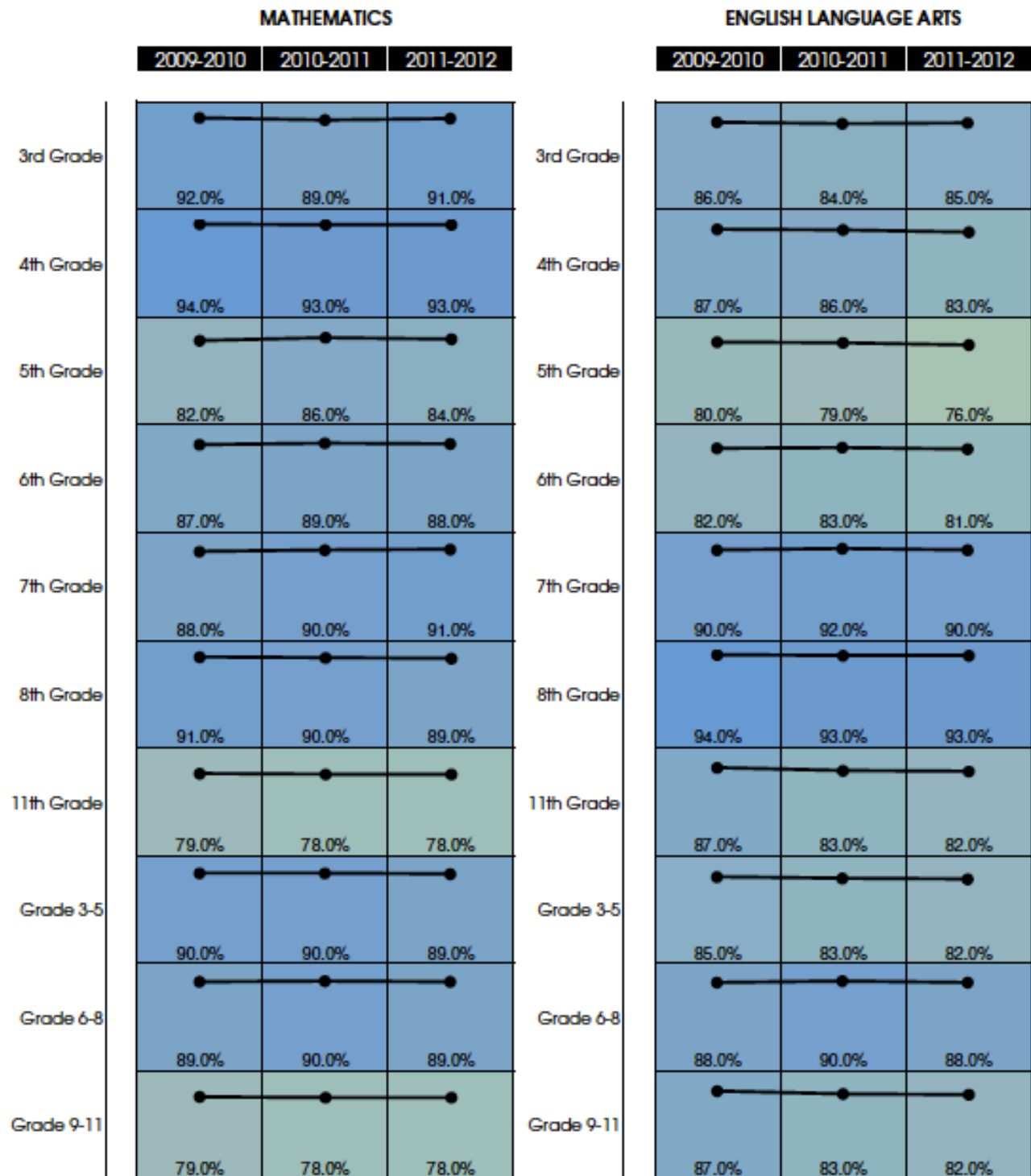


Figure 4: Percentage of Students Proficient/Advanced on PSSA Mathematics by Subgroup

Portrait of your 3-year MATHEMATICS PSSA Results

Number Scoring At/Above Proficiency OUT OF EVERY 20 STUDENTS

STATE COLLEGE AREA SD

Fewer than 7 out of every 20	Between 7-13 out of every 20	Between 13-17 out of every 20	More than 17 out of every 20
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Multi-year PSSA Mathematics Results Broken Down by Grade

		All Students	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multi-racial	White	IEP	LEP	ED
Grade 3	2011	18	20	11	18	13	18	10	17	16
	2010	18	20	14	18	20	18	12	13	16
	2009	18	18	15	18	18	18	10	N/A	18
Grade 4	2011	19	20	14	17	17	18	12	17	18
	2010	19	20	18	17	13	18	13	20	17
	2009	18	20	13	18	20	18	13	0	14
Grade 5	2011	17	18	12	14	12	18	8	20	16
	2010	18	18	13	15	18	18	8	10	12
	2009	18	18	10	15	7	17	10	0	11
Grade 6	2011	18	20	18	17	18	18	10	10	13
	2010	17	20	8	14	7	18	10	10	13
	2009	18	17	10	11	18	18	8	0	11
Grade 7	2011	18	18	10	18	13	18	11	10	16
	2010	17	18	10	12	18	17	10	10	13
	2009	18	18	12	18	17	18	10	N/A	13
Grade 8	2011	18	18	11	16	17	18	12	20	14
	2010	18	18	12	18	14	18	12	20	14
	2009	18	18	8	12	7	18	8	N/A	11
Grade 11	2011	18	18	8	18	18	18	7	4	10
	2010	15	18	7	18	12	15	5	20	10
	2009	14	18	8	14	14	14	4	N/A	8

Multi-year PSSA Mathematics Results Broken Down by Grade Clusters

		All Students	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multi-racial	White	IEP	LEP	ED
Gr 3-5	2011	18	20	13	18	14	18	10	17	16
	2010	18	20	14	17	18	18	11	14	16
	2009	17	18	12	18	13	17	11	0	14
Gr 6-8	2011	18	20	12	17	18	18	11	13	14
	2010	17	18	10	14	13	18	11	12	13
	2009	18	18	10	13	18	17	8	0	11
Gr 9-11	2011	18	18	8	18	18	18	7	4	10
	2010	15	18	7	18	12	15	5	20	10
	2009	14	18	8	14	14	14	4	N/A	8

Figure 5: Percentage of Students Proficient/Advanced on PSSA Reading by Subgroup

Portrait of your 3-year **READING** PSSA Results
Number Scoring At/Above Proficiency **OUT OF EVERY 20 STUDENTS**

STATE COLLEGE AREA SD

Fewer than 7 out of every 20 **Between 7-13 out of every 20** **Between 13-17 out of every 20** **More than 17 out of every 20**

Multi-year PSSA Reading Results Broken Down by Grade

		All Students	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial	White	IEP	LEP	ED
Grade 3	2011	17	18	10	15	15	17	10	10	14
	2010	17	18	14	17	18	17	8	10	11
	2009	18	19	15	16	16	18	10	N/A	14
Grade 4	2011	17	18	9	17	18	17	13	0	12
	2010	18	19	10	17	17	18	11	10	15
	2009	17	20	11	19	20	17	10	0	12
Grade 5	2011	16	17	14	14	8	16	9	N/A	10
	2010	16	18	12	13	20	16	6	10	12
	2009	16	18	5	18	9	16	8	0	10
Grade 6	2011	17	18	9	15	19	17	8	0	11
	2010	16	18	5	13	10	17	8	0	12
	2009	16	15	10	15	18	16	9	0	10
Grade 7	2011	18	19	7	19	17	19	12	20	15
	2010	18	17	16	14	20	18	12	0	15
	2009	18	18	16	18	17	18	12	N/A	15
Grade 8	2011	19	18	18	15	20	19	13	0	16
	2010	19	19	18	20	20	19	13	20	17
	2009	19	18	16	14	20	19	12	N/A	16
Grade 11	2011	17	17	12	17	16	17	6	8	9
	2010	17	19	11	16	18	17	9	0	14
	2009	15	18	10	14	20	15	4	N/A	10

Multi-year PSSA Reading Results Broken Down by Grade Clusters

		All Students	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Multiracial	White	IEP	LEP	ED
Gr 3-5	2011	17	18	11	15	15	17	11	5	12
	2010	17	18	12	16	18	17	9	10	13
	2009	17	19	10	18	13	17	10	0	12
Gr 6-8	2011	18	18	12	16	19	18	11	3	14
	2010	18	18	14	15	16	18	11	5	15
	2009	18	17	13	15	18	18	11	0	14
Gr 9-11	2011	17	17	12	17	16	17	6	8	9
	2010	17	19	11	16	18	17	9	0	14
	2009	15	18	10	14	20	15	4	N/A	10

Figure 6: SAT Scores – State College Area SD vs. Pennsylvania and National Means

Year	Entity	Critical Reading (Mean)	Mathematics (Mean)	Writing (Mean)
2013	State College	552	566	531
	Pennsylvania	494	504	482
	U.S.	496	514	488
2012	State College	556	572	537
	Pennsylvania	491	501	480
	U.S.	496	514	488
2011	State College	548	565	537
	Pennsylvania	493	501	479
	U.S.	497	514	489

Figure 7: ACT Scores – State College Area SD vs. Pennsylvania Means

These Scores reflect the achievement of State College graduates on the ACT over a three-year span (2011-2013). The ACT consists of curriculum-based tests of educational development in English, mathematics, reading, and science designed to measure the skills needed for success in first year college coursework.

Year	English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		Composite	
	SCASD	State	SCASD	State	SCASD	State	SCASD	State	SCASD	State
2011	23.9	21.9	24.9	22.6	23.9	22.6	23.8	21.8	24.2	22.3
2012	23.6	22.0	25.7	22.7	24.3	22.7	23.2	21.9	24.3	22.4
2013	23.7	22.2	25.3	23.0	24.5	23.0	23.0	22.2	24.3	22.7

Reflection on Professional Practices

The members of the Instructional Focus Team reflected on the current state of teaching practices, leadership practices and organizational practices in State College Area School District, in order to determine the root-cause of the current state of student learning and achievement. The root-cause ratings are summarized in Figure 8. The ratings are based on four-point rubrics associated with a set of **16 high-leverage practices** (Figure 9); the four-point rubric offered a consistent interpretation of each high-leverage practice.

This root-cause process also guided the identification of the **Four Pillars** of the district's **Instructional Focus** and the corresponding professional practices associated with each pillar (described in Chapter 5).

Figure 8: “Root Cause” Analysis of Current State of Student Achievement --

Ratings of the Effectiveness of Professional Practices

1 = Beginning Implementation

3 = Full Implementation

2 = Partial Implementation

4 = Exemplary Implementation

S = Strengths C = Concerns

		S1	S2	S3	S4		C1	C2	C3A	C3B	C4
High Leverage Practices		Ratings									
1	Standards-aligned consistent instruction	2	2	2	2		1	2	2	2	2
2	Equitable access to rigorous, high-level program	3	2	2	2		2	2	2	2	2
3	Differentiation	2	2	2	2		1	2	2	2	2
4	Culturally responsive teaching and learning	1	2	1	2		1	2	2	1	2
5	Data-driven continuous improvement	2	3	2	2		2	3	3	2	2
6	Accelerated intervention	3	2	2	3		2	2	2	2	2
7	Collegial collaboration and accountability	2	3	2	2		2	3	3	2	2
8	Results-focused professional learning	2	3	2	2		2	3	3	2	2
9	High expectations for all	3	3	2	2		2	2	2	2	2
10	Effective teacher for every student, effective leader for every school	2	3	2	1		2	2	2	2	1
11	Needs-based resource allocation	1	3	2	3		2	3	3	2	2
12	Supports for staff	3	3	2	3		3	3	3	2	3
13	Instructional leadership	2	3	2	3		2	3	3	2	3
14	Safe climate for learning and work	3	3	3	4		3	3	3	3	4
15	Effective and efficient operations	2	3	3	3		2	3	3	3	3
16	Strong relationships with families and community	1	3	2	2		1	3	3	2	2

Figure 9: 16 Research-based High-leverage Practices, or “Pillars”

1.	STANDARDS-ALIGNED CONSISTENT INSTRUCTION	Curriculum, assessment and teaching are directly aligned with all state standards in all content areas and for all students, with standards at the center of curriculum planning and student learning.
2.	EQUITABLE ACCESS TO RIGOROUS, HIGH-LEVEL PROGRAMS	All students have access to challenging, on-standard teaching and courses that include coverage of the “power standards” and core content.
3.	DIFFERENTIATION	Instructional strategies are differentiated to meet the varied learning needs of each student.
4.	CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING	Instruction reflects students’ prior knowledge, learning styles and cultural background; programs and policies integrate the perspectives and needs of diverse stakeholders.
5.	DATA-DRIVEN CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	School staff uses frequent and timely formative assessments to monitor and adjust teaching practices, leadership practices and organizational practices.
6.	ACCELERATED INTERVENTION	Students not meeting academic expectations receive immediate and targeted academic and social support.
7.	COLLEGIAL COLLABORATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY	Staff engage in year-round cycles of inquiry (e.g., <i>Eye on the Goal™</i> , Lesson Study), with clear standards of professional practice and accountability.
8.	RESULTS-FOCUSED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	Professional learning is linked to instructional priorities, is standards-based, has clear goals, and meets the individual needs of staff.
9.	HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL	Beliefs and behaviors reflect commonly held high expectations and shared responsibility for professional practices and student learning.
10.	EFFECTIVE TEACHER FOR EVERY STUDENT, EFFECTIVE LEADER FOR EVERY SCHOOL	Staffing assignments ensure equitable distribution of teachers and leaders to meet the specific needs of students and schools.
11.	NEEDS-BASED RESOURCE ALLOCATION	School resources are focused on strategies that enhance professional practice and accelerate learning for all student populations.
12.	SUPPORTS FOR STAFF	Teachers, leaders and staff receive timely, focused support and intervention (e.g., coaching, mentoring, peer support, targeted training).
13.	INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP	The principal and instructional leadership team articulate a clear school vision, and are actively involved in planning, guiding and assessing instruction and student learning.

14.	SAFE CLIMATE FOR LEARNING AND WORK	The school culture and structures support the social-emotional needs of students, and standards for student and adult conduct are fair and consistently enforced.
15.	EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT OPERATIONS	The school has well-established organizational procedures, and day-to-day operations run smoothly to facilitate teaching, learning and leadership.
16.	STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES	Trust among home-school-community is nurtured through shared responsibility for student success, proactive communication and meaningful stakeholder voice.

Assessment of Operations, Supports and Services

A number of Sub-Committees – comprised of a representative sampling of SCASD stakeholders – assessed the current state of supports and services in areas such as Learning Enrichment & Gifted Support; Special Education; Curriculum, Assessment, Instruction & Professional Development; Counseling & Nursing Services; and Communication.

For each area, the Sub-Committees assessed what's working well and what needs improvement, followed by each Sub-Committee's suggestions for improvement. The highest-priority suggestions are reflected in the recommendations of each Sub-Committee (summarized in Chapter 5).

LEARNING ENRICHMENT/GIFTED SUPPORT (LE/GS)

Building Block	Communication of policy and procedures related to Chapter 16 and the Learning Enrichment Program (professional development and community awareness)
<i>What's working well</i>	• Bi-weekly LE/GS staff meetings to keep informed. • LE/GS webpage for teachers, parents and students. • Fostering an open atmosphere where differences of opinions can be expressed and valued, and creativity is promoted.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Professional development for general ed. instructional staff. • More specific building-based information on LE/GS. • More opportunities and time for professional development regarding Chapter 16 Gifted Ed. regulations (for educators and students). • More time to provide training to foster teachers' understanding of LE plans/contracts and LE Program activities. • Time for collaboration between LE/GS teachers and unit writing for differentiation.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• General information website page/link about all of the building based programs.

	• Communication marker that identifies students who are getting services or identified LE/Gifted. • Online or in-service course on Chapter 16. • Link student's LE contract/plan with teacher(s) in that field of study. • Planning time for specific unit/curriculum activities. • LE/GS staff work with instructional coaches to support differentiation for advanced students.
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Building Block	LE/GS Program (Renzulli 3-Tier Approach and Gardner's Multiple Intelligences)
<i>What's working well</i>	• All of the tiers work very well at each school level. • The LE/GS system becomes more focused as students move through the years. • Students come together with like-minded students. • LE/GS teachers develop a relationship with students through the years and help them fine tune their interests. • Allows for different and varying interests/strengths • Eligibility requirements are helping us to reach the students we need to target. • Letters home to parents inform them of students' activities. • Provides a home base (where they belong) for students. • Students develop relationships that help them define their own interests/navigation through school.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• More LE/GS teachers. • More general education teachers need to clearly understand the model and what is available. • More contact with the classroom teachers. • As options are negotiated (ex. through unique cases), they should become standard operating procedures for the school system. • Reaching less assertive targets.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Sharing the model with staff, students, and parents--predictable meeting time/staff to dialogue. • In-service or presenting at faculty meetings. • Online course teachers could formally be introduced to LE/GS Program policy and procedures. • Reflect on program description and clarity of the program, meeting students where they are.

Building Block	Utilizing Data Driven Decision Making to Determine LE and GS Program Eligibility
<i>What's working well</i>	• PSSA is a good tool to see achievement as a piece of information. • MAP is a good tool as it does not have a ceiling, can take RIT score and place at a different grade level and get percentile. • Using a variety of data - objective, subjective, ability, achievement, formative, informative etc. • OLSAT provides some value and is a piece of information. • By high school, between SATs, National Merit and state testing we have a great deal of metrics.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• AIMSweb (K-2) used for screening at lower grades; and since it does not have a ceiling, not good for higher end. • PSSA - do not get scores in time to use during current year. • General education differentiation for advanced students. • Pre-test and use that information for differentiation. • Curriculum underestimates what a lot of students can do and grossly underestimates what our highly able students can do. • OLSAT provides some value but parents must be notified. • Determine and communicate who is responsible for scheduling and administering testing. • Unit planning meetings need to happen again.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Need a formal diagnostic tool for K-2 - perhaps MAP in lower grades. • Need more curriculum for general education to meet needs of gifted students everyday. • Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support and general education must work together to create curriculum that meets needs of all students. • Notify parents of OLSAT scores and all data that are used to make decisions about educational placement. • Look at what other districts are doing in terms of rubrics that quantify data/input from different parties. • Put unit planning meetings back into routine.

Building Block	LE/GS Program Elements: Materials & Resources (offerings, conferences and travel, guest speakers, etc.)
<i>What's working well</i>	• Good number of resources for LE/GS staff; speakers, conferences, good use of residencies, etc. • Very strong offering of courses at the high school and can create what doesn't exist but is needed.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Need more resources and training for teachers on ways to effectively differentiate for all students in the classroom. • Need more professional development resources and time to help teachers (pass on resources, articles, model strategies, consulting).

	• Need more whole group activities. • More communication with classroom teachers and specialists on ways to enrich. • More LE/GS teachers at each level. • Start initiatives and then work with a classroom teacher who can continue the activity.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Ideal would be to have one LE/GS staff member at each building. • More co-teaching. • Both LE/GS teachers and classroom teachers attend conferences to hear the same message. • Need to bring more offerings that interest students, involve students in choice. • At high school, need more spaces for students to have LE time. • More interaction of students across different levels (elementary, middle, high school). • More collaborative LEP's.

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, INSTRUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Building Block	Standards and Curriculum
<i>What's working well</i>	• Content curriculum is standards-aligned. • Teachers have ability to teach content creatively. • Curriculum Council has been having valuable K-12 conversations.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Lack of a systemic curriculum review. • The curriculum tool (Filemaker) is not user-friendly. • Vertical articulation of concepts from one grade level to the next with rigorous expectations. • Focus on the understanding as well as, the “know and do” in courses.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Systemic review of curriculum. • Focus on the Alignment for Common Core. • Implement the K-12 Curriculum Revision Cycle. • K-12 Curriculum Council needs to be developed to foster cohesion across the district. • Develop a readiness for the Curriculum Development Plan to be communicated to all stakeholders. • Include affective components in our core curriculum.

Building Block	Instruction and Assessment
<i>What's working well</i>	• Reading Apprenticeship Initiative. • Choice Reading. • Relevancy for content connects to real world. • Multiple assessments indicate that most of our students attain a high level of achievement. • Elementary instructional coaching initiative.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Some students are not achieving at least a year's worth of growth. • Some students are consistently underachieving. • Inconsistent data literacy among stakeholders. • Lack of a structured secondary coaching initiative.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Continue the Reading Apprenticeship Initiative. • Data literacy for all stakeholders to foster responsive teaching and learning. • Common language for teaching and learning. • High expectations for all students.

Building Block	Professional Development (including Title I, II and III; Chapter 16 - Gifted Education; Induction Program)
<i>What's working well</i>	• Elementary instructional coaching initiative. • Trade time initiatives.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Lack of a structured secondary instructional coaching initiative. • More Trade Time Opportunities to meet the needs of all teachers.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• District-wide professional development for curriculum. • Revision of school calendar to support K-12 collaboration. • Create and foster a culture of collaboration through lesson study, peer coaching, critical friends group, etc. • Support for teachers to grow and succeed with the teacher evaluation and differentiated supervision plan. • Create a culture of continuous improvement (growth mindset).

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Building Block	Autism
<i>What's working well</i>	• Full continuum of services and supports for students with autism.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Greater understanding and ability to provide for students with autism in general education.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Additional training on autism and strategies for working with students with autism in the general education classroom.

Building Block	Behavior Support
<i>What's working well</i>	• Positive Behavior Support Plans and emotional and autistic support services.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Common language, understanding and consistency across K-12 for behavioral support.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Adoption of the tenets of School-wide Positive Behavioral Support.

Building Block	Reading
<i>What's working well</i>	• On average 85% of SCASD students score proficient or advanced on the PSSAs.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Better performance among sub groups.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• More time during the student day devoted to literacy.

TECHNOLOGY

Building Block	Student Access to Technology Tools
<i>What's working well</i>	• Core tools widely utilized. • Core tools capable of supporting 21st Century Skills. • Students acquire robust set of technology skills making them career and college ready. • Teachers believe technology is a tool and not the end objective. • Teachers and students are comfortable users of technology and have developed ease in adopting new tools.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Student access to hardware. • Increased use of tools to foster. • 21st Century Skills learning - continue to leverage digital environment in lieu of paper environment.
<i>Suggestions for improvement</i>	• Move toward greater access to student equipment (one-to-one). • Continued professional development and low barrier for access to web 2.0 and social media tools. • Continue to migrate users from desktop to cloud computing.

Building Block	ePortfolio and 21st Century Skills
<i>What's working well</i>	• ePortfolio tool that links 21st Century Skills, available for all K-12 students. • 2012-13 goal to have multiple writing submissions for all K-11 students. • Definition of appropriate 21st Century Skills for each grade. • ePortfolio content available to current teachers and parents.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Greater participation by faculty and students. • Commitment from faculty to use ePortfolio to learn about students. • Value and utilize alternative forms of assessment. • No way for students to export or share their ePortfolio.
<i>Suggestions for improvement</i>	• Develop clarity around use of ePortfolio as a tool for demonstrating 21st Century Skills. • Add student capability for exporting and sharing content. • Define district requirement for ePortfolio use. • Professional development for faculty in support of ePortfolio submissions and use.

Building Block	Using data to improve instruction
<i>What's working well</i>	• Systems purchased/available for access/tracking student data. • Key data elements identified.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Lacking clear "data based" definition of an "at risk" student. • Using data to identify "at risk" students. • Using data to inform and differentiate instruction.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Greater definition of data process for identifying and addressing "at risk" students. • Instructional coaches focusing on differentiated instruction. • Leverage existing data and systems to support decision making.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Building Block	Developmental Services
<i>What's working well</i>	The school counselors provide students the following: • Opportunity to acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self to make informed career decisions services. • Opportunity to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others. • Assist students in the district when they change levels or schools and assist new students as they move into the district or current students who will be moving to a new district. • Provide students the opportunity to acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• K-12 career program including exploration, interest/skills inventory, post-secondary planning/training/education. • Developing coping skills and addressing anxiety/stress. • 12th grade to post-secondary transitions need improvement. • Providing organizational sessions for students.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Implement a K-12 career program using Career Cruising or Career Zone and the online portfolio. • Develop a K-12 counseling curriculum. • Provide parent/student psycho-educational sessions. • Provide self-awareness of organizational skills/methods.

Building Block	Diagnostic, Intervention and Referral Services
<i>What's working well</i>	The school counselors provide the following: • Transition services to assist students in the district as they change levels or schools and to assist new students as they move into the district, and for current students who will be moving to a new district. • Personal and social skill development to give students the opportunity to "acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others. • Career and educational planning to provide students the opportunity to acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self in order to make informed career decisions. • Review, maintain and secure records necessary for rendering professional services to the student as required by laws, regulations, institutional procedures and confidentiality guidelines. • Interpretation of the nature, purposes, results and potential impact of assessment/evaluation measure in language that staff, students and families can understand. • School counselors collaborates with: • School administration staff, colleagues, and community agencies in response to emergency crisis situations. • School administration, staff, colleagues, families, and the community to promote a safe, secure, and nurturing environment. • Parents, guardians, and other family members to help students build rapport and relationships and to facilitate the success of the student • Agencies, organizations, and individuals in the community in the best interest of students and without regard to personal reward and remunerations.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• School counselors do not provide a common language and understanding of support services K-12. • School counselors do not work from a common conceptual framework K-12.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Establish a common conceptual framework. • Establish a K-12 curriculum.

Building Block	Consultation and Coordination Services
<i>What's working well</i>	The school counselors: • Stay current with trends and issues in relation to the school counseling profession. • Review services given to students in an effort to make the most efficient use of their time and resources. • Participate on appropriate school district and community advisory committees and boards.

<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Time out of office to receive trainings. • More relevant training - mental health issues. • Consistent policies for student issues with regards to grades/classes. • Caseload and responsibilities/duties hinder program development - elementary (split between buildings) high school (2 buildings-operate differently). • Representation at academic level meetings. • More elementary counselors.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Routine meetings with principals K-8 to go over student issues and policies/procedures. • Measurement and communication on effectiveness of what school counselors are doing. • Participation on building level meetings on data collecting. • Representation at academic meetings where decisions are made (i.e. curriculum, scheduling, classroom dynamics, etc.).

CERTIFIED SCHOOL NURSES

Building Block	Developmental Services
<i>What's working well</i>	• Certified School Nurses (CSN) provide administration and management of medication at school, annual health screening and mandatory medical examinations.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Early schedule for school physicals. • All Schools have a common understanding of process/procedure.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• MD availability at HSS not available until May '13 – related to HSS schedule as well as MD availability. • Get BMI results out by end of calendar year. • Building level website for each nurse with link to district wide health services website.

Building Block	Diagnostic, Intervention and Referral Services
<i>What's working well</i>	• CSN provide staff communication to inform teachers of health conditions of students, which may affect behavior, attendance, appearance or academic performance with information of signs and symptoms, treatment and prognosis and classroom management strategies. • CSN provides parents communication. • CSN participates in Instructional Support Team (IST) meetings, Student

	Assistance Program (SAP) meetings, Casings meeting and district committees.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Training for teachers to use eSchools database to make paper lists of health concerns of students on their rosters. • Health information only gathered once a year and does not reflect changes that may occur throughout the school year. • At elementary level, CSNs rarely are asked to participate at IST meetings, other than to provide information on intake sheet regarding health screening results.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Annual reminder to teachers to access student health information in data base/annual education of staff during in-service days on how to access information. • Work with computer services to create a way for parents to update their children's information at any time throughout the year; automatic notice generated to CSN. • Educate IST teachers at elementary level regarding the importance of the input that can be provided by the CSN at meetings.

Building Block	Consultation and Coordination Services
<i>What's working well</i>	• CSN consult with the staff on the delivery of health services and accommodations in the classroom and field trips. • CSN serve as advisers to staff, student and families with regard to medical, psycho-social and immunization services. • CSN participate on appropriate school district and community advisory committees and boards.
<i>What needs improvement</i>	• Management of CSN coverage to attend building meetings (504, SAP, Casings) to provide consultation and coordination of services. • Coordination of information on each building website so all staff and families getting the same information.
<i>Suggestions for Improvement</i>	• Revise the website to be district/universal information. • Streamline processes to communicate with specific parents in email. • Look at health paraprofessional coverage to attend district meetings.

CHAPTER FIVE

Recommendations

The opening paragraph of our district's *Statement of Purpose* asserts that:

"The State College Area School District believes that the education of youth is a shared task involving our parents, community groups, the schools, and the students themselves. As a primary member of that education team, the district serves both directly in the instruction and guidance of its students and indirectly in assisting and supporting the efforts of the other members of the team."

Therefore, the strategic objectives outlined in our 2014-2017 Strategic Plan reaffirm the district's commitment to high expectations for our students, and excellence in core instructional programs and educational services by our teachers, leaders, and staff. Furthermore, since our schools can't do it alone, the strategic objectives incorporate the knowledge and expertise of SCASD's external stakeholders.

This Chapter summarizes the recommendations proposed by the three teams that worked on developing this strategic plan, namely: the **District Steering Committee**, the **Instructional Focus Team**, and the **Sub-Committees**.

- We set clear **Goals** and challenging **Benchmarks** to be achieved by 2017, and we identify the **Vital Signs** we will monitor to gauge our students' progress. Our outcomes for students reflect our commitment to accelerating their academic growth, building their academic tenacity (or "grit"), and reinforcing their socio-emotional resiliency.
- We define the **Four Pillars** that will serve as the building blocks of our **Instructional Focus**. That **Instructional Focus** articulates what we must do well in every classroom, every school, and across our district, to ensure success for all students. It includes specific teaching practices, leadership practices, and organization practices we must implement well at all levels. Continuous improvement of those professional practices is the precursor to continuous improvement of student achievement.
- Schools can't do it alone! Therefore, we outline guidelines for strengthening the **Empowering Infrastructure** to support core teaching and learning. These structures cover areas such as Learning Enrichment and Gifted Support; Professional Development; Special Education; Counseling and Nursing; and Technology.

Strong Outcome for Student

At **SCASD**, we exhibit a **passion for empowering every student** – every day – with individualized opportunities for **growth and success in a connected world**. This is in alignment with our district's central mission: *to prepare students for lifelong success through excellence in education*.

Our Goals are clear:

- Significant academic and personal growth for every student
- College- and career-ready graduates
- Achievement in arts, sports, clubs and activities
- Safe and supported learners
- Demonstrated commitment to self, community and global citizenship

Our 2017 Benchmarks reflect our belief in the potential of our students to meet high expectations; furthermore, the benchmarks are in alignment with the aspirations and expectations of State College parents and taxpayers.

By 2017:

1. At least 18 out of every 20 students (90%), at every grade level, report that they look forward to coming to school every day.
2. All students report that they are passionately engaged in challenging activities.
3. At least 19 out of every 20 students (95%) have meaningful connections to school through extra-/co-curricular activities or community involvement.
4. All students demonstrate acquisition of 21st Century Skills and authentic learning in an electronic portfolio (including academic, non-academic, and citizenship experiences).
5. At least 15 out of every 20 under-performing students (75%) achieve grade-level success in English Language Arts (ELA), math and science, based on multiple measures.
6. All students (100%) demonstrate at least one year's growth every year, based on multiple measures.
7. Comprehensive plans for successful student transitions between organizational levels exist and are communicated, implemented, reviewed, and revised on a yearly basis.
8. All graduates are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and understanding to participate as active citizens in a global society.

The Vital Signs of Student Progress

We want our students to experience continuous *academic growth*, embody *academic tenacity*, and to model *socio-emotional resiliency*.

Therefore, we will monitor and thoroughly analyze:

- A. Student **perseverance, determination and passion for learning**
- B. Student **critical thinking, collaboration and problem-solving**
- C. Student **voice and reflectiveness**
- D. Closing the **achievement gap** and enhancing **growth for all students**
- E. **Successful transitions** (across learning experiences & environments, including grade-to-grade, levels, newness to school/district, post-secondary, etc.)

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The Instructional Focus

The Four Pillars of our Instructional Focus frame our instructional vision and guide our professional practices. For each pillar, we have articulated teaching practices, leadership practices, and organizational practices that guide what we must do well in every classroom, in every school, and district-wide to ensure success for all students.

Our first Pillar – **CULTURE OF TRUST, RELATIONSHIPS AND COLLABORATION** – focuses on building trust and relationships, with open communication that promotes effective collaboration among all partners in the teaching and learning community.

Our second Pillar – **RESPONSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING** – ensures that curriculum, instruction, and learning are shaped by a growth mindset and guided by the principles of differentiation.

Our third Pillar – **HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL** – promotes beliefs and practices that reflect universally held high standards and shared responsibility for continuous growth and improvement.

Our fourth Pillar – **WELCOMING AND SAFE CLIMATE FOR LEARNING AND WORK** – recognizes that learning occurs best in safe environments that support the needs of all students and adults; it advocates for a welcoming climate where positive academic and prudent personal risk-taking are encouraged.

Together, the Four Pillars of our Instructional Focus serve as the building blocks for strengthening and sustaining a standards-aligned core instructional system throughout our school district.

Building an Empowering Infrastructure

Sustaining a world-class, standards-aligned instructional system requires an empowering infrastructure to support day-to-day activities of students, teachers, leaders, and staff. Schools, in particular, need responsive operations, services and structures that offer students and staff access to professional development as well as complementary enrichment, intervention, extracurricular, and co-curricular services for students.

The following are the strategic goals and benchmarks for building an empowering infrastructure to support the core instructional programs. Highlights of the key tasks associated with each area of focus – including timeline and responsibility – are available in Chapter 6 of this document and in supplementary department level detailed action plans.

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT, INSTRUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
<i>Strategic Goals</i>	1. Provide comprehensive and rigorous K-12 curriculum to all students in all content areas. 2. Provide responsive teaching and learning for all students through data literacy for all students, teachers, and parents. 3. Create a culture of continuous improvement among all students, teachers, and parents.
<i>Key Metrics</i>	Regarding the first strategic goal: a. Ensure all disciplines are actively involved in their assigned phase of the K-12 Curriculum Revision Cycle. Regarding the second strategic goal: a. Inform all students, teachers and parents about the purpose of the assessment and the value of the feedback to build learning. b. Support teachers' use of multiple forms of assessment to design instructional practices that will meet the diverse needs of all students. Regarding the third strategic goal: a. Engage all staff members in relevant professional development through inquiry, collaboration, and reflection focused on continuous improvement. b. Provide differentiated professional development opportunities.
<i>2014-2017 Benchmarks</i>	Regarding the first strategic goal: i. Establish a K-12 Curriculum Council that meets regularly to focus on curriculum, assessment, instruction, and professional development. ii. Adhere to timelines for each academic discipline within the established Curriculum Revision Cycle. Regarding the second strategic goal: i. Provide consistent and clear assessment information to students, teachers, and parents. ii. Ensure that differentiation is evident in all classrooms, and monitor using tools such as teacher evaluation and differentiated supervision process. Regarding the third strategic goal: i. Establish opportunities for growth and collaboration through Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and Professional Learning Networks (PLN). ii. Provide professional development opportunities through differentiated supervision, trade time, study group, lesson study, peer coaching, critical friends group, etc.

LEARNING ENRICHMENT/GIFTED SUPPORT (LE/GS)	
<i>Strategic Goals</i>	1. Provide Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support services for all of our most able and talented learners. 2. Provide sufficient resources dedicated to our most able and talented learners.
<i>Key Metrics</i>	Regarding the first strategic goal: a. Students, faculty, counselors and parents regularly recommend students to LE/GS. b. Able learners will regularly participate in LE/GS options. c. Faculty readily allows and encourages participation in LE/GS opportunities. d. Faculty is aware of and takes advantage of flexible grouping e. Regular collaboration between classroom teachers and LE/GS staff to customize course delivery to meet the needs of individual students. f. LE/GS teachers will regularly participate in curriculum writing to improve differentiated instruction for our most able learners. g. On-line LE/GS course for staff (course completion). h. Website includes LE/GS policies and procedures. Regarding the second strategic goal: a. Students K-12 will experience opportunities related to their interests and talents. b. Precedent becomes standard operating procedure - Unique educational experiences become more routine. c. Physical spaces are available in all buildings for our most able and talented learners. d. Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support Teachers available for all able and talented learners.
<i>2014-2017 Benchmarks</i>	Regarding the first strategic goal: i. (In Year 1) Convene meetings among Learning Enrichment/Gifted specialists, curriculum coaches, general education teachers, administrators, curriculum directors, and department coordinators. ii. (in Years 1-3) Provide all General Education Teachers professional development on differentiating to meet the needs of most able and talented learners. iii. (In Year 2) Ensure that 100% of administrators and classroom teachers successfully complete the online Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support and Chapter 16 course and conduct a faculty meeting each year dedicated to the LE/GS Program. iv. (In Year 3) Provide 100% of parents the opportunity – by invitation – to complete the Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support and Chapter 16 Parent course, with at least 90% of participants saying that they have been adequately educated. v. (In Year 1) Develop the website to include up-to-date policy and procedural information regarding Chapter 16 and the LE/GS Program. vi. (In Years 1-3) Provide evidence that all able and talented learners show at least one year's worth of growth based on performance data collected by the district annually.

	Regarding the second strategic goal: (In Year 1) Conduct an independent audit to provide feedback on the availability and effectiveness of utilization of LE/GS resources (staff, materials, space etc.). (In Year 2) Develop <i>Standard Operating Procedures</i> for unique cases to ensure cases are consistently solved.
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SPECIAL EDUCATION	
<i>Strategic Goals</i>	- All students with autism will be provided an appropriate Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with the availability of related services, identified supplementary aids and services and specially designed instruction in the least restrictive environment. - Provide a framework for the provision of behavioral support for all students based on effective practices and with attention given to interventions for struggling learners. - The State College Area School District Special Education Department will continue to close the gap for identified and at-risk students in the area of reading. - Enhance and better coordinate secondary transition activities for all identified students 14 and older.
<i>Key Metrics</i>	- State Performance Plan Indicator #5 Educational Environments will indicate an increased percentage of students with disabilities being served in the general education classroom. - Elementary implementation of School-Wide Positive Behavior Support Program (SWPBS) by September 2014, middle level by 2015 and high school level by 2016. - Progress monitoring of all students in special education receiving reading instruction. Interventions will be adjusted as necessary if warranted from the progress monitoring data. - State Performance Plan Indicator #3 will be 100% for IEP and transition services for students 16-21 years old as determined by cyclical monitoring.
<i>2014-2017 Benchmarks</i>	- Each year for the next three years (2013-2016) we will increase our Indicator # 5 by 1% a year for students being serviced in general education at least 80% of the day. - During the first year of implementation of SWPBS by each level there will be a decrease of 5-10% of out of school suspensions and/or expulsions. - During the course of the next three years (2013-2016) we will increase the performance of the IEP subgroup by 8-10% a year. - IEPs will be reviewed and monitored each school year for compliance with PA Chapter 14 regarding transition services.

TECHNOLOGY	
<i>Strategic Goals</i>	1. Provide adequate access to student technology tools, to maximize student learning and productivity. 2. Develop an ePortfolio system that supports 21st Century skills, is used by students to demonstrate their acquisition of 21st Century skills, and is used by teachers to inform instruction. 3. Provide data systems and clearly structured approaches for identifying at-risk students, and for planning instructional interventions for the identified students.
<i>Key Metrics</i>	a. Evidence of appropriate use of technology to support instruction. b. Student personal productivity improvement. c. Student enthusiasm for using ePortfolio to document learning and the acquisition of 21st Century Skills. d. Teacher enthusiasm for using ePortfolio to acquire knowledge about their students. e. Teacher and administrative immersion in data systems, to acquire knowledge about their students.
<i>2014-2017 Benchmarks</i>	i. 95% of students report that their access to technology is adequate to maximize their learning and productivity ii. 95% of teachers report that their students' access to technology is adequate to address teacher instructional objectives iii. All students contribute to the ePortfolio annually, with multiple entries from the core instructional areas iv. 95% of core teachers (grades 1 - 12) report that they use the ePortfolio to learn beneficial information about their students that impacts their instruction v. 95% of administrators report that the data systems available to them adequately provide information for identifying at-risk students vi. 95% of teachers report that the data systems available to them adequately provide information for designing appropriate instruction for individual students.

COUNSELING & NURSING	
<i>Strategic Goals</i>	<u>Counseling</u> 1. Develop and implement a K-12 behavior curriculum with common understanding, language and practices for all stakeholders. 2. Embed the K-12 counseling standards throughout the district's curriculum and practices. <u>Nursing</u> 1. Communicate health information with district faculty/staff, Parents/Guardians and Students that promotes individual/group health, safety and well being, so that all students can achieve optimal growth

	and success in a connected world.
Key Metrics	<u>Counseling</u> a. Students are connected to their school community. b. Everyone has a common understanding of academic and behavioral expectations. c. Students are succeeding academically, socially and emotionally. <u>Nursing</u> a. Parents/guardians access and update health information electronically (website data and district made survey). b. Faculty/staff access health information electronically regarding their student's needs and monitor changes in health concerns and consult with Certified School Nurse as needed for academic and extra-curricular activities (nurse data collection). c. Parent/guardians and faculty/staff will understand the role of the Certified School Nurse as a consultant for mental health and physical health to promote a safe and supported learning environment (district made survey).
2014-2017 Benchmarks	<u>Counseling</u> i. (In Year 2) All schools will implement a School Wide Positive Behavior Support Program with signs of restorative practices. ii. (In Year 2) All schools will get a 3.5 or better on the Community and Youth Collaborative Institute (CAYCI) survey related to "not tolerating bullying harassment and discrimination." iii. (In Year 2) All schools will score a 3.5 or better on CAYCI survey on "providing a friendly, rewarding and supportive atmosphere." iv. (In Years 1-3) Counselors will participate in the development and inclusion of the counseling standards in all curriculum development areas (district data analysis of completion). v. (In Year 3) 95% of the high school students will report no significant bullying during their educational career (Senior Exit Survey). <u>Nursing</u> i. (In Year 2) All parents/guardians will access and update health information electronically (beginning of the 2014 school year all parents will have access to online health documents and updating capabilities as measured by CSN data collection). Special accommodations will be made for families without electronic access. ii. (In Year 1) All faculty/staff will use electronic field trip planning process that will provide nurses with two weeks notice of field trips so nursing services can be arranged if necessary (beginning of the 2013-2014 school year all staff must utilize the on-line field trip planning process as measured by building administration data collection). iii. (In Years 2-3) All Certified School Nurses will be active members of building level student discussion teams (IST, Casing, SAP) (beginning of the 2014-2015 school year nurses will be active members of building level teams at each level).

SECURITY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING

The State College Area School District collaborates with all local first responders to update its comprehensive school safety, security and emergency response plan on an annual basis.

These updates are made in accordance with guidance provided by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA). The emergency response/management aspect of our plan addresses Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response and Recovery. This process includes yearly training updates with our faculty and staff. Through this plan, and other actions, all requirements of Chapter 10 of the Pennsylvania School Code (Safe Schools) are met annually. These requirements include:

- Biennial updates to *Memorandums of Understanding* with all local law enforcement agencies.
- Immediate notification of law enforcement when an offense listed under section 1303-A(b)(4.1) of the School Code (24 P.S. § 13-1303-A(b)(4.1)) occurs on school property or at a school event.
- Appropriate response and handling of a student with a disability by providing to each local police department having jurisdiction over property of the school entity a copy of its procedures on behavior support services no later than September 30, 2012 and each time that a revision occurs.
- Maintaining critical data, records and school rosters for use by first responders in an emergency.
- Immediately notifying, as soon as practicable, the parent or guardian of a victim or suspect directly involved in an incident listed under section 1303-A(b)(4.1) of the School Code (24 P.S. § 13-1303-A(b)(4.1)) or section 1303-A(b)(4.2) of the School Code (24 P.S. § 13-1303-A(b)(4.2)).

All of our district and school emergency response plans are prepared for use in an emergency and are considered to be secure and confidential documents. These documents are shared with all staff but are protected from disclosure to the public and media under several legal tenants.

In addition to the standing plans, the district periodically conducts safety and security audits in cooperation with appropriate outside agencies. Findings of these audits are incorporated into the appropriate safety and security plans as applicable.

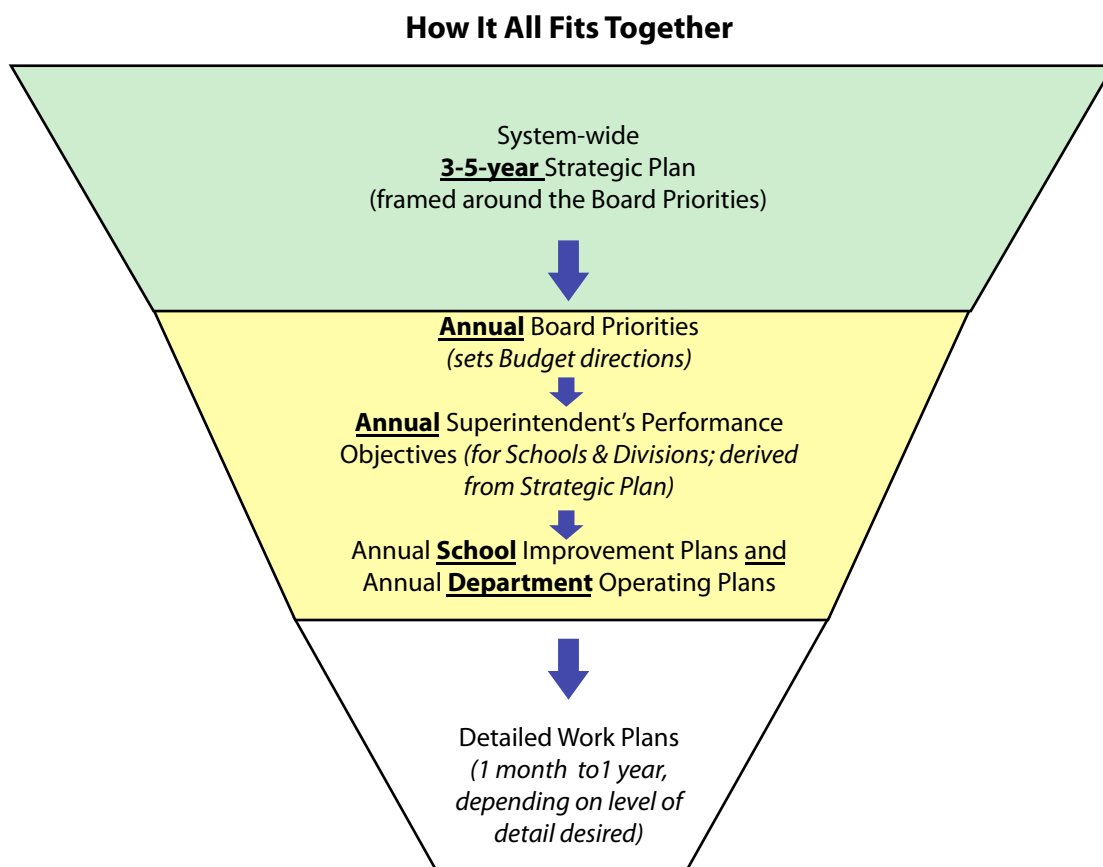
CHAPTER SIX

Appendix

How It All Fits Together

Success does not happen "by accident;" high-performing schools and school districts do not come about by chance. Consistent performance is the outcome of a disciplined approach to executing the essential functions of the schools, teams, and district as a whole. Those functions include: setting a clear goal and concrete performance objectives, aligning resources to the performance objectives, motivating commitment, building capabilities, communicating progress, nurturing continuous improvement and innovation, and ensuring incentives and accountability for performance. Making all these come together and making sure they stay together is a core responsibility of the school Board, district leadership and school leadership.

The diagram below illustrates the connection among the strategic plan, the annual plans derived from the strategic plan, and the work plans (task analysis) that individual units or teams might prepare to focus the priorities for their respective areas.



Now that the State College Area School District has “planned the work,” It must now commit to “working the plan” through disciplined implementation of the strategic objectives and key actions; consistent monitoring of progress to enable course-corrections in a timely manner; public reporting to sustain the ongoing commitment of internal and external stakeholders; and motivating and honoring effort and accomplishments.

A four-step performance management process such as this might be adapted to fit SCASD's local context.

Step 1: Clear Performance Objectives and Milestones of Progress – Set annual performance objectives, outlining what each group must accomplish. Those objectives include measurable student achievement improvement targets and clear strategies for meeting the targets for student learning and growth. Each objective must have explicit milestones of progress, a pre-assigned lead responsibility, and a completion date.

Step 2: Detailed Action Plans – Develop a detailed map of the key tasks that must be completed, including specific date by which each task will be accomplished. For each performance objective and/or milestone of progress, the task analysis should include the timeline, lead responsibility, resources needed, and measure of effectiveness or successful completion.

Step 3: Continuous Monitoring of Progress – Track progress of key activities and milestones at pre-set time intervals to provide timely feedback on progress and to guide decisions about assistance and intervention, as needed.

At the school level, Performance Fact, Inc. recommends a Data Summit™ (or equivalent) at the end of each assessment cycle (typically 6-9-week intervals). Furthermore, we recommend that the Superintendent present a progress report to the Board and Community two or three times during the school year – to keep the Board informed and involved and to communicate progress to external stakeholders. When done right, such transparency would enhance their commitment to the district and its students.

Step 4: Accountability for Performance – Accountability and incentives drive a performance-oriented system. Therefore, it is crucial to recognize and celebrate accomplishments of the performance objectives; take corrective action to enhance individual or collective performance as needed; and invoke sanctions and consequences when appropriate.

At the end of the school year or just before the start of the new school year, prepare an annual summary of accomplishments. This will serve as the basis for accountability for performance, as the foundation for celebrating accomplishments, and for identifying performance objectives for the next planning cycle.

Criteria for Setting Annual Performance Objectives*

A multi-year strategic plan must be implemented step-wise by setting *annual* performance objectives, or areas of focus for each year. As an operational definition, a performance objective must meet *all* of the following seven criteria.

1. Is it important relative to accelerating student learning and achievement? The performance objective will have a significant impact on achievement of the vital signs of student progress, in general, and the student achievement improvement targets for this year, in particular.

2. **Does it empower and enable the work of schools and educators?** The performance objectives will make a significant contribution to the ability of schools and school/district staff to better serve the needs of more students and more schools, more effectively and efficiently.

3. **Will it build organizational capacity?** The performance objective will significantly enhance the organization's capacity and capability, i.e., build real strength in the organization in the short-term and for the future. It will significantly enhance the accomplishment of the goals and objectives outlined in the strategic plan.

4. **Does it reflect the perspectives of stakeholders?** The performance objective is responsive to the expressed and/or implied priorities of affected stakeholders.

5. **Can we achieve it successfully this year?** The performance objective is challenging and doable this year. For projects/programs that will require several years for full implementation, the performance objective will describe the portion of the multi-year goal to be accomplished this year.

6. **Is accountability for results clear and unambiguous?** The performance objective will have an identifiable focal point and assigned responsibility for its accomplishment. Even in instances where multiple departments/divisions have a role in implementation, it is necessary to identify one person as "lead agent."

7. **Can we afford it this fiscal year?** Each performance objective and all of them together can be implemented within our means, even though we may choose to reallocate resources (i.e., people, money, time, space, technology) from other areas. However, on balance, the performance objective must be something we can fund during this fiscal year.

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Members of the Strategic Planning Teams

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Position/Title</u>	<u>District Steering Committee</u>	<u>Instructional Focus Team</u>	<u>Sub-committee</u>
Sheila	Abruzzo	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	LE/GS Teacher			X
Amy	Allison	SCASD	Delta Faculty/Parent	X		
Amy	Anderson	SCASD	Middle School Art Teacher	X	X	
Heidi	Arruda	Nursing Team	MS CSN			X
Alice	Ball	Counseling Team	High School Counselor			X
Nicole	Bates-Leto	Counseling Team	High School Counselor, Parent			X
Deirdre	Bauer	Curriculum K-6	Administrator	X	X	X
Bobby	Bendik	SCASD Student	Student Senate Pres - Freshman	X		
Lisa	Bevan	SCASD	Elementary Teacher	X	X	
Gregory	Billy	SCASD – CTC	Parent	X		
Geoff	Billy	SCASD Student	HS CTC Rep - Junior	X		
Laraine	Bortner	Counseling Team	Elementary Counselor			X
Paul	Brigman	Counseling Team	Middle School Counselor Intern			X
Sue	Brindle	SCASD	High School Counselor	X	X	
Linda	Brown	Counseling Team	Middle School Counselor			X
Patty	Bullock	Nursing Team	Elementary CSN			X
Elaine	Burn	Nursing Team	Elementary CSN			X
Jill	Campbell	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	LE/GS Teacher			X
Gus	Colangelo	PSU	Assoc Dean of Business			X
Amber	Concepcion	SCASD	Board Vice President	X		X
Jill	Corkery	SCASD – Elem	Instructional Coach		X	
Danielle	Crowe	SCASD – HS	Coordinator/Teacher Art		X	
Andy	Cunningham	SCASD Technology Management Team	PFMS Instructional Technology Specialist			X
Ryan	Czekaj	SCASD Student	Student Government - Sophomore	X		
Debra	Daggs	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	LE/GS Teacher			X
Janice	Davis	Special Education Department	Curriculum Support Specialist			X
Denise	DeGeorge	Counseling Team	Elementary Counselor			X
Dotty	DeLafield	SCASD	Middle School Librarian	X	X	X
Kate	Delano	State College Magazine	Editor			X
Scott	DeShong	SCASD	HS Administrator	X	X	
Patricia	Devecka	Counseling Team	High School Counselor			X
Sammy	Divirgilio	SCASD Student	Delta Adv Council - Freshman	X		
Kate	Domico	Citizen Advisory Committee for Technology	Member			X
Shirley	Donovan	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support LE/GS	LE/GS Teacher			X

Robert	Drafall	SCASD – HS	Coordinator/Teacher Music		X	
Jackie	Edmonson	PSU	Assoc Dean of the College of Education, Penn State Univ.	X		
Linda	Eggebeen	SCASD – Phys Ed	Coordinator/Teacher	X	X	
Lydia	Everhart	Special Education Department	Secondary School Teacher - Special Education			X
Penni	Fishbaine	SCASD	Board President			X
Mardi	Frye	SCASD	Elementary Librarian	X	X	
Deb	Gallagher	Nursing Team	HSN CSN			X
Christina	Ghinos	SCASD Student	Class Vice-President –Senior	X		
Julie	Gittings	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	Community Member			X
Sarah	Griffith	SCASD – CTC	HS Marketing Teacher	X	X	X
Kristen	Hall	SCASD	Elementary Instructional Coach	X	X	
Michael	Hardy	SCASD	Assist Superintendent	X	X	
Bill	Harrington	SCASD – HS	Coordinator/Teacher Math		X	
Sharon	Herlocker	Herlocker Food and National Penn Bank	Marketing Director			X
Nell	Hermann	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	LE/GS Teacher			X
Michael	Hertzler	Special Education Department	Secondary School Teacher - Regular Education			X
Craig	Herzing	Counseling Team	Middle School Counselor, Parent			X
Mary Beth	Hoffman	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	LE/GS Teacher, Parent			X
Tim	Hurley	DIApedia, LLC Tech Firm	Community Member	X		
David	Hutchinson	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	Board Member	X		X
Jess	Jeffries	SCASD – Elem	Instructional Coach		X	
Tony	Johnson	Haas Building Solutions	Dir of Marketing and Community Member	X		X
Noah	Kaplan	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	Student			X
Anne	Kerber	SCASD	Elementary Parent	X		X
Deb	Kerr	SCASD Technology Management Team	High School North Instructional Technology Specialist			X
Jeanne	Knouse	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support, Nursing Team Counseling Team	Director of LE/SS, Parent	X	X	X
Kristine	Lai	SCASD Student	Freshman Class Rep	X		
Penny	Leigey	SCASD – Phys Plant	Supervisor	X		
Sally	Lenker	SCASD Alumni	Past President and Realtor	X		
Jim	Leous	Citizen Advisory Committee for Technology	Board Member			X
Kyra	Levi	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	Student			X
Tim	Linden	SCASD Technology Management Team	User Support and Staff Dev Mgr, IT Department			X
Matt	Lintal	Counseling Team	High School Counselor			X
Jack	Lyke	SCASD – HS	Science Teacher		X	
Candace	Lyons	SCASD	Middle School Parent	X		
Mike	Macclay	SCASD	Elem Administrator	X	X	X

Sheryl	Marcinko	Counseling Team	Middle School Counselor			X
Ray	Marsh	PSU	Dir of Development and Communications			X
Jacque	Martin	SCASD	Director 7-12 Curriculum	X	X	X
S. Paul	Mazza III	Citizen Advisory Committee for Technology	Committee Chair			X
Denise	McCann	Youth Service Bureau	Division Director and Community Member	X		
Ann	McGlaughlin	SCASD	Board Member			X
Kerry	McGuiness Royer	PA Medical Society	Communications Director			X
Sarah	McNutt	SCASD Student	Class Vice-President - Sophomore	X		
Tod	McPherson	SCASD	High School Teacher	X	X	
Chris	Merritt	SCASD HS English Dept and CAC for Tech	Coordinator/Teacher and Member	X	X	X
Julie	Miller	SCASD - Communications	Communications Specialist			X
Tom	Mincemoyer	SCASD Technology Management Team	Director of Technology, IT Department	X	X	X
Rebecca	Misangyi	SCASD	High School Parent	X		
Tom	Mitchell	SCASD Technology Management Team	Information Systems Mgr, IT Department			X
David	Monk	PSU	Dean of Education	X		
Patrick	Moore	Special Education Department	Director of Special Education	X	X	X
Joanne	Morrison	Counseling Team	Elementary Counselor			X
Dawn	Murnyack-Rowell	Nursing Team	HSS CSN and Parent			X
Jim	Nolan	PSU	College of Education	X		X
Andy	Nyblade	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	Parent			X
Robert	O'Donnell	SCASD	Superintendent	X	X	
Eileen	Pearsall	Counseling Team	Elementary Counselor			X
David	Pencek	Town and Gown	Editorial Director			X
Jason	Perrin	SCASD	Administrator Elem & Middle Level Ed	X	X	
Sharon	Perry	SCASD-CTC	Director of CTC Program		X	X
Brian	Peters	Special Education Department, Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	Director of Curriculum K-6	X	X	X
Mary	Peterson	SCASD – FCS Dept	Coordinator/Teacher	X	X	
Howard	Pillot	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	LE/GS Teacher			X
Rick	Polka	SCASD – HS	Coordinator/Teacher World Languages		X	X
Deb	Poveromo	SCASD – HS	Coordinator/Teacher Social Studies		X	
Helen	Quinn	SCASD Technology Management Team	Elementary Instructional Technology Specialist		X	X
Brian	Rabian	Counseling Team	Parent	X		X
Jenn	Rand	SCASD – HS	10 th Grade English Teacher			X
Alex	Raup	SCASD – Middle School	8 th Grade English Teacher			X
Diane	Reed	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	LE/GS Teacher			X
Erika	Reutzel-Bechtel	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	Parent			X
Sarah	Rochette	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	School Psychologist			X

David	Rockower	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	6th grade Teacher, Parent			X
Doug	Romig	Counseling Team	Middle School Counselor			X
Gail	Romig	SCASD – Elem	Instructional Coach		X	X
Gowen	Roper	Special Education Department	Board Member			X
Karen	Roth	Nursing Team	Community Member			X
Alma	Row	SCASD Technology Management Team	MNMS Instructional Technology Specialist			X
Pratiti	Roy	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	Student			X
Peter	Rubba	Citizen Advisory Committee for Technology	Member			X
Sharon	Salter	Special Education Department	Assistant Director of Special Education			X
Connie	Schulz	Counseling Team	Family Outreach Specialist			X
Stacie	Scott	Counseling Team	Middle School Counselor			X
Jeff	Seamans	Citizen Advisory Committee for Technology	Member			X
John	Sheridan	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	Community Member			X
Candy	Stahl	SCASD – Elem	Elementary Teacher			X
Wilda	Stanfield	Citizen Advisory Committee for Technology	Member			X
Nicole	Steele	SCASD – Technology	Director of Technology	X		X
Jane	Steff	SCASD Technology Management Team	Elementary Instructional Technology Specialist		X	X
James	Steff	Centre Region COG	Executive Director	X		
Jeanne	Sylvia	Nursing Team	MS CSN			X
Nancy	Tamminga	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	LE/GS Teacher, Parent			X
Nicole	Togno	Counseling Team	SUMMIT Project Director			X
Jenn	Tranell	SCASD – Elem	Instructional Coach		X	
Robin	Verbeck	SCASD – CTC	Business			
Pat	Vernon	Citizen Advisory Committee for Technology	Member			X
Mary	Wagoner	Nursing Team	Elementary CSN			X
Amy	Warner	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	Elementary Teacher, Parent			X
Holli Jo	Warner	SCASD Middle School	6th Grade Teacher	X		
Patricia	Weaver	SCASD Middle School	Secretary	X		
Chris	Weakland	SCASD – HS	10 th Grade Dean of Students			X
Marion	Wheland	PSU	PDA for PSU and	X		
Jane	Whitaker	Learning Enrichment/Gifted Support	8th grade Teacher, Parent			X
Kerry	Wiessmann	Counseling Team	Elementary Counselor, Parent			X
Karen	Wiser	SCASD	MS Administrator	X	X	
Mike	Wolf	Counseling Team, Special Education Department	Parent			X
Tara	Wyckoff	PSU and Former IBM	Teachers PR Courses Marketing			X
Pat	Yost	SCASD Technology Management Team	High School South Instructional Technology Specialist			X
Nick	Zepp	SCASD Technology Management Team	Network Systems Mgr, IT Department			X
Freddie	Zheng	SCASD Student	Class President-Junior	X		

Laurel	Zydney	SCASD	Board Member	X		X
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State College Area School District

State College, Pennsylvania

Discover! Pursue! Excel!



Our 2014-2017 Instructional Focus

The State College Area School District is proud of its tradition of academic excellence and service to the greater community. Yet, in spite of our long-standing record of achievement, we remain committed to innovation and continuous improvement of our programs, services, and supports for our students.

During the 2013-2014 school year, our district engaged a representative cross-section of our community in a strategic planning exercise to refine our direction for the next three years. Nearly 150 people – students, parents, teachers, support staffs, administrators, business/higher education partners, community representatives, district-level leaders, and members of our school Board – participated.

The strategic planning process reaffirmed our district's Goals for student achievement and development as follows:

- Significant academic and personal growth for every student
- College- and career-ready graduates
- Achievement in the arts, sports, clubs, and activities
- Safe and supported learners
- Demonstrated commitment to self, community, and global citizenship.

This Instructional Focus is the roadmap accomplishing those Goals. It is built on **Four Pillars**; namely:

1. Culture of Trust, Relationships, and Collaboration
2. Responsive Teaching and Learning
3. High Expectations for All
4. Welcoming and Safe Climate for Learning and Work

The Instructional Focus is a statement of our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement of teaching practices, leadership practices, and organizational practices because they are the precursors to continuous improvement of student learning.

Our schools are places where we learn from our successes as well as our failures. Through focused implementation, collaboration among stakeholders, and continuous improvement of the professional practices outlined in this Instructional Focus document, our district will realize its Goals for student learning and will move that much closer to accomplishing our core mission: *preparing every student for lifelong success through excellence in education.*

Robert J. O'Donnell, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

January 2014

STUDENT LEARNING

At **SCASD**, we exhibit a **passion for empowering every student** – every day – with individualized opportunities for **growth and success in a connected world**.

Our central Mission is to *prepare students for lifelong success through excellence in education*.

Our Goals are clear:

- **Significant academic and personal growth for every student**
- **College- and career-ready graduates**
- **Achievement in arts, sports, clubs, and activities**
- **Safe and supported learners**
- **Demonstrated commitment to self, community, and global citizenship**

Vital Signs of Student Progress

- A. Student **perseverance, determination, and passion for learning**
- B. Student **critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving**
- C. Student **“voice” and reflectiveness**
- D. Closing the **“achievement gap”** and enhancing **growth for all students**
- E. **Successful transitions** (across learning experiences & environments, including grade-to-grade, levels, newness to school/district, post-secondary, etc.)

Our 2017 Benchmarks

1. At least 18 out of every 20 students (90%), at every grade level, report that they look forward to coming to school every day.
2. All students report that they are passionately engaged in challenging activities.
3. At least 19 out of every 20 students (95%) have meaningful connections to school through extra-/co-curricular activities or community involvement.
4. All students demonstrate acquisition of 21st Century skills and authentic learning (including academic, non-academic, and citizenship experiences).
5. At least 15 out of every 20 underperforming students (75%) achieve grade-level success in ELA, Math, and Science, based on multiple measures.
6. All students (100%) demonstrate at least one year's growth every year, based on multiple measures.
7. Comprehensive plans for successful student transitions between organizational levels exist and are communicated, implemented, reviewed, and revised on a yearly basis.
8. All graduates are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and understanding to participate as active citizens in a global society.

SCASD ... Discover! Pursue! Excel!

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES

As practitioners, we are committed to continuous improvement of our Teaching Practices, Leadership Practices, and Organizational Practices because they are the preconditions for higher levels of student achievement. Our “Four Pillars” are the building blocks of our professional practices; they frame what we must do well in every classroom, in every school, and system-wide to ensure success for all students, without exception.

	Teaching Practices	Leadership Practices	Organizational Practices
Pillar #1 We will build trust and relationships with open communication that promote effective collaboration among all partners in the teaching and learning community.	Culture of Trust, Relationships, and Collaboration T1: Teachers and staff will work collectively to enhance practices that promote a high-achieving, caring, supportive environment. T2: Teachers and staff will communicate regularly with parents and students as equal partners in supporting students' education and well-being.	L1: The leadership team will provide time, resources, and support to teachers regarding mindset and skills for effective collaboration. L2: The leadership team will demonstrate consistency and fairness to provide a structure for open communication that fosters collaborative partnership and shared decision-making.	O1: School/district leadership will provide training and opportunities for staff, parents, and community on collaborative partnership and shared decision-making. O2: School/district leadership will develop structures for regular one- and two-way communication among all partners in the teaching and learning community.
Pillar #2 Curriculum, instruction, and learning are shaped by a growth mindset and guided by principles of differentiation.	Responsive Teaching and Learning T3: Teachers and staff will use varied materials, tools, and resources to support instruction and engage students in meaningful learning. T4: Teachers and staff will adapt curricular content, process, and products to support students' readiness, interests, and learning styles.	L3: Educational leaders will ensure that teachers have access to instructional resources and varied assessments. L4: Educational leaders will design professional development with significant teacher input to facilitate effective implementation of responsive teaching and learning.	O3: School/district leaders will allocate time for training, collegial collaboration, and observation for responsive instruction. O4: School/district staff will engage in scheduled year-round discourse and reflection on instructional practices.
Pillar #3 Beliefs and practices reflect universally held high standards and shared responsibility for continuous growth and improvement.	High Expectations for All T5: Teachers and staff will establish continuous professional learning goals and seek out opportunities for growth and development. T6: Teachers and staff will communicate realistically high expectations for all students and ensure high student engagement in learning.	L5: Principal will schedule and protect “sacred time” for staff instructional planning, data-driven collaboration, and professional development. L6: Leadership will frequently emphasize in classrooms, at staff meetings, all school gatherings, and parent conferences that effective instruction and student learning are the highest priority for everyone.	O5: The school/district will develop a cadre of school and district leaders who have attained mastery of core leadership practices and will facilitate the learning of other administrators and teachers. O6: School/district leaders will ensure that families and community are aware of the school's vision and expectations for learning.
Pillar #4 Learning occurs in safe environments that support the needs of all students and adults and provide a welcoming environment where positive academic and prudent personal risk-taking are encouraged.	Welcoming and Safe Climate for Learning & Work T7: Teachers and staff will provide a safe and accepting environment. T8: Teachers and staff will provide the time, encouragement, and strategies necessary to help all students be connected.	L7: Administrative Team will annually assess and respond to data about school climate from students, parents, and school personnel. L8: Principal/Administrative team will assure that every student is connected to a caring adult.	O7: The District and community will build systems to link educators, students, parents, and caregivers to create a school climate that is safe, accepting, and caring. O8: The District and community will develop a full continuum of integrated systems of interventions to promote academic learning and healthy development for all members of the school community.

Vital signs & look-fors

What is measured and reinforced gets done!

By paying attention to the Vital Signs of Student Learning and Professional Practices, we will be able to monitor and communicate progress, improve practices, and celebrate our successes.

Student Learning	Teaching Practices	Leadership Practices	Organizational Practices
Growth on Assessments - Decrease "achievement gap" among student subgroups. - Students demonstrate growth on multiple forms of assessments. - Student assesses learning progress against student's own expectations.	Rigorous Learning Activities - Teachers use effective strategies and plan instructional tasks that encourage higher level thinking. - Teachers design instruction and activities that meet the needs of all learners.	Teacher Professional Growth - Grade-level/department teams meet for blocks of time sufficient to develop and refine instructional plans and review student learning data. - Educational leaders create and monitor a differentiated Professional Development Plan aligned to Instructional Focus and Vital Signs.	Resources Aligned to Priorities - Increase time and funds allocated to the improvement of teacher/ leadership effectiveness. - School Schedule maximizes time spent on quality instruction.
Application of Learning - Increase percentage of students who demonstrate mastery of 21st Century skills. - Students apply knowledge to solve problems in new situations.	Relationships with Students - Teachers communicate realistically high and positive academic and behavioral expectations for all students. - Teachers communicate caring for and interest in students' welfare and learning.	Team Collaboration - Teams establish and follow protocols for discussion of student work and data analysis. - Principal attends grade level and department meetings at least once each month.	Culture of Achievement - Recognize teachers and staff for improvements in student learning and professional practices. - Staff and administrators regularly acknowledge students and celebrate growth in achievement.

