JUNE 2015

CLEVELAND TRANSFORMATION ALLIANCE

A report to the community on the implementation and impact of *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools*

Cleveland Transformation Alliance

Quality Schools for All Children

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CLEVELAND TRANSFORMATION ALLIANCE:
A REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACT OF *CLEVELAND'S PLAN FOR TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS*

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CLEVELAND HAS
NO GREATER ASSET
THAN ITS CHILDREN.

THEY ARE THE
ENTREPRENEURS,
ARTISTS AND
LEADERS WHO
WILL DEFINE OUR
CITY'S FUTURE.

A Welcome from our Board Chair and Executive Director

Cleveland has no greater asset than its children. They are the entrepreneurs, artists and leaders who will define our city's future.

Cleveland also has no greater responsibility than to its children. We, as a community, owe every child within our borders the best possible preparation for life by ensuring every child attends an excellent school. *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* (the Cleveland Plan) is a path to creating a diversity of high performing school options for every child and family across the city.

The Cleveland Transformation Alliance is a nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to supporting the implementation and success of the Cleveland Plan. The Alliance represents a broad array of stakeholders who are working together to assess the quality of all of our city's public schools, communicate with families about quality school choices, ensure fidelity to the Cleveland Plan and monitor the growth and quality of the charter sector. This first report from the Alliance's Board of Directors has been created to provide stakeholders with a transparent account of the Cleveland Plan's progress to date.

The Board of Directors of the Alliance represents the deep commitment and collaboration required to ensure we meet our goals to create the great education system Cleveland's kids and our community need to be successful. We hope you will join our efforts and stand unified for quality schools.

Sincerely,



HONORABLE FRANK G. JACKSON,
MAYOR, CITY OF CLEVELAND
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CLEVELAND TRANSFORMATION ALLIANCE



MEGAN O'BRYAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CLEVELAND TRANSFORMATION ALLIANCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools (the Cleveland Plan) is a comprehensive agenda for reinventing public education in Cleveland. It encompasses both Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) schools and charter schools located within CMSD boundaries. Implementation began during the 2012-13 school year, following passage of enabling state legislation and a school operating levy. The Cleveland Transformation Alliance (the Alliance) is the nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to supporting the implementation and success of the Cleveland Plan, and is the author of this report.

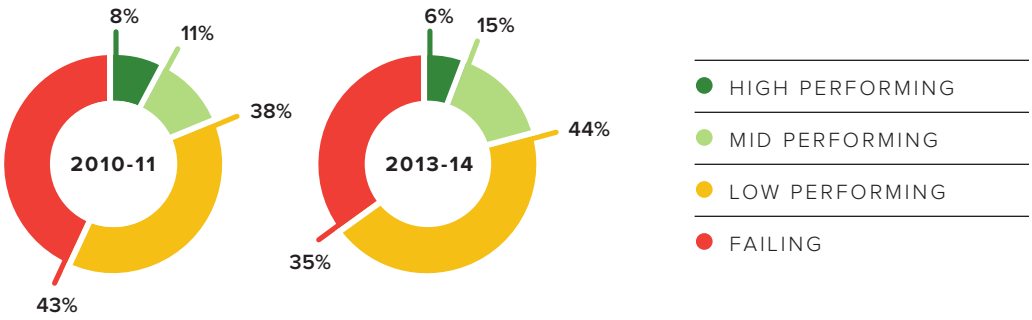
The Cleveland Plan sets two overarching goals: to triple the number of Cleveland students enrolled in high-performing district and charter schools, and to eliminate failing schools — both by the end of the 2018-19 school year. The Alliance considers as high-performing schools those that achieve a rating of A or B on two separate state indicators of quality.

In the first two years of implementation, important progress has been made toward developing the infrastructure and systems necessary to achieve the Cleveland Plan's goals. For example, CMSD is undergoing a comprehensive reorganization. Rather than being the top-down, single-source school district it once was, it is now focusing on providing a diverse portfolio of high-performing schools while giving school administrators and teachers new measures of autonomy. As of 2014-15, 48% of the district's operating budget was controlled at the school level, compared with 0.05% in 2011-12. Principals and teachers also have growing latitude to determine school hours, programs and curricula. CMSD has instituted improved systems for recruiting and retaining top teachers and principals while beginning to terminate those rated ineffective.

The picture for charter schools is also changing. In the past, charter schools opened with minimal oversight. More of the lowest-performing charter schools in Cleveland are being closed, and new schools tend to be run by charter operators with a proven track record. Today, the Alliance has legal authority intended to increase the accountability of charter school sponsors seeking to open a new school within CMSD boundaries. Partnerships between charter schools and CMSD have begun to strengthen. CMSD now sponsors eight high-performing charter schools and has partnership agreements with seven more. CMSD shares a portion of levy dollars with these schools.

The establishment of the Alliance is also a positive system development. The Alliance exists to assess and communicate school quality and to ensure the Cleveland Plan is implemented with fidelity. The organization provides a unique and effective forum for strengthening collaboration among community stakeholders working to improve Cleveland's public education system, including CMSD, the charter sector, the Cleveland Teachers Union, the mayor's office, businesses, foundations and families.

FIGURE 1, ALL SCHOOLS: Percentage of students enrolled in schools in different quality categories



Due in part to these system changes, there are some key indicators of progress. For example:

- The percentage of students in failing schools has declined to 35% in 2013-14 from 43% in 2010-11.
- Of the nine high-performing CMSD schools, six were fully enrolled at the start of 2014-15; both high-performing charter schools were fully enrolled.
- CMSD's high school graduation rate rose to 64% in 2012-13, an increase of eight percentage points since 2010-11 and its highest level in decades.
- Students in grades 4 through 8 are meeting state standards for keeping pace with their peers for the first time in nearly a decade.
- Many of the CMSD and partner charter schools that have opened over the past 10 years rate as high-performing.

While these developments are positive, the overall picture is not improving fast enough to meet the goals of the Cleveland Plan. In 2013-14, nearly eight in 10 public school students in Cleveland were in failing or low-performing schools, both district and charter. Since the inception of the Cleveland Plan, there has been a slight increase in the number of students in high-performing high schools, but this has been offset by a larger decrease in the number of students in high-performing K-8 schools. And although the number of students in failing schools has fallen, the number of failing schools has risen.

Perhaps of greatest concern is the two percentage point decline in the number of students in high-performing schools. More encouragingly, the number of students in failing schools decreased eight percentage points.

These trends may be partly explained by the increasing rigor of state performance measures. They also come relatively early in the implementation process, at a time when structural changes may not have translated to outcomes for students. And because the total number of students in Cleveland schools is changing over time, some movement may be due to demographic changes. In order to meet the overarching goals of the Cleveland Plan, decisive action is called for in reevaluating some strategies.

This report therefore makes the following recommendations to educators and stakeholders involved in the Cleveland Plan's implementation.

1. CMSD and charter school operators and sponsors should develop differentiated school support and intervention strategies based on the current performance of their schools.

Strategies should focus on ensuring high-performing schools continue to perform at a high level, and on filling all available seats. Seat capacity should be added where possible. Mid-performing schools should be guided from "good to great" through increasing student engagement and motivation, differentiating instruction based on student needs and using time, talent and resources more creatively.

Among low-performing schools, those with the most potential for improvement in underserved neighborhoods should receive focused attention. In addressing failing schools, CMSD should adhere to its three-year timeline for assessing progress. Those not making significant gains should be closed and, when necessary, replaced. Charter school operators and sponsors should develop aggressive intervention plans for the failing charter schools under their jurisdiction. The Alliance should continue to support efforts at the state level to more quickly close failing charter schools.

New school development should continue to be a critical component of growing Cleveland's portfolio of quality schools. CMSD and the charter sector should work together to strategically develop new schools to replace failing schools, especially in underserved neighborhoods. The Alliance should provide input into the development of new school models, including identifying high-performing schools from across the country for replication in Cleveland.

2. All stakeholders should intensify efforts to add capacity in the following areas that directly impact school quality.

Efforts should be made to expand relationships with proven sources of teacher talent to cultivate strong leaders for all schools. School autonomy should continue to be increased. The use of data and technology must be expanded on two fronts – in the classroom and at the systems level – and CMSD, the charter sector, and the Alliance must commit to developing a citywide enrollment system. The Alliance should develop family advocacy programs that empower parents to improve failing schools, and district-charter partnerships should continue to be strengthened.

—

The Alliance recognizes ongoing efforts to ensure every child attends a high-performing school. However, the current pace of change is not fast enough. CMSD, the charter sector, and all community stakeholders must continue to push for accelerated progress to meet the Cleveland Plan's goals by the end of the 2018-19 school year. Realizing these goals will require a difficult balance of urgency in implementation and measured patience around outcomes. All stakeholders of the Cleveland Plan share in the responsibility to ensure every child enrolled in public schools in Cleveland receives a high-quality education.

PART ONE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT



OVERVIEW OF THIS REPORT

This report was developed by the Cleveland Transformation Alliance (the Alliance), a public-private partnership with representatives from CMSD, the charter sector, the philanthropic and business community, and the broader community, including parents. All have equal voice. The Alliance's mission is to ensure every child in the city attends a high-performing school and every neighborhood has great schools from which families can choose. Assessing the progress of *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* (the Cleveland Plan) is a primary function of the Alliance.

This report is the first in a planned series of reports from the Alliance and aims to:

- Describe the standards the Alliance has established through the Alliance School Quality Framework to evaluate school quality and measure progress over time;
- Objectively assess progress toward the Cleveland Plan's goals; and
- Recommend areas for improvement of the city's district and charter schools.

Part 1 provides an overview of the Cleveland Plan and the city's education landscape. Part 2 describes the categories the Alliance uses to define school quality, and reports on the number of schools within each category. Part 3 reports implementation strategies and progress to date for each goal within the Cleveland Plan's four components. Part 4 summarizes key trends and early impacts, and makes recommendations for the future.

The Alliance commissioned the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) to analyze implementation of the Cleveland Plan. In addition to providing data evaluating progress underway, CRPE demonstrated how Cleveland compares with other portfolio cities and, in partnership with the Alliance, proposed recommendations for future focus (see p. 42).

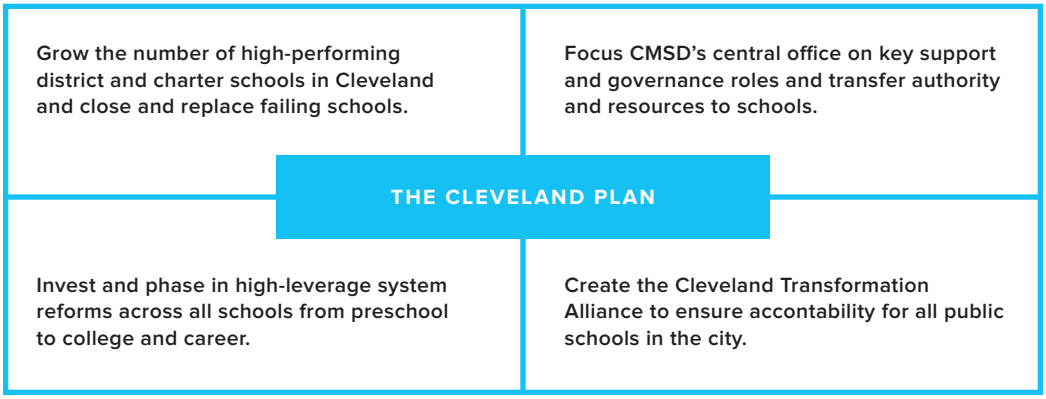
For this report, Alliance staff gathered information, primarily through phone interviews, from the following sponsors of CMSD-partner charter schools: Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Educational Services Center of Lake Erie West, Educational Resource Consultants of Ohio, Inc., Ohio Council of Community Schools, Office of School Sponsorship at the Ohio Department of Education and Thomas B. Fordham Institute. In addition, staff interviewed representatives of the following partner-charter school operators and charter schools: Breakthrough Schools, I CAN Schools and Stepstone Academy. CMSD information was gathered through in-person interviews and review of data provided.

The Cleveland Plan

In 2012, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) was at a remarkable and pivotal time in its history. It had enjoyed 14 years of stable and supportive governance under mayoral oversight. It had six years of targeted, proactive and heavily engaged philanthropic support that enabled the development of a small cohort of high-performing schools to attract and retain families. It had a highly conducive state policy context, most notably relating to rules governing working conditions for teachers, including evaluation, seniority and collective bargaining. It had a newly appointed CEO who had built solid relationships with principals and teachers during his tenure as chief academic officer. And it had a strong, credible and increasingly vocal mayoral commitment to reform. Yet CMSD had been continuously hit by budget shortfalls and multiple layoffs of hundreds of teachers. An operating levy had not been passed in the district in the previous 16 years. CMSD still had too many schools that were low-performing or failing.

These circumstances compelled the development of the Cleveland Plan in 2012. Commissioned by Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, the Cleveland Plan was developed by a broad group of stakeholders: CMSD's CEO and leadership team, the Cleveland Foundation, the George Gund Foundation, Greater Cleveland Partnership, Breakthrough Schools, and the mayor's staff.

The Cleveland Plan's two overarching goals are to triple the number of students enrolled in high-performing district and charter schools, and to eliminate failing schools — both by the end of the 2018-19 school year. The graphic below shows the four interwoven strategies of the Cleveland Plan.



An emerging national approach for improving public education, known as the "portfolio strategy," informed the goals of the Cleveland Plan. The portfolio strategy moves past the traditional one-size-fits-all approach to education by offering families a wider and better-publicized array of public school options and by shifting authority and resources to individual schools. The strategy has led to promising results in other city school districts – including Baltimore, Denver and New York City.

The Cleveland Plan calls for Cleveland to transition from reliance on a traditional, single-source school district to a network of district and charter schools held to the highest academic standards. The network should offer a portfolio of high-quality school options to improve achievement and opportunity for every child.



CLEVELAND'S PLAN FOR TRANSFORMING SCHOOLS: A TIMELINE

FALL 2011
Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson convenes a coalition of education, foundation and business leaders to forge a dramatically different path for Cleveland's schools.

FEBRUARY 2012
The coalition sends *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* (the Cleveland Plan) to Ohio's governor and legislative leaders.

MARCH - MAY 2012
The coalition and the Cleveland Teachers Union (CTU) propose reforms to Ohio lawmakers to enact the Cleveland Plan.

JUNE - JULY 2012
State lawmakers pass the bipartisan-sponsored House Bill 525 to implement the Cleveland Plan. Governor Kasich signs the bill into law, enabling implementation to begin.

NOVEMBER 2012
Voters approve a 15 mil school levy, the first operating levy passed in 16 years and the largest in the city's history. For the first time, a share of operating levy money is set aside for higher performing charter schools formally partnered with or sponsored by CMSD.

DECEMBER 2012
The Cleveland Transformation Alliance (the Alliance), a new nonprofit tasked with overseeing reform efforts, begins operations.

MAY 2013
CTU votes on a new contract that formalizes changes in state law and provides additional flexibility at the school level. Key elements include changing the teacher compensation system, reducing the weight seniority is given in layoff decisions, and providing schools with more say in hiring and length of the school day.

MARCH 2014
The Alliance launches its website and releases its comprehensive guide on school quality for all Cleveland public schools, both district and charter.

AUGUST 2014
At the start of 2014-15, CMSD begins to leverage its new structure, work rules and other systemic changes made possible by the Cleveland Plan.

NOVEMBER 2014
Voters pass a capital levy to support CMSD's Facilities Master Plan (see p. 35).

JUNE 2015
The Alliance releases its first report to the community on implementation and impact of the Cleveland Plan.

District schools now have autonomy over staff and budgets in exchange for high accountability for performance. This creates an environment that empowers and values principals and teachers as professionals, while making certain that students are held to the highest expectations.

The Cleveland Plan aims to triple the number of students in high-performing district and charter schools citywide. The developing portfolio of schools includes CMSD, the charter schools it sponsors, and those charter schools with which it has established formal partnerships ("partner charter schools"). In all, this portfolio currently encompasses 105 district schools and 15 partner charter schools; two more partner charters are set to open in August 2015.

Cleveland's Education Landscape

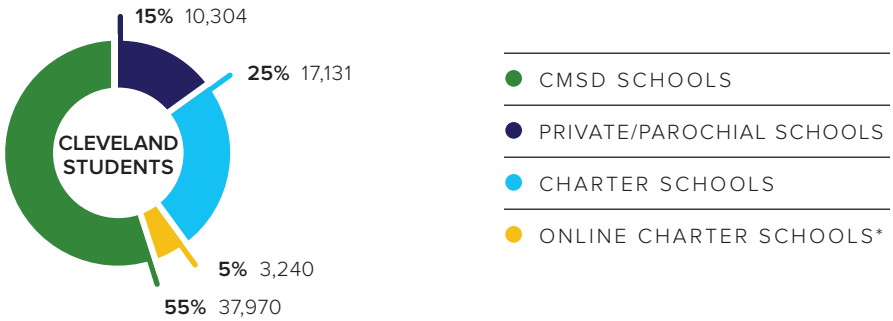
Cleveland families have multiple options regarding the type of school their children attend. Figure 2 shows the numbers and percentages of students enrolled in CMSD, charter and private/parochial schools located in the CMSD service area.

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD)

CMSD is the second largest school district in Ohio. The district is 82 square miles and serves Cleveland, Bratenahl, Linndale, Newburgh Heights, and parts of Brook Park and Garfield Heights. CMSD operates 105 schools. K-8 schools typically serve the immediate area in which the school is located, and high schools typically serve a broader cross section of students across multiple neighborhoods. Students may choose to attend district schools outside their neighborhood service area. Some district schools, particularly at the high school level, offer specialized curricula, for example, advanced placement, bilingual education, arts or STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). Since CMSD is an open-enrollment district, a portion of the students enrolled in CMSD schools live outside the district.

CMSD is governed by a board of education of nine voting members who are nominated by a local panel and appointed by Cleveland's Mayor. CMSD is the only district in Ohio with a mayoral-appointed board versus an elected board. The district has collective bargaining agreements with seven unions including those representing

FIGURE 2: Distribution of students in schools located in the CMSD service area



Source: CMSD and charter school data from the Ohio Department of Education for the 2013-14 school year; private/parochial data from the Cleveland Catholic Diocese and other nonpublic schools were provided in March 2015. Data represent students enrolled in schools of all types located in the CMSD footprint, including students who do not live in the CMSD service area. *Only one online charter school, Ohio Connections Academy, is located in the CMSD service area; according to the school, only 109 of its 3,240 students live in CMSD.

THE CLEVELAND PLAN AIMS TO TRIPLE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN HIGH PERFORMING DISTRICT AND CHARTER SCHOOLS CITYWIDE.

teachers and transportation and custodial workers. The collective bargaining agreements set work rules that can, at times, impact district flexibility.

CMSD ranks 608 out of 611 Ohio districts in academic performance. It faces the challenge of providing support for a large population of public school children living in poverty, as well as a large portion of students (23%) requiring special education services.

Charter Schools

Charter schools, legally known as community schools in Ohio, are tuition-free, publicly funded, privately operated public schools with more operational flexibility than the typical district school. By state law, each charter school must have its own board of directors, with individuals prohibited from serving on more than five charter school boards at the same time. Like district schools, Ohio charter schools must accept all students who seek to enroll unless they serve a specific population (e.g. gifted or special needs students).

A few Cleveland charter schools are independent, but 11 management firms operate the majority. Some management firms, like Constellation Schools and Breakthrough Schools, are based locally. Others operate schools statewide, nationally, or internationally.

Charter school sponsors, generally known as authorizers in other states, are entities to which ODE has delegated authority to oversee charter schools. Sponsors authorize new school start-ups, sign contracts with schools that define curriculum and performance goals, and provide technical assistance, among other duties.

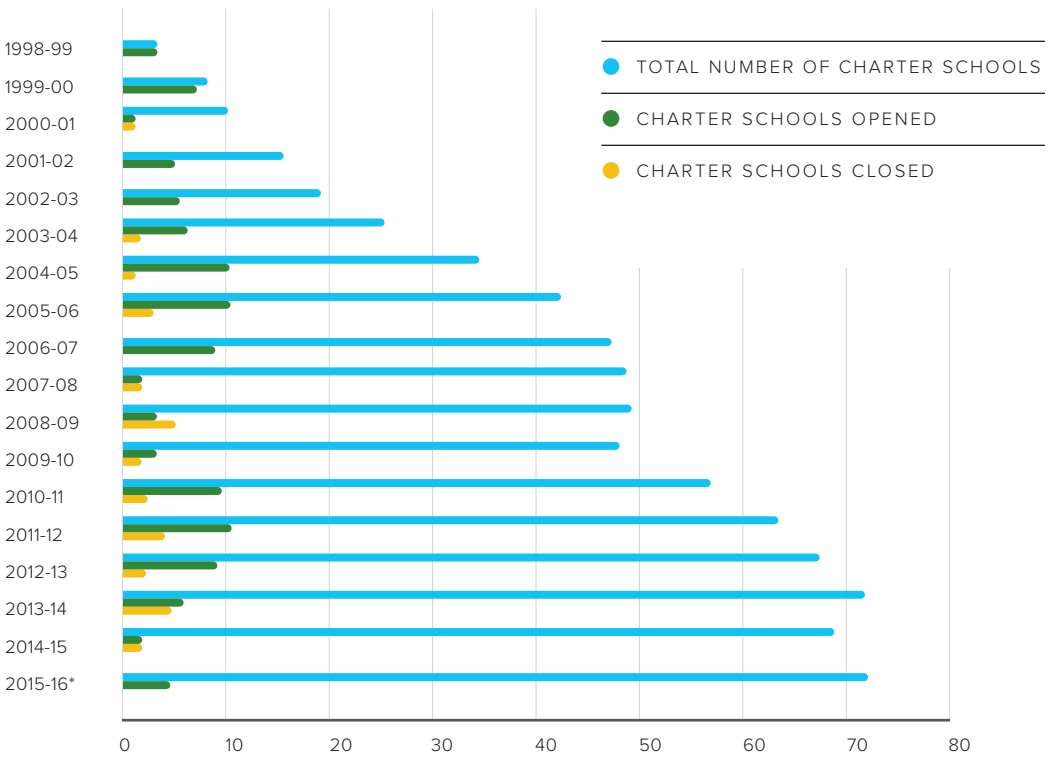
Ohio passed its law enabling charter schools in 1998. From that time, the number of charter schools has steadily increased. In 2014-15, there were some 70 charter schools operating within the CMSD footprint. By law, charter schools in Cleveland can prioritize enrollment for students living in the CMSD service area, but most enroll some students who live in other school districts. As noted in Figure 2 on page 14, the vast majority of students enrolled in the only online charter school located in CMSD, Ohio Connections Academy, live outside CMSD.

During the 2014-15 school year, CMSD sponsored eight charter schools that were open in Cleveland, and had a formal partnership with seven others. All 15 of these schools, called partner charter schools in this report, received levy money raised from the 2012 approval of Issue 107, sharing approximately $4 million a year on a per-student basis for each enrolled child residing in the CMSD footprint (see p. 17).

Nonpublic Schools

Another 10,304 students attended nonpublic schools, including parochial and other independent schools, in Cleveland. Like the enrollment numbers for district and charter schools, nonpublic enrollment includes non-CMSD resident students. Of the total nonpublic enrollment, 6,395 CMSD resident students participated in one of the state's voucher programs that use public money to pay some or all of their tuition in a private or parochial school. Since the Alliance has no authority to assess or monitor nonpublic schools, these schools are not part of this report.

FIGURE 3: Charter schools in Cleveland, 1998-99 to 2015-16



Source: Ohio Department of Education, Enrollment History reports and Preliminary Agreements. *Figures for 2015-16 are based on preliminary agreements between sponsors and charter schools on file with the Ohio Department of Education.

CMSD'S PARTNER CHARTER SCHOOLS

During the 2014-15 school year, there were 15 "partner charter schools" operating in Cleveland. They were either sponsored by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) or had partnership agreements with CMSD. An additional two partner charter schools were set to open for the 2015-16 school year. The list below shows all partner charter schools, with the operator of each school indicated in parentheses.

CURRENTLY OPEN AND SPONSORED BY CMSD:

Citizens Academy (Breakthrough Schools)

Citizens Academy East (Breakthrough Schools)

Citizens Leadership Academy (Breakthrough Schools)

Entrepreneurship Preparatory School (Breakthrough Schools)

Entrepreneurship Preparatory School, Woodland Hills Campus (Breakthrough Schools)

Near West Intergenerational School (Breakthrough Schools)

Promise Academy (CMSD)

Village Preparatory School, Cliffs Campus (Breakthrough Schools)

CURRENTLY OPEN AND PARTNERED WITH CMSD:

Cleveland College Preparatory School (I CAN Schools)

The Intergenerational School (Breakthrough Schools)

Lakeshore Intergenerational School (Breakthrough Schools)

Menlo Park Academy (Independent)

Northeast Ohio College Preparatory School (I CAN Schools)

Stepstone Academy (Ohio Guidestone)

Village Preparatory School, Woodland Hills Campus (Breakthrough Schools)

OPENING EARLY ELEMENTARY GRADES IN AUGUST 2015 WITH A PRELIMINARY SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT WITH CMSD:

Citizens Academy Southeast (Breakthrough)

Stonebrook Montessori (Independent)

PART TWO

ASSESSING SCHOOL QUALITY IN CLEVELAND, 2010-11 TO 2013-14



The Cleveland Plan sets goals of tripling the number of students enrolled in high-performing schools and eliminating failing schools. Both goals are to be met by the end of the 2018-19 school year, and apply to all public schools in Cleveland, both district and charter. One responsibility of the Alliance is to provide a picture of progress toward achieving these goals.

Developing a New Framework

Measuring the number of students in high-performing schools is challenging because Ohio has changed how it assesses and reports school quality since the development of the Cleveland Plan. Ohio has also increased the overall rigor of the school assessment system. The old state system assigned schools to the categories Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch and Academic Emergency. The new system, still being developed by the state, currently assigns letter grades for a range of performance indicators; it is planning to calculate overall grades of A through F for each school by August 2016.

Absent a final school grading system from the state, the Alliance used a three-step process to develop the new Alliance School Quality Framework to assess the academic performance of all public schools in Cleveland.

First, the Alliance identified three critical indicators that the state has used to evaluate school quality over time: performance index, value-added and four-year graduation rates.

Performance index applies to all schools. It indicates the percentage of students who have scored proficient or better on state tests. Value-added applies only to K-8 schools, and shows if students are achieving expected academic growth compared with similar students. Four-year graduation rates apply only to high schools.

As shown in the following charts, the state assigns schools letter grades for these indicators based on specific levels of performance.

STATE QUALITY INDICATORS Used by the Alliance

PERFORMANCE INDEX (ALL SCHOOLS):
Percentage of students scoring proficient or better on state tests

A	B	C	D	F
90% - 100%	80% - 89.9%	70% - 79.9%	50% - 69.9%	Less than 50%

VALUE-ADDED (K-8 ONLY):
Shows if students are achieving one year of academic growth compared to similar students. A score above 0 is better than expected growth. A score below 0 is less than expected growth

A	B	C	D	F
+2 or greater	1.99 to 1.01	1 to -1	-1.01 to -1.99	-2 or less

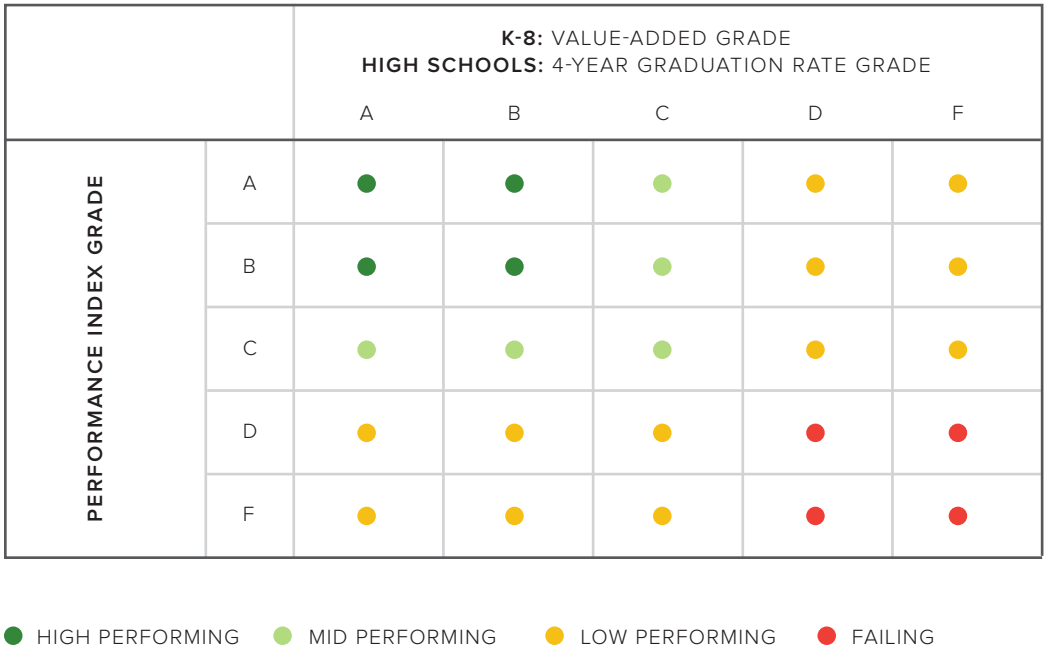
GRADUATION RATE (HIGH SCHOOL ONLY):
Percentage of students who graduated four years after entering ninth grade

A	B	C	D	F
93% to 100%	89% to 92.9%	84% to 88.9%	79% to 83.9%	0 to 78.9%

Second, the Alliance applied the state's letter grades for these indicators to all rated district and charter schools in Cleveland over four consecutive school years (2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14). This allowed the Alliance to compare progress over time using an apples-to-apples measure.

Third, the Alliance translated the letter grades into school performance ratings for each school. Figure 4, following page, shows how the Alliance School Quality Framework uses state indicators to assign all district and charter schools in Cleveland to one of four categories: high-performing, mid-performing, low-performing and failing.

FIGURE 4: Alliance School Quality Framework Categories



Cleveland Plan authors used data from 2010-11 to show that there were 7,993 students enrolled in Excellent and Effective CMSD schools in that year and 3,473 in Excellent and Effective charter schools, for a total of 11,466 students in high-performing schools. This was the number the Alliance had intended to use as a baseline to track progress toward tripling the number of students in high-performing schools. However, the state's changes rendered those numbers obsolete.

An analysis using the newly developed Alliance School Quality Framework, described on page 24, shows that 3,568 students attended high-performing schools in 2010-11. Tripling that number to meet the Cleveland Plan's goal means 10,704 students should be in high-performing schools by the end of the 2018-19 school year. This new baseline reflects more rigorous standards for Cleveland schools, in part set by the Alliance School Quality Framework's high standards for the top performance category.

The Alliance School Quality Framework provides a constant quality measure that enables the Alliance to track changes over time in both school performance and the number of students in different school quality categories. The following sections describe these changes at the K-8 and high school levels, and across all grades.

K-8 Schools

At the K-8 level, the number of students in high-performing schools has fluctuated, peaking in 2012-13 before declining in 2013-14 for an overall decrease of 498 students (30%) since 2010-11. The number of students in failing schools also fell, by 1,902 students (16%). The number of students in mid-performing and low-performing schools rose by 46% and 28%, respectively (Figure 5).

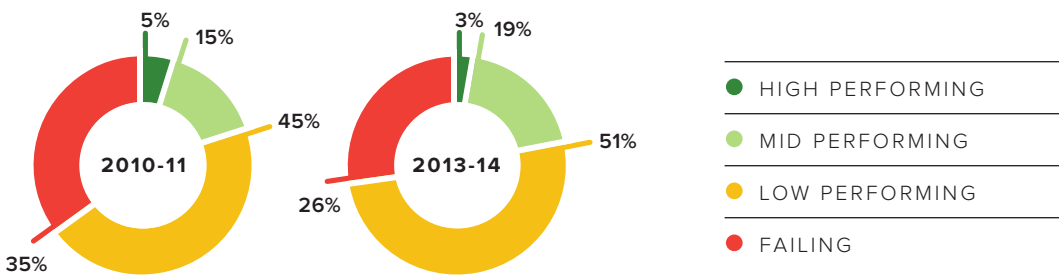
Considered as a percentage of the total number of students, the proportion of K-8 students in high-performing schools fell by 2 percentage points, while the proportion in failing schools fell by 9 percentage points. The proportion in low-performing schools rose by 6 percentage points; the proportion in mid-performing schools rose by 4 percentage points (Figure 6).

FIGURE 5, K-8 SCHOOLS: Number of K-8 students enrolled in all CMSD and charter schools, by Alliance School Quality Framework category, 2010-11 to 2013-14

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	% CHANGE 10-11 TO 13-14
High Performing	1,681	1,467	1,965	1,183	-30%
Mid Performing	5,038	5,686	7,445	7,353	46%
Low Performing	15,289	15,336	15,661	19,591	28%
Failing	11,865	14,867	11,958	9,963	-16%
TOTALS*	33,873	37,356	37,029	38,090	12%

Source: Alliance analysis of Ohio Department of Education data. *Totals do not include unrated schools.

FIGURE 6, K-8 SCHOOLS: Proportion of K-8 students enrolled in schools in different quality categories



Source: Alliance analysis of Ohio Department of Education data

High Schools

Among high school students, there was an increase of 103 students (5%) in high-performing schools from 2010-11 to 2013-14, and a decrease of 294 students (4%) in failing schools. The number of students in low-performing high schools rose 35%. There were no mid-performing high schools in 2013-14 (Figure 7).

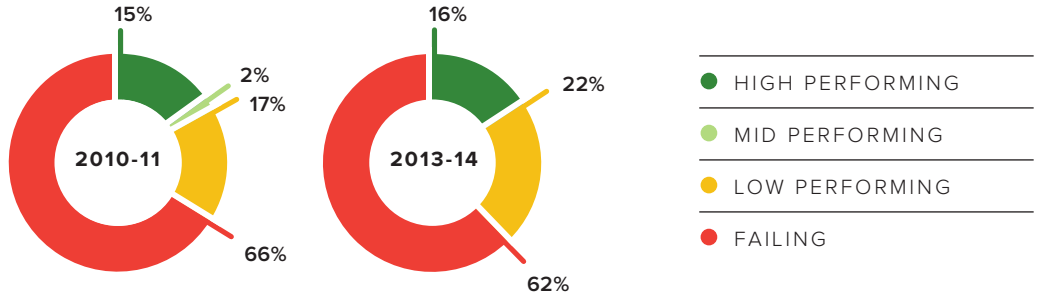
Considered as a percentage of the total number of students, the proportion of high school students in high-performing schools rose by 1 percentage point, while the proportion in failing schools fell by 4 percentage points. The proportion in low-performing schools rose by 5 percentage points (Figure 8).

FIGURE 7, HIGH SCHOOLS: Number of high school students enrolled in all CMSD and charter schools, by Alliance School Quality Framework category, 2010-11 to 2013-14

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	% CHANGE 10-11 TO 13-14
High Performing	1,887	1,166	1,717	1,990	5%
Mid Performing	251	616	289	-	-100%
Low Performing	2,068	1,725	1,755	2,791	35%
Failing	8,018	8,059	8,032	7,724	-4%
TOTALS*	12,224	11,566	11,793	12,505	2%

Source: Alliance analysis of Ohio Department of Education data. *Totals do not include unrated schools.

FIGURE 8, HIGH SCHOOLS: Proportion of high school students enrolled in schools in different quality categories



Source: Alliance analysis of Ohio Department of Education data

All Schools

Across all schools, the number of students in high-performing schools fluctuated between 2010-11 and 2013-14. There were 3,173 students in high-performing schools in 2013-14, an 11% decline since 2010-11. The number of students in failing schools was 17,687 — also a decline of 11%. The number of students in mid-performing and low-performing schools increased 39% and 29%, respectively (Figure 9).

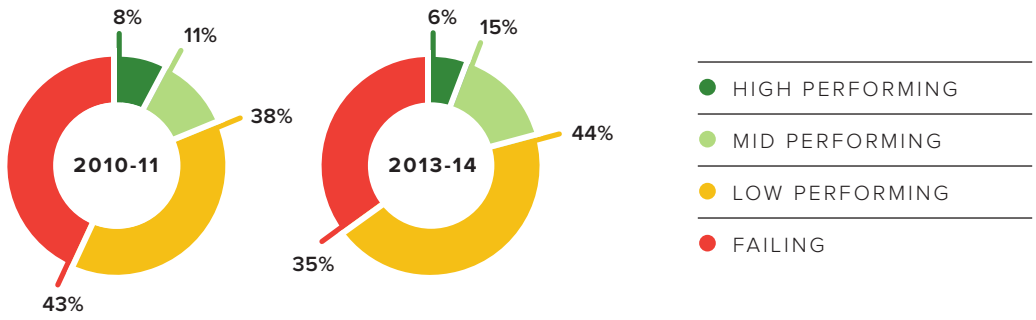
Considered as a percentage of the total number of students, the proportion of students in high-performing schools fell 2 percentage points. This was opposite a decline of 8 percentage points in the proportion of students in failing schools. The proportion in low-performing schools rose by 6 percentage points; the proportion in mid-performing schools rose by 4 percentage points (Figure 10).

FIGURE 9, ALL SCHOOLS: Number of students enrolled in all CMSD and charter schools, by Alliance School Quality Framework category, 2010-11 to 2013-14

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	% CHANGE 10-11 TO 13-14
High Performing	3,568	2,633	3,682	3,173	-11%
Mid Performing	5,289	6,302	7,734	7,353	39%
Low Performing	17,357	17,061	17,416	22,382	29%
Failing	19,883	22,926	19,990	17,687	-11%
TOTALS*	46,097	48,922	48,822	50,595	10%

Source: Alliance analysis of Ohio Department of Education data. *Totals do not include unrated schools.

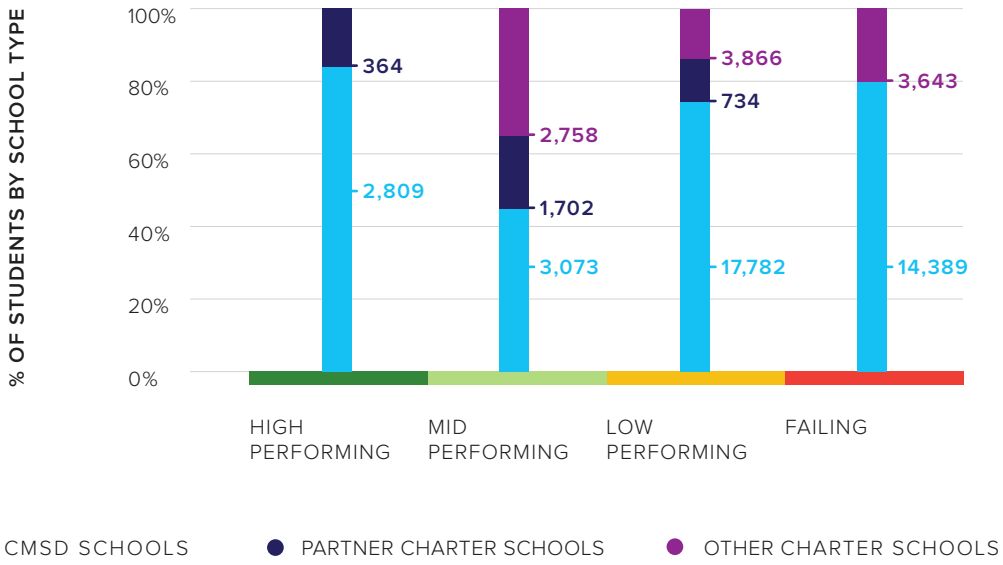
FIGURE 10, ALL SCHOOLS: Proportion of students enrolled in schools in different quality categories



Source: Alliance analysis of Ohio Department of Education data

In three of the four quality categories, a greater proportion of students attended CMSD schools compared with charter schools (either partnered or non-partnered with CMSD). Of students enrolled in high-performing schools, 89% attended CMSD schools and the remaining 11% attended partner charter schools. In the mid-performing category, the majority of students (59%) were in charter schools, compared with 41% in CMSD schools (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11, ALL SCHOOLS: Distribution of students in different types of schools by Alliance School Quality Framework categories, 2013-14 school year



↓11% Decrease in the number of students in high-performing schools, as shown in Figure 9.

↑39% Increase in the number of students in mid-performing schools, as shown in Figure 9.

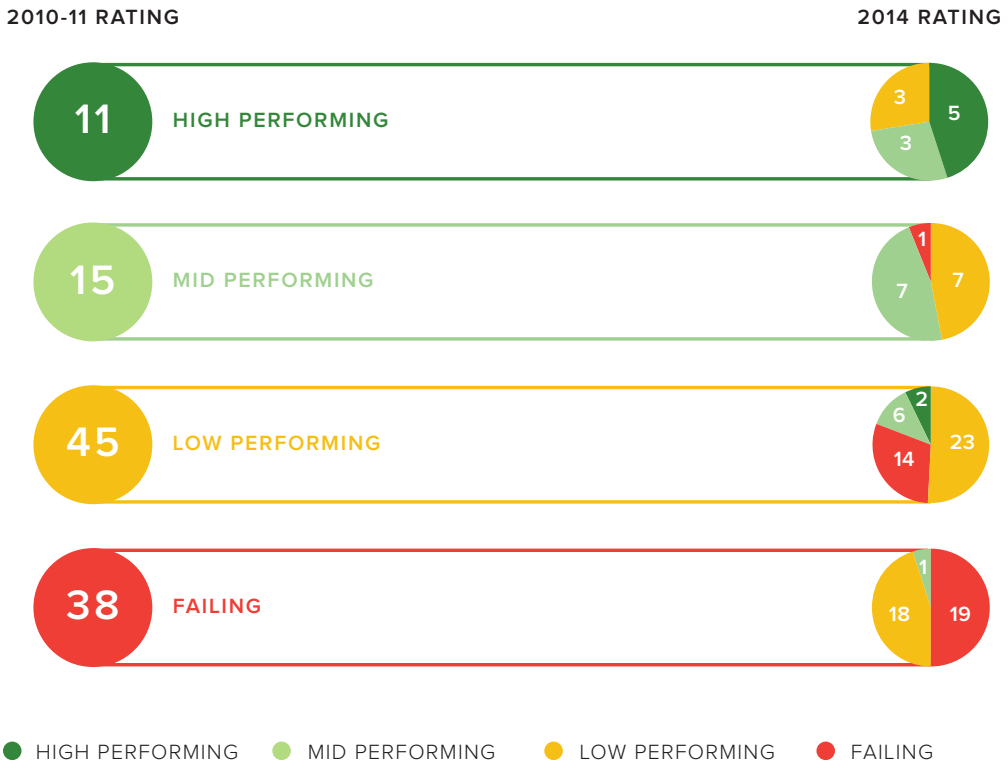
↓11% Decrease in the number of students in failing schools, as shown in Figure 9.

↑29% Increase in the number of students in low-performing schools, as shown in Figure 9.

The Alliance School Quality Framework also enables a tracking of how Cleveland schools — not just students — are moving between quality categories over time. This is important to understanding progress toward meeting the Cleveland Plan's goal of closing failing schools.

Progress will be shown by movement of schools out of lower quality categories and into higher quality categories, and by maintaining high-performing schools at their current level of quality (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12, ALL SCHOOLS: Change in category of Cleveland public schools under the Alliance School Quality Framework from 2010-11 to 2013-14*



* Tracks only schools that were rated in 2010-11

Of the 38 schools that rated as failing in 2010-11, 19 remained failing while 18 improved to low-performing. One improved to mid-performing.

Among the 11 schools rated high-performing in 2010-11, five remained high-performing while six decreased in quality to either mid-performing or low-performing. This was somewhat offset by an improvement of two low-performing schools to the high-performing category.

Analysis of Trends, 2010-11 to 2013-14

As the above data show, trends to date have been mixed. In Cleveland schools overall, there has been a net movement of both schools and students out of the high-performing and failing categories and into the mid-performing and low-performing categories. (Again, it is important to keep in mind the high standards the Alliance has set for its top performance category and the increasing rigor of the state's school assessment system.)

The four-year patterns for K-8 schools and high schools are different. There are fewer students in failing schools of both types, but the decrease was larger for K-8 schools than it was for high schools. The number of students in high-performing high schools increased, while the number of students in high-performing K-8 schools decreased.

The potential for adding high-performing schools also appears to be different for K-8 schools and high schools. Among K-8 schools, there is a group of mid-performing schools that could improve to high-performing with proper support. However, high schools have become more divided, with a consistent group of high-performing schools contrasted against a consistent group of low-performing and failing schools.



PART THREE

IMPLEMENTATION AND PROGRESS



This section reports implementation strategies and progress to date for each goal within the Cleveland Plan's four components (see p. 12). While goals were defined by the Cleveland Plan, implementation strategies have been developed by CMSD, partner charter schools, and the Alliance, working separately or in collaboration.

1 Grow the number of high-performing district and charter schools in Cleveland and close and replace failing schools.

The Cleveland Plan is built on aggressively growing the number of high-performing schools while phasing out those that are failing. This includes increasing enrollment in existing high-performing schools, starting new schools, strengthening mid-performing schools and addressing low-performing schools. Where possible, new or expanded schools should be explicitly used as a strategy to replace consistently failing schools.

PLAN GOAL	**1. PROMOTE, EXPAND, AND REPLICATE EXISTING HIGH-PERFORMING DISTRICT AND CHARTER SCHOOLS.**
IMPLEMENTATION STATEGY	Fill existing seats in high-performing schools.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	Of the nine high-performing CMSD schools, six were fully enrolled at the start of 2014-15. Of the two high-performing charter schools, both were fully enrolled at the start of 2014-15. The Alliance and CMSD led campaigns encouraging families to be active and informed public school choosers (see p. 33 and 41).

IMPLEMENTATION STATEGY	Replicate and expand high-performing district and charter schools.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	CMSD added grades and seats at some of its high-performing schools, including Campus International and MC²STEM. Since July 2012, Breakthrough Schools has added four charter schools based on high-performing models – E Prep Woodland Hills, Village Prep Woodland Hills, Citizens Academy East and Lakeshore Intergenerational School. Together, these four schools enrolled about 637 students as of March 2015, representing approximately 26% of Breakthrough's 2015 enrollment.
PLAN GOAL	**2. START NEW SCHOOLS.**
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	Attract proven national models. Collaborate with local partners to start up new schools. Phase out failing schools and replace them with new schools.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	Since July 2012, CMSD has launched five new high schools including: • Facing History New Tech High School, opened in 2012, based on a combination of two national school design models. • Two new schools, E³agle and PACT, opened in 2014, to replace the failing John F. Kennedy High School. • Cleveland High School for Digital Arts, opened in 2014, developed with the Center for Arts Inspired Learning. • Bard High School Early College, opened in 2014, developed in collaboration with a national partner. John Marshall High School is being redesigned into a campus with three small schools and is set for an August 2015 reopening. OhioGuidestone opened its first charter school, Stepstone Academy, in 2012, based on a blended-learning model with plans to grow to a K-8 enrollment of 450 students. Stonebrook Montessori, a charter school sponsored by CMSD, opened its preschool in March 2015 and is readying its K-2 classes for an August 2015 opening with plans to grow to K-8.

PLAN GOAL	3. REFOCUS AND STRENGTHEN MID-PERFORMING SCHOOLS.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Provide each school with regular reports on its academic performance.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	CMSD schools began to receive twice-annual performance reports beginning in 2013-14. These reports, based on the School Performance and Planning Framework (SPPF), help schools set goals and develop priorities for the coming year (see box, p. 32).
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	Develop school networks to support schools. Transform CMSD's career centers into career academies.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	CMSD has created seven support networks aligned to themed groups of schools. Network leaders facilitate CMSD's shift from a traditional top-down compliance model to a system that provides service and support to principals, including problem solving and student-centered performance improvement. CMSD has partnered with Ford Next Generation Learning, a national program to increase college and career readiness, to assess and create redesign plans for five CMSD high schools: Garrett Morgan School of Science, Jane Addams Business Careers Center, Martin Luther King Jr., Max S. Hayes and Washington Park Environmental Studies.
PLAN GOAL	4. REPURPOSE AND ADDRESS LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	Identify and track the lowest-performing schools. Target the bottom 10% to 15% of schools for immediate action, including closure and reassignment of students to better schools.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	CMSD identified two low-performing K-8 schools – Buckeye-Woodland and Paul Revere – for closure at the end of 2014-15, and is phasing out SuccessTech High School. In 2013-14 and 2014-15 a total of 23 of CMSD's poorest performing schools have been targeted for corrective action and added investment. These schools are known as Investment Schools and employ an intensive community wraparound strategy that is supported by United Way of Greater Cleveland and in partnership with local service agencies. In 2014-15 CMSD opened two new high schools starting with 9th grade – PACT and E^{3}agle Academy – to replace John F. Kennedy, a failing comprehensive high school that is being phased out. Five Cleveland charter schools have closed since July 2012 for academic or financial reasons. A sixth, Woodland Academy, was slated to close for poor academic performance at the end of 2014-15.

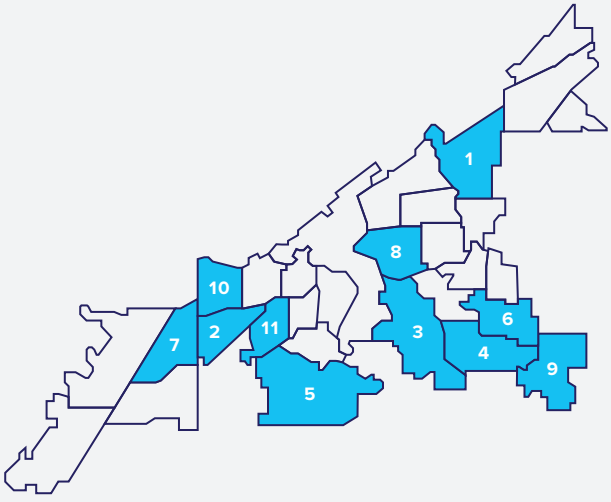
A SCHOOL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK FOR CMSD SCHOOLS

CMSD developed the School Performance and Planning Framework (SPPF) to evaluate school performance in terms of student achievement and qualitative metrics. The qualitative metrics, captured through an onsite review, were piloted in the spring of 2015 and will be incorporated into the SPPF school rating beginning in 2015–16. The framework gives schools a picture of progress within a like cohort and the ability to monitor their progress against an expected standard of performance. The six dimensions of performance SPPF measures are:

- Are students prepared for future success?
- Do they show strong academic performance?
- Are students making progress?
- Is the school closing gaps across students?
- Is the school a coherent, student-centered learning environment?
- Is the school a safe and supportive environment for students?

IFF REPORT ON ENSURING QUALITY EDUCATION IN ALL CLEVELAND NEIGHBORHOODS

IFF, a nonprofit community development financial institution, released a 2014 report commissioned by CMSD that studied the number of children in each Cleveland neighborhood and the corresponding supply of seats in high-performing schools. The report recommended replicating high-performing schools, improving mid-performing schools, and targeting the lowest-performing schools for turnaround or closure in 11 neighborhoods it identified as “highest-need.” Like the Cleveland Plan, IFF recommended filling top-performing schools with Cleveland children and closing the lowest-performing charter schools.



1. GLENVILLE
2. WEST BOULEVARD
3. BROADWAY-SLAVIC VILLAGE
4. UNION MILES
5. OLD BROOKLYN
6. MOUNT PLEASANT
7. JEFFERSON
8. CENTRAL
9. LEE-HARVARD, LEE-SEVILLE
10. CUDELL-EDGEWATER
11. STOCKYARD

2 Focus the district's central office on key support and governance roles and transfer authority and resources to schools.

Historically, CMSD evolved to address the needs of a manufacturing economy in a fast-growing city. To achieve efficiency, the district tightly controlled staffing, scheduling, curriculum, operations and budgets from its central office, far removed from the day-to-day operations of schools. That approach no longer serves students. Cleveland needs schools and teachers to be adaptable and responsive as they help students develop the complex problem-solving and social skills necessary to thrive in a knowledge-based economy.

Cleveland's new portfolio strategy requires central office to become a flatter, more nimble and more strategic professional organization. CMSD will employ a differentiated management system based on accountability, and will drive resources to schools. These changes, inspired by the practices and culture of successful charter schools, require a fundamental shift in mindset, roles and capacity across CMSD.

PLAN GOAL	1. NEW ROLE FOR CENTRAL OFFICE FOCUSED ON A CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESS, SYSTEM COORDINATION AND SERVICE PROVISION
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Reorganize central office to support the portfolio strategy.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	A comprehensive reorganization of CMSD is ongoing, including creation of the Office of New and Innovative Schools, tasked with expanding the portfolio of high-performing school choices in Cleveland.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Coordinate a fair and informative citywide enrollment process.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	CMSD has identified technology to streamline and improve the enrollment process. CMSD produced outreach materials, including a printed guide, to encourage families to make active school choices. CMSD's enrollment personnel were trained in new systems and customer-friendly approaches, and recruiters were hired to support families in making informed school choices. 91% of students entering 9th grade in 2014-15 actively chose their high school.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Improve data governance, availability, quality and timeliness.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	In partnership with The Lubrizol Corporation, CMSD completed an assessment of current information technology systems and needs, and hired a chief information officer.

	CMSD restructured the Department of Information Technology to better support schools. CMSD is investing in its data systems to improve the range and quality of data available to schools in real time, and to better inform instruction and monitor school performance.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Professionalize human resource functions.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	CMSD reorganized its Human Resources Office into the Talent Office and hired a new chief talent officer. The Talent Office staffed 99% of classrooms at the start of the 2014-15 school year, leaving 26 open spots, up from the 96% of classrooms staffed at the start of 2013-14, which left 110 openings.
PLAN GOAL	**2. SCHOOL AUTONOMY BASED ON PERFORMANCE**
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	Provide school leaders with greater autonomy in the areas of staffing, scheduling and budgeting, and provide support for transitioning to the use of these autonomies. Offer targeted services to schools to meet their needs instead of imposing one-size-fits-all strategies.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	CMSD defined and publicized new school autonomies. Nine CMSD schools piloted autonomies in 2012-13. CMSD granted autonomies to all schools starting in July 2013 with tight oversight of low-performing and failing schools.
PLAN GOAL	**3. REDISTRIBUTION OF MONEY TO SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS**
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Design and implement a student-based budgeting system based on the number and needs of students enrolled in each school. Provide principals with control over an increasing percentage of the school allocation.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	Student-based budgeting began in 2013-14 and rolled out district-wide at the start of 2014-15. As of 2014-15, principals control 48% of the total operating budget of the district, up from 0.05% in 2010-11.

3 Invest and phase in high-leverage system reforms across all schools from preschool to college and career.

The Cleveland Plan identifies six fundamental goals for improving the effectiveness and academic quality of schools. These goals address the needs of students from preschool through high school, while ensuring career and college readiness.

PLAN GOAL	1. HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL EDUCATION
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Create a new pre-K plan for Cleveland.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	In November 2013, CMSD, The George Gund Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation and other partners established PRE4CLE, a plan to expand access to high quality pre-K to children in Cleveland (see box, p. 38). As of April 2015, PRE4CLE had added 750 new high-quality preschool seats, an increase of 21% from the previous year. Stepstone Academy, Stonebrook Montessori, The Intergenerational School and Near West Intergenerational School — all CMSD partners — either offer preschool or have partnered with co-located programs.

PLAN GOAL	2. COLLEGE AND WORKFORCE READINESS
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	Commit to the Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland to significantly increase the number of Cleveland students who are ready for and enroll in post-secondary institutions. Revamp career and technical education within CMSD.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	From 2010-11 to 2012-13, CMSD's high school graduation rate increased to 64% from 56%, and fewer graduates tested into remedial college courses.

CMSD FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

CMSD's Facilities Master Plan is funded by proceeds from the passage of 2014's local ballot Issue 4. The ballot issue will generate about $200 million in local revenue and $250 million in state revenue for construction and another $2.5 million annually for maintenance. These funds will finance construction of up to 22 new school buildings, as well as the refurbishment of as many as 23 existing schools. Funds will also go toward modernizing schools with new technologies.

Percentage of CMSD students meeting the college-ready benchmark ACT score of 21 increased to 14% in 2013-14 from 12% in 2011-12.

Enrollment in college within one year of CMSD graduation dropped to 53% in 2012-13 from 61% in 2010-11, paralleling a national trend.

PLAN GOAL	3. YEAR-ROUND CALENDAR
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	Lengthen the school year and allow schools to adjust when school days begin and end. Earmark reflection time for faculty, so they can step back from the daily demands of teaching to assess the academic progress of their students and adjust curricula as needed.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	All CMSD schools can use student-based budgeting to design more flexible calendars. Eighteen CMSD schools operate more than the traditionally required number of days. Four operate with a year-round calendar. Several CMSD schools offer additional in-school time outside the required number of hours including jump-start years and camps. The current CTU contract lengthened teachers' school day to provide 200 minutes a week of professional time. All Breakthrough Schools, I CAN Schools, and Stepstone Academy provide more than the state required amount of instruction time. Breakthrough Schools operate on an extended school year, but no partner charter schools operate on a year-round calendar.

PLAN GOAL	4. TALENT RECRUITMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	Attract and retain top talent, offer staff development programs for existing staff, and dismiss low-performing staff. Build a team focused on recruiting, developing, and retaining the best teachers and school leaders, one that will oversee the evaluation of teachers in a way that is fair and accurate.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	In 2014-15, CMSD retained 99% of teachers and 83% of principals who received the highest performance rating in 2013-14. CMSD implemented its new Teacher Development and Evaluation System to develop teacher talent, reward excellent teachers and dismiss poorly performing teachers.

The district can terminate tenured teachers who are rated ineffective for two successive years on their teacher evaluation, and non-tenured teachers who are rated ineffective for one year.

For 2014-15, 60 low-performing, non-tenured CMSD teachers were not renewed.

CMSD hired 36 Teach for America corps members for 2014-15.

CMSD hired 232 teachers with the support of The New Teacher Project.

CMSD's new Aspiring Principal Academy, implemented in 2014, trains educators for leadership positions (see p. 39).

Breakthrough Schools was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Incentive Fund. The grant funds design and implementation of new systems for evaluation, performance-based compensation, career pathways and professional development.

PLAN GOAL	5. ACADEMIC TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENT
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	Increase offerings of computer-assisted instruction, including the exploration of blended-learning classroom models. Expand investments in academic technologies, including software, hardware and staff training.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	CMSD has recently opened two technology-driven schools: Cleveland High School for Digital Arts in 2014-15, and Facing History New Tech High School in 2012-13. CMSD is developing a long-term instructional technology plan to meet the needs of schools. Stepstone Academy charter school uses a blended-learning approach. I CAN charter schools offer online Advanced Placement courses at the secondary level.

CMSD'S INVESTMENT SCHOOLS

Twenty-three of CMSD's lowest-performing schools have been identified for corrective action and dramatic investment since 2013-14. These schools employ a customized community wraparound service strategy and engage organizational and neighborhood partners to support students and families through access to a broad array of social services. This strategy is designed to eliminate barriers to student success and is supported by United Way of Greater Cleveland and partnering organizations that serve as lead agencies in these schools. Investment Schools have a three-year timeline to meet student achievement and other benchmarks.

PLAN GOAL	6. SUPPORT FOR HIGH-PERFORMING CHARTER SCHOOLS
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Provide a portion of levy funds to high-performing charter schools that partner with CMSD.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	Through an application process, CMSD has to date identified 17 charter schools to share approximately $4 million of levy funds each year. Ten are sponsored by CMSD, and seven have formal partnerships with the district (see p. 17). CMSD and partner charter schools are collaborating on the Gates District-Charter Collaboration Compact, which seeks to create new ways for charter schools and district schools to collaborate (see p. 39).

CLEVELAND'S PROGRAM FOR HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

The primary goal of PRE4CLE, established in November 2013, is to provide high-quality, universally accessible pre-K education to Cleveland children as young as four (and, by 2018, three). This requires the rapid and efficient expansion of, and increased demand for and enrollment in, high-performing, high-capacity learning settings. High-quality pre-K providers are those that meet specific organizational criteria and receive a rating of at least three stars in the state's five-star Step Up To Quality rating system. Between March 2014 and April 2015, PRE4CLE created 750 new high-quality seats.

PRE4CLE has two outcome-related goals. By 2016, at least half of participating children will show statistically significant development gains in the year before kindergarten. By 2018, two-thirds will arrive in kindergarten scoring above the Cuyahoga County mean for kindergarten readiness.

4 Create the Cleveland Transformation Alliance to ensure accountability for all public schools in the city.

Cleveland is home to approximately 170 public K-12 schools, both district and charter. Governance of schools is dispersed, which makes it difficult to advocate for needed system-wide change. To address this, the Alliance was created to ensure fidelity to the Cleveland Plan, assess the quality of all public schools in Cleveland, communicate to families about quality school choices, and monitor charter sector growth and quality.

PLAN GOAL	1. ENSURE FIDELITY TO THE CITYWIDE EDUCATION PLAN.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Convene a board of directors and committees to address work within the Cleveland Plan.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	The Alliance's board formed in December of 2012, with stakeholders representing CMSD, charter schools, businesses, foundations and community members including parents and educators. The board has formed active committees to address areas of finance, governance, school quality and Cleveland Plan progress. The Alliance has received funding from local and national foundations.

GATES DISTRICT-CHARTER COLLABORATION COMPACT

In 2014, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation named Cleveland a "Gates Compact City," recognizing the growing collaboration between CMSD and high-performing charter schools. CMSD, in partnership with Breakthrough Schools and the Cleveland Foundation, received a 12-month planning grant of $100,000 from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, which is supported by the Gates Foundation. The grant will support joint district-charter strategies to address such issues as improving low-performing schools, strengthening the delivery of special education services, and expanding charter school access to district facilities. A formal District-Charter Compact Agreement, aligned to the goals of the Cleveland Plan, is to be formalized in December 2015.

ASPIRING PRINCIPAL ACADEMY

Candidates in CMSD's Aspiring Principal Academy are promising leaders from Cleveland and beyond. The Academy provides five weeks of summer training, a year of residency with a mentor principal, and coaching and mentoring during each trainee's first year of placement in a Cleveland school. Ten aspiring leaders, selected from 153 applicants, participated in the 2014-15 training.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Communicate the Cleveland Plan's progress to the community.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	The Alliance issued this first progress report to inform the public on the Cleveland Plan's implementation and impact to date.

PLAN GOAL	2. ASSESS THE QUALITY OF ALL PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN CLEVELAND.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Identify the academic and operational performance standards that constitute a high-performing school.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	In spring 2014, the Alliance released its first comprehensive guide to all Cleveland district and charter schools, using information reported from the state, schools, and the community. In 2015, the Alliance developed its School Quality Framework (see p. 19) to set new and consistent standards for determining school quality for all district and charter schools. The Alliance's website was updated with new state data in October 2014 and with the Alliance School Quality Framework data in June 2015.

PLAN GOAL	3. COMMUNICATE TO FAMILIES ABOUT QUALITY SCHOOL CHOICES.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Strategically disseminate information about school quality, so that families can make informed school choices and the Alliance becomes the "go-to source" on school quality in Cleveland.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	The Alliance has launched two outreach campaigns: Right School Right Now and Choose Your School, Change the Future!, as well as a website, ClevelandTA.org. The Choose Your School! campaign reached an estimated 1.2 million people through printed books, billboards, kiosks, web ads, print ads in local newspapers, and radio. ClevelandTA.org allows parents, students, and others to provide their feedback on how well schools serve children and the community. The Alliance has trained 24 grassroots School Quality Ambassadors, representing 18 neighborhoods, who reach out to families with information about school quality and options. The Alliance and a team of School Quality Ambassadors regularly visit schools to observe indicators of quality. The Alliance has conducted market research, including focus groups, to continue honing its ability to effectively communicate with families.

PLAN GOAL	4. MONITOR CHARTER SECTOR GROWTH AND QUALITY.
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	Exercise legal authority to make recommendations to the Ohio Department of Education as it considers the granting, renewal or extension of agreements with charter school sponsors.
PROGRESS/IMPACT	The Alliance has developed criteria sponsors must use to open new charter schools in Cleveland. In 2015, an Alliance board task force reviewed an application submitted by Buckeye Community Hope Foundation, and made a recommendation to ODE on the continuing ability of the sponsor to oversee schools in Cleveland. The Alliance has helped promote awareness of charter school quality locally and statewide. The Alliance has successfully advocated for state law changes to ensure its authority to review charter school sponsors and make recommendations to the Ohio Department of Education.

REACHING FAMILIES AND STUDENTS: THE CLEVELAND TRANSFORMATION ALLIANCE

The Alliance achieves its mission through community partnerships with more than 50 trusted organizations that provide connections at the citywide, neighborhood and block level. These partners have helped the Alliance distribute more than 20,000 printed pieces of information including its *School Quality Guide* and direct mail.

Electronic media, including ClevelandTA.org, provide a powerful platform for the Alliance, as market research indicates that 60% of Cleveland families would use a website to learn about public school options. Since its launch in 2014, the Alliance website has had more than 25,000 visits. On the website, users can search for schools by school name, Zip Code, address, academic performance, grade level, and status as a new school. They can also create a virtual "shopping cart" to compare school options side-by-side. In addition, the website features a crowd-sourced rating system that allows people to log in and post reviews of the schools they know first-hand. The Alliance has gained a large social-media following, creating an online movement of friends following Cleveland education.

The Alliance School Quality Framework (see p. 19) was an effort not only to measure progress toward the goal of increasing the number of students in high-performing schools, but also to provide user-friendly school-quality information to families.

The Alliance sees communication and outreach as key strategies to create a community of active and informed school choosers.

PART FOUR

KEY IMPACTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION



KEY IMPACTS TO DATE

Although the Cleveland Plan was developed in early 2012, its implementation did not begin until after the signing of enabling legislation and passage of the operating levy later that year, and the approval of a new teacher contract in the spring of 2013. Beginning in the summer of 2013, much of the implementation effort has focused on transitioning CMSD from a traditional top-down, single-source school district to a portfolio district. In many ways, the work of this first stage of effort has centered on disrupting long-entrenched and outdated systems, so new ones can take their places.

THERE ARE POSITIVE SIGNS THAT A SIGNIFICANT TRANSITION IS TAKING PLACE WITHIN CMSD, INCLUDING:

Greater autonomy for district schools
CMSD has undergone a massive institutional reorganization, including delegating many former responsibilities of the central office to individual schools and administrators. As of 2014-15, 48% of the district's operating budget was controlled at the school level, compared with 0.05% in 2011-12. Principals and teachers also enjoy greater latitude in determining school hours, programs and curricula. This embrace of autonomy for individual schools gives each school greater freedom than ever before to meet the needs of its particular students.

An improved talent recruitment and development system
A new talent office was developed to hire and place effective teachers in schools before the start of the school year. The Teacher Development and Evaluation System gives CMSD a mechanism for developing talent and retaining top teachers while terminating those rated ineffective. The Aspiring Principals Program has resulted in the development and hiring of highly qualified new principals.

Enhanced school choice and enrollment process
Efforts are underway to create a streamlined enrollment process at CMSD, including investments in technology and staff. CMSD has created new print and online resources to provide families with information about school choices. The Alliance's resources are distributed by an on-the-ground network of neighborhood "ambassadors." In 2014-15, more than nine out of 10 entering CMSD ninth graders made active high school choices.

An integrated portfolio planning process

CMSD's Office of New and Innovative Schools oversees a growing portfolio of high-performing schools, most of which were opened in partnership with external organizations and with advisory committees. Three of the schools have selective admission criteria.

IN ADDITION TO THE WORK TAKING PLACE WITHIN CMSD, THERE ARE OTHER POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS THAT ARE INTEGRAL TO THE CLEVELAND PLAN:

Creation of the Cleveland Transformation Alliance

The Alliance began operations in December 2012, providing a forum for strengthening collaboration among organizations working to improve Cleveland's public education system. CMSD, charter school operators, the Cleveland Teachers Union, the mayor's office, businesses and foundations now regularly communicate to work toward common education goals.

The Alliance has also developed print and online resources that report on school quality based on information provided by the state, schools and the community.

Improved relationships between CMSD and the charter sector

One key outcome of this collaborative spirit among Cleveland's education stakeholders is CMSD's sharing of levy funds with partner charter schools, an unprecedented demonstration of priority being placed on quality education over institutional boundaries. CMSD has also collaborated with charter school operators to open new schools.

Development of a citywide early education plan

PRE4CLE is a concerted effort to increase the number of high-quality preschool seats in Cleveland. Between March 2014 and April 2015, PRE4CLE created 750 new high-quality seats (see box, p. 38).

THIS FIRST PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CLEVELAND PLAN HAS BEEN A REMARKABLE AND NECESSARY PERIOD OF RESTRUCTURING, RE-ENGINEERING AND BUILDING NEW SYSTEMS, ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS. AT THE SAME TIME, SOME PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON KEY IMPACT MEASURES:

Student achievement

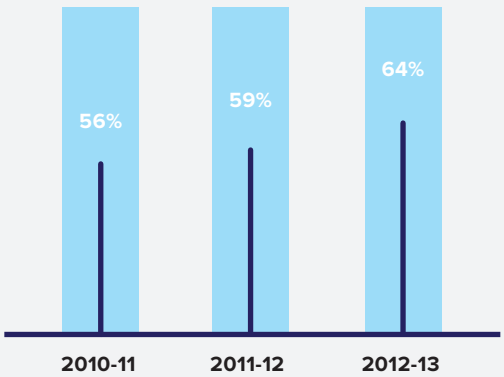
CMSD's high school graduation rate has climbed eight percentage points since 2010-11 (see p. 45). The percentage of CMSD students meeting the college-ready benchmark ACT score of 21 increased to 14% in 2013-14 from 12% in 2011-12. And after nearly a decade of losing ground on value-added measures for students in grades 4 through 8, CMSD met progress indicators for the last two years.

Public support

Public regard for current reform strategies appears to be positive. In a 2015 poll of Cleveland voters with school-aged children, 72% agreed that the schools are moving in the right direction, 74% trust the district's leaders to make decisions about the schools, and 91% said improving the schools is critical to making the city and its neighborhoods stronger.

CMSD FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATES

CMSD's high school graduation rate rose to 64% in 2012-13, an increase of eight percentage points since 2010-11 and its highest level in decades.



Recommendations

While significant progress has been made in developing district and community infrastructure to support the portfolio strategy, and while the quality of Cleveland's portfolio of schools is growing, the overall performance of public schools in the city is not improving fast enough. The Alliance calls for a more deliberate and strategic focus on meeting the overarching goals of the Cleveland Plan: to triple the number of students in high-performing schools and eliminate failing schools. In addition, the stakeholders must strive to ensure there are quality school options in all Cleveland neighborhoods, with a focus on the 11 underserved neighborhoods identified in the IFF report (see p. 32).

To date, progress toward meeting those goals has been incremental. While the number of students in failing schools has declined, the number of students in high-performing schools has also fallen. Meanwhile, the number of students in low-performing schools has increased.

The following recommendations are meant to provide a framework for achieving the Cleveland Plan's goals. They are not intended to prescribe specific strategies and action steps; that is the purview of educators engaged in this work. Instead, they provide general direction based on the findings in this report, the original goals and approaches outlined in the Cleveland Plan, and relevant studies published during the past year.

RECOMMENDATION 1

CMSD and charter school operators should develop differentiated school support and intervention strategies based on the current performance of their schools.

High-performing schools: (11 schools, 3,173 students): Strategies should focus on ensuring these schools continue to perform at a high level. CMSD and charter school operators should maintain current investment levels. They should work with the schools to make sure all seats are filled with Cleveland residents and should add seat capacity where possible, particularly in and near underserved neighborhoods.

Mid-performing schools: (25 schools, 7,353 students) Strategies should focus on helping these schools transition from "good to great." Investment in these schools has the most potential for helping to triple the number of students in high-performing schools. Emphasis should be placed on increasing student engagement and motivation, differentiating instruction based on student needs and using time, talent and resources more creatively to improve results.

Low-performing schools: (69 schools, 22,382 students) This is the largest category of schools with the widest variance in performance. A "one-size-fits-all" approach will not work here. Based on performance data and trends, CMSD and charter school operators should classify these schools into three categories – high-potential, medium-potential and low-potential – and customize support and intervention plans for each level. Priority should be given to high and medium potential schools in underserved neighborhoods. In some cases, low potential schools should be treated as failing schools (see below).

Failing schools: (44 schools, 18,032 students) CMSD should adhere to its three-year timeline to assess the progress of its 23 Investment Schools. Those schools not making significant gains should be closed or replaced. CMSD should also develop aggressive but time-limited intervention plans addressing its current failing schools that are not Investment Schools, as well as some of its low-performing, low-potential schools. Charter operators and sponsors should develop aggressive intervention plans for the 10 failing charter schools under their jurisdiction. The Alliance should continue to support efforts at the state level to enact legislation that provides the state with the authority to more quickly close failing charter schools.

New school start-ups: The development of new district and charter schools over the past decade has contributed to improving the quality of Cleveland's portfolio of schools. In 2013-14, seven of the 11 high-performing schools had been started within the previous 10 years, as had 11 of the 25 mid-performing schools. CMSD's recent focus on phasing out two low-performing comprehensive high schools and replacing them with several new smaller schools is also promising. Creating new schools is critical to expanding Cleveland's portfolio of quality schools. CMSD and the charter

sector should work together to strategically develop new schools to replace failing schools and to increase the number of high-quality options, particularly in high-need neighborhoods as identified in the 2014 IFF report (see p. 32). The Alliance should research and present promising school models to CMSD and charter operators.

Increasing the quality of Cleveland's school portfolio using this tiered approach will require CMSD and charter school operators to put in place deliberate and comprehensive planning processes. It will also require them to have the courage to continue to invest in what is working and pull back from what is not. This will result in the closure of some persistently failing schools. The Alliance must continue to support affected families during periods of transition, helping them to select new schools for their children so that students' education is not interrupted.

RECOMMENDATION 2

All stakeholders invested in the Cleveland Plan, including CMSD, the charter sector, Cleveland Teachers Union, the business and foundation communities, state policymakers, the Transformation Alliance, neighborhood-based organizations and higher education institutions should intensify efforts and build capacity in the following areas that directly impact school quality.

Strong leaders and teachers for all public schools: As already reported in this document, CMSD and the charter sector have begun several initiatives aimed at recruiting, hiring and developing quality teachers and principals. Efforts should be made to expand relationships with proven sources of teacher talent and to work with local colleges of education to create exemplary urban teacher preparation programs. CMSD should deepen its implementation of the new Teacher Development and Evaluation System to develop its teacher talent, reward excellent teachers and dismiss poorly performing teachers. CMSD should also continue to grow its leadership pipeline by expanding the Aspiring Principals Program and recruiting experienced leaders from outside Cleveland. CMSD should assist principals in better understanding and using the new financial, operational and curricular autonomies they enjoy under the Cleveland Plan. School autonomy should continue to be expanded by securing additional flexibilities through board policy and collective bargaining, particularly related to the hiring of non-teaching staff.

Use of data and technology: The use of data and technology must be expanded on two fronts – in the classroom and at the systems level. Both district and charter schools should explore additional opportunities for blended-learning classroom models, combining computer-assisted instruction with classroom instruction. Used effectively, such models allow schools to provide a more individualized approach to education and offer strong preparation for a global economy that continues to emphasize and reward computer literacy. CMSD must continue to update its information technology systems to ensure improved communication and data sharing between systems, schools and the district office so schools can better use resources and make more timely decisions. Staff training should be a component of the overall technology plan.

Parent and community demand for quality schools: High-performing district and charter schools must be fully enrolled. Crucial to this is a citywide enrollment system, which will provide parents a "one-stop shop" for enrolling their children in any school they choose — charter or district. CMSD must prioritize the development and implementation of such a system, and must work closely with the charter sector in its planning and launch. The system should include access to information about school quality and directly link to the Alliance's website to increase the likelihood that families will choose high-performing schools. Families often choose failing or low-performing schools because those schools are the best or only choice in their neighborhood. As a result, the Alliance should develop family advocacy programs that empower parents to participate in or lead efforts to improve failing schools. These programs should help educate families on the metrics used to assess school performance, for example, and advise them on how to make their voices heard in advocating for change.

District-charter partnerships: While district-charter partnerships have improved, there are additional areas of collaboration that should be explored.

Potential focus areas include talent recruitment; special education; professional development; addressing failing and low-performing schools; and sharing buildings. In addition, the Alliance, CMSD and its current charter partners should work to expand the number of charter schools that see themselves as partners in the work of the Cleveland Plan.





Conclusion

Important progress has been made toward achieving the goals of the Cleveland Plan even as significant challenges remain. While the number of students in failing schools has dropped, the number in high-performing schools has also fallen. The Alliance recognizes it must continue to push for accelerated progress.

A complicating factor for the coming year is the expected change to the state's rating system (see p. 19). The Alliance must remain vigilant about any initial declines in school quality under this new system while taking the longer view that students, teachers and administrators may need time to adjust to new expectations.

Realizing the Cleveland Plan's goals will require a balance of urgency and patience. All stakeholders share in the responsibility to ensure every child in Cleveland receives a high-quality education.

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF TERMS, REFERENCES, BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF



Glossary of terms

Blended-learning
The definition of blended-learning can be fluid, but generally describes an approach where a portion of traditional face-to-face instruction is replaced by web-based learning.

Charter school
A tuition-free, publicly funded, privately operated school with a greater degree of autonomy than the typical district school; known legally as "community schools" in Ohio.

Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD)
The public district that serves most of Cleveland, along with Bratenahl, Linndale, Newburgh Heights, and parts of Brook Park and Garfield Heights. (clevelandmetroschools.org.)

***Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools* (the Cleveland Plan)**
A plan created in 2012 to guide implementation of a portfolio strategy for Cleveland's schools. The plan includes four components: grow the number of high-performing district and charter schools in Cleveland and close and replace failing schools; focus CMSD's central office on key support and governance roles and transfer authority and resources to schools; create the Cleveland Transformation Alliance to ensure accountability for all public schools in the city; invest and phase in high-leverage system reforms across all schools from preschool to college and career.

Cleveland Teachers Union (CTU)
The labor union representing teachers working in CMSD schools. The CTU is affiliated with the Ohio Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers. The union represents only a few teachers working in Cleveland charter schools.

Cleveland Transformation Alliance (the Alliance)
A nonprofit organization created by House Bill 525 to assess the quality of every public school in Cleveland, communicate with families and stakeholders about quality school options, ensure fidelity to the Cleveland Plan, and monitor charter sector quality and growth.

District school
Schools operated by CMSD. District schools are free and open to all students, up to the school's capacity. Although CMSD does sponsor some charter schools and has formal partnership agreements with others, these are not considered district schools.

Failing school
A rating under the Alliance School Quality Framework of a district or charter school that earns a D or F on two state quality indicators. (The indicators are performance index for all schools, value-added for schools serving grades K through 8, and four-year graduation rate for high schools.)

Ford Next Generation Learning (Ford NGL)
A Ford Motor Company Fund initiative with the mission to "create a new generation of young people who will graduate from high school both college – and career-ready – an emerging workforce prepared to compete successfully in the 21st century economy." Ford NGL is partnering with CMSD to assess and create redesign plans for five CMSD high schools: Garrett Morgan School of Science, Jane Addams Business Careers Center, Martin Luther King Jr., Max S. Hayes and Washington Park Environmental Studies.

Gates District-Charter Compact
An agreement between CMSD and Breakthrough Schools to become a Gates Compact City. The agreement will further develop relationships between district and charter schools in Cleveland. Funded by a $100,000 grant from the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, the District-Charter Compact Agreement is expected to be finalized in December 2015.

High-performing school
A rating under the Alliance School Quality Framework of a district or charter school that earns an A or B on two state quality indicators. (The indicators are performance index for all schools, value-added for schools serving grades K through 8, and four-year graduation rate for high schools.)

High school graduation rate
The four-year graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who graduate in four years or less by the number of students who form the final adjusted cohort for the graduating class. This cohort includes students who are identified as first-time 9th graders four years earlier, with adjustments for transfers in and out of the cohort. In order to include summer graduates in the graduation rate calculation, the four-year graduation rate is lagged by one year so the rate on the 2014 report card, used in this report, represents the four-year rate for the graduating class of 2013.

Investment School
One of 23 CMSD schools selected by CMSD, in partnership with the United Way of Greater Cleveland, for corrective action and added investment. These schools, among the district's lowest-performing, use additional funds to provide wraparound services to students, improve professional development for teachers and staff, and other interventions.

IFF
A Chicago-based nonprofit community development institution that in 2014 conducted a neighborhood-by-neighborhood study of Cleveland public school options, both district and charter. The study compared the number of school-age children in each community with the number of high-quality seats available in that community, and identified 11 neighborhoods with the greatest need for increased access to high-quality schools.

Low-performing school
A rating under the Alliance School Quality Framework of a district or charter school that earns a D or F on one of two state quality indicators, and a C or better on the other. (The indicators are performance index for all schools, value-added for schools serving grades K through 8, and four-year graduation rate for high schools.)

Mid-performing school
A rating under the Alliance School Quality Framework of a district or charter school that earns a C on one of two state quality indicators, and a C or better on the other. (The indicators are performance index for all schools, value-added for schools serving grades K through 8, and four-year graduation rate for high schools.)

Nonpublic schools
Ohio has two types of nonpublic schools. Chartered nonpublic schools are private schools that follow state operating standards and are officially chartered by the Ohio Board of Education. These schools can choose to offer a religious-based curriculum. Other Ohio chartered schools, both public and nonpublic, must recognize credits and diplomas from such schools. Non-chartered, non-tax supported schools choose to not be

chartered by the state because of truly held religious beliefs. They are required to file a report annually with ODE. Because these schools are not chartered by the state, other schools, colleges, universities, and employers have discretion over decisions regarding the acceptance of transfer credits or graduation credentials from non-chartered schools. Most nonpublic schools in Cleveland are chartered.

Ohio Principal Evaluation System (OPES)
Adopted in 2008, OPES is the method used by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to measure the effectiveness of principals across the state. OPES combines measures of student performance with principals' own performance on standards including professional goal setting, communication and professionalism, and skills and knowledge.

Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES)
Revised in June 2014, OTES is ODE's method of measuring the effectiveness of teachers across the state. OTES combines measures of student performance with teachers' own performance on standards including knowledge of subject matter, lesson delivery, and classroom environment.

Partner charter school
As used in this report, a Cleveland charter school that is either sponsored by CMSD or signs a formal partnership agreement with the district. These schools share a portion of the proceeds from the 2012 operating levy passed by voters living in the school district, and the district can elect to include enrollment and student performance data from these schools, under certain conditions, on its state report card.

Performance index
This calculation measures student performance on the Ohio Achievement Assessments for grades four through eight, and on the Ohio Graduation Test in grade 10.

Portfolio schools strategy
An approach to school improvement whereby districts and the charter sector provide high-quality school options citywide for all families. This strategy includes recruitment, training, and retention of excellent principals and teachers; increased autonomy at district schools in exchange for greater performance-based accountability; funding decisions based on students attending individual schools; and extensive public engagement. Portfolio strategies have been implemented in cities such as Baltimore, Denver, Hartford, and New York. For Cleveland, the portfolio is defined as all CMSD schools and charter schools that have partnered with the district.

Public schools
As used in this report, the term "public schools" includes all schools operated by a school district as well as all charter schools, legally known in Ohio as "community schools."

School autonomy
The ability of school leaders to make decisions about staff, budget, curriculum, and pedagogy, independent of district-level mandates.

School quality
As measured by the Alliance School Quality Framework, a combination of an individual school's state-reported ratings. (Performance index for all schools, value-added for schools serving grades K through 8, and four-year graduation rate for high schools.) More broadly, "school quality" can be used to describe any measurement of a school's effectiveness at fostering academic, social, emotional, and civic well-being in its students and community.

Sponsor
An entity to which the Ohio Department of Education has delegated oversight of charter schools, generally a nonprofit organization or a public entity such as an educational service center or school district. By signing contracts with charter schools, sponsors authorize the opening of the school, agree to provide oversight and certain kinds of assistance, and collect a percentage of state funds as their fee. Generally known as "authorizers" in other states.

Value added
A calculation that uses student achievement data over time to measure the gains in learning made by students. Value-added provides a way to measure the effect a school has on student academic performance over the course of a school year.

Wraparound service strategy
A school reform strategy by which schools partner with organizations to increase student and community access to social services, medical and dental care, job training programs, and other resources. Wraparound services are available in many of CMSD's Investment Schools and are supported through United Way of Greater Cleveland and in partnership with community organizations that serve as lead agencies implementing the strategy.

Resources

ODE Interactive Local Report Card
reportcard.education.ohio.gov

Higher Education Compact of Greater Cleveland
highereducationcompact.org

Center On Reinventing Public Education
crpe.org

Cleveland Metropolitan School District
clevelandmetroschools.org

Cleveland Transformation Alliance
ClevelandTA.org
• *Cleveland's Plan for Transforming Schools*
• School quality ratings for every public school in Cleveland

A Shared Responsibility: Ensuring Quality Education in Every Cleveland Neighborhood
iff.org/education

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