



Mid-Cycle Progress Report

Duneland School Corporation
Chesterton, Indiana

65045

Introduction

This report is designed to reflect on your institution's progress as related to the findings of the most recent Accreditation Engagement Review. This report allows your institution to provide information relevant to the progress in meeting the Cognia Performance Standards and/or Assurances as outlined in the Area(s) for Improvement. It also allows Cognia to review and respond to the same.

Using evidence to support your responses, you will summarize your institution's progress and other general information relevant to the Area(s) for Improvement. Cite and share evidence of results based on your institution's progress.

Accreditation is Continuous Improvement

Accreditation is a continuous improvement process. Cognia defines continuous improvement as "an embedded behavior rooted in an institution's culture that constantly focuses on conditions, processes, and practices to improve teaching and learning."

Cognia believes all institutions can improve no matter how well they are currently performing. In the same manner that educators are expected to understand the unique needs of every learner and tailor the education experience to drive student success, every institution must be empowered to map out and embrace their unique improvement journey. Cognia expects institutions to use the results and analyses of data from diverse sources to select and implement actions that drive improvement in education quality and student performance. Cognia recognizes that each institution's improvement journey is unique and, as such, actions designed for improvement must be tailored to meet the needs of the institution and its learners.

Following the Engagement Review, the institution is expected to review the findings in the report and initiate plans to address the Area(s) for Improvement. These Area(s) for Improvement provide the basis for the Progress Report.

Results of Improvement Actions

This Progress Report should include narratives for each Area for Improvement that provide the results of your improvement efforts. The narratives should include descriptive evidence about how you have **engaged** stakeholders, practices and processes you have **implemented**, **results** you have achieved, how you plan to **sustain** your improvements, and how these new practices will become **embedded** in the culture of your institution. These **five levels of impact** align with the three phases of the i3 Rubric that are outlined below.

Additional Requirements for Early Learning Schools

Cognia institutions that have earned separate and distinct Cognia Early Learning Accreditation are required to complete additional items, which are found at the end of this template.

i3 Rubric

You will use Cognia's i3 Rubric to guide your assessment of your efforts since your previous Engagement Review. Examine each Area for Improvement, and related standards, against the rubric to determine which level of impact within the phases--Initiate, Improve, or Impact--your institution is currently in and identify your plan to move the policy, process, and/or practice to the next level of impact.

In Cognia's approach to change management, the i3 Rubric, we use three phases that describe the change process. These phases help leaders to investigate and evaluate the contexts of change within their organization. In this process it is important to note that, while each improvement journey is unique, the journey is driven by key actions:

Initiate

The first phase of the improvement journey is to initiate actions to cause and achieve better results. The elements of the Initiate phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Engagement and Implementation. **Engagement** is the level of involvement and frequency stakeholders are engaged in the desired practices, processes, or programs within the institution. **Implementation** is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are monitored and adjusted for quality and fidelity of implementation. Processes and practices you identify within the Initiate phase should become the focus of the institution's continuous improvement journey to move toward the collection, analysis, and use of data to measure the results of engagement and implementation. A focus on enhancing the capacity of the institution in meeting the identified goals has the greatest potential impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Improve

The second phase of the improvement journey is to gather and evaluate the results of actions to improve. The elements of the Improve phase are defined within the Levels of Impact of Results and Sustainability. **Results** represent the collection, analysis, and use of data and evidence to demonstrate attaining the desired outcome(s). **Sustainability** is results achieved consistently to demonstrate growth and improvement over time (minimum of three years). Processes and practices identified within the Improve phase are those in which the institution is using results to inform their continuous improvement processes and using results over time to demonstrate the achievement of goals. The institution should continue to analyze and use results to guide improvements in student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

Impact

The third phase of achieving improvement is the impact where desired practices are deeply entrenched. The elements of the Impact phase are defined within the Level of Impact of Embeddedness. **Embeddedness** is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are deeply ingrained in the culture and operation of the institution. Processes and practices identified within the Impact phase are those in which the institution has demonstrated ongoing growth and improvement over time and has embedded the practices within the culture of the institution. Institutions should continue to support and sustain these practices that are yielding results in improving student achievement and organizational effectiveness.

i3 Rubric

INITIATE		IMPROVE		IMPACT
Engagement	Implementation	Results	Sustainability	Embeddedness
<i>The level of involvement and frequency stakeholders are engaged in the desired practices, processes, or programs.</i>	<i>The desired practices, processes, or programs are monitored and adjusted for quality and fidelity of implementation.</i>	<i>The collection, analysis, and use of data and evidence to demonstrate attaining the desired result(s).</i>	<i>Results achieved consistently demonstrate growth and improvement over time (minimum of three years).</i>	<i>The desired practices, processes, or programs are deeply ingrained in the culture and operation of the institution.</i>
Few stakeholders are involved in support of the desired practice or program.	The desired practice or program is minimally implemented.	There is little or no data and evidence of attaining the desired result(s).	The institution has little or no data and evidence to indicate growth and improvement over time.	The desired practice or program is not ingrained in the institution.
Some stakeholders are frequently involved in support of the desired practice or program.	The desired practice or program is being monitored for implementation.	The institution collects and analyzes data and evidence to demonstrate the progress toward attaining the desired result(s).	The institution has some data and evidence to indicate growth and improvement over time.	The desired practice or program is ingrained in parts of the institution.
Many stakeholders are frequently involved in support of the desired practice or program.	The desired practice or program is being monitored and adjusted for quality and fidelity of implementation.	The institution collects, analyzes, and uses multiple sources of data and evidence to demonstrate progress toward attaining the desired result(s).	The institution has consistently documented data and evidence to indicate growth and improvement over time.	The desired practice or program is ingrained in the culture of the day-to-day work of the institution.
Most stakeholders are frequently involved in support of the desired practice or program.	Formal processes are used to demonstrate that the desired practice or program is implemented and monitored with quality and fidelity.	Formal processes are implemented to collect, analyze, and use multiple forms of data and evidence to demonstrate progress toward attaining the desired result(s).	The institution has consistently documented data and evidence to indicate sustained growth and improvement over time.	The desired practice or program is deeply ingrained and protected throughout the culture and the operations of the institution.

You will see that each level of impact has its own rubric to move from minimal practices within that level to best practices. For example, in Engagement, the frequency of involvement is *low* with *few* stakeholders engaged, while the best practice is that *most* stakeholders are *frequently* engaged.

As you determine your institution’s level of impact on the i3 Rubric, identify 1) ways in which your institution will move from one level to the next, 2) how the levels guide and impact your improvement process, as well as your programs, processes, and practices, and 3) goals and activities that will support your institution’s movement to and movement through the next level of impact.

Completing the Progress Report

Using evidence to support your responses, summarize your institution's progress and other general information relevant to the Area(s) for Improvement. Select your institution's level of impact from the i3 Rubric and follow the narrative prompts provided below.

Areas for Improvement

The following Area for Improvement was identified in the Engagement Review Report.

Area for Improvement #1: Expand systemic processes for PLCs and work for consistency and constancy of practice from building-to-building, grade-to-grade, and content-to-content ensuring that formal processes include measures of accountability and include professional development to support and extend capacity within the organization and align with the current and revised strategic plan.

Standard 5 Professional staff members embrace effective collegiality and collaboration in support of learners.

Standard 6 Professional staff members receive the support they need to strengthen their professional practice.

Institution Response

i3 Rubric. Based on your findings, what level of impact from the i3 Rubric is your institution demonstrating in this Area for Improvement?

Embeddedness

Narrative.

- State whether you have achieved your goals relative to this Area for Improvement
- Document your findings
- Cite supporting evidence
- Specifically outline your plans and related activities towards continuous improvement based on your assessment with the i3 Rubric and pursuing Embeddedness
- Plans to continue working towards improvement related to this Area for Improvement

This area has been a primary focus for the district for six years now and we have met this area of improvement. Goals to develop and embed Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to a sustainable level appear in both our 2020-2023 and 2024-2028 strategic plans. Specifically, following the 2023 accreditation review, the strategic planning goals established for PLCs focus on consistency, sustainability, and an embedded culture. While PLC specific goals exist, there are elements of PLC culture that are also woven into other goals for Exceptional Learning (Exl), Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and our Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC). The focus on PLCs is not just written in goals it is sustained in our practice.

The district's first intentional entry into PLCs included two years' worth of training with a consultant from Solution Tree. Building and district leaders as well as teacher leaders from each school were included in ongoing training with embedded coaching. Each building's Guiding Coalition was then tasked with providing foundational training and support for the building for roll out of the PLC process. Subsequently, Solution Tree then provided three coaches to conduct follow up coaching to each school. These efforts were made to fine tune and further refine our practices. This period also showed growth in the commitment to time and

resources. Schools were asked to develop PLC collaboration calendars to commit time to working with all PLC groups as well as provide ongoing training and support for small and large group data review. The external review was conducted during this time and provided additional support to modify our upcoming strategic plan and provide pivotal feedback to further narrow our focus for improvement.

To provide continued ongoing support, the Department of Teaching Learning focused on several key areas. The first was utilizing a school-based visit approach to meet each semester with guiding coalitions to celebrate successes, seek areas for additional improvement, and develop patterns for district wide professional development and support. Instructional coaches and building leaders were provided ongoing training as well in the areas of critical conversations and change agency to develop building and district consistency. Instructional coaching was focused on the PLC process as well as GVC courses were being rolled out, and PLCs began to focus on common formative and summative assessment data. Reinforcement was provided for this practice at all levels providing a district-wide consistency to courses and grade levels. Additionally, a PLC lens was applied to all initiatives to ensure that the foundation for new strategies returned to the PLC practices.

The district has also undergone a construction and eventual redistricting process. This included a need to develop new start and end times for all schools in the district with modifications to the workday schedule. This stakeholder-based scheduling process also included further review of progress on dedicated PLC time. PLCs had been conducted either outside of or during the student day. The newly developed schedule allowed for district-wide consistent dedicated time for PLC processes. Ongoing conversations with the teacher's association allowed development within the collaboration calendars of time for PLCs as well as PLC preparation. Resources were aligned to provide coverage and support to ensure a focus on PLCs.

Several years into the process, in winter of 2025, an outside consultant, Dr. Jim Snapp, was hired to conduct a review of our PLC culture to make recommendations for leverage points to further meet the area of improvement. His work included meeting multiple times with stakeholder groups in each building and at the district level to ask questions, provide follow up, and then eventually submit a report. His recommendations outlined several key areas for growth in the PLCs. The superintendent then provided the results of this report to each school in a presentation and allowed them to provide their own survey responses to each recommendation. Metrics were used to determine which areas we agreed on moving forward and other areas where professional growth may be needed.

Moving into the 2025-2026 school year the strategic plan, external review, and new consultant's report helped to refine out PLC work. Through realignment of resources of time, PLC meetings were moved to a consistent day at each level during the week and time spent in PLCs increased. PLCs, when possible, meet in one location allowing administrators and other supporting leaders to move between PLCs seamlessly to provide feedback. A district-wide PLC agenda was rolled out with a base agenda template and then supporting templates to guide discussions based on the needs of the PLC in addressing their current GVC progress. Timelines have been established for when agendas are to be distributed and when feedback will be provided. Training and coaching on the use of the agenda is ongoing. District leaders are asked to provide written feedback on the agendas. At monthly district leadership meetings, leaders are bringing example PLC agendas to discuss. In these settings district leadership is providing feedback and support for the building leader to leverage consistency and change. This also adds a layer of accountability for leaders at each level.

It is noted that recent Cognia surveys demonstrate growth in the PLC area. Questions reviewing focus on data driven decisions on curriculum and instruction have steadily increased from 3.84 to 4.04 on staff surveys. Staff surveys also showed an increase from 3.77 to 4.34 regarding participation in collaborative communities. This was the highest scoring survey item.

Utilization of the common expanded time, consistent agendas, and ongoing feedback loops coupled with building and district training land us on track to a ranking of Embeddedness. The work has a regular cadence which demonstrates that through time it will evolve to meet our needs but also demonstrate systemic change.

Cognia’s Assessment of Area for Improvement #1.

The following is an assessment of the evaluator's findings.

Sufficient progress - no further action required

Summary of Cognia’s Findings

Duneland School Corporation has sufficiently met and embedded expectations regarding professional learning communities. Leaders have sustained practices that have withstood changes to scheduled start and end times as well as changes in teacher and student populations. District leadership has maintained a presence in schools as a source of support and accountability for those implementing PLCs. Evidence provided indicates teachers feel curriculum and instructional decisions are driven by data analysis within collaborative communities. The leadership team has structures in place that will maintain expectations for PLCs and therefore continue to evolve to meet district needs.

The following Area for Improvement was identified in the Engagement Review Report.

Area for Improvement #2: Facilitate action research and consider a feasibility study addressing the alignment of standards-based mastery learning, focusing on growth to include grades 5-12.

Standard 3 Leaders actively engage stakeholders to support the institution's priorities and guiding principles that promote learners' academic growth and well-being.

Standard 17 Learners have equitable opportunities to realize their learning potential.

Standard 21 Instruction is characterized by high expectations and learner-centered practices.

Institution Response

i3 Rubric. Based on your findings, what level of impact from the i3 Rubric is your institution demonstrating in this Area for Improvement?

Results

Narrative.

- State whether you have achieved your goals relative to this Area for Improvement
- Document your findings
- Cite supporting evidence
- Specifically outline your plans and related activities towards continuous improvement based on your assessment with the i3 Rubric and pursuing Embeddedness
- Plans to continue working towards improvement related to this Area for Improvement

Leading up to and during the External Review, the district focused on researching, training, and implementing Standards-Based Grading (SBG) at the elementary (K–4) level. This work was embedded within our Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC), supported by training and ongoing coaching. It is now deeply ingrained in daily practice, with only minor adjustments occurring during curriculum “look back” reviews. Both written and verbal feedback from the Cognia evaluator emphasized the need to extend this work beyond grade 4.

To begin meaningful work at the secondary level, we first addressed consistency in grading practices and calculations. Meeting agendas at both school and district levels demonstrate tracked progress in aligning grade calculation percentages, extra credit practices, retake procedures, and other logistical aspects. Next, we focused on aligning the instructional materials used for grading. Courses are now established K–12 with consistent Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) and Common Summative Assessments (CSAs), aligned to Indiana standards and prioritized with both state and local data. Coaching during GVC course building supported rigor in assessment development, ensuring curriculum is now standardized and performance based. Building and district-based PLCs are also involved in item analysis of these assessments to make alterations to instructional practices.

Cognia survey data shows staff perceptions of grading practices with markers of consistent grading practices increasing from 3.73 as one of our bottom-five to 4.10. Additionally, staff report increased in systematic processes of informing students regarding their progress with survey scores moving from 3.89 to 4.18 on this question. To reinforce consistency, building and district leaders review grade distributions quarterly. These reviews have prompted targeted training and support for staff, ensuring consistent grading practices within courses and across teachers.

At the high school level, additional work has focused on grade weighting and awards programs (laude system), with input from stakeholder groups. The intent is to align grading policies with postsecondary admission expectations. This process is ongoing and will include parent and student presentations before changes are finalized.

Leadership reviews indicate some lingering inconsistencies remain, but there is strong consensus that grading reflects student mastery of standards. While traditional grading scales are still applied 6-12, assessments continue to evolve within developed courses. With ongoing training in Universal Design for Learning (UDL), new conversations are emerging about assessment formats. The next critical step will be aligning UDL practices with GVC assessments and PLC processes. Evidence from PLC agendas shows UDL strategies are already improving student performance on CFAs and CSAs. Monitoring through course look-back processes will ensure clarity on negotiable versus non-negotiable assessment practices.

Parent communication is a key element of this work. At the K–4 level, a handbook, quarterly guides, and a website support parents in understanding SBG and report cards. If similar reporting changes are extended to grades 5–12, a broader communication and training effort will be necessary.

To fully meet the Area of Improvement, the district will need to evaluate the feasibility of moving beyond grading practices and policies toward a modified reporting system at grades 5–12, similar to the approach already in place at K–4.

Cognia’s Assessment of Area for Improvement #2.

The following is an assessment of the evaluator's findings.

Some progress - to be completed prior to the next Accreditation Engagement Review

Summary of Cognia’s Findings

The Duneland School Corporation leadership team has sufficiently addressed this area for improvement by addressing inconsistencies between grade levels, content areas, and classrooms regarding common assessments and grading practices, which increased rigor and communication with students. Additionally, leadership has worked with stakeholders to align high school grading expectations to better prepare students for post-secondary opportunities. At this point in time, standards-based grading is embedded in K-4. Since the

last engagement review, the district has taken time to reflect with stakeholders on the appropriateness of standards-based grading in grades 5-12. More reflection and discussion are needed before a decision is made about the extension.

The following Area for Improvement was identified in the Engagement Review Report.

Area for Improvement #3: Formalize processes to create succession planning documents to ensure continuity of programming and initiatives for new personnel coming into critical positions in the district.

Standard 11 Leaders create and maintain institutional structures and processes that support learners and staff members in both stable and changing environments.

Institution Response

i3 Rubric. Based on your findings, what level of impact from the i3 Rubric is your institution demonstrating in this Area for Improvement?

Results

Narrative.

- State whether you have achieved your goals relative to this Area for Improvement
- Document your findings
- Cite supporting evidence
- Specifically outline your plans and related activities towards continuous improvement based on your assessment with the i3 Rubric and pursuing Embeddedness
- Plans to continue working towards improvement related to this Area for Improvement

While the district has made significant gains on this Area of Improvement we have not yet reached the level of Embeddedness that we are anticipating. There have been several key successes in the process of development of these succession planning documents that both provide physical evidence of progress but also demonstrate the more important cultural changes that are expected.

Several key broad process documents have been created. Specifically, the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Handbook has been developed that outlines key practices, procedures, and expectations for all of those who are involved in the MTSS process. This handbook has helped to set the stage for consistency and work towards systematic and systemic process changes in the area of both academic and behavior interventions across the district. Similarly, the district has also developed an Exceptional Learning Playbook to guide and support all of those working with our Special Education population. As exemplars of this work, both documents are established and have ongoing minor updates based on stakeholder feedback, policy changes, and evolutions in practice. More recently, similar work has been done with PLCs as we have redesigned our PLC time, agendas, and feedback processes. In this case videos, handouts, and ongoing professional development have supported the roll out of this district-wide PLC culture change. These three process areas have not yet hit the three-year mark and therefore we do not yet reach the i3 Rubric level of Sustainability, but both demonstrate the work is on the right track.

Similar work is also underway through other identified areas that address institutional processes. Guidance documents are near completion for Section 504 and attendance. As with all process documents, these two highlight the additional professional development and training that has been established to parallel the work. With these ongoing training is being provided, and helpful supplements, resources and exemplars are being added based on that training to further support cultural change.

The district has also seen intentional growth in this area outside of the teaching and learning space with annual

reviews of certified, classified, and administrator employee handbooks through HR. Our instructional technology department has also developed documented consistent policies and practices which have supported onboarding of new employees.

Job related guidance handbooks were previously being developed in unique areas such as our student information specialists or administrative assistants. We have seen most numerical growth in this area as documents have been developed and are continuously added to for key areas such as Administrators, Counselors, Central Office Leadership, Instructional Coaches, Behavior Coaches, Exceptional Learning Coordinators, as well as pivotal classified staff leadership positions. Documents in this space still vary in scope and detail. As these documents are organically growing in individual spaces, we see the need through them and our additional successes to establish more intentional consistency moving forward.

There are several key steps within this Area of Improvement that have been identified by stakeholder groups as necessary next steps to both development but also cultural sustainability of these documents. First, has been the identification for a singular location to house all developed documents. Through a website or shared location, the centralization of the documents will support easier access, frequency of combined used, and maintenance. Additionally, an inventory of all developed plans, documents, and manuals should take place with a broader stakeholder group. The purpose of this group would be to identify broader processes and specific positions that are missing and would benefit from guidance documents. Groups have already identified for instance work to be done with custodial and athletic staff, but also school processes such as dual credit, working with applied skills students, etc. Finally, there is a need to embed regular review of documents and provide updates. Our district is establishing a systematic “look back” process with our guaranteed and viable curriculum that is scoped out over several years to ensure consistent review and process. A parallel process should develop for these plans to reach beyond organic change and growth. This process should include determining monitoring and accountability for regular updates.

We believe that through addressing these next steps, additional times, and specific ongoing monitoring we can move within the i3 Rubric to the Embeddedness level. We recognize that the documents and parallel ongoing training are both pivotal to the anticipated cultural changes. We can attribute the work done in MTSS, PLCs, and ExL as key catalysts and demonstrators for how aligned processes can support student achievement.

Cognia’s Assessment of Area for Improvement #3.

The following is an assessment of the evaluator’s findings.

Some progress - to be completed prior to the next Accreditation Engagement Review

Summary of Cognia’s Findings

The Duneland School Corporation leadership team has made progress toward embedding this area for improvement. They have created systems and documentation about MTSS processes, special education, and professional learning communities, among other topics. The leadership team has plans or are in the midst of developing documentation including handbooks and procedures for other topics as well. The team has plans to systematically review the documents on a regular schedule to ensure they are still meeting the needs of students, teachers, and staff.

The following Area for Improvement was identified in the Engagement Review Report.

Area for Improvement #4: Research opportunities for integrating data currently housed on multiple platforms into a more user-friendly resource.

Standard 21 Instruction is characterized by high expectations and learner-centered practices.

Standard 24 Leaders use data and input from a variety of sources to make decisions for learners' and staff members' growth and well-being.

Institution Responses

i3 Rubric. Based on your findings, what level of impact from the i3 Rubric is your institution demonstrating in this Area for Improvement?

Sustainability

Narrative.

- State whether you have achieved your goals relative to this Area for Improvement
- Document your findings
- Cite supporting evidence
- Specifically outline your plans and related activities towards continuous improvement based on your assessment with the i3 Rubric and pursuing Embeddedness
- Plans to continue working towards improvement related to this Area for Improvement

Work in this area had been started prior to our external review and while ongoing, we feel that we are closer to meeting this goal and can demonstrate consistent growth over time in this area to support a rating of Sustainability.

In years leading up to our external review there had been a myriad of locations whereby data was stored for regular review and usage. Outside of general storage of data in our student information system the district has implemented the use of Branching Minds as the single key data storage and access platform for K-8 staff and students. This platform has become pivotal in not only growing in storage of academic data, but also behavior data. With the implementation of our MTSS handbook as well as ongoing training through our Student Support Services Coordinator we have shifted the focus and use of data in the K-8 space. Following implementation, regular Cognia surveys have seen a steady increase in this area moving questions related to data usage for instructional decision making from averages of 3.84 to 4.04. Branching Minds also supports MTSS decisions assisting with tiering events and intervention progress monitoring tracking. Here again the individualization of student progress and instruction is highlighted in our Surveys with growth in this area from 3.78 to 4.00 averages. Consistent use of this data has elevated the districts overall scores, supporting interventions allowing us to reach a level of top 10 in the state for ILEARN, exceeding the 95% pass rate on IREAD, and seeing documented growth in special education populations on ILEARN. Behavior tracking has moved from an administrator only practice to teachers, specialists, and counselors also documenting events to allow decision makers to have consistent data pictures to support behavior intervention plans as well. Systematic processes are established on both regular times when data is inserted into the system, alignment of meeting schedules to review data, and streamlines intervention practices to determine short- and long-term progress monitoring goals. The successful use of this single data system allowed the district to provide intervention tracking reports from Branching Minds to the Indiana Department of Education to have them approve Branching Minds reports to meet all requirements of Individual Reading Plans for IREAD failures. This outcome demonstrates the level of cultural change to not only use a single data source, but also the source being used for multiple requirements.

At the high school level, a similar platform is currently under integrated development through Abre. This platform is more customizable, and stakeholder teams are meeting regularly to outline and develop MTSS structures at the secondary level. Here key dashboards have been developed that monitor attendance practices aligned with new state and local guidelines. Students can be visually identified as habitual or chronically absent to allow intervention teams to plan and act within our outlined attendance structures. This data previously was housed in our student management systems and teams were regularly downloading, building and interpreting reports for decisions with inconsistency in practice. A singular location now supports

all those steps into one. State assessment dashboards have also been developed for SAT readiness. Again, through visualization administrator and teacher teams can quickly identify students in need of support. With the advent of the new diploma requirements a team is building dashboards on credit tracking, diploma seal tracking, etc. While newer than Branching Minds, this integration is following a similar cultural level of embeddedness in use. As the system grows the culture of data use around it also grows and starts removing ancillary data storage practices.

Moving forward there are several key areas of focus to move this Area of Improvement into the next level on the i3 rubric. At the K-8 level our system is used in the day-to-day operations of the school. We aim to develop the high school platform at the same level with emphasis on administrator, counselor, and office personnel using this regularly. Advisory teachers can also use it. Over time, both parents and students would also have access at the high school level. This involves including use and guidance in our MTSS handbook of these structures as well as initial and ongoing training of use. We find that repetitive cycles and coaching with use of the systems is aligned. Stakeholder groups have also identified additional data points that would be beneficial for integration into these systems. Our teams now need to work with vendors to create automatic or manual scheduled processes to import this data for regular use.

Time allows us the opportunity to make use of these platforms deeply ingrained and protected. Our procedural manuals and leadership guidance are working to ingrain these practices. Resource alignment to provide ongoing training and coaching further support this practice. When determining budgets these items have been protected during cuts to support continued use. We are close to meeting this goal and when all grades PreK-12 have a system then we will be at that Embeddedness level.

Cognia's Assessment of Progress Related to Area for Improvement #4.

The following is an assessment of the evaluator's findings.

Sufficient progress - no further action required

Summary of Cognia's Findings

The leadership team at Duneland School Corporation have intentionally and strategically worked to consolidate data collection and storage processes. Cognia surveys show improvement in the area of using data to drive instructional decisions. This work directly influences professional learning communities' ability to efficiently analyze data and allows stakeholders within the school to communicate about student progress and needs.

Reflections

Successes. Summarize your institution’s successes with continuous improvement.

Continuous improvement is deeply embedded within Duneland School Corporation. Beginning with the development of the 2020 strategic plan and its revision for 2024–2028, the district has demonstrated a systems-based approach to addressing key priorities. Each year, plans and related data are reviewed at both the district and school levels, with teachers, administrators, and central office leaders collaboratively engaged in setting goals, tracking progress, and monitoring performance indicators.

Through the accreditation process, Duneland has built a culture of continuous growth that has advanced multiple district-wide initiatives from early implementation to sustainable, embedded practice. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have been a priority for more than six years and are now fully integrated across all schools, grade levels, and content areas. This work is reinforced by protected PLC time in the calendar, consistent use of agendas, leadership accountability, and coaching structures that make collaboration purposeful and data-driven. Staff surveys confirm this progress, with notable gains in collaborative practices and the use of data to inform instruction.

Standards-Based Grading (SBG), initially embedded in elementary grades, has become a hallmark of consistency and rigor, with aligned grading practices, common formative and summative assessments, and intentional parent communication tools. Expansion into grades 5–12 is underway, with leadership teams addressing consistency, grade weighting, and alignment to postsecondary expectations. Succession planning has also advanced through the development of key handbooks and playbooks for MTSS, Exceptional Learning, and PLC implementation, alongside parallel work in Section 504, attendance, and HR processes. These resources ensure stability for students and continuity for staff as roles and leadership evolve.

Data-informed decision-making has been strengthened through the integration of Branching Minds at K–8 and Abre at the high school, unifying academic, behavioral, and attendance data into single access points. These systems not only support MTSS interventions but have also produced measurable outcomes, including Duneland’s placement among the top 10 in the state for ILEARN performance and surpassing the 95% benchmark on IREAD.

Beyond these initiatives, the district has expanded capacity in special education through the decentralization of the local cooperative. This shift has provided new professional development opportunities and informed the 2024–2028 strategic plan through an IU CELL audit. Building on this foundation, Duneland has launched a four-year commitment to Universal Design for Learning (UDL), using a teach–model–release approach. Drawing from lessons learned through PLCs and the Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC), this UDL initiative has already exceeded expectations, showing immediate gains in survey results and positive impacts on student learning.

Together, these efforts reflect Duneland’s unwavering commitment to improvement that is systemic, intentional, and sustainable. They are firmly anchored in strategic planning, aligned resources, and measurable evidence of growth in both staff practice and student achievement.

Challenges. What challenges did your institution encounter with the improvement initiatives?

While Duneland has made substantial progress in advancing its improvement initiatives, several challenges have emerged along the way. As with most improvement and change the themes of consistency, accountability and monitoring can be seen.

Ensuring consistency across buildings, grade levels, and content areas in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) required adjustments, particularly during redistricting and construction, and outside consultant reviews highlighted areas still needing refinement.

Expanding Standards-Based Grading (SBG) beyond the elementary level presented further challenges, as leadership teams worked to address lingering inconsistencies in grading practices, align policies with postsecondary expectations, and prepare for broader communication needs with parents at the secondary level. We continue to explore and review the right path for expansion in this area to appropriately meet the needs of students, families and post high school experiences.

The district has developed important handbooks and playbooks but ensuring uniform scope and detail across all documents and creating a centralized repository for easy access and systematic review remain areas of focus. Key next steps will cover the challenges of accountability and storage.

Finally, while consolidating data through Branching Minds (K–8) and Abre (high school) has streamlined decision-making, achieving full adoption at the secondary level requires additional training, stakeholder engagement, and vendor support to integrate all necessary data points.

These challenges reflect the complexity of systemic change, but the district’s commitment to addressing them has strengthened capacity, created new opportunities for collaboration, and ensured that improvement efforts remain aligned with long-term goals.

Institution’s Next Steps

- Submit your completed Progress Report, in **Microsoft Word** only, in the Workspace.
- Upload evidence in the Workspace that you deem relative and supportive of your progress.
- Notify your Cognia Regional Office of your submission in the Workspace.

Institution’s Submission

This report was completed and submitted by:

Name	Kevin R. Zeck
Title	Assistant Director of Teaching & Learning
Date	September 30, 2025

Summary of Cognia’s Review

Pursuant to the Cognia Accreditation and Certification Policies and Procedures, the following recommendation will be reviewed, along with other documentation, by Cognia and the Cognia Global Commission for action. For details related to each status, please see Policy 3.

X	Continued Accredited status with no further actions
	Accredited Under Review status recommended based on an incomplete report and/or insufficient progress

Next Steps

The following tasks should be completed before the next review. Cognia representatives stand ready to help you complete these tasks.

1.	Continue to work with stakeholders to understand the feasibility of standards-based grading in grades 5-12.
2.	Continue to collect feedback from stakeholders regarding handbooks to ensure relevance and consistent implementation.
3.	Prepare for the Accreditation Engagement Review in 2028-29.

Annabeth B. Stone
Mid-Cycle Report Reviewer (Evaluator)

10/06/2025
Date

Matthew R. McMullen
Matthew R. McMullen
State Director

11/2/2025
Date