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School Quality Review Report School District of Philadelphia

General Louis Wagner Middle School

October 12th-13th, 2017

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1 The School Context

4.1 Introduction

In 2017 Cambridge Education was awarded a contract against RFP-499 to provide School Quality Reviews (SQRs) to six of the District of Philadelphia (SDP) schools. The SQR program includes the following:

- a School Quality Review (SQR) orientation for principals
- a two-day SQR for each school
- A meta-analysis report of the school findings

The SQR report contained herein was prepared by the Lead Reviewer based on the evidence collected and the assessment made by the full SQR team (Lead Reviewer, Team Member Reviewer). Evidence was collected via classroom observations; interviews with the administration; and focus groups with students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders.

5.1 Background information about the School

Location and enrollment

General Louis Wagner Middle School is in the West Oak Lane Neighborhood of Philadelphia. At the time of this writing, the school had an enrollment of 527 students. Rather than a discernible trend over the last three years, the school saw fluctuations in its enrollment. The 2016-2017 enrollment of 527 represents a slight increase over the previous year which had an enrollment of 497. However, that represented a decrease from 541 in the previous year of 2014-2015.

School Performance and survey data

2015-2016 School Progress Report for Wagner School

Overall: 7% Intervene (decrease from 17% in 2013-2014, and 10% in 2014-2015); City Rank-35th out of 36; Peer Rank-19th out of 19

Achievement: 0% Intervene (decrease from 13% in 2013-2014, and from 1% in 2014-2015); City Rank-34th out of 36; Peer Rank-17th out of 19

The Achievement domain measures performance on standardized assessments, including PSSA, Keystone Exams, ACCESS for ELLs, and reading assessments.

Progress: 8% Intervene (decrease from 20% in 2013-2014, but increase from 8% in 2014-2015); City Rank-25th out of 34; Peer Rank-14th out of 19

The Progress domain measures growth on standardized assessments and progress towards graduation (for high schools only).

Climate: 12% Intervene (decrease from 19% in 2013-2014 and 19% in 2014-2015); City Rank-33rd out of 36; Peer Rank-16th out of 18

The Climate domain measures school climate and student and parent/guardian engagement.

One notable area of strength listed on the SPR was that 100% of the students had zero in-school suspension. Notable areas in need of improvement on the SPR included academic achievement, academic progress, attendance, student retention, and educator effectiveness. These areas suggest that the school is performing well below expectations in a number of areas critical to school success.

Comprehensive Plan

In its comprehensive plan, the school noted the following areas of focus for the school over the next two years: improving attendance; reducing out of school suspension; reducing the percentage of students who score below basic on the PSSA math and reading assessments; and increasing the percentage of students who score A's and B's on the core courses baseline assessments. At the time of the review, the school had instituted incentives to boost student attendance, as well as a system for monitoring students who are routinely absent. Additionally, teachers had received professional development to improve their instructional effectiveness. Two notable trainings were on questioning and differentiation.

Other contextual factors

Wagner Middle School serves grades 6-8 and receives students from five neighborhood elementary schools. The special needs population of the school stands at 25% with 20 students being in an emotional support (ES) class. At the time of the writing of this report, there is no full-time teacher assigned to the ES class. The students are served by a rotation of substitute teachers. Additionally, the school has vacancies for four teachers.

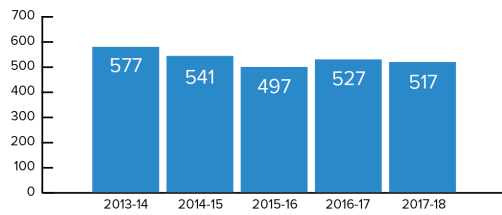
98 students are overaged, and the principal expresses concern about this since the district's overage program can only accommodate ten students. The principal, deans, and teachers all highlight the need for mental health support for students, many of whom deal with trauma daily. Some students are homeless or in foster homes without stability, and the school does not have the requisite staff in adequate numbers to support the mental health needs of its students.

The principal has been at the school for fifteen years serving as a teacher, dean, and principal for the last seven years. Wagner Middle School is the only school she has worked at within the district and she is fully invested in and passionate about improving the school. She identifies support from the Assistant Superintendent as very strong.

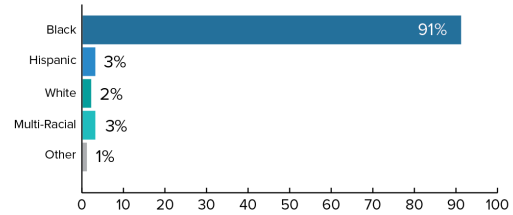
6.1 School demographic and performance data

General Louis Wagner School At a glance

Enrollment



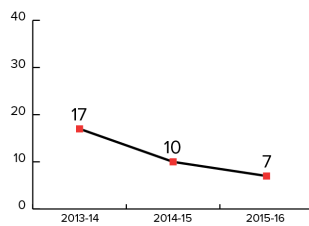
Race/Ethnicity Breakdown



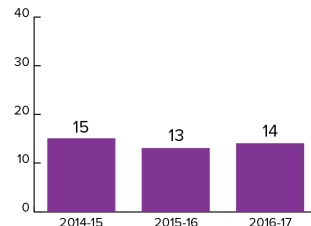
Students living in this catchment area choose to go to:

Students attending this school come from the following catchments:

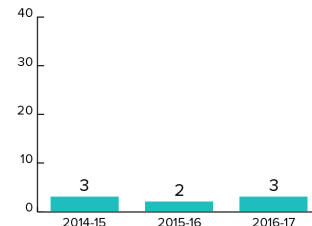
3-Year SPR Trend



ELA Achievement



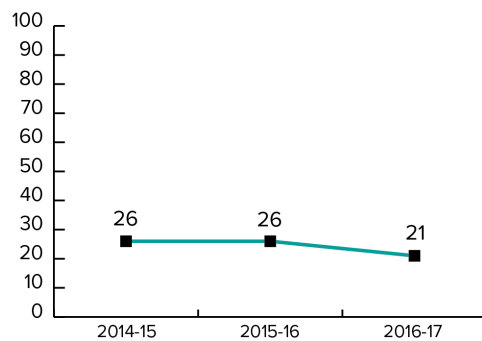
Math Achievement



% students scoring proficient or advanced on state tests (PSSA and/or Keystone)

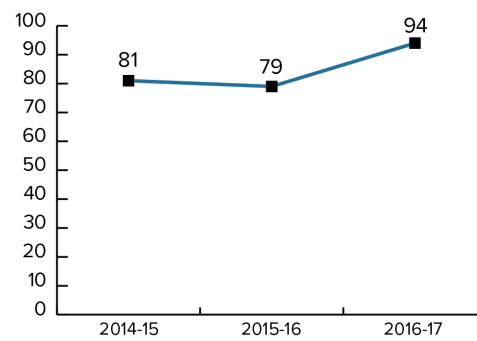
Attendance

% of students attending 95% or more of school days



Suspensions

% of students receiving zero suspensions



2 SQR Process and Details

2.0 Background on the SQR process

Meeting with the Principal

The SQR team consisted of two members - a lead reviewer and an assistant reviewer. The SQR team began the process with a one hour meeting with the school principal. The principal provided background information on the school, its current strengths and challenges from her perspective, and the school's current priorities.

The principal shared the following priorities for the school: improving attendance, supporting teachers instructionally, and improving students' performance on assessments. To support these priorities, the school has taken or is planning to take a number of actions. The school has trained all teachers on questioning and discussion techniques. All teachers have received several hours of training on the district's new mathematics and literacy curricula, and the administration has been monitoring implementation by conducting frequent class visits and providing feedback to teachers.

Classroom visits

The SQR team visited 12 classrooms over two days. The average classroom visit was 15 minutes, with a maximum of 25 minutes and a minimum of eight minutes. Three of the 10 visits were less than 15 minutes due to the fact that one class had just finished a test and two classrooms were chaotic with no productive engagement.

The team observed lessons in English language arts, math, social studies, and science. The team also observed 40 minutes of the school's after school program on the first day of the review. The team visited classrooms in all grade levels.

Classrooms visited had an average of 20 students, with a maximum of 30 students and minimum of ten students.

Focus groups

The team conducted two student focus groups and one staff focus group. No parents came to the parent focus group. The student focus groups consisted of a group of 18 students and a group of 14 students, all of whom were chosen by the deans. The staff focus group consisted of five 6th grade teachers, one 7th grade teacher, and one 8th grade teacher. All participating staff members were teachers who were free at the time of the meeting.

3 SQR Main Findings

In this section of the report, the SQR team has identified the factors that are most significantly supporting and limiting effective student learning. (Please see the sections that follow for more details).

4.1 Factors that support effective student learning:

- I. The principal is committed to improving the school and is constantly seeking ways to improve teacher and student performance. (*Domain 1, P. 7 & Domain 3, P. 11*)
 - The deployment of three deans has significantly improved the climate of the school and is beginning to create an environment that is conducive to learning.
 - The provision of training for teachers to understand and use the new district curriculum resources for mathematics and literacy has enhanced their implementation of those curricular resources.
 - The provision of training on questioning and discussion for teachers is beginning to enhance some teachers' facilitation of student discourse in some classrooms.
- II. The principal is very visible in the school. She frequents classrooms, hallways, and the cafeteria where she assists with the lunch routines. Her high visibility serves to foster positive relations with students and reinforce expectations for faculty and students alike. (*Domain 3, P. 13*).
- III. The principal has created a hierarchy of leadership. Responsibility for improving the school is distributed among the leadership team, which is comprised of the principal, the three deans, the counselor and climate specialist. Each dean, who is responsible for a grade, establishes close relationships with students, monitors their behavioral and academic performance, and coordinates available resources to support them. (*Domain 3, P. 13*)

5.1 Factors that limit effective student learning:

- I. Instruction in many classrooms is not yet of a quality that engages students in deep understanding of concepts, and the building of critical thinking, meaningful discourse, and problem solving. (*Domain 1, P. 7*)
- II. Learning is sometimes impeded by classroom management issues and disruptive student behavior. (*Domain 1, P. 7*)
- III. Teachers are not consistently planning and delivering engaging lessons, designed to build on students' current knowledge, through worthwhile tasks, employment of scaffolds, and collaborative work. (*Domain 1, P. 7*)
- IV. Teachers do not consistently communicate learning objectives in ways that allow all students to understand what they are learning, why it is important, and how it is connected to past and future

learning. Additionally, the objectives are not consistently revisited during and at the end of lessons. (*Domain 1, P. 7*)

- V. Teachers' planning does not yet adequately involve the use of data to guide instructional decisions. The work that students are exposed to is often too challenging for some and too simple for others. As a result, not all students are able to make the progress that they are capable of. (*Domain 2, P. 10*)
- VI. The special needs population of the school is at 25% including a classroom for emotional support (ES) students, for which there is no teacher. The principal and staff lament this fact because the students are underserved by a rotation of substitute teachers who are unable to meet their needs. Additionally, the school currently has vacancies for science and social studies teachers. (*Domain 4, P. 15*)
- VII. Transition of incoming students into the 6th grade needs improvement. Although there are opportunities to communicate with principals from the feeder schools during network meetings and articulation meetings in the Spring, there is no deliberate communication strategy to facilitate high attendance at the 6th grade orientation in the summer, nor is there a mechanism for determining and understanding the needs of incoming students to create and implement an effective strategic plan to support them, academically.

4 Individual Domains

In the sections below, each domain received a rating based on the evidence collected during the SQR. The judgments have been broken down into *Factors that Support Effective Student Learning* and *Factors that Limit Effective Student Learning*.

4.1 Domain 1: Quality of Learning & Teaching

The Quality of Learning & Teaching requires intensive school-wide support

Factors that support effective student learning:

- I. Teachers have received training on questioning and discussion techniques to build student engagement during lessons.
 - a. This is beginning to have a positive impact on the learning experiences of students, as observed in 2 out of 12 classrooms. Teachers in these classrooms use questioning to engage students in discussions about the content of lessons.

The principal recognizes this initiative as critical to improving student discourse during lessons. She indicated that too many lessons are teacher-centered, with teachers doing most of the talking and students being passive recipients. This deprives them of interacting in meaningful ways with concepts and ideas. The next step in the process is to ensure that all teachers utilize the strategies they learn consistently in their classrooms. This can be achieved by regular observation and feedback about the frequency and quality of the use of the strategies, and providing follow up training and support where necessary.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

- I. Few teachers post and communicate the learning objectives of lessons.
 - a. In only 4 out of 12 classrooms were learning objectives posted.
 - b. In 3 out of 4 classes observed that did have a posted objective, the learning objectives were not well-written, with a clear statement of what students would learn and how they and the teacher would know that they had achieved the objective (the success criteria).
 - c. In only 2 of the 4 classrooms where objectives were posted, the objectives observed met the rigor of the PA Core Standards with higher-order thinking verbs such as “describe and analyze” and “interpret.”
 - d. In only 2 out of 12 classrooms were the objective/s for the lesson communicated to students in ways that allowed them to understand what they were learning, why it was important, and how it connected to past and future learning.
 - e. In none of the 12 lessons observed, were the objectives revisited during and at the end of lessons.

The absence of clearly written learning objectives that are communicated to students in meaningful ways, prevents students from understanding what they should be learning during lessons. Additionally, it deprives them from opportunities to monitor their own progress against the success criteria, especially when the objectives are not revisited during and after the lesson. To improve the impact of objective-

driven instruction, school leaders may consider emphasizing the importance of the learning objectives, supporting teachers who need support to construct and communicate well-written objectives with success criteria, and holding teachers accountable for the established expectations.

- II. Students do not yet benefit from collaborative learning.
 - a. In only 1 of 12 lessons observed were students engaged in collaborative work. In the other classrooms, students worked alone on independent activities.

This situation does not allow students to adequately learn from each other, or to cultivate the dispositions for cooperation and collaboration needed for success at higher grades and college.

- III. Opportunities for students to build ownership of their learning are not embedded in classroom experiences.
 - a. In none of the 12 classrooms observed were students discussing what they were learning, utilizing rubrics to assess their work and that of their peers, or engaging in discussion and debate about each other's ideas.
- IV. High expectations for student behavior during classes is not a consistent feature of the school.
 - a. In 3 out of 12 classrooms, students were engaged in off-task behaviors, which created a disruptive environment that negatively impacted the quality of learning. The off-task behaviors were not addressed and there was no evidence of routines or procedures for managing the class.

Classes that are not managed well, where disruptive and off-task behaviors are not addressed send a message of low expectations for the conduct of students. Students always test the boundaries, and what they are allowed to get away with becomes their norm for those classes. In the classes where this was observed, very little learning, if any, occurred. The school should consider providing these teachers support with classroom management and establishing and maintaining clear and high expectations for students behavioral and academic performance.

- V. Some teachers do not plan lessons that are challenging enough to support student progress.
 - a. Planned learning experiences within 9 out of 12 classrooms did not engage students in cognitively demanding tasks that produced adequate productive struggle, or engagement in critical thinking and problem solving.
 - b. In 3 out of 3 math lessons observed, students worked on worksheets that simply required recall or the plugging in of numbers into a formula.
 - c. In 9 out of 12 classrooms, all questions required only the recall of information without opportunities for students to comment on each other's responses.
 - d. 10 out of 13 students in a focus group say the work they get during lessons is easy and that they have a problem with the way many teachers teach them. One student declared, "Some teachers do not teach us in a way to help us understand."

Teachers expressed concerns about the gaps students have in knowledge and skills and this is often seen in many classrooms that lack rigor. However, the fact that students may not yet be performing at grade level should not stop teachers from engaging students in tasks that cause them to think critically, use their prior knowledge, and collaboratively pursue answers in ways that build their critical thinking and

problem-solving skills. School leaders should continue to support teachers in engaging students in worthwhile tasks that are cognitively demanding, even for students who may possess skill gaps.

- VI. Students do not yet benefit from work on projects and complex problems that engage them in deep consideration of concepts.
 - a. 10 of 13 students in a focus group described the work as being easy, and not being engaged with complex problems and projects.
 - b. Teachers in a focus group indicated that students have huge gaps in content knowledge and skills, and this understanding of where students are, academically, was reflected in the learning experiences in 75% of the classrooms visited.

Low expectations for what students can accomplish is evident in too many classrooms and this inhibits them from developing the habits of mind and dispositions, as well as skills and content knowledge to improve their performance and to be prepared for success at high school, college and careers.

- VII. School leaders and faculty alike express that students enter the school with huge gaps in knowledge and skills, and this has resulted in misplaced expectations for students. The school does not currently have an effective system of interventions and remediation to address students learning gaps.

The school leadership indicated that many of the incoming 6th grade students enter each year with content and skill deficits. However, the school does not currently have an effective mechanism for addressing these deficits, and students' progress through the school maintaining, and in many cases, furthering their deficits. To address this issue, the school should strengthen its early morning intervention block, as well as its use of iReady, Achieve 3000, Imagine Math, Academy of Math and Lexia intervention programs, and provide regular intervention supports in the classrooms and on a school-wide basis, as well as create a summer bridge program for incoming students,

- VIII. The school's focus on data has not yet resulted in effective targeted supports for individual and groups of students.
 - a. In none of the 12 classrooms visited was there any evidence of student grouping based on data. The work was not differentiated and/or targeted for students at different skill levels.

Although the school has done some work on using data, teachers are not yet using the data to identify specific needs of students for targeted and differentiated learning experiences. This is a next step for school leaders in the process. Teachers need to begin to make instructional decisions based on the data they look at, and that must be reflected in targeted and differentiated supports for their students.

4.2 Domain 2: Curriculum & Assessment

Curriculum & Assessment requires intensive school-wide support

Factors that support effective student learning:

- I. The school utilizes the district-recommended curricula for mathematics and literacy, which are aligned to the PA Core Standards.

- a. The principal has been able to access training on the new curricula resources for math and literacy through the district office. Teachers unanimously welcome the resources and the training they have received.

The use of the district's curricula for math and literacy provides a wealth of PA Core-aligned resources for teachers and results in students being exposed to standards-aligned learning experiences in some math and literacy classrooms.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

- I. The school lacks appropriate resources for science and social studies.
 - a. The science and social studies curriculum materials are outdated and physically damaged.

Teachers in a focus group expressed their frustration with the absence of these resources. They highlight the additional burden it presents for them for planning lessons and creating tasks for students to work on.

- II. The school does not currently provide a range of learning experiences for students.
 - a. Other than the core subjects, students are exposed to only Physical Education on a regular basis. The principal indicated the presence of an art class and a district instrumental music teacher who visits the school periodically, but this is inadequate to provide the range of learning experience that students need.

Students in focus groups expressed they do not like the fact that they do not regularly get art and other non-core subjects. As a result, they have limited opportunities to experience success in subjects other than the core academic subjects. The principal should explore opportunities for expanding the curricular offerings of the school.

- III. Although the school possesses a range of technology, including approximately 300 Chromebooks, document cameras for science teachers, calculators for two math classes, and SmartBoards in 13 out of 18 advisory classes, there was very limited use of technology by students. As a result, students may not develop the technological competencies that would allow them to be successful at high school, college, and careers.
 - a. In one of twelve classrooms observed, students were using computers. The use of computers in this instance was only to input their answers to a benchmark assessment they had taken on paper, into a digital version of the assessment, online.

The school lacks important resources in many key areas, including science, social studies, technology, and elective courses. The school should consider investing resources in these areas to provide students with a robust middle school experience that will adequately prepare them for the courses and technological resources that they will have access to in high school and beyond.

4.3 Domain 3: Instructional Coaching, Management, and Accountability

Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership requires support in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

- I. School leaders regularly monitor teaching and learning through frequent class observations, review of lesson plans, and analysis of data.
 - a. Teachers in focus groups report that the principal frequents their classrooms and provides feedback after visits.
 - b. The responsibility for observations are shared with the deans, who informally observe teachers on their assigned grade level.
 - c. The principal reviews teachers' lesson plans and provides feedback to them. She recently changed the lesson plan template and emphasized small group instruction and tiered questioning.
 - d. The principal recently set up a data room and a process for looking at student work and performance data. She has placed an emphasis on small group instruction and this is beginning to be evident in some classrooms

The school has established systems for regular supervision and feedback on instruction. This is an important step toward ensuring that high quality instruction is consistently taking place in each classroom. To deepen this practice, the principal may consider ensuring that there is a common understanding among her and her deans about what effective instructions is and how to assess it during lessons. In separate interviews, variations in understanding about instructional effectiveness emerged from the deans and the principal, and this may result in conflicting messages delivered to teachers. The principal recognizes that the instructional capacity of teachers needs intensive support and is working with her assistant superintendent to allocate the necessary resources and training to build their instructional capacity.

- II. Teachers have received training on the new district curriculum resources for math and literacy, as well as on analyzing data, looking at student work, and questioning and discussion techniques.

This work is still in its infancy, and its impact is only now seen in small pockets of improved practice across the school. This was evident in the 6th grade literacy class, where the objective was aligned to the rigor of the PA core standards, and the level of questioning and student discussion facilitated by the teacher's questions was appropriate.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

- I. School leaders do not yet consistently engage teachers in setting performance goals, nor do they monitor their progress towards meeting those goals.
 - a. Other than for teachers in their professional development plan (PDP) year, the principal has not yet instituted a system for setting performance goals for teachers, and supporting and monitoring their improvement.

Many teachers at the school do not have clear performance goals that are established in consultation with the school administration. Clear and focused performance goals can help focus the collective work of all educators, and ensure that teachers are receiving the specific feedback they need to improve. To address this issue, the leadership team may consider expanding the goal-setting and monitoring program to include all teachers. The goals could be related to their implementation of the strategies they are exposed to during professional development exercises, which are now not evidenced in their classrooms.

- II. The principal's review of planning has not yet resulted in teachers' generation of plans that effectively meet the needs of students.

- a. Review of six lesson plans during the SQR did not reveal accommodations for the varying learning needs of students; the incorporation of instructional activities to build on students' current knowledge and skill; plans for engagement in productive struggle; and opportunities for building students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Plans lacked the specificity needed to ensure that the instruction taking place would be engaging and challenging.
 - b. The principal's comments on lesson plans were not focused and specific enough to improve teacher's planning practice to the level she expects.
- III. The principal has begun to focus on data analysis and has provided training for the staff. However, the collection, analysis, and use of disaggregated data is not yet of a quality to significantly impact the learning experiences of students.
- a. Lessons in 10 out of 12 classes consisted of whole-group instruction, without differentiated activities or work products
 - b. The school does not yet have an adequate systematic approach of remediation and intervention to meet the needs of students.

The lack of an intentional use of data analysis to plan differentiated learning experiences for students, as well as the absence of a system of intervention, remediation, and targeted support, results in students not making the progress they can. This is a next step in the process of data analysis for the school.

- IV. The principal has not yet been able to foster a sense of urgency among the entire staff for changing the trajectory of the school, and as a result, a significant number of classrooms have climates that do not demonstrate high expectations for student learning.
- a. In seven out of twelve classrooms observed, much of the time was spent on non-productive activities, and these classrooms were also disrupted by a high number of off-task behaviors.

The school has not yet established a consistency of expectations across classrooms in which all teachers display a strong sense of urgency in student learning. Teachers in a focus group were in unison in highlighting the many and varied needs that the students and the community present, and their own challenges to adequately service those needs. The leadership team may consider developing a set of shared norms and expectations with staff on how each classroom will demonstrate high expectations and a sense of urgency with its students.

Management and Accountability

Management and Accountability requires support | targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

- I. The principal and her leadership team promote and model high expectations for all staff and students.
 - a. The leadership team emphasizes and communicates appropriate behaviors for students, and positive interactions between staff and students. This is evident in the interactions between members of the leadership team and students, and in the communication between teachers and students in at least six out of twelve classrooms. This has resulted in some improvement in the climate and culture of the building.

The consistently high expectations for staff displayed by the leadership team have engendered a sense of respect for the leaders amongst the school staff. To deepen the impact of their actions, the leadership team may consider engaging all staff in conversations about how the professional performance of teachers will be clearly communicated, monitored, and addressed, when lacking.

- II. School leaders ensure that teachers have opportunities for collaboration and dissemination of best practice and this is working to provide a system of collegial support amongst the faculty.
 - a. The principal has designated teachers with strong practice in their content area as consultants at the school. There is a literacy consultant, a math consultant, and a Google Classroom consultant, who support their colleagues in ongoing professional development. Teachers express positive remarks about the collegial culture of the faculty and indicate that they can go to each other openly for support.

The building of a collegial and supportive culture within the school is working to help teachers grow and disseminate best practices. The impact of this work can be deepened by aligning collaborative efforts with the performance goals of teachers and monitoring performance goals to determine how well it is working to improve teacher practice.

- III. Various staff with identified skills and aptitude have been assigned various roles and tasks within the leadership structure of the school.
 - a. There are three deans who are jointly responsible for climate/culture, and individually responsible for supporting the behavioral and academic expectations of an assigned grade.
 - b. Individual teachers are assigned responsibility for Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), Response to Interventions RTI, financial analysis, testing coordination, event planning, site selection coordination, student government, and leads for each grade level.

This sharing of responsibilities, and allocation of tasks in accordance with teachers' skills and aptitude, serves to build joint responsibility for improving the school.

- IV. The principal works to build the capacity of her deans on the leadership team.
 - a. In addition to discipline and administrative responsibilities, the deans assist with informal feedback to teachers.
 - b. The principal invests time and resources to build their capacity and comments that as she gets better, they get better.
 - c. The deans, in interviews, positively describe the support that they get from the principal. They received training from an instructional coach during the summer, and will receive follow-up visits during the school year.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

- I. The principal has not yet been able to articulate a vision that is well-understood and embraced by all constituents of the school.
 - a. Different stakeholders (deans, teachers, students) have different conceptions of the vision, and different understandings about how to achieve it.

A compelling shared vision can guide a school to make sure that all staff members are working toward a common goal. The leadership team should consider investing more time to ensure that the vision is strategic, well-articulated, known, and embraced by all constituents of the school. It should be posted around the school and emphasized regularly.

- II. The School's Comprehensive Improvement Plan identifies goals and priorities, but there isn't a rigorously implemented systematic improvement strategy for achieving them, nor is there a mechanism for monitoring progress to make course corrections along the way.
 - a. The principal and deans speak clearly about the priorities laid out in the comprehensive plan, but are less clear on the mechanisms for achieving them. As a result, the initiatives undertaken may not result in the accomplishment of the articulated goals.

The principal has a clearly established set of priorities for improvement. To ensure that the school is able to strategically focus on these priorities, the school should revisit its comprehensive plan to clearly articulate how it plans to monitor progress and to regularly reflect on short-term outcomes in order to make course corrections along the way.

4.4 Domain 4: The Culture of Learning

The Culture of Learning requires support in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

- I. School leaders and staff promote, show respect for, and maintain positive relationships with members of the school community.
 - a. All students in each focus group indicated they feel generally respected by school leaders and staff, who maintain positive relationships with them.
 - b. All Students in focus groups indicate that there are multiple people in the building to whom they can go in confidence if they have a problem.
 - c. Despite the occurrence of occasional fights, students regard the school as safe.

The school leaders and staff have cultivated a caring environment for students. School leaders and teachers express that many students experience traumatic events, and many have mental health issues. The caring, supportive environment created by the school works well to provide solace for many students. Students expressed concern about the many fights that occur at the school, but more often, outside of the school after dismissal. The principal has a mechanism to support with this issue, which involves staff, including her, standing at various locations on the street at dismissal time.

- II. The work environment is very collegial.
 - a. All teachers in a focus group positively describe their professional relationships as being supportive.
 - b. The principal has created a peer-support model which enhances collegial relationships among teachers. There is a literacy, math, and Google consultant, who support their colleagues.
- III. School leaders make concerted attempts to celebrate the students for their academic and behavioral performance.
 - a. The school hosts assemblies and honor roll ceremonies to recognize students for their achievements. This serves to motivate students to monitor their academic and behavioral performance and to improve further.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

- I. The school does not currently have a school-wide behavior management system such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS).
 - a. There is evidence of inconsistent application of consequences, as well as the absence of systematic process of positive behavior interventions. In 5 out of 12 classes, students are held to high account for behavioral expectations, while in other classrooms, inappropriate and off-task behaviors go unaddressed.

The principal recognizes the need for a positive behavior management system and is in the process of bringing PBIS to the school.

- II. The student government does not yet provide adequate opportunities for substantial student voice.
 - a. The student government is operating, but their actions are now limited to fundraising for charitable causes, such as a cancer walk.
 - b. There are not enough opportunities for students to engage in conversation with school leaders about how they can contribute to improvement the school.

While the student government is engaged in some worthwhile causes, it is not yet a vehicle for meaningful student interaction between students and school leaders. To ensure that the student government serves as a true student leadership body, the school may explore opportunities for students to be more deeply engaged in authentic conversations that affect the school and their education, and to engage and support them in partnering with school leaders in finding solutions to issues. This will serve to build student ownership of the school and its improvement and would send a positive message throughout the student body and among their peers.

4.5 Domain 5: Family and Community Engagement

Family and Community Engagement requires support in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

- I. School leaders and some teachers make concerted efforts to regularly communicate with parents and this keeps them informed about the academic and behavioral performance of their children.
 - a. 80% of students in focus groups indicate that teachers communicate with their parents about their social and academic progress.
- II. The school makes student academic information available on the parent portal. Parents are therefore able to access current information about how their children are doing academically.
 - a. 8 out of 13 students indicate that their parents look at the information on the parent portal.
- III. The school and its students benefit from positive relationships with some community partners that provide supports for students' academic and social development both during and after school.
 - a. Among the many partners are LaSalle University, Eye Institute, Eat. Right. Now., Einstein Hospital, Girls' Run, and Sixers Math Hoops.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

- i. The school has not yet developed a system for involving parents in its day-to-day operations.

- a. There is no organized system for parent volunteers to support the school, nor a system for the expression of parental voice and advocacy for their children.
- b. The Home and School Association is described by the principal as not vibrant and parental participation on the School Advisory Council (SAC) is low.
- c. No parents were present at the parent focus group, although that could have been the result of a communication flaw between the school and the district about the distinction between the SQR parent focus group and the parent focus group for the community meetings.

Parental involvement is a challenge for the school. Many children are in unstable situations, moving around among different relatives. Some are in foster homes. The principal needs to explore way to engage the parents of the more stable students to partner with the school to help improve the educational experiences of their children.

