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CAMBRIDGE
EDUCATION

Client name	School District of Philadelphia
School name	Edward Gideon Community Partnership School
Principal name	Shauneille Taylor
Review date(s)	October 5th & 6th
Lead reviewer	Jalilah Dukes
Team reviewer(s)	Gwen Burrel

School Quality Review Report
School District of Philadelphia

Edward Gideon Community Partnership School

November 3, 2017

Contents

1 The School Context

1.1 Introduction

In October of 2017, Cambridge Education was awarded a contract against RFP-499 to provide School Quality Reviews (SQRs) to six School 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.

1.2 Background information about the School

Location and Enrollment

Edward Gideon School is located at the intersection of 28th & West Glenwood Avenue in the Strawberry Mansion section of the city. At the time of this writing, the school had an enrollment of 289, which consists of a 94.4% African American population, 5.6% indicated as other, 19% special education population, and 100% economically disadvantage population.

School performance and survey data

2015-2016 School Progress Report for Edward Gideon School

Overall: 7% Intervene (decline from 12% in 2013-2014 and 18% in 2014-2015); City Rank-129th out of 138; Peer Rank-20th out of 23.

The overall score represents the combined performance of the Achievement, Progress, Climate, and College & Career (for high schools only) domains.

Achievement: 6% Intervene (slight increase from 7% in 2013-2014 and 5% in 2014-2015); City Rank-102nd out of 138; Peer Rank-11th out of 23.

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

Progress: 6% Intervene (decline 12% in 2013-2014 and 42% in 2014-2015); City Rank-121st out of 132; Peer Rank-20th out of 21.

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

Climate: 11% Intervene (slight increase from 18% in 2013-2014 and 7% in 2014-2015); City Rank-126th out of 140; Peer Rank-19th out of 23.

Comprehensive plan

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In its community school plan, the school noted the following areas of focus for the school over the next two years: Increase safety in the school and surrounding environment; increase resources for families, including access to health services, and increase extracurricular opportunities for students. At the time of the review, several initiatives to address areas of focus have not been implemented. However, the Community School Coordinator is actively working to support families and serves on the school's Leadership Team.
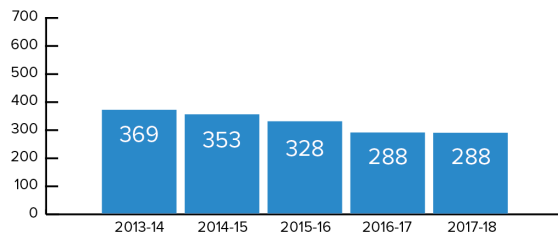
Other contextual factors

The immediate neighborhood around the school is largely residential, and community members report high crime rates in the area. The school is in the 22nd police district, and the police chief is very supportive of the school. Many of the students at Gideon School live in James W. Johnson Homes, a 522-unit PHA housing development nearby. There are also three other K-8 schools within a half mile of Gideon. Enrollment at Gideon has declined over the past few years.

The principal is in her third year of leadership at Gideon and there is no assistant principal to share leadership responsibilities.
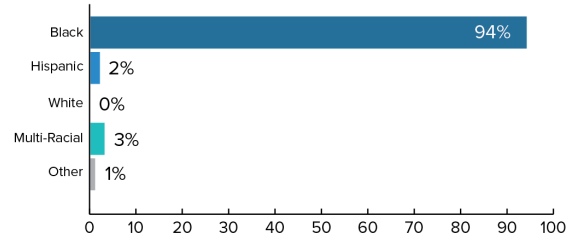
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1.3 School demographic and performance data

Edward Gideon School
At a glance

Enrollment

Students living in this catchment area choose to go to:

- Gideon (62%)
- WD Kelley (5%)
- Alliance for Progress Charter School (2%)
- Blaine (2%)

Race/Ethnicity Breakdown

Students attending this school come from the following catchments:

- Gideon (61%)
- Blaine (8%)
- WD Kelley (6%)
- William Dick (3%)

3-Year SPR Trend
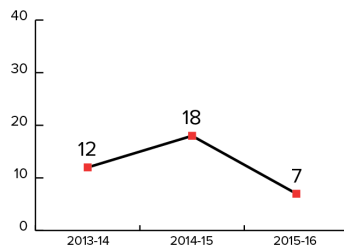
ELA Achievement

Math Achievement

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

Attendance
% of students attending 95% or more of school days

Suspensions
% of students receiving zero suspensions

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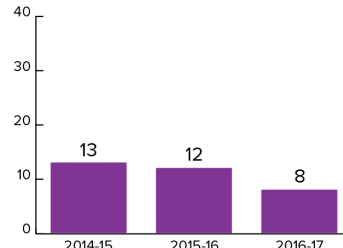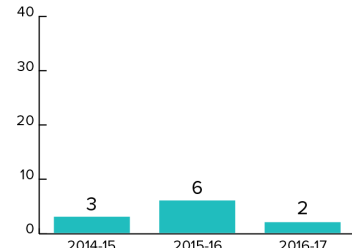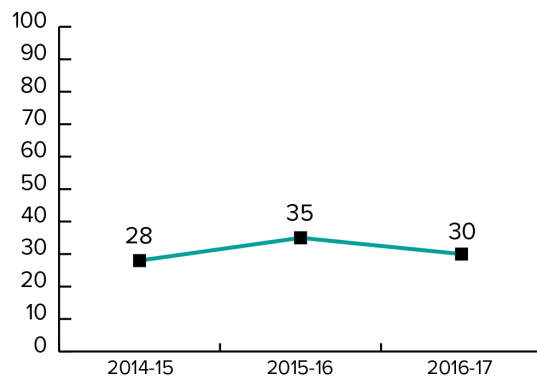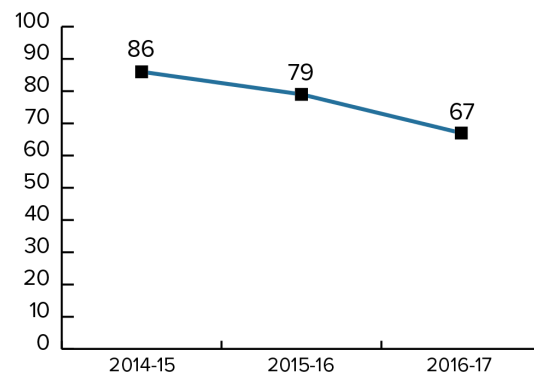School District of Philadelphia
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2 SQR Process and Details

In this section of the report, the SQR team has identified the factors that are most significantly supporting and limiting effective student learning.

2.1 Background on the SQR process

Meeting with the Principal

The School Quality Review (SQR) team consisted of two members – Dr. Jalilah Dukes, Lead Reviewer, and Mrs. Gwen Burrel, Team Reviewer. The SQR team began the process with a 1.5-hour meeting with the school principal. The principal provided background information on the school's organizational structure, changes from the previous year, relationships with staff and families, instructional capacity, assessment tools and processes, and strategies for improving school culture, staff performance, and student outcomes.

The principal spoke extensively about the challenges of a small staff and the new organizational structure put in place to support a better school culture, build teacher leadership, and offer teachers time for collaboration and coaching. She also discussed the goal-setting tool and process introduced to the staff to increase student achievement, and its' alignment with the district anchor goals. The principal requested that the staff use i-Ready and AIMSweb reading and mathematics data to intentionally plan lessons that are designed to address students' academic needs. However, she recognizes that more training and clarity about the type and schedule for administering assessments are required for staff to confidently create data-driven lessons.

The Principal highlighted the staff's dedication to the school. Due to recent changes, teachers have taken on leadership roles such as Academy Coordinators and Positive Behavioral and Intervention Support (PBIS) Facilitator. Additionally, the teachers work collaboratively to plan for instruction after school hours and outside of school.

Classroom visits

The SQR team visited ten classrooms over two days. The average classroom observation lasted twenty minutes. In six classrooms, the observation time was twenty minutes. The remaining four classes observations lasted twenty-three, nineteen (teacher dismissed students to transition to a math class), twenty-two, and five minutes (due to a class reward party). The team observed lessons in mathematics, science, reading, literacy centers, and special education in Kindergarten through 8th grade classes. The team visited classrooms in all grade levels.

Gideon School's class sizes vary by grade level. On average, classes average about twenty students, except for the special education classes. However, there were twenty-six 2nd, thirty-one 4th, and thirty-six 7th grade students in these classes during the observation.

Focus groups

The team conducted two student focus groups, three staff focus groups, and two parent focus groups. The student focus groups consisted of nine students from every grade level, all of whom were chosen by the school leaders. The staff focus group consisted of six Kindergarten through 4th grade teachers, two 7th and 8th grade teachers, and one 6th grade teacher. Interviewed staff members volunteered to participate in the focus group during the time their students attended a special or elective class, and, in some cases, the principal provided coverage to allow teachers to participate in the focus group.

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The parent focus groups included a total of three parents that had students in grades Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 6th, and recent graduates of Gideon School. All school parents were invited to be a part of the focus group by the Family and Community Engagement Liaison through flyers, emails, and robocalls.

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.

3.1 Factors that support effective student learning:

i. School leaders and teachers seek to ensure that the school curriculum is aligned to state standards and are making strides at linking standards, instruction, and assessment to ensure clear and consistent expectations for student learning. *(Domain 1, P. 8)*

    a) When interviewed, the principal stated that she reviews teachers' lesson plans using the Lesson Plan Checklist. Two of the checklist elements include alignment to state standards/CCSS, and evidence of clear learning objectives. Four out of six K-4 and 7-8 teacher focus group members confirmed that they have received copies of the Lesson Plan Checklist with feedback from the principal as necessary.

    b) Teachers are in the beginning phase of sharing learning objectives with students. In six out of ten classrooms visited, learning objectives were posted, and in two of the ten classes the learning objective was written on the student tasks.

ii. School leaders offer instructional support for team members through coaching, weekly grade group meetings, and professional development. During each teacher focus group session, teachers spoke about voluntarily meeting after school and outside of school to plan for learning. Eight out of nine teachers discussed planning with colleagues during lunch, after-school, and on their own time. Teachers have a desire to improve learning and teaching, and genuinely want the school to succeed. *(Domain 3, P.15)*

iii. The principal holds teachers accountable for the academic and social achievement of their students and addresses poor performance. *(Domain 3, P.13)*
Examples include:

    a) written lesson plan feedback,

    b) informal lesson observations with shared verbal and written feedback,

    c) formal evaluation process,

    d) critical conversations with written follow up, and

    e) coaching and professional development support to address teachers' needs.

3.2 Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. Although the school is trying to increase learning for staff and students, severe and persistent behavior issues limit growth for students and creates an environment that is not conducive for learning. Safety and security were noted as major concerns by all focus groups. (*Domain 1, P. 9, Domain 3, P. 14, and Domain 4, P. 19)*

    a) Two teachers shared that parents walk in and out of classes during instruction time. For example, during an observation, three parents entered the classroom at 1:17 p.m. One parent attempted to interrupt the teacher's guided reading group. The teacher requested that the parent give her a few minutes before meeting with her. The parent sat in the back of the classroom. Another parent entered, hugged her child, waved at the other parents then exited the class. The third parent spoke to his child, waited a few moments then exited the class.

    b) Focus group parents, and parents that the SQR team met over the course of the two-day review, expressed concerns about their child's safety at school. Two focus group parents

stated that they volunteer to serve at the front desk because there is no security guard or police presence on campus.

c) All nine upper-grade student focus group participants indicated that they did not feel safe at school.

d) Teachers spend a considerable amount of instructional time trying to maintain control of the classroom and respond to student misbehavior. The teachers are unable to maintain consistency and stability for themselves and their students.

e) Teacher growth is stifled because teachers are reluctant to implement new learning from professional development or coaching sessions. For some teachers, any change could create unrest in their classrooms.

ii. While there has been an intentional focus on data, teachers require more professional development on the tools, analysis, and application to have a significant impact on student learning. *(Domain 1, P. 10, Domain 2, P. 11, and Domain 3, P. 14)*

a) One teachers stated that, "We are constantly testing and there is no time for actual teaching." When these teacher focus group members were asked if they agree, six out of six members agreed with that statement.

b) Six out of nine teachers were unsure how to develop their Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) which is part of the states' multiple-measure, comprehensive system of educator effectiveness.

c) There is little evidence of use of rubrics and other formative assessment data during classroom observations. In two classes, teachers designed small group learning based on assessment results.

d) School leaders and teachers are confused about which assessment tools such as i-Ready, AIMSweb, DRA, Benchmarks, and Gates to use and when they should be administered as stated during focus group discussions. Only eight out of 19 teachers and school leaders interviewed could articulate how many times per year i-Ready was being administered and why this particular assessment was being administered.

iii. School leaders are responsible for multiple areas outside their primary roles resulting in reduced impact on learning and teaching. (*Domain 3, P. 15 and Domain 4 P. 18)*

a) Focus groups cited low staff morale, poor school climate, and limited resources such as staff capacity to provide student interventions, no SMART Board pens in the upper grade classes, and no school dean, social worker, and security guard as barriers to increasing learning and overall school performance.

b) All teachers reported concerns about students not receiving consequences in a timely manner, or a consequence that does not reflect the severity of the offense, when "pink slips" are sent to the Academy Coordinators.

c) Seven teachers expressed concerns about breach of student and teacher confidentiality due to teacher leaders performing administrative duties.

d) Teachers attempt to implement Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII); however, they report that there is no follow up actions when paperwork is submitted.

e) Upper grade students "do not feel valued or respected" by some school leaders. They stated that most of their interactions with the guidance counselor are related to behavior concerns instead of preparing them for high school.

iv. Although steps have been taken, school leaders, staff and students haven't been able to forge trusting relationships amongst all stakeholders. (*Domain 3, P. 15 and Domain 4, P. 18)*

a) Teachers, students, and families shared issues about not feeling welcomed, valued, or being treated with fairness and respect.

b) In addition, staff is unclear about the process to become leaders, and some feel unsupported to advance professionally.

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/action

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. Teachers in grades Kindergarten through 4th grade are incorporating technology into their instruction using SMART Boards to display PowerPoints and to show videos.
   a) Kindergarten and 3rd teachers or students were observed using electronic pens to circle items or move virtual objects with their fingers, and showing visuals to extend students' vocabulary. For example, Kindergarten students were called to the SMART Board to draw representations of numbers six through ten.

For those teachers that have new technology in their classrooms, student engagement is higher as evident during our classroom observations and comments shared during the student focus groups.

ii. Teachers understand the importance of aligning the subject content of lessons to the state standards. Instructional coaches are continuing to support teachers to plan lessons and design assessments based on the state standards. For example, the Partners in School Innovation Coach held sessions with the 4th-8th grade teachers on unit planning. The Literacy Lead Coach also attended these sessions to support Kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers.
   a) In eight out of ten classes, the teacher posted learning objectives in the classroom or wrote them on the assignment.

Teachers and school leaders are working diligently to implement lessons aligned to the state standards. The teachers meet regularly during work hours and outside of the school day to plan for instruction. More time and attention is necessary to ensure all teachers share learning objectives that are directly aligned to state standards and clearly articulate them before, during, and at the closure of an activity.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i. Instructional rigor in most classrooms is not sufficient, as it does not provide students with the appropriate level of academic challenge to accelerate learning.
   a) Opportunities for collaboration, student voice and critical thinking are limited. In only two classes, Kindergarten students worked collaboratively in literacy centers and 8th grade students worked in pairs to discuss a reading assignment.
   b) There is little evidence of higher-level questions, effective discussion strategies, and assignments that require students to think critically. An analysis of teacher questions is provided below.
      i. Class 1-three recall questions
      ii. Class 2-no questions asked
      iii. Class 3-mix of two high and four average level questions such as – "If I wanted to measure the width of this width of this book what measurement

        tool would I use? What about a baseball bat? What unit of measure for an American Football field? Can you tell me the strategy you are going to use when you read?

    iv. Class 4-no verbal questions; mix of average and low-level questions on written assignments
    v. Class 4-five recall questions asked
    vi. Class 5-six recall questions asked. When students responded incorrectly, the teacher gave the answer without giving them an opportunity to explain their thinking or to self-correct.
    vii. Class 6-no verbal questions asked
    viii. Class 7-questioned were embedded in the assignment
    ix. Class 8-mix of four average and three low-level questions asked
    x. Class 9-three average questions asked
    xi. Class 10- no questions asked (class party)

c) In most classes, teachers did not share meaningful feedback with students to advance their understanding. Students in grades 5-8 stated that, "As long as we do our work and behave in class, we will get a good grade." The students said they are not sure if they "are doing good or not."

d) Upper grade students expressed that they do not feel academically challenged. Both eight grade students commented that they need to learn more so they can be better prepared for high school.

The lack of rigorous instruction and low student engagement inhibits the school's overall student achievement. Teachers are not asking enough high-quality questions to formatively assess student mastery of concepts, or facilitating genuine student discussions to support students' verbal skills. Most lessons are teacher-centered leaving little to no opportunities for inquiry, and for students to collaborate and learn from their peers. These skills are essential to solidifying concepts learned, and for future success in college and careers. Teachers require professional development to develop high quality questions that promote deeper thinking, and facilitate student-led discussions to increase engagement and learning.

    ii. Teachers are struggling to effectively manage student behavior in classrooms. For examples, focus group teachers expressed concerns about consistent behavior problems that disrupt classes. During classroom observations, the team observed one teacher writing a stack of pink slips as some students sat with their heads down while others used the Chromebooks. Other teachers attempted to address misbehaviors by repeatedly praising students that exhibited the appropriate behavior, using proximity and circulating among the students, calling students' names to redirect them, ignoring minor behaviors, talking over students to continue the lesson, removing students from class, or using tools like Class DoJo or a behavior chart to clip up or down. In all observed classes, these actions halted behaviors temporarily or had no effect.

    a) The teachers and school counselor require more support and training to meet the students' social and emotional needs. During focus group session with the school leaders, they spoke about the increase in severe behaviors this year, their desire to learn strategies to better support their students, and actions taken thus far to support the staff to manage their classes and to reduce the effects of a stressful work environment. One school leader said they received training on trauma awareness, but that the training did not provide specific strategies as to how to respond to trauma. When asked for consensus, all nine school leaders agreed with her statement. In August, the Guidance Counselor provided one training session for the staff on mindfulness, and hopes to offer more sessions throughout the year. In addition, the school leaders mentioned the district's initial efforts to implement Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

b) The hallways are loud. The intercom constantly interrupts instruction, and student behaviors are disruptive to teachers and peers. Students are out of class often because of misbehaviors or to respond to calls from the office resulting in loss of learning time.

Student misbehavior is prevalent throughout the school creating an overall environment that is not conducive for learning. The school staff members are not equipped to handle the type of behaviors exhibited by some students. When teachers attempt to address misbehaviors, students are sent out of class, or refuse to leave class and continue to disrupt learning. As a result, a significant number of instructional minutes are lost every hour of the school day. This is especially concerning for students that are already academically deficient. As a next step, the school could review school expectations with students, provide Restorative Justice or in-depth PBIS training for all staff, and continue to seek to fill Emotional Support (ES) staff vacancies. The principal has been trying to fill the ES vacancies since August 9, 2017.

iii. Student engagement is low in most classes due to a lack of differentiation and ineffective instructional practices.
   a) In most classes, students worked independently. When students were sitting in groups, there was no evidence of targeted small group instruction, as students were working on the same assignment except in the Kindergarten class and learning support class. In these classes, students received targeted intervention and one to one support.
   b) Opportunities for students to work collaboratively on engaging projects and assignments were not observed in any of the ten classrooms visited.

Instruction is not student-centered in most classrooms, and students receive the same assignment regardless of their academic level. Intensive support is required to ensure teachers implement effective instructional practice, interventions and differentiated learning opportunities based on students' academic data to improve student achievement.

iv. Teachers require more support to analyze data such as i-Ready or AIMSweb to plan instruction at the appropriate level for their students.
   a) Teachers expressed that the goal-setting document designed to support struggling students is not being used for its' intended purposes due to lack of understanding on how to properly complete the document. To implement the growth plan, it requires a great deal of paperwork, and extensive time and resources. As a result, it is only completed for compliance reasons as shared by teachers in the focus group.

In summary, the principal discussed how she introduced the staff to goal-setting and is aware of the need to clarify the growth-plan template. Goal-setting and prioritization are key research-based practices for improving individual learning and school-wide achievement, but more time and support are necessary to realize the impact of these initial efforts.

4.2   Domain 2: Curriculum & Assessment

Curriculum & Assessment requires support/action in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i. The school leadership team works to ensure that the school curriculum and assessments are aligned to state standards.
   a) Common assessments consist of i-Ready for reading and mathematics administered three times a year which provides growth measures for students and individualize instruction.
   b) In the Kindergarten class, the teacher and Experience Corp staff member were observed using AIMSweb results for targeted instruction during literacy learning centers.

Most teachers are using the district mandated curriculum. To increase student achievement, the school leaders may improve student progress by continuing to observe classroom instruction and monitoring instructional practices to guarantee that all teachers' use assessment results to plan for student interventions. (Academic Improvement Plan Readiness Criteria, Curriculum & Instruction Domain #9)

ii.   The school offers art and music classes and extracurricular activities through the afterschool program to broaden learning experiences.
    a) The students benefit from afterschool programming offered by Education Works. They currently work with 42 students in grades K-8. The program is STEAM focused, incorporates project-based learning, and sports activities.

The school staff offers extended student learning time through special classes and afterschool programs. The school leaders should seek to increase student participation in extended learning time.

iii.   The school is seeking to increase teacher collaboration and professional learning.
    a) Teacher teams meet weekly in grade groups to receive support from Instructional Coaches K-8, the school counselor, and principal. The principal reports that teachers discuss student interventions. A sample agenda included RTII-September monthly review, and input interventions students into the RTII system to create plans.
    b) In addition, upper grade teachers are developing unit plans with the Partners in School Innovation Coach, and all teachers report collaborating with colleagues on their own time to plan lessons to ensure instructional alignment.

Teachers can improve the curriculum and discuss assessment results during weekly grade group meetings, professional development, and coaching sessions. Teachers value opportunities for professional learning and to collaborate with their colleagues. To increase adult and student leaning, these meetings must adhere to a process that is cyclical and inclusive of curriculum, assessment, and instructional development and evaluation.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   Although the school is seeking to respond to low student achievement, teachers are not properly trained or proficient in use and administration of the assessments, and are unable to use data properly to inform small group instruction.

    a) In only two classes out of ten, students received targeted instruction in small groups based on their AIMSweb and i-Ready assessment results. The school has multiple assessment programs. Teachers and school leaders shared in focus group sessions that they need more training to design data-driven instruction.

The school has multiple assessment programs. Teachers and school leaders shared in focus group sessions that they need more training to design data-driven instruction.

ii.   The enacted curriculum does not adequately prepare students for high school.
    a) 8th grade students expressed dissatisfaction with the limited course offerings, and quality of instruction. The focus group students said if they do the assignments and turn them in they will automatically get a good grade. However, they didn't know if the quality of their work is good nor did they receive specific feedback to improve their learning.
    b) During classroom observations in the 8th grade class, student comments about the assignments included: "Not challenging"; "Not sure if I am ready for high school." "I am testing to go to another high school."
    c) Only three out of seven students gave positive remarks like, "I am learning a lot." "I am prepared for high school." "I understand how to do the work."
    d) Teachers expressed that the math curriculum, Envision, has changed to such an extent that students "haven't caught up with it". In some cases, this causes teachers to revert to

the old curriculum as seen in one classroom.

The school does not offer a variety of courses such as foreign language or advanced courses like Algebra I for accelerated students. The 8th grade teacher stated that he tries to incorporate Algebra I concepts into the units. As a next step, the school leaders may want to explore online learning or partnerships with local high schools to offer a broader selection of courses at the 7th and 8th grade levels.

    iii.   Gideon School has experienced an increase in teacher turnover rates in the past two years resulting in shifts at each grade level.
        a)   The school has a mix of teachers that are new to the teaching profession, and new to their grade level. Eight out of nine teachers discussed the challenges they face in their new positions, such as being unfamiliar with the curriculum and state standards, and having difficulty managing student behaviors.

The principal has acknowledged this challenge, and is currently taking steps to build teacher capacity around grade level standards, assessment literacy, and behavior management skills. For example, teachers enrolled in higher education programs may have formal mentors, but the principal provides informal mentors   through school instructional coaches and relationships with veteran teachers to support their development.

4.3   Domain 3: Instructional Coaching, Management, and Accountability

4.3.1   Sub-Domain 3.1: Instructional Leadership

Instructional Leadership requires support/action in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

    i.   The principal regularly gives teachers feedback through lesson plan reviews to improve learning and teaching.
        a)   Teachers stated that they receive a copy of the Lesson Plan Checklist with the principal's written feedback on their lesson plans and formal and informal observations, as necessary.

The principal spoke extensively about the actions being taken to improve instruction. She developed a Lesson Plan Checklist to share feedback with teachers. Three teachers discussed how they use this feedback to improve their lessons. As a relevant next step, school leaders could develop a schedule for conducting learning walks or Instructional Rounds to measure teacher progress and share effective practices across the school.

    ii.   The Principal holds the staff accountable for their students' progress, and demonstrating professional behavior.
        a)   When required, the principal conferences with staff members to remediate poor performance, and submits written documentation to ensure adherence to agreements. For example, in separate focus groups, the principal and a teacher discussed an incident that the principal deemed as unprofessional behavior and the actions taken to rectify the situation.

Teachers openly discussed instances where the principal redirected them to improve performance, school culture, and student achievement although they may not have agreed with her. The principal is aware of teachers' needs, and shared ideas of how she will continue to support their development such as assessment and unit planning training, and repurposing staff.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

    i.   Learning from professional development or coaching sessions are not applied, and classes are
         not observed consistently to improve learning and teaching
         a) Teachers seek to maintain control of their students by using strategies like "1-2-3 Eyes on
            Me" and placing the student's desk in an individual area instead of with a group in lower
            grades, or asking the student to stand in the hallway to privately conference with him/her
            in upper grades. However, the SQR team observed students refusing to comply with
            requests such as not exiting the classroom to speak with the teacher. These types of
            defiant behaviors were mentioned as reasons why teachers feel prohibited in attempting
            to implement new teaching strategies shared by instructional coaches or trying new
            learning from professional development sessions.
         b) School leaders and instructional coaches are assigned multiple roles such as Academy
            Leaders monitor academic and behavior management, school leaders serve on two
            committees on average and assist with planning professional development and school-
            wide events; therefore, they are not conducting learning walks and classroom
            observations as often as initially planned.

Student misbehaviors constantly disrupt the learning environment. In every classroom observed, the
teacher had to stop teaching to address misbehavior, or draw students' attention to the lesson because of
disruptions in the hallway. Coaches and school leaders are reacting to these behavior issues, and other
challenges, instead of being able to focus their time to improve learning and teaching. School leaders
could seek a more proactive approach which consists of reevaluating staff's roles and responsibilities as
well as school procedures to eliminate these constant disruptions.

    ii. Although the school has multiple assessment tools, the teachers are not proficient in the use and
         administration of the assessments and school leaders are not normed on assessment
         expectations and practices.
         a) Staff are unsure which assessments are currently administered, when, and for what
            purposes.
         b) For example, during the Kindergarten through 3rd grade teacher focus group, only two of
            six teachers reported using assessment data to plan lessons. The K-3rd teachers said
            AIMSweb is administered quarterly, i-Ready for reading and mathematics twice a year,
            Diagnostic Reading Assessment (DRA) only as needed, teacher-made assessments one
            subject per week, and Benchmark tests per the district schedule.
         c) An upper grade teacher explained that AIMSweb is administered in September, January,
            and May, i-Ready twice a year (pre- and post), Benchmarks every report card/grading
            period, Gates for ELA and DRA for the lower grades as needed, weekly teacher-made
            tests, and PSSA ELA and mathematics for grades 3rd-8th and Science 4th and 8th in April.
         d) The Instructional Leadership Team expressed a slightly greater level of understanding
            about the purposes of the assessments, but even the school leaders contradicted each
            other and appeared confused when asked to discuss the school's assessment programs
            and practices.
         e) For example, school leaders that attended the focus group session said i-Ready is
            administered twice a year, as a pre- and post-assessment, and AIMSweb is administered
            three times a year, beginning, middle, and end of year (BOY, MOY, EOY).
         f) During the focus group meeting, a teacher leader said that i-Ready was a voluntary
            assessment only.

Training is required for teachers and school leaders to effectively utilize data to improve student
achievement. As a next step, the principal's immediate action may be to explain these assessment
programs and to design a comprehensive assessment calendar to eliminate confusion.

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    iii.   Although grade groups meet once a week, teams reported the agendas are created for them. A sample agenda of a 50-minute meeting included welcoming procedures, RTII areas of concern, exit ticket activity-questions, and a checklist of intervention students.

        a)   The principal reports that these meetings are run by the principal, counselor, and K-8 Instructional Coaches.

        b)   The teachers stated that the teams do not have sufficient time to analyze data and student work samples, monitor student progress, and collaboratively plan lessons and interventions.

The quality of learning and teaching is inconsistent across the school. Some Instructional Support Team members are not providing consistent support or communication to their teams to improve learning. These meetings are not as collaborative or provide enough time for teachers to plan together; therefore, teachers report that they must meet with colleagues outside of school to plan lessons. The data gathered from the Instructional Leadership Team focus groups confirmed the teachers' comments. As a next step, the principal could revisit expectations for grade group meetings, and create an action plan protocol for Instructional Leadership meetings and grade group meetings to encourage consistent messaging and cohesive instructional practices across the school.

4.3.2   Sub-Domain 3.2: Management and Accountability

Management and Accountability requires support/action in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

    i.   The Principal redesigned the staff structure to support colleagues' professional growth.

        a)   The Scholars Academy Coordinator (Kindergarten-2nd) collaborates with her team, and serves as a peer coach, when possible. The Kindergarten teachers discussed how they plan together, and explained the supports they receive from the Scholars Academy Coordinator. During the focus group session, teacher's responses echoed consistent support.

The principal is seeking to implement a shared leadership model, which is supported by research. However, the poor school culture and pervasive discipline issues overwhelm the entire staff, and will need to be addressed before this model can be fully implemented.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

    i.   As revealed during observation and focus group sessions, school leaders are assigned multiple roles which reduces their instructional time.

        a)   During teacher focus groups, teachers shared that the guidance counselor and special education teacher are responsible for administrative duties, for example reacting to disciplinary pink slips, conferencing with parents, and attending off-site professional development as the school's representative which prevents them from servicing students.

Students are not receiving sufficient academic and guidance services to further their learning. General Education teachers that also serve as school leaders expressed feelings of being overwhelmed. As a next step, the principal could assume administrative duties related to discipline.

    ii.   Although the school leaders developed the strategic vision in a collaborative manner, many of the original team members are retired or transferred from the school.

There is a need for increased communication, and clarity about the strategic vision to garner commitment from all stakeholder groups to increase student achievement. The principal could form a committee representative of the stakeholder groups to develop a school improvement plan with actions that are monitored and reviewed at least monthly.

iii.   Staff vacancies and overcrowded classes negatively impact student learning.
     a) Emotional Support classes have substitute teachers. Hallway behaviors interrupt surrounding classroom, and instructional time is consumed by attempts to manage student behavior.
     b) The 7th and 2nd grade classes are overcrowded. Teachers in these classes spend most of learning time redirecting students and filling out disciplinary pink slips.

The principal is attempting to secure additional or qualified teachers for the above classes; however, this process began on August 9, 2017 and is still underway. The principal should continue her efforts to contact colleagues, and possibly contact local colleges and universities to recruit teachers to fill these positions, and maintain weekly contact with the district staff to expedite the hiring process.

iv.   Staff is unclear about the process to become leaders, and two teachers said that they felt unsupported to advance into a leadership role.
     a) For example, teachers and students felt the principal did not select school leaders in an objective, and systematic manner. One claimed, "I did not apply to be an Academy Coordinator. I was simply told that I was the Academy Coordinator for my grade group."

In summary, this contributes to low staff morale and a poor school culture. The Instructional Leadership Team could design a leadership development program that includes an application process, selection criteria and training for teacher leaders. This leadership development program could be shared with the staff to solicit their feedback before it is implemented. Once a program is established, the principal would be able to share it with new teachers and staff during school-level orientation.

v.   Only 35% of students attend school 95% of the time. Parents spoke of the school's effort to inform them of the importance of attendance such as notifications, contacts from the Truancy Office, and teachers working with students to "catch students up" when they are absent. Although, the school staff informs parents of the attendance guidelines, the school continues to struggle to increase attendance rates.

As a next step, the principal could continue to work closely with the Community School Coordinator, district-level Family and Community Engagement Liaison, and Truancy Officer to develop an attendance incentive program, maintain regular communication with parents, track individual student attendance rates and impact of attendance interventions, and ensure the families of students with poor attendance are connected to available community resources to overcome barriers that prevent the student from attending school regularly.

4.4   Domain 4: The Culture of Learning

The Culture of Learning requires intensive school-wide support/action

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   The core teacher teams have established respectful, collaborative working relationships and they have a desire to improve learning outcomes for all students.
     a) In the Kindergarten through 1st grade classrooms, adults work together in clearly defined roles to serve students.
     b) During conversations with all teachers, they discussed various ways that colleagues collaborate about learning during and outside of school. These comments were supported by parents' comments about their child's teachers, and observed during the onsite review.

ii.   Students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade articulated the school-wide academic and social expectations, and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) goals.
     a) In observed Kindergarten through 3rd grade classes, except for one classroom, teachers

model respectful behavior, reinforce academic and social expectations, and maintain students' dignity when redirecting them. For example, Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers were observed using non-verbal cues to redirect students, and praising students that exhibited the desired behaviors.

b) These focus group members confidently spoke about their learning experiences, and communication between the school and families about their academic and social progress. Their statements were confirmed as parents shared positive comments about their child's teachers.

These grade level teachers articulate expectations clearly and students have internalized the expectations. PBIS works well based on students' enthusiastic comments. As a result of coherent behavioral expectations, students in grades Kindergarten, 1st, and 3rd grade are exposed to more conducive learning environments than other students in the school. The PBIS and Climate and Culture Committees could observe the Kindergarten, 1st, and 3rd grade teams to share the applicable strategies with the other grade level teachers. These committees should also consider re-launching PBIS, providing training for all staff, and creating a system to track and monitor when and where behavior infractions escalate.

iii.   Despite concerns expressed in the 5th through 8th grade student focus group, all students reported that there was at least one adult they could go to in the building for support.

Staff are supportive and respectful of one another, and express that they have a love for their student and want them to succeed. To further learning, the principal could ensure that the guidance counselor works closely with the 5th- 8th grade students and teachers to establish mentoring relationships with internal staff and community organizations, and to share academic resources to prepare them for high school. The guidance counselor could meet with student groups to teach life-skills or tools such as deescalating strategies, communication skills, conflict resolution, restorative practices, mindfulness, study skills, and application writing strategies.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   There are constant interruptions to the learning environment.
   a) Intercom announcements interrupted learning seven times during a focus group session.
   b) In eight out of nine classes (10th classes had a class party), teachers had to stop instruction multiple times to address student misbehavior.
   c) In six out of nine classes (10th classes had a class party), students said the work is "too easy" or "boring" which diminished engagement and increased off-task behaviors. Students worked independently on worksheets, answered questions written on the board, or solved math problems in a textbook or workbook.
   d) Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) English Language Arts (ELA) - 12% of students designated as Proficient or Advanced
   e) Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) Math - 6% of students designated as Proficient or Advanced; 1% Advanced

Due to numerous factors such as inappropriate student behavior, multiple all calls over the intercom, and low teacher capacity, the school has not established a culture of learning that permeates the school community. The principal must continue to work diligently to hire staff to fill vacancies and reduce class size, and increase teacher capacity by providing ongoing, high quality literacy and mathematics instructional coaching. The office staff, teachers and parents could restrict interruptions, especially during the literacy and mathematics blocks, to increase overall student achievement.

ii.   Upper grade students report disrespectful student and adult behaviors that result in loss of instructional time and broken trusts.

a) Parents and students, primarily in grades 4th through 8th, report concerns about their safety at school, and not feeling welcomed and valued by school leaders.
b) These students do not feel that Gideon School is preparing them for the rigorous requirements of high school, college, and career.
c) Advance courses are non-existent in some content areas and elective options are limited.

Due to the students' negative perceptions of leaders and peers, behavior problems increase and engagement decreases. All staff must model respectful behaviors and maintain students' dignity when correcting misbehaviors. As a next step, the principal and school leaders could have a consistent visible presence to monitor the quality of instruction, provide teachers with feedback to increase academic and social achievement, and to further model respectful behaviors as an example to students and staff.

iii. Although the school has taken steps to implement PBIS, there is little evidence that PBIS, or other initiatives, have a positive impact on reducing the effects of trauma and imbedding social and emotional strategies to improve students' lives.
a) During the parent focus group, parents commented that the school's behavior policy had not been shared.
b) All focus groups reported safety and a poor school culture as factors that reduce learning.
c) Consistent disruptions to the learning environment were observed throughout the two-day onsite review.

Students' academic and social growth is not advancing quickly enough to increase the school's overall performance. The school staff requires training to work with students that are affected by severe or ongoing traumatic issues as well as re-launching the PBIS program. The principal could seek partnerships with external agencies and solicit the assistance of the Community School Coordinator and district-level Family and Community Engagement Liaison to offer families' support services.

iv. Staff and students shared that low expectations regarding student behavior exist.
a) Focus group comments include: "There are little to no consequences." "No expectations for learning." "Lack of support which makes it difficult to get things done because the climate is not good."
b) While observing one classroom, there were four different interruptions from Emotional Support (ES) students busting into the classroom during the teacher's lesson. The teacher reported that this is "ongoing and prevents her from teaching because her students are in a constant uproar."
c) Parents report that students are put in the hallway when they misbehave. "These students run around the school disrupting others." "There is no dean or in-school suspension room" to send students that need time to reflect, redirect and then continue academic work.
d) SQR team members observed three students that were put in the hallway for misbehavior. The teachers continued to teach the lesson until they could conference with the students. One student spoke loudly, bothered students as they passed by the class, and created distractions while in the hallway.
e) On every floor, students with or without teacher escort were loud and playful in the hallways. While in a 6th grade class, students in the hallway beat on the closed door as they passed the class.

Safety represents a consistent desire for staff, parents, and students. The school could increase efforts to communicate expectations, consequences, and rewards to all stakeholders, and administer consequences consistently when students violate rules. In addition, the principal's presence is required in all classrooms, but especially in grades 4th through 8th, to take a proactive approach to reducing

behavior incidents. As a potential deterrent, all teachers could stand in their doorway to greet students as they enter class, and to monitor the hallways during transitions. Teachers could make sure students adhere to hallway expectations when escorting their classes. During high traffic times, non-instructional staff and parent volunteers could be stationed in the hallways to monitor activities. The RTII Team could have scheduled, timely meetings to ensure students have appropriate programming and services to meet their needs.

4.5   Domain 5: Family and Community Engagement

Family and Community Engagement requires support/action in targeted areas

Factors that support effective student learning:

i.   Gideon School utilizes multiple ways such as, but not limited to, the Gideon Gram, automated call system, and monthly calendars to communicate with families.
   a)   The School Quality Review team observed parents bringing in items for the bake sale, ensuring students had money to purchase bake sale items, volunteering in a Kindergarten classroom, and greeting visitors at the entrance desk.
   b)   Students in grades Kindergarten through 3rd applied their learning to a real-life situation as they assisted in managing the bake sale.

The school has created systems for communicating with parents. Kindergarten through 3rd grade parents appear to support grade level activities as confirmed by student focus group members that spoke about how their parents speak to their teachers regularly, send items to the school, and attend activities as often as possible. These students exhibited higher levels of engagement and enthusiasm for learning.

ii.   Teachers make a deliberate effort to keep parents informed about students' academic and social achievements.
   a)   All focus groups discussed teachers' informal and formal methods of sharing students' progress with families. Families receive either verbal or written daily, weekly, interim, and quarterly progress reports.
   b)   Some teachers have strong relationships with families. These teachers were observed having genuinely caring conversations with families. For example, one parent discussed how a teacher taught her the new mathematics concept so the mother could assist her child at home.

The school seeks to keep parents informed to increase the achievement and success of every child. As a result, most parents and students can discuss the current learning, homework help, and other efforts to support student learning in their classroom.

Factors that limit effective student learning:

i.   Although the school is a designated Community School, some of the services have not been fully implemented.
   a)   Families report receiving the healthy food baskets, and enthusiastically spoke about the work of the Community School Coordinator. However, other services that may increase student learning have not yet been initiated.
   b)   The social worker has not been hired to assist with the vast needs of the students and families.

The momentum of receiving the designation as a Community School is starting to wane. Although appreciative of some changes, families want more services for their school and themselves. As a next

step, the principal could revisit the Community School plan to devise next steps in support of increasing services and fully implementing the program, and communicate activities and implementation progress to families.

    ii.   School leaders have not devised effective solutions to overcome issues of being a small school community, and to amass a group of empowered parents to advocate for their school.

        a)   During the parent focus group, two out of three parents expressed a concern with staff being pulled out of classrooms to support in other areas.

        b)   Parents also shared concerns with large classroom sizes citing 2nd grade as an example with over thirty students, and 7th grade with forty students.

        c)   One out of the three parents were not aware that Gideon School was a low performing school. Parents report limited opportunities to strategically plan or work in a positive, productive manner with other parents to improve their school.

        d)   All three of the parents stated that they do not hear about the school promoting college and career.

    iii.   There is little to no evidence of celebrating cultural diversity to enhance the learning environment and ensure all students' backgrounds are valued. The school's student population consists of 5.6% Multi-racial/Ethnic students, and a significant number of Muslim students.

        a)   Parents indicated that celebrations are limited to days off per the district calendar.

        b)   Despite its' efforts, the school has not been successful in fostering a positive school climate, which is pivotal to building parent-school partnerships and supporting parent engagement in learning more generally. The school could benefit from developing a parent engagement plan to enhance their existing efforts, and producing a more inclusive environment in which everyone learns from and celebrates diversity.