

**2014–15 Level 5 School Annual Evaluation**  
**Paul A. Dever Elementary School, Boston, Massachusetts**  
**Receiver: Blueprint Schools Network**

## Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to collect evidence from each Level 5 school on the progress toward implementation of the turnaround plan in Year 1 of Level 5 status. During a two-day Monitoring Site Visit, data were collected through classroom observations using Teachstone’s Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS),<sup>1</sup> key stakeholder and focus group interviews, and a review of extant documentation (e.g., turnaround plan, quarterly reports, and other documents). The data collection and analysis processes are purposely developed to ensure reliability and validity of the findings. AIR’s Level 5 school review process focused on the specific turnaround priorities from each school’s turnaround plan. This report first provides highlights of the implementation of the turnaround plan and then provides pertinent information on each of the turnaround priorities.

## Highlights of Turnaround Plan Implementation at Paul A. Dever Elementary

- **Wraparound Services.** The Family Coordinator, who connected families to community partner organizations and provided access to wraparound services, has been very helpful in ensuring that students are prepared for learning, according to respondents.
- **Urgency and Trusting Relationships.** Staff camaraderie, support for each other, and focus on working hard for the best interests of the students were reported across stakeholders.
- **Student Behavior/Classroom Management.** The school began the year implementing a positive behavioral intervention system (PBIS) and focused on reinvigorating the PBIS efforts during the second half of the school year, which reportedly had a positive early impact on improving behavior issues throughout the school.
- **Spanish Language Program.** Due to Spanish language program constraints (i.e., the opt-in model and the short length of the classes), the Spanish language program was not implemented as effectively as desired in Year 1. Plans are in place to further improve the program in Year 2.
- **Adult Time Use.** Time and opportunities for teacher development occurred during the summer but were limited during the school year. Although all educator evaluation requirements were met, competing priorities and unanticipated challenges, including a change in school leadership in March, led to infrequent classroom observations during the second half of the school year, thereby limiting the additional feedback teachers receive. Evidence provided by the receiver demonstrates plans to refine these systems in Year 2.
- **Family Engagement.** The school experienced challenges in attracting families to school-wide family-centered events; strategies are already underway to increase family engagement in school year 2015-16, including devoting additional leadership and staff time to this effort.

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<sup>1</sup> See Teachstone’s website for more information: [http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/336169/What-is-CLASS\\_Info\\_Sheet.pdf?t=1432824252621](http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/336169/What-is-CLASS_Info_Sheet.pdf?t=1432824252621)

## Site Visit Findings

**Turnaround Priority Area 1: *Rapidly accelerate all students' language development in English and provide families with the opportunity for content-rich Spanish language development for their students.***

English language development has been a key priority for Dever. In response to a need for more support for the school's high number of English language learners (ELLs), the leadership team brought in a consultant to support curriculum and technology for ELL instruction during the spring of 2015. In addition, two literacy interventionists, as well as paraprofessionals, worked with students on developing reading skills. All teachers are required to participate in RETELL (Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners) training and earn Sheltered English Instruction endorsement, which participating staff reported as helpful in working with ELLs. In addition, the school offered a Spanish language program to students who opted into the daily 30-minute classes with a signed parental permission slip. Students who do not participate in the Spanish program work on additional core content review in small groups during this time. Respondents noted that the opt-in requirement and the limited amount of time (30 minutes) for the Spanish language program weakened the potential benefit to students. In response, the leadership team is developing plans to strengthen the program in Year 2.

**Turnaround Priority Area 2: *Improve instructional quality and maximize time for core instruction.***

In addition to lengthening the school day, instructional time was maximized through a range of academic and social-emotional student supports. Struggling students receive additional academic support by working with English language arts and mathematics interventionists, both teachers and paraprofessionals. A schedule for targeting students for interventions is developed based on student needs. In addition, academic needs are targeted through Blueprint's Math Fellows Program which provides academic intervention during 45-minute tutoring sessions for all fourth-grade students. The additional tutoring time doubles mathematics instruction time for these students. To address the needs of students struggling with social-emotional issues, the school partners with a counselor from the Home for Little Wanderers, who spends approximately 30 hours per week counseling students at the school. Dever also offers the Mass Starts program that provides social-emotional supports to small groups of students.

**Turnaround Priority Area 3: *Use data to drive instruction.***

On a quarterly basis staff meetings are held to review and discuss student assessment data. Although the school schedule allows for daily collaborative planning time, according to teachers this time is frequently used for other purposes including meetings among staff and urgent issues that arose during the school day, especially issues related to student behavior. According to respondents, during the beginning of the school year weekly time was allotted to review student data, but this time "slowly disappeared" because of competing priorities and distractions. Therefore, the school has not been able to sufficiently adopt adequate and consistent protocols for data-driven instructional improvement in Year 1. Recognizing limitations in the current professional development calendar, the school will have five full days for staff professional development and collaboration across next year's academic calendar in addition to summer professional development and quarterly staff meetings. The school leadership team is planning to prioritize data analysis for the upcoming year, is currently developing structures to formally use assessment data to inform instructional improvements, and is creating an instructional

leadership team to develop a stronger system for coaching teachers and conducting classroom observations.

**Turnaround Priority Area 4: *Establish a culture of high expectations and college and career readiness.***

The leadership team has implemented multiple strategies to meet expectations in this priority area, and teachers and school leaders are collaboratively engaged in turnaround planning. Teachers clearly see the co-principals' commitment to providing support. Evidence of this commitment is demonstrated in the substantially separate program, called the Therapeutic Learning Community, which supports approximately 33 students who have severe social-emotional needs. Still, the school faced a major challenge in turnaround efforts due to issues related to student behavior, which take away from instructional time. In response, in April 2015 the administration charged the PBIS committee, composed of teachers, specialists, and a consultant hired by Blueprint, to develop a new school-wide behavior plan. According to respondents, implementation of PBIS resulted in improvements in student behavior, as evidenced by the upper-middle-range average scores on classroom behavior management in Monitoring Site Visit schoolwide instructional observations.

Contributing to the culture of high expectations and connections to the students' families, a full-time Family Coordinator connects students' families to community-based support programs and organizes the school's Parent Action Committee, which meets regularly to discuss progress toward turnaround goals. Teachers reported making frequent contact with parents, and parent-teacher conferences were held twice during the year. However, the school continues to face challenges attracting families to schoolwide family-centered events; strategies are already underway to increase family engagement in school year 2015-16, including devoting additional leadership and staff time to this effort.

**Turnaround Priority Area 5: *Hire and cultivate high-performing and high-potential staff.***

The leadership team members and the teaching staff were hired by Blueprint Network staff in the spring and summer of 2014. The school leader, hired by Blueprint, had demonstrated experience working in a school that had turned around, according to respondents. In late March, the leadership structure changed to a co-principal model upon the departure of the school leader due to medical concerns. Although Dever's teachers have approximately six years of experience, on average, many of the teachers hired have limited prior teaching experience. All staff participated in summer professional development in preparation for the school year.

Overall, the school culture is supportive, evidenced by a high level of trust among teaching staff, and teachers overwhelmingly reported that staff supports the school's turnaround goals. The 2014–15 school schedule allows for structured opportunities for teachers to meet with instructional leaders, but competing demands limit these opportunities. As a result staff reported communicating in shorter, more informal conversations. Although the informal conversations work for some teachers, the lack of structured collaboration time limits opportunities to focus and cultivate teams, use data, and strategize on instructional improvement strategies. . Although all educator evaluation requirements were met, competing priorities and unanticipated challenges, including a change in school leadership in March, led to infrequent classroom observations during the second half of the school year, thereby limiting the additional feedback teachers received. The school leadership team is planning to increase the observations and feedback teachers will receive in the coming year.

## 2014–15 Level 5 School Annual Evaluation

# UP Academy Holland, Boston, Massachusetts

### Receiver: UP Education Network

## Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to collect evidence from each Level 5 school on the progress toward implementation of the turnaround plan in Year 1 of Level 5 status. During a two-day Monitoring Site Visit, data were collected through classroom observations using Teachstone’s Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS),<sup>2</sup> key stakeholder and focus group interviews, and a review of extant documentation (e.g., turnaround plan, quarterly reports, and other documents). The data collection and analysis processes are purposely developed to ensure reliability and validity of the findings. AIR’s Level 5 school review process focused on the specific turnaround priorities from each school’s turnaround plan. This report first provides highlights of the implementation of the turnaround plan and then provides pertinent information on each of the turnaround priorities.

## Highlights of Turnaround Plan Implementation at UP Academy Holland

- **Data Use.** Data drives instructional decision making, and time during professional development and grade-level team meetings is used to examine data.
- **Trusting Relationships/Coaching.** Staff reported that there are good working relationships between coaches and teachers and that feedback from instructional observations is useful.
- **School Culture.** Developing a positive school culture and high expectations for students has been a top priority. Efforts to improve school culture include the implementation of a school-wide student behavior plan that is varied by grade level in order to be developmentally appropriate for students.
- **Collaboration Time.** Teachers have time to collaborate regularly in grade-level teams, and English as a second language teachers attend these meetings to plan for English language learners (ELLs) in each grade level. The current schedule does not provide specific time for teacher teams to collaborate with special education teachers or between grade levels.
- **Tiered System of Interventions.** The school uses a Response to Intervention (RTI) model, and plans are in place to enhance Tier 2 (targeted) and Tier 3 (intensive) interventions in Year 2.

## Site Visit Findings

**Turnaround Priority Area 1: *Transform the culture of the school into a culture of urgency, high expectations, accountability, excellence, and achievement.***

School leadership understands and supports a culture of high expectations and positive regard between students, staff, and administrators. School leaders and staff have made building school culture and setting high expectations a priority. During the summer, teachers had three weeks of additional training

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mainly focused on setting expectations and creating school culture, with some professional development on instruction. Throughout the school year, staff maintain high expectations for their students, which supports strong relationships between teachers and students. Supported by a dean of students and two behavioral interventionists, the school-wide behavior plan is differentiated to account for differences in developmental level, and is being implemented by a majority of staff members. Classrooms observed during the Monitoring Site Visit received a middle-range score, approaching a high-range score in behavior management. However, some teachers expressed a desire for more behavioral interventionists to address student behavior.

***Turnaround Priority Area 2: Enhance the rigor of the curricula, improve the effectiveness of instruction, and strengthen the utilization of assessment data.***

Teachers, including English language learner (ELL) teachers, use collaboration time with their grade-level teams and a supervisor once a week. Collaboration time focuses on reviewing student data to assess which areas need to be retaught. Professional development time also focuses on using data to address student needs. Teachers have time to collaborate regularly in grade-level teams, and ELL teachers attend these meetings. The current schedule does not provide specific time for teacher teams to collaborate with special education teachers or between grade levels. The school curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and the deans of curriculum and instruction (DCI) are responsible for helping teachers strengthen lesson plans. During the two-day site visit, school-wide classroom observations found that teachers often, but not always, shared learning objectives with their classes. In addition, classroom observations suggest that teachers actively facilitated learning for some but not all students and do not always actively engage students through the entire class period.

Strong teacher-coach and teacher-teacher relationships are present in the school. Deans of curriculum and instruction and UP Network specialists provide targeted coaching for teachers to support instructional improvement, including additional summer training. In addition to teachers' reviewing of data during collaboration time, school leaders use data to plan out professional development cycles and determine areas in need of school-wide capacity building.

***Turnaround Priority Area 3: Expand the school day and school year, build in time, deploy resources, develop programs, and create identification and tracking systems to ensure that all students, especially students with disabilities and English language learners, receive the academic and other supports they require to learn and succeed.***

The school uses a response to intervention model to inform student interventions. Supports for students include a focus period for students at the end of each day during which teachers can provide supplemental or remedial activities, speech and fine motor skills support, push-in and pull-out services for special education and ELL students, and targeted afterschool tutoring. ELL students also are supported through specific language programs for Spanish and Vietnamese native-speaking students and a targeted afterschool program to support ELL student improvement in science. School leaders have a clear process for identifying students for intervention; however, entry and exit criteria could be made clearer to staff. Plans are in place to enhance Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in Year 2.

Student social, emotional, and health welfare is supported by trainings for teachers on helping students suffering from trauma, and staff have been designated to support these students closely. The school does not currently have a social-emotional curriculum but is working to develop one for the coming year. Afterschool programs, such as College Bound and Strong Women and Strong Girls, in addition to

teacher-led afterschool clubs are available to students. Although the dean of community and family involvement helps connect families with outside resources, the school is lacking a systematic process to provide wraparound services for students.

**Turnaround Priority Area 4: *Recruit and hire extraordinary leaders, teachers, and support staff, and build and utilize systems to evaluate, develop, promote, reward, and retain this staff over the long term.***

During the teacher recruitment and hiring process, candidates were provided with information on school vision, mission, and expectations to ensure a good fit between the candidate and the school. The hiring protocol included metrics each candidate had to meet to ensure the recruitment of top candidates. An instructional coach described the process as “intensive and unique.” While staff members from the UP Education Network (UPEN) Academic and Leadership team were used as consultants for a handful of hires (for example, the UPEN Director of Special Education assisted with the hiring of the UP Academy Holland Special Education Coordinator), school leaders did the vast majority of the hiring for the school..

Professional development is designed to build the culture of the staff, establish expectations, and develop staff skills. All staff participated in three weeks of summer professional development which focused on setting expectations and creating school culture along with some opportunities to learn more about effective instructional practices. During the course of the school year, teachers receive feedback and support from coaches and school leaders. Through these opportunities, positive relationships have developed among staff and between staff and coaches. Professional development for staff takes place a half day each week and focuses on whole-staff professional development. However, school leaders recognize the need for professional development to address specific teacher needs and plan to differentiate and target professional development in the coming year. Classroom observations by school leaders and deans of curriculum and instruction took place weekly or biweekly, and timely feedback was provided. Five-minute feedback observations, in particular, are used to quickly assess whether a given educator is implementing specific feedback using the school’s model. Staff also participated in the RETELL (Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners) course.

**Turnaround Priority Area 5: *Fully engage all of the school’s families in the learning of their children.***

The school prioritizes family involvement by engaging families in such activities as summer orientation and parent conference night. Many stakeholders cited improvement in frequency and modes of family engagement throughout the school year; however, there was still some concern expressed about moderate parental participation and challenges presented by language barriers. All teachers are expected to communicate with parents biweekly through phone calls, emails and/or notes and keep records of these communications. Family engagement is supported by the dean of community and family involvement, who also is responsible for helping families access resources outside the school. However, there is limited evidence that staff is aware of supports available for families and that school leaders have a consistent, methodical approach to providing family resources or assessing family needs.

## 2014–15 Level 5 School Annual Evaluation

### John Avery Parker Elementary School, New Bedford, Massachusetts

#### Turnaround Plan Implemented by: Superintendent Pia Durkin

### Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to collect evidence from each Level 5 school on the progress toward implementation of the turnaround plan in Year 1 of Level 5 status. During a two-day Monitoring Site Visit, data were collected through classroom observations using Teachstone’s Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS),<sup>3</sup> key stakeholder and focus group interviews, and a review of extant documentation (e.g., turnaround plan, quarterly reports, and other documents). The data collection and analysis processes are purposely developed to ensure reliability and validity of the findings. AIR’s Level 5 school review process focused on the specific turnaround priorities from each school’s turnaround plan. This report first provides highlights of the implementation of the turnaround plan and then provides pertinent information on each of the turnaround priorities.

### Highlights of Turnaround Plan Implementation at John Avery Parker Elementary

- **Family Engagement.** Clear evidence of family engagement is present at the school, with family events held during the year, including “Saturday Shares” and morning “Math and Muffins” events to help build parent capacity to support students academically.
- **English Language Learner Supports.** Improving systems of support for English language learners (ELLs) is a focus of the school. All staff participated in the RETELL (Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners) course. More support for ELLs is needed, and plans are in place to target supports by changing the ELL specialist position from part-time to full-time next year.
- **Teacher Data Use.** Collaboration time occurs in Teacher Collaboration Teams (TCTs). Data use is occasionally a part of these sessions; however, review of student data varies across grades, and some staff (e.g., the technology teacher and ELL teacher) do not participate in TCTs. Evidence suggests the school leadership team is focused on prioritizing TCT time and developing protocols for data use in the coming year.
- **Student Behavior Plan.** Although student behavior is generally positive, there is room to improve supports for students who demonstrate the most significant behavioral issues and needs. To date, the administrative team focuses on reacting to student behaviors and has not yet developed a comprehensive proactive plan for managing student behavior issues that need to be handled outside the classroom.

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## Site Visit Findings

### **Turnaround Priority Area 1: *Maximize and accelerate student achievement by increasing the rigor of classroom instruction in every classroom for every student every day.***

Respondents indicated that increasing rigor has been a priority at Parker over the last year. All stakeholders cited instructional practices and expectations related to the school's focus on comprehension and communication. The continuous focus on instruction was demonstrated by weekly memos from school leaders and consistent implementation of expectations for writing across content areas and specials. An intervention block is in place to support students who need Tier 2 (targeted) and Tier 3 (intensive) instruction. However, classroom observations during the Monitoring Site Visit indicated that these supports may still be in the developmental phase, as instructional observations noted low-range scores in the area of concept development, which emphasizes students' higher-order thinking skills, such as problem solving and analysis.

The school's new English language arts (ELA) and mathematics curriculum materials are aligned to Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and the school devoted time during the Summer Academy, an expanded learning opportunity for students and a development opportunity for teachers, to aligning instruction to these standards. Professional development is promoted through regular provision of Teacher Collaboration Teams (TCTs) and participation in professional development during the Summer Academy. Further teacher-focused supports include monthly professional development during a student early release day, a literacy coach (full-time) and a mathematics coach (part-time), and mentors for new teachers.

The Pre-K program and ELL supports are continuing to develop. The Pre-K program is being developed through mentoring and additional professional development for the current preschool teacher. In the upcoming school year, the school plans to move three- and four-year-old programs to full-day programs and hire an additional preschool teacher. Nearly a third of the approximately 300 students enrolled in Parker are now formally identified as ELLs because the district changed the ELL identification procedures this year (including the addition of home language surveys and testing for students). In order to increase support for ELLs, all staff are participating in RETELL training. The school has a part-time ELL teacher who is shared with another school; however, some staff expressed that only having an ELL teacher part-time was inadequate given the number of ELLs and their needs. To address this concern, the ELL teacher will serve Parker full-time next year.

### **Turnaround Priority Area 2: *Establish school structures and systems to ensure that all students have teachers who are proficient in delivering rigorous instruction and maximize instructional time.***

Data indicate that structures and systems of support are in place at Parker to improve teacher practice and maximize instructional time. According to respondents, staff is committed to the school's mission and structure. School leaders have autonomy in scheduling and staffing. As a result, leaders have hired new staff and added the Summer Academy and TCT time. Instructional time has been maximized by extending the school day and year and by using February vacation as instructional time. During TCT, instructional coaches and special education teachers are available to support teachers. Although teachers meet four days per week for TCT by grade level, this time is sometimes interrupted. Also, due to scheduling conflicts, ELL and preschool teachers are unable to attend TCT meetings. Respondents

noted the need for a full-time mathematics coach as well as additional support for students currently identified as ELLs; plans are in place to accommodate these needs next school year.

Although teachers reported having been informed of performance- and evaluation-based pay scale increases, teachers did not receive any follow-up during the year. Respondents also expressed the concern that obtaining substitutes and paraprofessionals is challenging because the school's daily compensation allotment for these positions is similar to that at other schools in the district but the day at Parker School is longer.

***Turnaround Priority Area 3: Provide students with appropriate supports and acceleration opportunities to maximize their learning by using data to differentiate instruction and identifying opportunities for intervention and enrichment.***

Data are present in the school in multiple forms. Biweekly, the instructional leadership team examines student data from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment, the Galileo Instructional Data System assessment, and Fountas and Pinnell to inform schoolwide instructional practices. All staff have access to a homemade, Excel-based ELA data tracker in a shared folder, that provides a school-wide snapshot of student progress in literacy and informs decisions for individual students and grade levels. The school is supported by an external partner, Focus on Results, in establishing a system for data analysis, and teachers work individually and together during TCT time to assess progress toward school outcomes. Intervention (Pride) time is an opportunity for differentiation in which data are used to group and monitor students; however, teachers did not discuss differentiated instruction at length. Although one stakeholder indicated that the district has tools to help teachers use data, no specific protocols or professional development to support data use for determining student learning needs were mentioned. Evidence suggests that the school leadership team is focused on enhancing processes for supporting data use during TCT time at the end of Year 1 and will fully implement those processes during Year 2.

***Turnaround Priority Area 4: Ensure that all students succeed academically by establishing a climate that focuses on learning and engaging families as partners in student learning.***

The school supports relationship-building between teachers and families by providing a Family Resource Coordinator who plans parent activities and translates communications in multiple languages for parents. The school also offers a walking school bus for students in the spring. Parent capacity-building is promoted through events for parents, including "Math and Muffins" events to share ways that parents can more effectively support their children's mathematics schoolwork. Saturday events, called "Saturday Shares," are designed to support parents and families in the academic process.

While the school has established and posted behavioral expectations framed around what it means to be a "Parker Scholar," respondents noted severe student behaviors as an impediment to developing a more cohesive school culture, and many approaches in the school are reported to be reactive, rather than proactive. Although classroom observation scores for behavior and classroom management in the middle- to high-ranges suggest that many teachers are able to control their classrooms, many staff reported inconsistency in how the school-wide behavior system is implemented, and some respondents reported that students with significant behavioral issues are not removed from the classroom, therefore disrupting learning for other students. To address these concerns, the leadership team plans to re-envision the role of the behavioral interventionist for the coming year.

## 2014–15 Level 5 School Annual Evaluation

# Morgan Full Service Community School, Holyoke, Massachusetts

### Receiver: Project GRAD USA

## Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) to collect evidence from each Level 5 school on the progress toward implementation of the turnaround plan in Year 1 of Level 5 status. During a two-day Monitoring Site Visit, data were collected through classroom observations using Teachstone’s Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS),<sup>4</sup> key stakeholder and focus group interviews, and a review of extant documentation (e.g., turnaround plan, quarterly reports, and other documents). The data collection and analysis processes are purposely developed to ensure reliability and validity of the findings. AIR’s Level 5 school review process focused on the specific turnaround priorities from each school’s turnaround plan. This report first provides highlights of the implementation of the turnaround plan and then provides pertinent information on each of the turnaround priorities.

## Highlights of Turnaround Plan Implementation at Morgan Full Service Community School

- **Urgency and Trusting Relationships.** Staff camaraderie, support for each other, and a focus on working hard for the best interests of the students were reported across stakeholders.
- **Student Behavior/Classroom Management.** Since the dean of students was hired in March 2015, all staff indicated that there is increased support and staff observed significant improvements in student behavior.
- **Staffing.** A few key instructional support staff who provided coaching for teachers and targeted assistance to students were available only later in the year.
- **Planning/Instructional Support.** Due to uncertainty about the school budget for school year 2015–16 resulting from the late timing of Holyoke’s city budget process, planning for additional instructional support staff for the upcoming year has been a challenge.
- **STEM.** Schoolwide implementation of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Academy was delayed because staff needed to dedicate time to student behavior management issues at the beginning of the school year. In addition, limited STEM resources and time for building partnerships impedes progress. School leadership has begun to address implementation challenges for the coming year.

## Site Visit Findings

### Turnaround Priority Area 1: *Recruitment and development of outstanding professional talent.*

All recruitment screening was conducted by the receiver, Project GRAD USA, during March and April 2014. Many of the newly hired teachers were early in their careers. At the onset of receivership, Project GRAD USA hired a principal, who began in July 2014, as well as a dean of instruction and a director of

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STEM. Later in the school year, Morgan leadership hired a director of student support, and Project GRAD USA hired a full-time, on-site director of operations. Professional development during the summer focused on team building and developing systems for behavior, curriculum, and instructional expectations. Professional expectations were set for and understood by staff, and expectations were consistent with feedback teachers received during classroom observations.

In addition to the STEM director who began in the summer 2014, content-focused instructional coaching evolved over the course of the school year. Several instructional support staff were added after December 2014, including the following: a part-time English language arts (ELA) instructional coach, and a part-time professional services consultant providing support to the new teachers in the building. In addition, several staff provide intensive support to struggling students, including a part-time literacy consultant, two reading interventionists, and six mathematics and science tutors. Staff without a certification for teaching English language learners (ELLs) or a Sheltered English Instruction endorsement participated in the RETELL (Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners) course during the school year. A professional services consultant provided instructional coaching to new teachers focused on classroom management, and the ELA instructional coach provided targeted support to all teachers on improving literacy instruction and strategies.

***Turnaround Priority Area 2: Enhance the rigor of the curricula, improve the effectiveness of instruction, and strengthen the utilization of assessment data.***

School leaders and staff began mapping instructional resources to standards in summer 2014, and this process is ongoing. School leaders engaged in regular data planning meetings and provided formal quarterly reports to ESE. The school's turnaround plan was monitored through quarterly data review, data collection, and formal and informal classroom observations and evaluations. The Ramp Up plan, a result of a midyear meeting with ESE, included assessing and adjusting implementation, identifying resources, and reallocating the budget.

School leaders' focus on improving instruction, and respondents reported that leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide timely feedback to teachers. Feedback is provided electronically, with an online tool that tracks feedback and notifies teachers when feedback is available. If a teacher is rated *needs improvement* or lower, feedback is given during in-person meetings. In addition, teachers are supported by the ELA instructional coach, who models lessons, co-teaches, and provides resources to teachers. The literacy consultant works directly with students and provides teachers with feedback on progress implementing literacy strategies. Teachers reported using feedback from the literacy consultant and ELA instructional coach to improve and inform instructional practice. Routinely administered reading assessments help staff to identify student needs, which in turn informs instruction and referrals for additional support (e.g., intensive support from the literacy consultant or reading interventionists).

There is evidence that Morgan is developing and beginning to implement a tiered system of student support focused on literacy needs and behavior issues. The tiered system for literacy relies on teachers providing the Tier 1 (universal) support for reading using differentiated instruction. Teachers' Tier 1 literacy supports are tracked through an online tracking system. Tier 2 (targeted) supports are provided to struggling students. The Building Based Support Team identifies and directs the Tier 2 supports. The tiered system of support for student behavior focuses on students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs. The Tier 1 (universal) interventions available to all students rely on a positive behavioral intervention system. The Tier 2 (targeted) interventions for struggling students focus on a check-in and

check-out model that concentrates attention on students and allows them time to focus on appropriate school behaviors. Finally, the Tier 3 (intensive) interventions provide individualized behavior plans for students with significant needs. A behavioral intervention room used primarily by students in Tier 3 helps staff to support students in need. Some inconsistency remains in procedures for identifying and monitoring students with behavior issues and in communication across stakeholders, though the new dean of students, hired in March, has improved student behavior-related issues, according to respondents.

**Turnaround Priority Area 3: *Creating a STEM center of excellence.***

STEM programming is in need of further development. Because the STEM director expended significant time supporting the school with student behavior issues, time and focus were taken away from building the middle grades' STEM Academy, and less time was spent on building K–5 STEM opportunities. In addition, a lack of adequate lab resources contributed to the challenges of implementing STEM programming. Next year, the school will increase focus on the STEM program. The school will also focus on strengthening existing STEM-related partnerships and seek out new partnerships. Since the hiring of the dean of students, the STEM director has focused on STEM activities (for example, students visited Dean Vocational Technical High School to use science labs), and coordination in STEM is promising.

**Turnaround Priority Area 4: *Targeted and aligned resources.***

ELA and literacy were major school priorities during this school year. The midyear addition of staff, including the part-time ELA instructional coach and literacy consultant, further enhanced this effort. Mathematics has not been as high a priority as planned this year, as the mathematics coach position remained vacant due to a lack of qualified candidates. Therefore, the responsibility for aligning mathematics resources fell to the teachers, who reported improving instruction in mathematics as an area for future growth. Greater emphasis on implementation of instructional support in literacy and mathematics is expected in the upcoming school year.

The needs of ELLs and special education students are a continuing focus of the school. This year, staff without a Sheltered English Instruction endorsement are participating in the RETELL course. In addition, language development and reading support was provided by interventionists. Maintaining special education services was challenging at the outset of the school year as the staff inherited disorganized and lapsed student individualized educational plans. Staff worked with school leaders in the first semester to ensure that compliance was school-wide and that students received necessary interventions. One challenge noted was the limited opportunities for student support staff, including reading interventionists, special education teachers, and the part-time ELA instructional coach and literacy consultant, to participate in collaborative planning time with grade-level teams.

**Turnaround Priority Area 5: *Enhancing and sustaining family and community engagement.***

The school makes family involvement a priority. The School Site Council, composed of the principal, deans, parents, and teachers, met monthly to review the turnaround plan, prioritize goals for improvement, and measure progress. The ELL Parent Advisory Committee met regularly to inform parents of ELLs about school supports for their children. Parents were particularly interested in fundraising and promoting school spirit. Community engagement staff, supported by Project GRAD USA, created a Welcome Center for parents, providing a physical space for families to meet. An advisory group for families of students with disabilities engaged parents of students with disabilities in school-

wide planning and problem solving. The community engagement staff was in frequent contact with parents and participated in home visits to provide early literacy support and to connect with hard-to-reach parents. In addition, community engagement staff translated letters and served as translators for meetings and phone calls to homes. Staff members have expanded community partnerships that closely align to instruction. The Parent-Child Home Program serves 20 families that typically feed students into the Pre-K program, giving families resources to promote reading and play and building a relationship with the school. Newcomers and their families receive support through the Family Engagement Center, which also supports teachers who have newcomers in their classrooms.