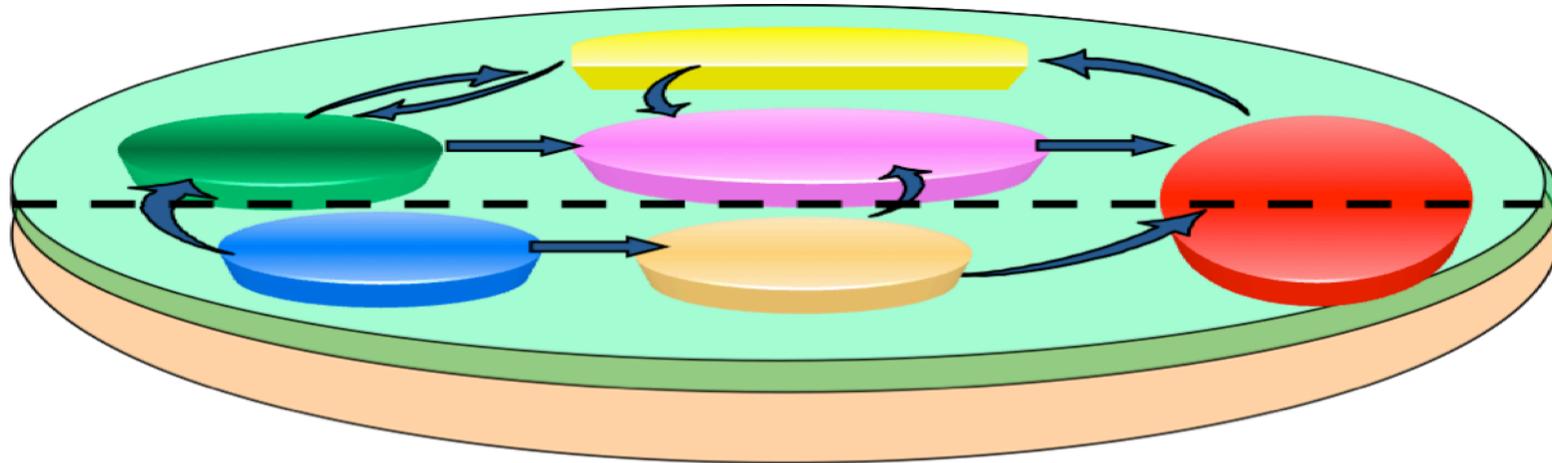


## Avoca District 37 System Assessment Executive Summary Report

The following system assessment feedback report was developed for Avoca District 37 by the System Assessment Review Team of the Consortium for Educational Change.

Using the best practice criteria of a correlation between the Baldrige Performance Excellence Education Criteria and the Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities as a lens, the System Assessment Review Team reviewed information provided by the school and interviewed administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents in order to identify strengths and opportunities for system improvement.



This feedback report was developed reflecting on the indicators described on the next few pages. It is a response to written information provided by the district as well as from information gathered from interviews. ***It is not intended to represent the perspective of all school administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents. Its accuracy is dependent on the information presented and discussed.*** It is a synthesis of the research from the Baldrige Performance Excellence Criteria and the Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities. They represent the best practice, continuous improvement frameworks.

**The system assessment process is built on values/beliefs:**

1. The district must believe in **continuous improvement**. A belief that every student, every staff member, every team, every school, every department and the district itself can be better tomorrow than it is today is necessary.
2. The district must believe strongly in the power of effective **labor-management collaboration**. The board of education, district leaders, union leaders, and family/community leaders must get on the same page through clear communication and collaboration to pull the improvement rope in the same direction. There must be trust, respect and a focus on learning what is best for learners that guides shared decision-making.
3. The district must **be familiar with the best practices of a continuous improvement framework** and believe in systems thinking. The best practices originate from the Baldrige Performance Excellence Criteria for Education. Those practices were translated into the Professional Learning Community framework. These best practices are research-based and are to be used to benchmark against in striving for continuous improvement. It is clear that when these practices are executed with a high level of fidelity, performance grows and improves.
4. The district must believe that **all children can grow and learn at high levels and should have equal access to quality education**. It supports recent federal requirements in placing an emphasis on the growth for all learners toward a set of expectations. It celebrates districts and schools who demonstrate growth in their performance results.
5. The district must believe their organization must **define how to measure success and both progress monitor and report performance periodically to their stakeholders** to demonstrate responsibility and accountability.

**Avoca District 37 asked to use the Professional Learning Community Framework as its format. That framework with its 50 best practice indicators is outlined below:**

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK: FIRST BIG IDEA - FOCUS ON LEARNING

<b>Focus on Learning:</b> We acknowledge that our fundamental collective purpose is to help all students achieve high levels of learning and therefore we are willing to examine all of our practices in light of their impact on learning.	
<b><i>A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum</i></b>	
A.	<b><i>Establishing the Curriculum:</i></b> We articulate student learning outcomes across all classrooms to build shared knowledge regarding state standards, district curriculum guides, trends in student achievement and outcomes for the next course or grade in all subject areas.
B.	<b><i>Executing the Curriculum:</i></b> We ensure that each teacher gives priority to the identified learning outcomes in every unit of instruction to guarantee that each student has equal access to instruction that addresses those learning outcomes in all classrooms for the grade level or course.
C.	<b><i>Clarifying and Communicating the Curriculum:</i></b> We ensure that every teacher is able to assist all students and their families in knowing the essential learning outcomes so they can assist in monitoring performance in relationship to those outcomes.
<b><i>Formative and Summative System of Assessments</i></b>	
D.	<b><i>Defining the Assessment System:</i></b> We ensure there is alignment and balance between common, formative assessment data to guide instruction and learning and common, summative assessment data to reflect on teaching, programs, interventions and periodic student progress reporting in all subject areas.
E.	<b><i>Assessing What Each Student Knows and Needs to Learn Next:</i></b> We ensure each teacher monitors the learning of all students, aligns the learning to outcomes per unit, and identifies what each student knows, is able to do and needs to learn next.
F.	<b><i>Providing Frequent and Timely Descriptive Assessment Feedback:</i></b> We ensure there is frequent and timely feedback regarding the performance of our students on classroom, team, school, district, and state assessments. We demonstrate that we use formative and summative assessment data differently and for appropriately different purposes.
G.	<b><i>Using Assessment Data and Information to Drive Instruction:</i></b> We ensure teachers use assessment data, aligned to student learning outcomes per unit, to determine how instruction should be modified, adjusted or changed in order to effectively respond to individual student and group learning needs.
H.	<b><i>Using Assessment Data and Information to Recognize Growth and Achievement.</i></b> We regularly recognize and celebrate individual and collective student growth, mastery and success aligned to appropriate unit-based learning outcomes.
<b><i>Instruction: Differentiation, Interventions and Enrichments</i></b>	
I.	<b><i>Differentiating Instruction:</i></b> We ensure Instructional activities are engaging and differentiated to meet individual and small group needs for a minimum of 80% of the students within the classroom. We ensure classroom differentiation includes models of co-teaching, cross grade instruction, push-in instruction, flexible grouping, etc. in all subject areas.
J.	<b><i>Aligning Interventions:</i></b> We ensure a system of interventions that guarantees each student will receive additional time and support for learning if he/she has not demonstrated mastery of grade level or course unit-based learning outcomes. Such an intervention system must be school-wide and engage a team of support specialists who assist classroom teachers in improving mastery of each grade level's or course's unit-based learning outcomes.
K.	<b><i>Aligning Enrichments:</i></b> We ensure teachers extend and enrich the learning of students who have already mastered common learning targets so every student is appropriately challenged. Such an enrichment system must be school-wide and engage a team of support specialists who assist classroom teachers in improving mastery of content beyond each grade level's or course's unit-based learning outcome expectations.
<b><i>Ensuring a Focus on Learning</i></b>	
L.	<b><i>Organizing and Allocating Resources:</i></b> We organize, allocate and reflect on resources of people, time and money with a focus on learning as opposed to a focus on teaching. Resources support our vision.
M.	<b><i>Providing Training and Support:</i></b> We provide sufficient training and follow-up support to guarantee the implementation of alignment of assessments and instruction within a standards-driven curriculum. Professional learning is aligned to our vision.
N.	<b><i>Providing Conditions for an Optimal Learning Environment:</i></b> We ensure all learning environments are safe, respectful and engaging while supporting a climate of high expectations for social emotional learning. We utilize student, family and staff satisfaction data as three types of evidence sources to assess and improve learning conditions.
O.	<b><i>Judging Quality Work:</i></b> We ensure that all teachers establish the criteria or standards by which they will determine that student work is of an organizationally prescribed level of quality and practice applying those criteria until they can do so consistently.
P.	<b><i>Examining Learning Practices:</i></b> We ensure that all teachers examine homework, grading, report cards, etc. to provide organization-wide clarity and common expectations regarding judgments of student performance. We provide consistency in these areas across all classrooms, teams and all other organizational levels.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK: SECOND BIG IDEA - FOCUS ON COLLABORATION

<b>Focus on Collaboration:</b> We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose of learning for all students. We cultivate a collaborative culture through the development of high performing teams.	
<b><i>Building Shared Knowledge and Leadership: Mission, Vision, Values, Goals and Strategies</i></b>	
A.	<b><i>Clarifying the “Big Picture”:</i></b> We deploy and evaluate mission, vision, values (collective commitments), long-range goals and high-level strategies to measure and monitor our direction. Everyone knows where we are and where we want to be.
B.	<b><i>Communicating the “Big Picture”:</i></b> We have established clear direction by communicating a “Big Picture” so everyone sees how current and new initiatives connect to that direction and how those initiatives align with district and school direction. Everyone understands how his/her work contributes to the “Big Picture’s” improvement planning process.
C.	<b><i>Reinforcing the “Big Picture”:</i></b> We ensure that common behaviors and actions of all staff support the vision, mission, values, goals and strategies of the organization at all levels. Everyone is accountable for aligning their behaviors and actions to our mission, vision, values and goals.
D.	<b><i>Living the “Big Picture”:</i></b> We consistently carry out strategies through action plans that describe the steps to be taken toward the attainment of goals. The improvement planning process serves as the centerpiece for examining how the organization performs.
<b><i>Making Appropriate Decisions Through High Performing, Collaborative Teams</i></b>	
E.	<b><i>Setting Expectations for Team Function:</i></b> Work is consistently done through collaborative teams in which members work together interdependently to achieve common goals. We consistently use appropriate structures and processes to efficiently organize our time as a team. We consistently use appropriate structures and processes to promote shared and distributed leadership.
F.	<b><i>Providing Time &amp; Purpose for Teams to Meet:</i></b> We provide sufficient time during the contractual day and school year for teams to meet. Team meeting time focuses on improving student learning. Team meetings are effective and efficient.
G.	<b><i>Providing a Safe Data Culture for Effective Team Function:</i></b> We ensure safe team environments at all levels to report and compare data and our own practices so as to learn from one another and share effective practices with the team.
H.	<b><i>Making Teams Accountable:</i></b> We ensure teams are accountable for the decisions they make and the results they achieve. We ensure each team understands its charge and expectations and takes responsibility for its actions leading to improvement results. We ensure all members of the team assume equal responsibility for the learning progress of every student within the team. We ensure each team understands its charge and expectations and takes responsibility for its actions leading to improvement results.
I.	<b><i>Implementing a High Performance Culture:</i></b> We ensure a culture/teaching environment of personal growth and high performance. We attain and continue to maintain high morale and professional relationships. We ensure that team time is used to engage in collective inquiry on questions specifically linked to gains in student achievement. We ensure team time is used to engage in professional growth, sharing and learning.
<b><i>Fostering Strong Partnerships</i></b>	
J.	<b><i>Fostering Collaborative Internal Staff Partnerships:</i></b> We ensure collaborative staff partnerships between and across all organizational levels to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of students. We consistently act and respond to staff satisfaction data to improve working conditions.
K.	<b><i>Fostering Collaborative External Family Partnerships:</i></b> We ensure collaborative partnerships with parents (families) to engage them in decisions about the progress of district, school and student goal attainment. We consistently act on parent (family) satisfaction data to improve home-school relationships in order to improve student learning.
L.	<b><i>Fostering Collaborative External Community Partnerships:</i></b> We generate and sustain collaborative partnerships with the community to engage them in decisions about the progress of district, school and student goal attainment.
<b><i>Ensuring a Focus on Collaboration</i></b>	
M.	<b><i>Organizing and Allocating Resources:</i></b> We organize and allocate and reflect on our resources of people, time and money with a focus on collaboration. Resources support our vision.
N.	<b><i>Providing Job-embedded Training:</i></b> We ensure professional development and to include team effectiveness, parent engagement and school culture to be job-embedded and ongoing. Professional learning is aligned to our vision.
O.	<b><i>Providing Conditions for an Optimal Work Environment:</i></b> We ensure all work environments to be safe, respectful, and engaging in order to support a climate of high expectations for student learning. We ensure collaboration, commitment and accountability through the actions and behaviors of all for improving our organization and its results.
P.	<b><i>Providing Meaningful, Aligned Evaluation Systems:</i></b> We ensure the aligned evaluation system includes data-based evidence of results.

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK: THIRD BIG IDEA - FOCUS ON RESULTS**

<b>Focus on Results:</b> We assess our effectiveness on the basis of results rather than intentions. Individuals, teams, schools and districts seek relevant data and information and use that information to promote continuous improvement.	
<b>Data Transparency and Efficacy</b>	
A.	<b>Setting SMART Goals:</b> All district, school, team and individual staff goals are specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented and timely (SMART). They address gaps identified through key data sources that focus improvement efforts.
B.	<b>Measuring What Matters Most:</b> We have aligned key data indicators, measures and targets throughout the organization — district to school to grade level team/department to individual --- and ensure effective ways to monitor and report progress.
C.	<b>Aligning Administrator Performance Evaluation:</b> Administrative performance goals align with the organization’s improvement plans. Administrative performance goals address improving student learning results. Administrator evaluation system meets state requirements for student growth.
D.	<b>Aligning Teacher Performance Evaluation:</b> Teacher performance goals align with district, school and/or team improvement plans. Teacher/ team goals address improving student learning results. Teacher evaluation system meets state requirements for student growth.
E.	<b>Aligning Student Performance Evaluation:</b> Student performance goals align with unit-based learning outcomes and other assessment data and information. Individual student goals address improving individual student learning results.
<b>Creating a Results Orientation</b>	
F.	<b>Using Data Effectively:</b> We ensure all staff use assessment data to: a) identify students who need additional time and support for learning; b) measure and report progress toward goals; c) define action plans, and d) discover strengths and weaknesses in their own job performance.
G.	<b>Reporting and Acting on Satisfaction Data:</b> We collect, analyze, prioritize and act upon student, parent, and staff satisfaction data at all levels of the organization to be certain they are addressing the needs and requirements of our stakeholders.
H.	<b>Monitoring and Reporting Progress to ensure accountability:</b> We view, monitor and report progress to all stakeholders through an established reporting timeline to identify what to celebrate and what to focus on next in terms of improvement.
I.	<b>Promoting Student Responsibility for Their Own Learning:</b> We ensure that staff assist students in taking responsibility for their own learning by setting goals, collecting data, monitoring their performance and reporting their results to others and comparing their performance to high expectations and the performance results of others.
<b>A Data-Based Picture of Results</b>	
J.	<b>Closing Achievement Gaps:</b> We have data-based evidence to show our results have substantially narrowed or closed achievement gaps between groups of students. We know and are celebrating our strengths. We know and are continuing to address our opportunities for improvement.
K.	<b>Examining Trend Data:</b> We have data-based evidence to show our results have substantially improved compared to the past. Our achievement results include measures of both proficiency and growth. We know and are celebrating our strengths. We know and are continuing to address our opportunities for improvement.
L.	<b>Examining Cohort Data:</b> We are acting on data-based evidence to show our student cohort achievement results have substantially improved from grade to grade. Our achievement results include measures of both proficiency and growth. We know and are celebrating our strengths. We know and are continuing to address our opportunities for improvement.
M.	<b>Examining Comparative Data:</b> We are acting on data-based evidence to show our achievement has substantially improved compared to others (state and other benchmark districts). We know and are celebrating our strengths. We know and are continuing to address our opportunities for improvement.
<b>Ensuring a Focus on Results</b>	
N.	<b>Organizing and Allocating Resources:</b> We organize and allocate and reflect on our resources of people, time and money with a focus on results. Resources support our vision.
O.	<b>Providing Job-embedded Training:</b> We ensure professional development and training around data and results is job-embedded and ongoing. We know professional development is meeting the needs of our staff. Professional learning is aligned to our vision.
P.	<b>Managing Data:</b> We improve policies and processes related to data collection, management and analysis to be certain they are effective and efficient. Data are easily accessible and user-friendly in their formats. Staff satisfaction with the quality and timeliness of available data is high.
Q.	<b>Providing Meaningful Data-based Evaluation Systems:</b> We ensure the aligned evaluation system includes data-based evidence of results.

## **SYSTEM ASSESSMENT SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:**

The school responded to a set of questions aligned to the three research-based, best-practice criteria areas listed above. The external team reviewed the Professional Learning Community effective practices and identified school strengths and opportunities for improvement. The school self-assessed as to where they viewed their progress toward implementation of the criteria. The external team assessed the school and provided the school with affirmation in areas where there was evidence to support strengths and lack of evidence to identify opportunities for improvement.

The External Team examined the information and data prior to the site visit. They developed a list of questions to explore as part of the site visit. The External Team interviewed all stakeholder groups.

On the first day the Team interviewed:

- Superintendent's Cabinet
- Curriculum Leaders
- Business and Operations Leaders
- Human Resource Leaders
- Student Services Official/Problem Solving Team
- Parent Organization Leaders
- Association Leaders
- Board Leaders
- Support Team-Instructional and Non-Instructional
- Technology/Data Specialists
- Building Leaders
- Self-Study Teams

On the second day, at both schools, the Team interviewed:

- Parents
- Students
- Teachers
- Building Leadership Team

The schedule was set by district leaders. Representatives interviewed reflected the demographics of the school. Approximately 175 stakeholders were interviewed. Following interviews, the Team reviewed its findings and prepared an oral report to give the district a preview of overall strengths and opportunities for improvement aligned to the framework and criteria. The week following the visit, the Team communicated electronically to prepare the final written feedback report. This final report was sent to the district within seven days of the visit.

CEC is available to assist the district in any way it chooses to follow up with suggested next steps. The district has committed to use the information to update its improvement plans. It also has committed to allow staff members to serve on a Review Team for another system assessment visit.

**System Assessment team members.**

<b>Avoca District 37 System Assessment Team</b>		
<b>Member</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Email</b>
Perry Soldwedel	Team Leader Consortium for Educational Change	<a href="mailto:Perry.soldwedel@cecillinois.org">Perry.soldwedel@cecillinois.org</a>
Steve Bahn	Elementary Principal LaGrange District 105	<a href="mailto:sbahn@d105.net">sbahn@d105.net</a>
Ashley Burger	K-5 Instructional Intervention Specialist Western Springs District 101	<a href="mailto:aburger@d101.org">aburger@d101.org</a>
Kristin Cioffi	Math/Science Specialist Northbrook/Glenview District 30	<a href="mailto:kcioffi@district30.org">kcioffi@district30.org</a>
Sarah Coffey	Assistant Superintendent Western Springs District 101	<a href="mailto:scoffey@d101.org">scoffey@d101.org</a>
Sharon Frys	Assistant Superintendent Student Services and Continuous Improvement Carol Stream District 93	<a href="mailto:sfrys@ccsd93.com">sfrys@ccsd93.com</a>
Colleen Gjataj	Reading Specialist LaGrange District 105	<a href="mailto:cgjataj@d105.net">cgjataj@d105.net</a>

Michael Jankiewicz	Co-Team Leader Consortium for Educational Change	<a href="mailto:Michael.jankiewicz@cecillinois.org">Michael.jankiewicz@cecillinois.org</a>
Michael Kahn	Principal West Northfield District 31	<a href="mailto:mkahn@district31.net">mkahn@district31.net</a>
Toni Kappel	Senior Consultant Consortium for Educational Change	<a href="mailto:toni.kappel@cecillinois.org">toni.kappel@cecillinois.org</a>
Franny Keyes	Middle School Gifted and Technology Specialist Park Ridge-Niles District 64	<a href="mailto:fkeyes@d64.org">fkeyes@d64.org</a>
Robyn Kogan	Gifted Coordinator, Differentiation Specialist Northbrook/Glenview District 30	<a href="mailto:rkogan@district30.org">rkogan@district30.org</a>
Kristen Levenson	Math/Science PLTW Northbrook/Glenview District 30	<a href="mailto:kleverso@district30.org">kleverso@district30.org</a>
Tony Murray	Middle School Principal Park Ridge-Niles District 64	<a href="mailto:amurray@d64.org">amurray@d64.org</a>
Kery Obradovich	Math/Science Coordinator Northbrook/Glenview District 30	<a href="mailto:kobradovich@district30.org">kobradovich@district30.org</a>
Jon Pokora	Elementary Principal Marquardt District 15	<a href="mailto:jpokora@d15.us">jpokora@d15.us</a>
Megan Preis	Instructional Tech Coordinator Park Ridge-Niles District 64	<a href="mailto:Mpreis@d64.org">Mpreis@d64.org</a>
Michelle Rzepka	Elementary Principal Downers Grove District 58	<a href="mailto:mrzepka@dg58.org">mrzepka@dg58.org</a>
Matt Rich	Assistant Superintendent Downers Grove District 58	<a href="mailto:mrich@dg58.org">mrich@dg58.org</a>
Allison Sherman	Curriculum Director Marquardt District 15	<a href="mailto:asherman@d15.us">asherman@d15.us</a>
Vanessa Suarez	First Grade Teacher LaGrange 105	<a href="mailto:vsuarez@d105.net">vsuarez@d105.net</a>
Irene Villa	Elementary Principal Glenview District 34	<a href="mailto:ivilla@glenview34.org">ivilla@glenview34.org</a>
Courtney Vonderharr	Elementary Learning Specialist Northbrook/Glenview District 30	<a href="mailto:cbenfield@district30.org">cbenfield@district30.org</a>

This report summarizes the strengths and opportunities aligned to the continuous improvement criteria.

## SUMMARY OF OVERALL STRENGTHS

Among all of the strengths within each category and for all core values, the assessment team finds these strengths to be highest in priority. It is hoped that recognizing and celebrating these strengths will showcase past investment of resources in improving performance results.

### Focus on Learning Strengths:

- + Standards in English Language Arts and mathematics are clearly understood and unpacked. Teachers know and understand the standards. They were refined and assessments were developed aligned to the standards. Currently resources are being identified to teach the standards. The district is also working on unpacking the Next Generation Science Standards along with Writing Units of Study. There are high expectations for student growth and achievement.
- + Advanced math begins at 4<sup>th</sup> grade and entrance is based on MAP scores, teacher recommendation and common end-of-the-year assessments.
- + Students and families report being well prepared in rigor from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Students love school and feel both teachers and leaders care for them and support their learning.
- + PARCC, MAP, CogAT, CBMs and Fountas and Pinnell are common assessments given throughout the district. There is a district expectation that teachers have professional responsibility to align assessments to the curriculum. Teachers use plan time and time outside the day to score and provide assessment feedback. Informally teachers are observing and assessing student learning. Families can use PowerSchool to monitor and track student performance.

- + There is an expectation that differentiated classroom instruction meets the needs of 80-85% of learners. Flexible groupings and center-based instruction strategies assist with differentiated instruction. There are good examples of co-teaching and push-in techniques to differentiate within the classroom. The curriculum offerings at the middle school are rigorous. Students feel challenged and engaged.
- + The district is providing many support personnel to assist students and teachers to differentiate instruction and provide programs and services to meet the needs of all students. In addition, class size is low.
- + Encore and Allied Arts provide a rich array of programs to extend and support core academics.
- + The district is proud of its diverse student population. The district provides resources to address its changing student demographics (EL and special education).
- + The self-study identified that student engagement was a strength of the district.

### **Focus on Collaboration Strengths:**

- + There is a “family-like” climate throughout the district. Staff morale is good and has improved especially at the elementary level. Everyone knows the district mission. There is a healthy level of trust and respect between leaders and teachers. The superintendent is a visionary leader and very accessible. He previously was a highly regarded elementary principal in the district.
- + There is a healthy relationship between the board, administration and staff. The district believes in continuous improvement. There is a passion and pride for learning throughout the district. There is a healthy level of trust and respect between leaders and teachers. The district provides several opportunities and positions for teacher leadership.
- + There is a strategic plan that has provided direction over the past five years. Board members value time to reflect and plan for continuous improvement. Board members are looking forward to engaging stakeholders in the creation of a new strategic plan.

- + The district provides sufficient time for grade level teams to collaborate. In addition, the district provides for individual plan time. Collaboration time provides time for support teachers to communicate, plan and ready support for students who struggle or need more rigor. At the middle school collaboration time often has a focus: nuts and bolts day, student concerns day, co-teaching day, data day, etc.
- + There is a positive culture. Most people feel listened to on a regular basis. Most people feel that they have input into the decisions that impact their work. Team leader meetings give voice and are being heard and addressed. Teams seem to be comfortable to share ideas for improving teaching and learning, as well as data to better meet student needs.
- + Families have confidence and trust district personnel. Families feel their students are safe and secure. Families attend school events. Families feel the district compares well with other districts that send students to New Trier.
- + The building leadership team (BLT) meets once a month. Team leaders have opportunities to bring ideas and issues to the team and to take results and decisions back to those they represent.
- + The district attracts high quality candidates related to the hiring process. Teams report input into hiring decisions.

### **Focus on Results Strengths:**

- + There are goals set at both the district and school levels. Key district data indicators have been identified and data is collected and housed in Inform, PowerSchool and on the Interactive School Report Card site.
- + MAP, Fountas and Pinnell, CoGAT, AIMSWeb, ISEL, PARCC, ACCESS, NT Freshman Preparedness Survey, Words Their Way Spelling Inventory make up the academic measures. In addition, the district's key measures include the Life, Safety Survey and the 5 Essentials

**Satisfaction Surveys. MAP and Fountas and Pinnell data are used to see where students are showing strength and weakness.**

- + Students set MAP goals in reading and mathematics. The teacher and leader evaluation process includes goal setting and is designed to meet the new requirements of PERA and student growth.**
- + The district provides an annual report on its performance every fall. Teachers use PowerSchool to keep parents updated regularly throughout the years.**
- + Students at the middle school are taking responsibility for tracking and reporting their learning.**
- + MAP data in reading and mathematics show students perform well.**
- + The district is recognized for its financial practices. It has the highest state recognition. Business procedures are recognized by the board with a high level of confidence.**
- + The data culture at the middle school is safe and teachers readily are sharing data and are comfortable to focus on data to make decisions.**

## SUMMARY OF OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES

**Among all of the opportunities for improvement within each category and for all core values, the assessment team finds these opportunities to be highest in priority. It is hoped that addressing these opportunities will yield a high future return on investment of resources in improving performance results.**

### **Focus on Learning Opportunities for Improvement:**

- △ The most essential learning outcomes have not been explicitly established within each grade level. Vertical alignment of the curriculum standards and outcomes is not in place in K-8 ELA and K-5 math. Students and families are unaware of the essential learning outcomes, since they have not been consistently established.**
- △ There is a feeling of over-assessment. There is a worry that MAP does not align with what is being taught and does not inform instruction. There is a feeling that the testing takes away too much instructional time and, in addition, causes stress/anxiety levels for students.**
- △ Teams are creating common assessments, but there is fear they are not accurate, valid and reliable. The assessments are not directly aligned to essential learning outcomes.**
- △ The Response to Intervention system is not effective or efficient especially related to short-term needs: expectations, procedures, entrance/exit criteria, and alignment to classroom curriculum. There are no math interventions. There are no Tier II interventions in the classroom. Those interventions are pull-out.**

- △ There has been little attention given to the identification of district-wide instructional practices beyond guided reading. Enrichment opportunities are not consistently available to ensure identified student needs are being met.
- △ There is no time in the current schedule for extra time and support for students who are struggling unless they miss an elective class.
- △ The EL population is growing. Students with IEPs are moving into the district more often than 10 years ago. Fewer students with IEPs are being outsourced.
- △ Many stakeholders identified a need to be certain the district provides future resources to develop the “whole” child.
- △ Professional development and follow-up support is sometimes random and not aligned to support execution of new initiatives. There has been limited professional development for teachers to assist with differentiated instruction. There has been limited professional development for teachers to assist them to make necessary shifts from being text-driven to standards-driven in their instruction.

### **Focus on Collaboration Opportunities for Improvement:**

- △ The current strategic plan has lived its life. The district has identified a need to envision a new plan. The Big Picture is not always clear or communicated. Staff may not always be aware of the motivation behind big picture initiatives. Staff does not see how their work connects with the big picture.
- △ There has been stress associated with the work necessary to address all of the state mandates over the past several years. That stress is especially present at the elementary level where teachers teach several content areas. Staff are overloaded and confused given the quantity of simultaneous initiatives and the expectation for outcomes. Some feel communication between support teachers and classroom teachers would increase morale.

- △ **There are several systems that are not in place to ensure PK-8 coherence and alignment. There is not a lot of connection between buildings. There is not consistent communication PK-8. There appears to be disjointed efforts regarding articulation and collaboration. There does not appear to be consistent school improvement expectations or a clear process. The district has not provided training to establish clear expectations for a PLC.**
- △ **Leaders in the district wear many hats making it difficult to fully provide support for any one role. There is a lean central office administrative staff. Without a curriculum leader, many aspects of the PK-8 curriculum, assessment and instructional program are not connected and not consistent.**
- △ **The district struggles with celebrations of both student and staff accomplishments as it often creates a discomfort among the staff.**
- △ **Board members recognized a need to improve communication and engagement of families and the community at large.**
- △ **Families want to be more engaged with decisions that impact their children. Families want to be better informed about district and school performance. Sometimes families feel left out of the process. Families want improved communication. Language barriers present some communication and collaboration issues for staff and families.**
- △ **Staff demographics do not mirror student demographics.**

### **Focus on Results Opportunities for Improvement:**

- △ **The district lacks a results orientation; data is collected and recorded, but not always used, monitored and reported to guide improvement. Goals are not SMART goals; they are not always measurable and specific. Some goals have an activity-orientation, not a results-orientation. Not all measures have a target.**
- △ **Stakeholders cannot report on whether goals have been accomplished.**

- △ **There appear to be few action plans aligned to goals that identify tasks, timelines, participants, and evidence of success. There has been no training for the school improvement process.**
- △ **Expectations for staff to assist students to own their learning are not consistent and clearly communicated to students and parents. Students do not set goals for individual unit instruction.**
- △ **Few staff members know how to use Inform. Teachers have little access to historical data.**
- △ **The district is having a difficult time moving the performance of the bottom quartile of students as measured by MAP.**
- △ **Student cohort data is not being used to track and report student progress year to year. Achievement gaps are increasing.**
- △ **Facilities are aging.**
- △ **The data culture at the elementary school is improving, but climate and morale several years ago still make it difficult for some staff members to share data and to be comfortable to focus on data to make decisions.**

## NEXT STEPS

While this report is not intended to be prescriptive, this section provides some suggestions for addressing key opportunities for improvement. It provides suggestions that could serve as next steps. The strengths and areas of opportunity are based on set criteria framed by continuous improvement research. The priorities are not listed in any order. Each is equally important. Next Steps are framed by the experiences and opinions of the assessment team.

### Priority: Focus on Learning

#### Continue the journey of common unit plan instruction for all subjects.

- ✓ Articulate and communicate essential learning outcomes to students and their families for each unit of instruction. *(Define for you, your team, each student and their family what students are to know and be able to do for each unit of instruction.)*
- ✓ Continue to design, develop and implement formative and summative assessments aligned to the learning outcomes for all units of instruction in each subject area. *(Determine for you, your team, each student and their family an assessment system that allows them to identify what they know and do not know aligned to the essential learning outcomes.)*
- ✓ Use formative and summative assessment to identify flexible groups for classroom differentiation to allow students to work together in the classroom around what they know and do not know. Use best practice differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students in the classroom. Use this data to guide re-teaching and pacing decisions. Use support personnel in the classroom to assist each teacher and all students improve their knowledge and skills. *(Determine for you, your team, each student and their family how to respond when they are not learning or when they have learned and need more challenge.)*
- ✓ Use summative assessment data from each unit to determine Tier II interventions. Use the essential learning outcomes as the criteria to get into and out of a short-term intervention. *(Determine for you, your team, each student and their family how to further respond when they have not learned or when they have not been challenged.)*
- ✓ Use summative assessment data from each unit's essential learning outcomes to report to parents progress related to standards-based reporting. Align report card grades to the mastery of the essential learning outcomes for the grading period. *(Determine for you, your team, each student and their family how you will align grading period progress reporting to ensure clear communication of performance aligned to essential unit learning outcomes and how to assign a grade to that performance. Ensure inter-rater-reliability.)*

### Priority: Collaborative Culture

#### Ensure expectations are clear and being consistently implemented PK-8 for student, staff and family ownership of the Professional Learning Community Practices.

- ✓ Use the PLC Four Essential questions outlined in the Learning Priority to ensure clear understanding and responsibility of

**roles for students, staff and families:** What should students know and be able to do in each unit of instruction? How will we know they are learning? What will we do when they are not learning? What will we do when they **are** learning to challenge and engage each student?

- ✓ **Develop consistent expectations to assist all teachers become Distinguished/Excellent teachers as defined through the Danielson Rubrics.** Know clearly the progression of expectations PK-8 for students to take responsibility for their own learning. Enable students to progress monitor and report their learning.
- ✓ **Continue to make optimal use of collaboration time** to focus on the needs of all students, work collaboratively to share strategies and ideas to support one another, make good use of the support personnel system available to assist staff and students.
- ✓ **Engage families as partners in the learning process.** Make sure they are clear about unit learning outcomes and how their student is performing in relationship to those outcomes. Make sure they understand the expectations you have for them to assist you as partners in the learning process. Make sure they understand the plan in place to meet the individual needs of their student.

## **Priority: Results Orientation**

### **Invest in progress monitoring and reporting to continuously improve and ensure a results orientation**

- ✓ **Establish a consistent district school improvement process.** Work to create a school district rather than a system of schools. Strive for coherence and alignment.
- ✓ Transition from a reliance on MAP data to drive instructional decisions to **unit formative and summative assessment.**
- ✓ Develop a consistent **SMART goal setting process** for school, team/department, leader, teacher and student goal setting. Align goals with the strategic plan's goals, indicators, measures and targets.
- ✓ Use the **key indicators and measures for progress monitoring and reporting both district and school performance.**
- ✓ **Set targets** for improvement aligned to those indicators and measures for both goals and action plans.
- ✓ Periodically **progress monitor and report** to everyone how you are doing.
- ✓ **Celebrate** your success. **Address** your opportunities.