Cognia Diagnostic Review Report

Results for: Mill Creek Elementary

December 2-5, 2019

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Table of Contents

Introduction

The Cognia Diagnostic Review is conducted by a team of highly qualified evaluators who examine the institution's adherence and commitment to the research aligned to Cognia Performance Standards. The Diagnostic Review process is designed to energize and equip the leadership and stakeholders of an institution to achieve higher levels of performance and address areas that may be hindering efforts to reach those desired performance levels. The Diagnostic Review is a rigorous process that includes an in-depth examination of evidence and relevant performance data, interviews with stakeholders, and observations of instruction, learning, and operations.

Standards help delineate what matters. They provide a common language through which an education community can engage in conversations about educational improvement, institution effectiveness, and achievement. They serve as a foundation for planning and implementing improvement strategies and activities and for measuring success. Cognia Performance Standards were developed by a committee composed of educators from the fields of practice, research, and policy. These talented leaders applied professional wisdom, deep knowledge of effective practice, and the best available research to craft a set of robust standards that define institutional quality and guide continuous improvement.

When this institution was evaluated, the Diagnostic Review Team used an identified subset of the Cognia Performance Standards and related criteria to guide its evaluation, looking not only for adherence to standards, but also for how the institution functioned as a whole and embodied the practices and characteristics of quality. Using the evidence they gathered, the Diagnostic Review Team arrived at a set of findings contained in this report.

As a part of the Diagnostic Review, stakeholders were interviewed by members of the Diagnostic Review Team about their perspectives on topics relevant to the institution's learning environment and organizational effectiveness. The feedback gained through the stakeholder interviews was considered with other evidence and data to support the findings of the Diagnostic Review. The following table lists the numbers of interviewed representatives of various stakeholder groups.

Stakeholder Groups	Number
District-Level Administrators	2
Building-Level Administrators	2
Professional Support Staff (e.g., Counselor, Media Specialist, Technology Coordinator)	6
Certified Staff	15
Noncertified Staff	6
Students	31
Parents	5
Total	67

Cognia Standards Diagnostic Results

The Cognia Standards Diagnostic was used by the Diagnostic Review Team to evaluate the institution's effectiveness based on the Cognia's Performance Standards identified as essential for realizing growth and sustainable improvement in underperforming schools. The diagnostic consists of three components built around each of the three Domains: **Leadership Capacity**, **Learning Capacity**, and **Resource Capacity**. Point values are established within the diagnostic, and a percentage of the points earned by the institution for each Essential Standard is calculated. Results are reported within four categories: Impacting, Improving, Initiating, and Insufficient. The results for the three Domains are presented in the tables that follow.

Leadership Capacity Domain

The capacity of leadership to ensure an institution's progress toward its stated objectives is an essential element of organizational effectiveness. An institution's leadership capacity includes the fidelity and commitment to its purpose and direction, the effectiveness of governance and leadership to enable the institution to realize its stated objectives, the ability to engage and involve stakeholders in meaningful and productive ways, and the capacity to implement strategies that improve learner and educator performance.

Leadership Capacity Essential Standards		Rating
1.1	The institution commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners.	Insufficient
1.3	The institution engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice.	Insufficient
1.6	Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness.	Insufficient
1.7	Leaders implement operational process and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.	Insufficient
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the institution's purpose and direction.	Insufficient
1.9	The institution provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.	Insufficient
1.10	Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement.	Insufficient

Learning Capacity Domain

The impact of teaching and learning on student achievement and success is the primary expectation of every institution. An effective learning culture is characterized by positive and productive teacher/learner relationships, high expectations and standards, a challenging and engaging curriculum, quality instruction and comprehensive support that enable all learners to be successful, and assessment practices (formative and summative) that monitor and measure learner progress and achievement. Moreover, a quality institution evaluates the impact of its learning culture, including all programs and support services, and adjusts accordingly.

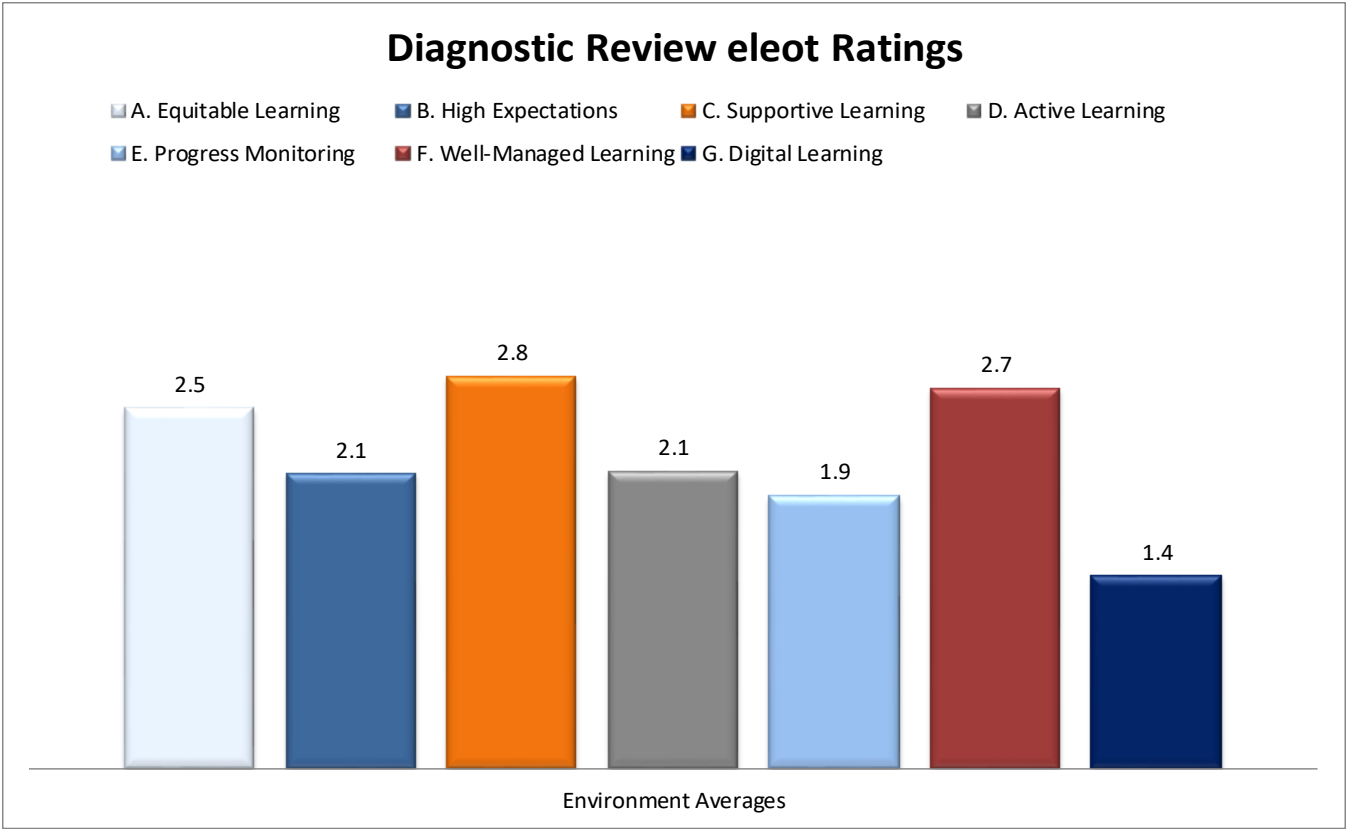| Learning Capacity Essential Standards		Rating
2.1	Learners have equitable opportunities to develop skills and achieve the content and learning priorities established by the institution.	Insufficient
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving.	Insufficient
2.5	Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.	Insufficient
2.7	Instruction is monitored and adjusted to meet individual learners' needs and the institution's learning expectations.	Insufficient
2.9	The institution implements, evaluates, and monitors processes to identify and address the specialized social, emotional, developmental, and academic needs of students.	Insufficient
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.	Insufficient
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.	Insufficient
2.12	The institution implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.	Insufficient

Resource Capacity Domain

The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably so that the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning for all staff. The institution examines the allocation and use of resources to ensure appropriate levels of funding, sustainability, organizational effectiveness, and increased student learning.

Resource Capacity Essential Standards		Rating
3.1	The institution plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the institution's effectiveness.	Insufficient
3.2	The institution's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.	Insufficient
3.4	The institution attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the institution's purpose and direction.	Insufficient
3.7	The institution demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the institution's purpose and direction.	Insufficient
3.8	The institution allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the institution's identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness.	Insufficient

Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) Results

The eProve™ Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool (eleot) is a learner-centric classroom observation tool that comprises 28 items organized in seven environments aligned with the Cognia Standards. The tool provides useful, relevant, structured, and quantifiable data on the extent to which students are engaged in activities and demonstrate knowledge, attitudes, and dispositions that are conducive to effective learning. Classroom observations are conducted for a minimum of 20 minutes.

Every member of the Diagnostic Review Team was eleot certified and passed a certification exam that established inter-rater reliability. Team members conducted 18 observations during the Diagnostic Review process, including all core content learning environments. The following charts provide aggregate data across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments.

Diagnostic Review eleot Ratings

Legend:
- A. Equitable Learning
- B. High Expectations
- C. Supportive Learning
- D. Active Learning
- E. Progress Monitoring
- F. Well-Managed Learning
- G. Digital Learning

Environment	Rating
A. Equitable Learning	2.5
B. High Expectations	2.1
C. Supportive Learning	2.8
D. Active Learning	2.1
E. Progress Monitoring	1.9
F. Well-Managed Learning	2.7
G. Digital Learning	1.4

Environment Averages

A. Equitable Learning Environment							
Indicators	**Average**	**Description**	**Not Observed**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Evident**	**Very Evident**
A1	1.8	Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs.	33%	56%	11%	0%
A2	3.1	Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support.	0%	22%	50%	28%
A3	3.2	Learners are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner.	0%	11%	61%	28%
A4	2.1	Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions.	33%	22%	44%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:	**2.5**					

B. High Expectations Learning Environment							
Indicators	**Average**	**Description**	**Not Observed**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Evident**	**Very Evident**
B1	2.1	Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher.	22%	50%	28%	0%
B2	2.4	Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable.	6%	44%	50%	0%
B3	1.9	Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work.	28%	56%	11%	6%
B4	2.1	Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing).	17%	61%	22%	0%
B5	1.8	Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning.	33%	50%	17%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:	**2.1**					

C. Supportive Learning Environment							
Indicators	**Average**	**Description**	**Not Observed**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Evident**	**Very Evident**
C1	2.4	Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful.	11%	44%	39%	6%
C2	2.6	Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback).	0%	44%	50%	6%
C3	3.1	Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks.	0%	6%	83%	11%
C4	2.9	Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher.	0%	28%	50%	22%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:		**2.8**				

D. Active Learning Environment							
Indicators	**Average**	**Description**	**Not Observed**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Evident**	**Very Evident**
D1	2.7	Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and teacher predominate.	0%	33%	67%	0%
D2	1.9	Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences.	33%	44%	17%	6%
D3	2.3	Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities.	0%	67%	33%	0%
D4	1.4	Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments.	67%	28%	6%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:		**2.1**				

		E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment				
Indicators	**Average**	**Description**	**Not Observed**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Evident**	**Very Evident**
E1	1.6	Learners monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored.	50%	44%	6%	0%
E2	2.3	Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work.	17%	39%	44%	0%
E3	2.3	Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content.	11%	50%	33%	6%
E4	1.5	Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed.	61%	28%	11%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:		**1.9**				

		F. Well-Managed Learning Environment				
Indicators	**Average**	**Description**	**Not Observed**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Evident**	**Very Evident**
F1	3.0	Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other.	0%	22%	56%	22%
F2	2.6	Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others.	0%	50%	39%	11%
F3	2.5	Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another.	11%	44%	28%	17%
F4	2.6	Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions.	0%	50%	44%	6%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:		**2.7**				

G. Digital Learning Environment						
Indicators	**Average**	**Description**	**Not Observed**	**Somewhat Evident**	**Evident**	**Very Evident**
G1	1.4	Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning.	72%	17%	6%	6%
G2	1.5	Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning.	78%	6%	6%	11%
G3	1.1	Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning.	89%	11%	0%	0%
Overall rating on a 4 point scale:		**1.4**				

eleot Narrative

The Diagnostic Review Team observed 18 core classrooms and conducted other informal observations. Based on a four-point scale, the eleot observations reflected that the Supportive Learning Environment was rated highest at 2.8 and Digital Learning was rated lowest at 1.4. Well-Managed Learning was rated 2.7, Equitable Learning rated 2.5, High Expectations rated 2.1, Active Learning rated 2.1, Progress Monitoring and Feedback rated 1.9, and Digital Learning rated 1.4. Most classrooms revealed positive teacher-student relationships and interactions. The team was concerned that expectations for student learning were low and not aligned to the district curriculum framework and the revised Kentucky Academic Standards. Furthermore, there was little instructional differentiation or personalization to support individual student learning needs either for intervention or acceleration.

Results in the Equitable Learning Environment demonstrated a focus on fairness and equal access. It was evident/very evident in 89 percent of classrooms that "Learners are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner" (A3) and in 78 percent of classrooms that "Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support" (A2). On the other hand, it was evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms that "Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs" (A1).

The Diagnostic Review Team noted the lack of high expectations and little responsibility for self-monitoring among students. Students who "strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher" (B1) were evident/very evident in 28 percent of classrooms, and students who "take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning" (B5) were evident/very evident in 17 percent of classrooms. In addition, the team was concerned by the low level of rigor in student tasks. Students who "demonstrate and/or able to describe high quality work" (B3) were evident/very evident in 17 percent of classrooms, and students who "engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)" (B4) were evident/very evident in 22 percent of classrooms. In 50 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that "Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" (B2).

The Diagnostic Review Team identified some strengths in the Supportive Learning Environment. In 94 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that "Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks" (C3). Furthermore, students who "demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher" (C4) were evident/very evident in 72 percent of classrooms. On the other hand, observations revealed that it was evident/very evident in 56 percent of classrooms that "Learners take risks in learning" (C2) and in 45 percent of classrooms that "Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful" (C1).

In the Active Learning Environment, the Diagnostic Review Team noted low levels of active student engagement and peer collaboration. Students who "collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments" (D4) were evident/very evident in six percent of classrooms. Although students were observed to be compliant with low-level learning tasks, students who "are actively engaged in the learning activities" (D3) were evident/very evident in 33 percent of classrooms and who "make connections from content to real-life experiences" (D2) were evident/very evident in 23 percent of classrooms. In 67 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that "Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and teacher predominate" (D1).

Overall, results in the Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment were of concern to the Diagnostic Review Team, with a rating of 1.9. Specifically, it was evident/very evident in six percent of classrooms that "Learners monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored" (E1). Furthermore, students who "understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed" (E4) were evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms. Observation data also revealed that students often lacked understanding of the lesson and were not given feedback to improve their understanding. Students who "demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content" (E3) were evident/very evident in 39 percent of classrooms, and students who "receive/respond to feedback to improve understanding and/or revise work" (E2) were evident/very evident in 44 percent of classrooms.

Findings for the Well-Managed Learning Environment revealed a strength in that students who "speak and interact respectfully with teachers and each other" (F1) were evident/very evident in 78 percent of classrooms. However, students who "demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others" (F2) and students who "use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions" (F4) were evident/very evident in 50 percent of classrooms. Another area of concern was that it was evident/very evident in 45 percent of classrooms that "Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another" (F3).

Of the seven learning environments, the Digital Learning Environment had the lowest overall rating with a 1.4. Noting that the school had previously implemented a one-to-one digital environment, the Diagnostic Review Team was concerned that learning opportunities using technology were missed. Students who "use digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning" (G3) were evident/very evident in zero percent of classrooms, and students who "use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning" (G2) were evident/very evident in 17 percent of classrooms. Finally, students who "use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning" (G1) were evident/very evident in 12 percent of classrooms.

Findings

Improvement Priorities

Improvement priorities are developed to enhance the capacity of the institution to reach a higher level of performance and reflect the areas identified by the Diagnostic Review Team to have the greatest impact on improving student performance and organizational effectiveness.

Improvement Priority #1

Develop, document, and communicate a formal continuous improvement process that includes an authentic and useful school improvement/renewal plan. The plan should have detailed specific goals, strategies, and measures based on identified needs from intentional data. (Standard 1.3)

Evidence:

Student Performance Data:

The Diagnostic Review Team was concerned with the downward trend in student achievement as measured by Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) and evidenced in the Student Performance Data addendum. The percentage of students who scored Proficient/Distinguished in reading decreased from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 in all grades. Specifically, during the two-year period, the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in reading declined from 22.7 percent to 9.3 percent. The percentage of fourth graders scoring Proficient/Distinguished declined from 23.3 percent to 18.6 percent, and the percentage of fifth graders declined from 33.3 percent to 29.6 percent. Reading scores for all grades continued to lag behind state averages.

From 2017-2018 to 2018-2019, the percentage of third-grade students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in math decreased from 21.3 percent to 9.3 percent. In the same two years, the percentage of fourth-grade students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in math increased from 7.0 to 9.3 and the percentage of fifth graders increased from 14.4 to 17.3. However, the percentages of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in math in all grades were at least 25 percentage points below the state averages in both 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

From 2017-2018 to 2018-2019, students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in fourth-grade science remained unchanged at 3.5 percent; however, this was 27.3 percentage points lower than the state average in 2017-2018 and 28.2 percentage points lower than the state average in 2018-2019. Additionally, students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in fifth-grade social studies decreased from 11.1 percent in 2017-2018 to 9.9 percent in 2018-2019, compared to the state average of 53.0 percent in both years. The percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in writing increased from 6.7 percent in 2017-2018 to 9.9 percent in 2018-2019 but was lower than the state averages for the two years, 40.5 and 46.6 respectively.

The student growth index in reading was higher than the state average in 2018-2019, 62.4 compared to 57.8. However, the student growth index in math in 2018-2019 lagged behind the state average, 43.9 compared to 57.6. Also of concern to the Diagnostic Review Team, the school's growth indicator in 2018-2019 (53.2) was lower than the state average (57.7).

Non-economically disadvantaged students significantly outscored economically disadvantaged students in reading (30.6 percent compared to 17.5 percent); math (27.8 percent compared to 9.2 percent); science (7.7 percent compared to 2.7 percent); and social studies (16.7 percent compared to 8.7 percent).

White students outscored African American students in reading (33.3 percent compared to 15.3 percent) and math (22.2 percent compared to 10.8 percent), and males outscored females in all content areas except writing.

Only 3.5 percent of students tested in science scored Proficient/Distinguished. Although the total students tested performed better in social studies than in science, the percent scoring Proficient/Distinguished was low (9.9 percent). In writing, the total students tested scored 9.9 percent Proficient/Distinguished, with African American students scoring 12.3 percent. Females scored higher than males in writing, 11.6 percent compared to 7.9 percent.

Classroom Observation Data:

Generally, students were well-behaved and compliant with the teachers' directions. Class sizes were large, with approximately 27 or more students, making small-group instruction, learning centers, and differentiation challenging for teachers. Each K-2 classroom had an assistant to mediate the large class size; however, assistants were often redirecting off-task students instead of differentiating instruction with individuals or small groups.

The Diagnostic Review Team was concerned with the lack of challenging student work. Students who "engage in activities that are challenging, but attainable" (B2) were evident/very evident in 50 percent of classrooms, and students who "engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking" (B4) were evident/very evident in 22 percent of classrooms. In addition, students who "understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed" (E4) were evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms, and students who "demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content" (E3) were evident/very evident in 39 percent of classrooms. Students were compliant, but their classwork was below grade-level standards and required low levels of thinking.

Stakeholder Interview Data:

According to interview data, teachers designed unit plans in their professional learning communities (PLCs). Although the intent was for the unit development process to be standards-based, teachers tended to teach topics and not the standards. Some stakeholders noted the lack of deep understanding of standards and of specifications for measuring proficiency toward standards as a factor for low student achievement. Furthermore, as often as weekly, substitute teachers replaced grade-level teachers during afternoon instructional time so that unit plans could be developed. While providing time for unit planning was well-intended, it resulted in lost learning time for students. The Diagnostic Review Team suggests that the school should prioritize teacher and student time together for learning and find alternative times for PLCs to plan units.

The school implemented the development of instructional units in PLCs during the fall of 2019. Data from unit summative assessments were used to measure continuous improvement of student learning. Even though unit summative tests included reading, science, and social studies items, test data results did not identify these items by content and standard. Because progress toward proficiency on individual content standards was therefore not tracked, conclusions based on these unit tests about students' progress toward proficiency were invalid. Hence, the teachers and administrators made instructional decisions based on misconceptions about summative test data, and these data lacked predictive value for state assessment results.

Stakeholder groups had varying perceptions of the data gathering and subsequent analysis processes. Some stakeholders indicated the school was continuing to use color-coded charts to track student progress as determined by unit assessments, while others said the process was abandoned due to lack of impact on student learning. The Diagnostic Review Team believed that the abandonment of tracking student progress was misinformed, as the issue appeared to be the use of invalid assessment data and not the process of using color-coded charts to reflect student progress.

Staff indicated concern with the limited available consequences for student misbehavior. Saturday school was added as a potential consequence during fall 2019. One person queried, "I wonder if we are doing students a disservice as they move to other locations, such as middle school." Related to concerns about the lack of consequences for misbehavior, another staff member indicated, "When it comes to improvement, they ask us

about our feelings and thoughts, but we all know that what happens is what they want. I'm happy here, but don't feel supported at times. We just have to deal with our day, especially with behavior."

A stakeholder indicated that "cultural relevance seemed to be weighted more than teaching and learning." Comments indicated that discussions revolve around culture, rather than focusing on improving student achievement. One stakeholder commented, "We do not differentiate and don't have a system."

Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:

Of the 80 students who completed the survey, 88 percent agreed that "My teachers tell me how I should behave and do my work" (E4). On related points, 66 percent of students agreed that "My teachers listen to me" (E3) and that "My teachers always help me when I need them." (E6). Additionally, 53 percent of students agreed that "My principal and teachers ask me what I think about school" (G1). Of concern to the team was that 32 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that "In my school students treat adults with respect" (D2).

Of the 58 parents who completed the survey, 80 percent agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school has established goals and a plan for student learning" (C3). Also, 88 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school communicates effectively about the school's goals and activities" (D5).

With 33 staff members completing the survey, 79 percent agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school has a continuous improvement process based on data, goals, actions, and measures of growth" (C5) and 66 percent agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school has a systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and using data" (G3). Additionally, 70 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school's leaders engage effectively with all stakeholders about the school's purpose and direction" (D9).

Seventy-five percent of staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school's leaders ensure all staff members use supervisory feedback to improve student learning" (D8). Related to the induction of new teachers, only 36 percent agreed/strongly agreed that "In our school a formal process is in place to support new staff members in their professional practice" (E16). On the other hand, 79 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed that "In our school, staff members participate in continuous professional learning based on identified needs of the school" (E17) while 63 percent agreed/strongly agreed that "In our school, a professional learning program is designed to build capacity among all professional and support staff members" (E18). The Diagnostic Review Team encourages the school to design a data-informed professional development system to build professional capacity to achieve and sustain improved student learning outcomes and teacher leadership.

Documents and Artifacts:

The Needs Assessment for Schools diagnostic for 2019-2020 reflected the belief that there were "no significant student achievement gaps" identified by K-PREP. Of concern to the Diagnostic Review Team was that while the needs assessment was in compliance with requirements and supported the focus on a positive school culture, it did not provide for a useful, accurate, and data-informed path to improve teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

Grade-level schedules were posted outside of each classroom indicating time allocated for core content instruction. For example, minutes allocated for core instruction (reading, math, science, social studies, and writing) were 255 for kindergarten, 270 for third grade, and 205 for fifth grade. The team noticed that the dedicated 90-minute reading and math blocks were not consistently implemented and emphasized that adherence to these time blocks was needed to improve students' reading and math performance.

Additionally, in grades K-2, schedules showed no designated formal intervention times for non-proficient students or acceleration times for those proficient with learning targets. In grades 3-5, 45 minutes at the end of each school day were designated for intervention and enrichment by the classroom teacher. However, observations did not show that differentiated intervention and acceleration were taking place systematically during this designated time. The Diagnostic Review Team encourages the school to design, implement, monitor, and adjust a systematic

and formal intervention system and acceleration system in grades K-5 to maximize student learning improvements.

Improvement Priority #2

Develop, implement, and monitor a systematic curricular and instructional process aligned to and congruent in rigor to the Revised Kentucky Academic Standards and school district on-grade-level curriculum framework. Establish, implement, and monitor high expectations to prepare students for success at the next level. (Standard 2.5)

Evidence:

Student Performance Data:

As noted in Improvement Priority 1, there was a downward trend in student achievement and large differences among student subgroups' achievement. Specific data can be seen in Improvement Priority 1 and in the Addenda.

Classroom Observation Data:

Generally, expectations for students' work were low. Students were observed to be compliant with learning tasks such as copying sentences or sentence stems from the white board, but were not expected to think or generate sentences, summaries, conclusions, or inferences from textual evidence. With high teacher support, some students were able to complete sentences from the sentence stems, but most did not work independently.

Even though grades K-2 classrooms had teacher assistants, few were observed supporting individuals or small groups of students to meet learning needs. Most of the teaching assistants were redirecting students who were off task.

The eleot observation data revealed an overall rating of 2.1 for the High Expectations Learning Environment. It was evident/very evident in 28 percent of classrooms that "Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher" (B1). Students who "demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work" (B3) and students who "take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning" (B5) were evident/very evident in 17 percent of classrooms. It was evident/very evident in 22 percent of classrooms that "Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking" (B4).

Of concern to the Diagnostic Review Team was that the Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment had an overall rating of 1.9. It was evident/very evident in six percent of classrooms that "Learners monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored" (E1). Further, students who "understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed" (E4) were evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms. In 39 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that "Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content" (E3). Finally, a lack of effective use of feedback was indicated by it being evident/very evident in 44 percent of classrooms that "Learners receive/respond to feedback to improve understanding and/or revise work" (E2). Specific feedback to help students identify their misconceptions and know how to improve their work is important to improving learning outcomes.

Stakeholder Interview Data:

Teachers expressed a lack of confidence in developing standards-based instructional units and aligned assessments. In addition, teachers tended to focus on topics (e.g. theme, context clues) at a low cognitive level, regardless of the cognitive level or complexity of the standard. One stakeholder said that teachers set benchmark requirements for the year, rather than adopting standards-based benchmarks set by the school district. The Diagnostic Review Team was concerned that staff indicated they teach grade-level standards at a lower level for student understanding. Teachers need understanding of grade-level standards and specifications, supported by scaffolded instructional strategies for unit design.

Unit summative assessments were developed after the unit's completion, rather than when the target standards were identified. The Diagnostic Review Team suggests that this practice be remedied to ensure alignment of summative assessments with the specifications of the standard. The team recommends that teachers, with

support from leadership, use backward design as an approach to ensure alignment of assessments with standards-based instruction.

Most staff said that they focused data analysis on student progress in learning and not on developing proficiency in grade-level standards. Students commented that they monitored their progress based on effort, such as "I do my best," and did not monitor their progress toward proficiency in of the learning target. As noted in Improvement Priority 1, staff members indicated that summative assessment data was not disaggregated by reading, science, and social studies items; therefore, re-teaching and differentiation of instruction for individual student needs was not occurring. The Diagnostic Review Team suggests that assessments be aligned to standards and specifications, resulting in valid data. When valid data are disaggregated by content (reading, science, and social studies), the data can be used to reteach and differentiate instruction to meet individual and group needs.

Interviews revealed that teachers were aligning instruction horizontally. However, they indicated that they were not aligning their instruction and use of resources vertically or in a systematic manner.

According to interviewees there were no textbooks, either traditional or digital, for mathematics, science, and social studies, although the school purchased programs for guided reading and math. Core instruction lacked appropriate resources supported by a systematic plan for implementation with fidelity. Teachers indicated that the time required to find instructional resources, particularly for science and social studies, was unreasonable and that therefore these content areas were often inadequately addressed. Further, stakeholders expressed that the new math program, Eureka, was targeted for November and December 2019 implementation without sufficient teacher preparation.

Teachers indicated they had guided reading resources but no core reading text or resources. Guided reading was a component of the integrated units of "reading and science" and "reading and social studies," which were taught in a block of time. The Diagnostic Review Team was concerned that no specific reading block for balanced literacy was identified and that guided reading was the only component of a balanced literacy program mentioned by stakeholders. According to teachers, they found social studies and science passages for whole-group instruction. It was unclear if the science and social studies passages were identified by reading level and/or text complexity to align with grade-level, standards-based instruction or only by the target content standard or topic.

Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:

The Diagnostic Review Team was concerned with the lack of valid data to inform instructional decisions, and the lack of feedback to students. Sixty-nine percent of the 33 staff who completed the staff survey agreed/strongly agreed that "All teachers in our school use a process to inform student of their learning expectations and standards of performance" (E5), and 64 percent agreed/strongly agreed that "All teachers in our school use multiple types of assessments to modify instruction and to revise the curriculum" (E7). Furthermore, 61 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed that "All teachers in our school provide students with specific and timely feedback about their learning" (E6).

A disconnect was evident between students' and parents' perceptions versus teachers' perceptions of the curricular and instructional processes. Eighty-three percent of parents surveyed agreed/strongly agreed with "All of my child's teachers give work that challenges my child" (E2). Similarly, 84 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed that "My child knows the expectations for learning in all classes" (E10).

Student responses were generally positive regarding learning, with 84 percent who agreed/strongly agreed that "In my school I am learning new things that will help me" (C2), and that "My teachers use different activities to help me learn" (E2). Also positive was that 87 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that "My teachers help me learn things I will need in the future" (E1).

Documents and Artifacts:

As noted in Improvement Priority 1, the Diagnostic Review Team examined grade-level daily schedules and found that core content instruction was not adequately scheduled for appropriate focus on standards-based instruction.

The team suggests that maximized allocated time for core content instruction be ensured and that nonessential nonacademic activities in the daily schedule be minimized. For example, reading and math should each have a minimum 90-minute dedicated daily block apart from social studies, science, and writing. One of the first steps for continuous improvement of student learning outcomes is to provide time for instruction, along with differentiated intervention and acceleration of content areas tested by the state.

Additionally, documents indicated that the school was not vertically aligning curriculum, instruction, and resources from one grade level to the next. The K-PREP Analysis document stated, "There are no vertical alignments at this time," indicating that the school was aware of the need for vertical alignment. Vertical alignment may assist teachers in preparing students for the next level expectations and prevent duplicating the use of resources grade after grade.

The K-PREP Analysis document further states, "Student feedback and the grade system needs to be improved to more effectively communicate student learning." Additionally, the document noted that the school was aware of the need for improvement in the area of monitoring students' growth on standards. "There is no current tracking system that measures each student's growth on the standards; therefore, students do not know where they are in their own progression of learning."

Insights from the Review

The Diagnostic Review Team engaged in professional discussions and deliberations about the processes, programs, and practices within the institution to arrive at the findings of the team. These findings are organized around themes guided by the evidence, examples of programs, and practices and provide direction for the institution's continuous improvement efforts. The insights from the Review narrative should provide contextualized information from the team deliberations and provide information about the team's analysis of the practices, processes, and programs of the institution within the **Levels of Impact of Engagement**, **Implementation**, **Results**, **Sustainability**, and **Embeddedness**.

Engagement is the level of involvement and frequency with which stakeholders are engaged in the desired practices, processes, or programs within the institution. **Implementation** is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are monitored and adjusted for quality and fidelity of implementation. **Results** represent the collection, analysis, and use of data and evidence to demonstrate attaining the desired result(s). **Sustainability** is results achieved consistently to demonstrate growth and improvement over time (minimum of three years). **Embeddedness** is the degree to which the desired practices, processes, or programs are deeply ingrained in the culture and operation of the institution.

Strengths:

The school's strength was the positive, trusting culture among adults and between adults and students.

Using PLCs for standards-based integrated unit planning (reading and science or reading and social studies) was in the implementation stage. The PLC process was focused on standards-based instruction, instructional strategies, and development of formative and summative assessments.

Continuous Improvement Process:

Mill Creek Elementary enrollment changed from one that was diverse in 2009 (50 percent African American and 47 percent white) to one that was predominantly African American (92 percent) in 2019. The free and reduced lunch participation grew from 71 percent to 86 percent during the same decade.

At the time of the Diagnostic Review, the principal had been in the position for 21 years and the assistant principal had been in the position for five years. The stability of the administrative team instilled confidence among stakeholders.

In contrast, the majority of the 30 certified staff (86 percent) had less than five years of experience and four teachers were new to Mill Creek Elementary for the 2019-20 school year. Given the number of inexperienced teachers and teachers who were new to the school, it is suggested that professional development for induction to teaching and to the school be designed, implemented, and monitored. It is also important that a data-informed schoolwide professional development plan for teachers, staff, and teaching assistants be designed, implemented, monitored, and adjusted based on results.

It appeared that the improvement process was a directive from the administration to the teachers instead of collaborative. Representatives of the teachers met with the leadership team twice during the school year and once in the summer to review data and determine adjustments for the next year. The Diagnostic Review Team suggests that these meetings should occur in a more ongoing and responsive manner.

Selecting and implementing instructional resources and monitoring the implementation is an important part of continuous improvement of teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes. At Mill Creek Elementary, some resources were acquired without due diligence in researching requirements for successful implementation. Examples included the implementation of 1:1 digital devices (Chromebooks) in the fall of 2018, and the removal of these devices in the spring of 2019, due to the perceived lack of successful implementation. Similarly, a math program, Eureka, was implemented in November and December 2019 without a monitored implementation plan.

Based on various perspectives, the Diagnostic Review Team suggests that stakeholders revisit the school's behavior management process to ensure that misbehaving students have appropriate consequences, along with positive behavior supports. A streamlined behavior management system that supports the instructional process should be developed, implemented, and monitored, and adjusted as needed.

Although documents and interviews reflected the intent to develop standards-based units, there was little evidence that the teachers had deep understanding of the standards and specifications. In interviews, stakeholders indicated that they had great difficulty in integrating reading with science and social studies, as they were directed to do by the administration. The Diagnostic Review Team did not observe or hear in discussions evidence that staff knew how to scaffold student learning from the current level of proficiency to demonstration of expectations of the standards. Standards-based instruction and assessment aligned to the school district framework and content and to state standards should be designed, implemented, and monitored, and adjusted based on results. To accomplish this task, the team recommends that ongoing professional development to ensure understanding of the standards and specifications be used in the design of instructional plans and classroom assessments that can be used to monitor individual student progress toward proficiency.

Supervision of teaching should be planned, implemented, and monitored to include meaningful feedback from walkthroughs and observations. Data on instructional effectiveness should be gathered and analyzed so that needed adjustments can be made for continuous improvement of instruction.

The faculty, staff, and administration need to learn more about assessment development and disaggregation of classroom assessment data by standards, as well as by individual students and groups of students. Improved use of data will provide valid evidence upon which to make instructional decisions. Furthermore, alignment between unit summative assessments and state assessments will result in helpful predictiveness between the two types of assessments.

In summary, it was noticed that human, temporal, and fiscal resources were leveraged for priorities other than improving student learning outcomes. The lack of accessible textbooks/digital resources for reading, math, science, and social studies was of concern to the Diagnostic Review Team. The team further recognized that digital tools can be used effectively to improve student learning outcomes and should be incorporated strategically. Furthermore, there were five permanent substitute teachers who relieved teachers from instruction for PLC instructional planning or other tasks, in addition to teaching when teachers were absent. Given the large class sizes and that third, fourth, and fifth grades did not have teaching assistants, there were opportunities to reallocate resources to support teaching and learning. Additionally, certified staff who are not core classroom teachers may have expertise to influence the improvement of learning outcomes more than in how they are used currently. In conclusion, the team suggests that the school should be strategic in resource use and prioritize improving student learning outcomes, including formal and systematic intervention for less than proficient students and acceleration for higher performing students.

Next Steps

The results of the Diagnostic Review provide the next step for guiding the improvement journey of the institution with their efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness. The feedback provided in the Diagnostic Review Report will assist the institution in reflecting on current improvement efforts and adapting and adjusting their plans to continuously strive for improvement.

Upon receiving the Diagnostic Review Report, the institution is encouraged to implement the following steps:

- Review and share the findings with stakeholders.
- Develop plans to address the improvement priorities identified by the Diagnostic Review Team.

- Use the findings and data from the report to guide and strengthen the institution's continuous improvement efforts.
- Celebrate the successes noted in the report.

Team Roster

Diagnostic Review Teams comprise professionals with varied backgrounds and professional experiences. All Lead Evaluators and Diagnostic Review Team members complete Cognia training and eleot® certification to provide knowledge and understanding of the Cognia tools and processes. The following professionals served on the Diagnostic Review Team:

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
Felicia Bond	Felicia Bond has served in the education profession for over 27 years. Mrs. Bond has been an Education Recovery Specialist for the Kentucky Department of Education for the past six years and is currently working with Fairview Elementary and Fairview Middle schools in Ashland, Kentucky. She taught mathematics at West Carter High School in Olive Hill, Kentucky, and Montgomery County High School in Mt. Sterling, Kentucky. She also served as a curriculum specialist and building assessment coordinator for Montgomery County Schools.
Jason Bryant	Jason Bryant is in his fifteenth year as a teacher and administrator. He is currently assistant principal for Lincoln County Middle School in Stanford, Kentucky. In that position, he assists the building principal in organizing and fostering a positive, safe environment that is conducive to meeting the needs of all students, staff, and parents.
Nancy Burns	Nancy Burns has served as an Education Recovery Specialist for the Kentucky Department of Education for four years and is currently assigned to Newport Independent Schools. She has 23 years of experience in education and has served as an elementary educator, district gifted and talented resource teacher K-12, and staff developer and curriculum coach for five elementary schools. She has been actively involved in several professional cadres and is a Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC) certified coach.
Mike Murphy	Mike Murphy is currently serving as a state manager for Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Office of Continuous Improvement and Support. In this role, he serves as the designee for the Council of Chief State School Officers. His responsibilities as a state manager include all administrative, operational, financial, personnel, and instructional aspects of the management of the school district formerly exercised by the local school board and the superintendent. Prior to this role, he was an Education Recovery Leader for KDE. He has taught special education and regular education science classes at the elementary and middle school levels and has served as an elementary and high school principal. During his tenure as a high school principal in Kentucky, he led a bottom five percent school to the top five percent within three years.
Dr. Rosemarye Taylor	Dr. Rosemarye Taylor was professor of educational leadership at the University of Central Florida in Orlando. She has teaching and administrative experience at all levels K-12 in rural, suburban, and urban settings. Dr. Taylor's administrative experience ranges from school-based administration to executive leadership at the district level. She has national experience in classroom, school, and district level analyses of organizational strengths and challenges. She has a proven track record of evidence-based collaboration to develop potential solutions for continuous improvement in teacher and leader effectiveness and hence, student learning outcomes. As a well-published author on leading, teaching, and learning, she has published 10 books along with numerous articles and chapters.

Addenda

Student Performance Data

Mill Creek Elementary Performance Results

Content Area	Grade	%P/D School (17-18)	%P/D State (17-18)	%P/D School (18-19)	%P/D State (18-19)
Reading	3	22.7	52.3	9.3	52.7
	4	23.3	53.7	18.6	53.0
	5	33.3	57.8	29.6	57.9
Math	3	21.3	47.3	9.3	47.4
	4	7.0	47.2	9.3	46.7
	5	14.4	52.0	17.3	51.7
Science	4	3.5	30.8	3.5	31.7
Social Studies	5	11.1	53.0	9.9	53.0
Writing	5	6.7	40.5	9.9	46.6

Plus

- The percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in math at the fourth-grade level increased from 7.0 in 2017-2018 to 9.3 in 2018-2019.

- The percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in math at the fifth-grade level increased from 14.4 in 2017-2018 to 17.3 in 2018-2019.

- The percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in writing at the fifth-grade level increased from 6.7 in 2017-2018 to 9.9 in 2018-2019.

Delta

- The percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in reading at the third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade levels decreased in 2018-2019 when compared to 2017-2018.

- The percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in math at the third-grade level decreased from 21.3 in 2017-2018 to 9.3 in 2018-2019.

- The percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in social studies at the fifth-grade level decreased from 11.1 in 2017-2018 to 9.9 in 2018-2019.

- The percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in science at the fourth-grade level remained the same from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 (3.5 percent in both years).

Growth Index Mill Creek Elementary

Content Area	School (17-18)	State (17-18)	School (18-19)	State (18-19)
Reading	18.2	19.7	62.4	57.8
Math	17.4	14.5	43.9	57.6
English Learner		18.8		70.5
Growth Indicator	17.8	17.1	53.2	57.7

Note: The formula for calculating growth changed between 18-19 and 19-20. Comparisons should only be made between school and state ratings.

Plus

- The student growth index in reading exceeded state average in 2018-2019 (62.4 compared to 57.8)

Delta

- In 2018-2019, the student growth index in math (43.9) was below the state average (57.6).
- In 2018-2019, the growth indicator (53.2) was below state average (57.7).

2018-19 Percent Proficient/Distinguished

Group	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies	Writing
African American	15.3	10.8	1.4	6.2	12.3
Alternative Assessment					
American Indian					
Asian					
Consolidated Student Group	18.2	10.9	1.2	9.9	11.3
Disabilities (IEP)	16.7	16.7	0.0	20.0	20.0
Disabilities Regular Assessment	13.8	13.8			9.1
Disabilities with Acc.	14.3	14.3			
Economically Disadvantaged	17.5	9.2	2.7	8.7	
English Learners					
English Learners Monitored					
Female	17.8	9.3	2.6	7.0	11.6
Foster					
Gifted and Talented					
Hispanic					
Homeless					
Male	21.0	14.5	4.3	13.2	7.9

Group	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies	Writing
Migrant					
Military					
No Disabilities	19.9	11.2	4.0	7.6	7.6
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	30.6	27.8	7.7	16.7	
Non-English Learners				9.9	9.9
Non-Migrant	19.4	12.0	3.5	9.9	9.9
Not Consolidated Student Group	31.8	22.7		10.0	0.0
Not English Learners Monitored	19.3	11.8		9.9	9.9
Not Gifted and Talented	19.4	12.0	3.5	9.9	9.9
Not Homeless	19.7	12.0			
Pacific Islander					
Total Students Tested	19.4	12.0	3.5	9.9	9.9
Two or More					
White	33.3	22.2			

Plus

• Students with disabilities (IEP) outperformed all other groups in social studies and writing.

Delta

• The percentage of females scoring Proficient/Distinguished was lower than males in all subject areas except writing.

Schedule

Monday, December 2, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
4:00 p.m.	Team Meeting	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4:30 p.m.–5:15 p.m.	Principal Presentation	Hotel Conference Room	Principal and Diagnostic Review Team Members
5:15 p.m.–8:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #1	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Tuesday, December 3, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
8:15 a.m.	Team arrives at school	School Office	Diagnostic Review Team Members
8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	Interviews / Classroom Observations / Stakeholder Interviews / Artifact Review	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #2	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
8:15 a.m.	Team arrives at school	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Interviews / Classroom Observations / Stakeholder Interviews / Artifact Review	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #3	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

Thursday, December 5, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Final Team Work Session	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members