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# **Learnings from a Multi-site Case Study of Former Turnaround Schools**

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A report prepared by the Center for Assessment, Design, Research and Evaluation (CADRE) at the CU Boulder School of Education.



School of Education  
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# Acknowledgements

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## About CADRE

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The Center for Assessment, Design, Research and Evaluation (CADRE) is housed in the School of Education at the University of Colorado Boulder. The mission of CADRE is to produce generalizable knowledge that improves the ability to assess student learning and to evaluate programs and methods that may have an effect on this learning. Projects undertaken by CADRE staff represent a collaboration with the ongoing activities in the School of Education, the University, and the broader national and international community of scholars and stakeholders involved in educational assessment and evaluation.

## Suggested Citation

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# Executive Summary

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At the national level and in the state of Colorado, school turnover reforms and interventions have produced mixed results. However, some studies have indicated that several districts and schools have experienced a degree of success in improving student academic outcomes. In this report, CADRE researchers share results from conducting a qualitative multi-site case study at three former low performing schools located in one school district that adopted locally motivated turnaround strategies and practices to maintain higher levels of student achievement over time. Two schools are former turnaround schools that participated in the Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) Turnaround Network (TN), and one school did not participate in the network but used many of the tools and strategies provided to TN schools. The purpose of this multi-site case study was to identify the practices, and conditions supporting those practices, that these schools learned through partnership with the TN and continue to sustain through present day.

Key findings from this multi-site case study are that:

- A key condition for implementing the reforms enacted at each site was the establishment of a partnership relationship with the school district and the state. TN reforms by design are implemented as a bottom-up approach that prioritizes partnership work and the joint development of school-specific strategies as critical ingredients for shaping and enacting reforms at each site. School leaders and educators at the three sites indicated the value and importance of this partnership work to establish accountability for ensuring the success of the school across all levels (i.e., state, district and school).
- The performance-management (PM) tool, provided by CDE and used by all three sites, served as an important mediating tool to help define the strategic goals and direction for each school, and to monitor progress toward meeting improvement goals. All three schools still currently use this tool to define and monitor their improvement work.
- Regular coaching cycles established at each site provide the basis for trying new approaches, learning from these attempts, and refining instructional strategies used by teachers. Interviewed teachers highlighted the value of the coaching and observations received regularly from school and teacher leaders to drive the instructional improvement process and to establish a common vision for teaching and learning across classrooms.
- Distributed leadership opportunities provided to teachers have and continue to allow educators to play a critical and formal role in influencing the policies and strategic direction of the school. These well-structured leadership opportunities enable teacher leaders to help execute the instructional vision at the school and to serve as mentors for novice teachers that may require more support in the classroom.

These practices and conditions established at our case study sites can be traced back to an extensive and rich research base that recommend that such approaches be taken up by schools regardless of their accountability rating. Although the learnings from these schools are intended to help inform the improvement work taking place at current TN schools, these can also be reviewed to help inform the improvement work taking place at any school within the state. Additionally, the learnings from these schools can help CDE adjust and improve their support programs (including the TN) that are offered to low-performing schools in the state.

# Introduction

The legacy of school turnaround programs to rapidly improve academic achievement at lower performing schools has yielded mixed results nationally (Dee, 2012; Dragoset et al., 2018; Hallgren et al., 2019). In some studies, academic gains were noted in mathematics but were not observed in other content areas (Hallgren et al., 2019). In other studies, differences in the turnaround approach implemented pointed to differential outcomes experienced by these schools, or in effects that could not be clearly attributed to different models (Dragoset et al., 2018; Pham et al., 2020; Redding & Nguyen, 2020). Some studies conducted document how turnaround interventions have backfired and resulted in generating worse conditions (e.g., higher teacher and principal turnover rates, and the departure of higher performing students) for the school (Dougherty & Weiner, 2019; Heissel & Ladd, 2018). These mixed results found nationally also apply to the Colorado context where questions have been raised about whether the returns on investment for turnaround initiatives have accrued tangible benefits for students in Denver (A Plus Colorado, 2019). A large proportion of school turnaround studies completed evaluate outcomes associated with interventions supported by the federally funded School Improvement Grants (SIGs). Under the SIG, districts and schools selected one of four intervention models to implement: Transformation, Turnaround, Restart, and Closure.<sup>1</sup> Each of these models came with prescribed practices and steps to follow. Although these federal investments and resources provided were substantial, the turnaround models advanced through these SIG grants fell under heavy criticism for being highly prescriptive and for ignoring the broader local and sociopolitical context of schools (Murphy & Bleiburg, 2019; Trujillo & Renee, 2012).

Despite the lack of consensus around the efficacy of turnaround interventions on lowest performing schools, there is clear consensus among educational researchers that school turnaround work is highly complex and that organizational and behavioral changes enacted through turnaround strategies take time to result in observable changes (Mckown et al., 2020; Pham et al., 2020; Redding & Nguyen, 2020). More importantly, because schools are situated in and influenced by the larger educational system, complex reforms such as turnaround work require system-level supports and approaches (Fullan, 2010; Mckown et al., 2020; Meyers, 2020). Understanding turnaround work in relation to a system underscores the importance of understanding the role of district and state actors to support school turnaround work (Meyers, 2020). However, to date, the few studies focused on understanding the role of district and state



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<sup>1</sup> Under the SIG grants: the “turnaround” model entailed replacing the school principal, rehiring no more than 50% of school staff and granting the new principal flexibility in hiring, length of school day and the budget; the “restart” model entailed converting the school into a charter or closing and opening a chronically low performing charter school with a new management or school operator; 3) the “closure” model entailed closing and moving students into higher-achieving schools within the same district; and 4) Transformation entailed replacing the school principal and taking a comprehensive approach to instituting instructional reforms, providing operational flexibility, increasing learning time and creating community-oriented schools. The TN model at CDE has more overlap with the transformation model but does not hinge on replacing the principal and also employs prioritized strategies that encompass other areas such as school culture and professional learning.

actors in supporting reforms such as turnaround initiatives at schools, tend to highlight the absence or inability of the district to provide effective supports to schools (Peck & Reitzug 2014; Player et al., 2014; Scott & Fleischman, 2017). The few studies that highlight the more effective roles taken on by the state and district to support turnaround schools point to the importance of supportive and positive relationships constructed across levels to effectively engage in school turnaround work (Galindo et al., 2016; Schueler, 2018; Meyer, 2020).

This emphasis on a systems-wide approach to turnaround work sets the background stage for the set of former turnaround case study schools presented in this report. In this descriptive multi-site case study, we focused our work on learning from the experiences of former turnaround schools that participated in a district and state supported turnaround network. This network approach to supporting school turnaround efforts represents a newer model for embarking upon turnaround reform work. All three schools relied upon active partnerships with district and state actors to advance a coherent and focused approach to the turnaround work enacted. That is, to effectively address the root causes for low performance at each site, improvement plans had to be developed and implemented in close collaboration with partners from the district and state. Two of the former turnaround schools that we studied participated in the Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) Turnaround Network (TN) program. Unlike the prescriptive approach taken by the SIG grants, the TN model advances a set of tools to support the turnaround work, but largely defers critical decision-making points to the school. Under the TN model, the district and state are not conceived as playing a minor support role, but rather positioned as partners who form strong relationships with leaders at turnaround schools to help them navigate the complexity of reforms and organizational changes occurring at their schools over a three to four-year period. The third case study school is a former turnaround school that was not eligible for enrolling in the TN program, but used many of the TN tools while forging close partnerships with the district and state to advance their school improvement work. In all three case study schools, these schools are no longer on Colorado's "accountability clock" or facing possible involvement by the Colorado State Board of Education.

The purpose of these case studies sponsored by CDE is to document and learn from the past and current work undertaken by these three schools to implement and sustain the improvement strategies that they embarked on during their turnaround period. These case studies are intended to serve as a proof point for current TN participants and other turnaround schools in Colorado seeking to learn from the experiences of former turnaround schools in the state. Additionally, we carried out these case studies to help the state learn about the components of the Turnaround Network that can lead to the effective implementation of improvement strategies, thus supporting current and future Turnaround Network participants. The state legislature set aside funding to support this evaluation to inform future supports and policy decisions grounded in promising practices from the field that are research-based. We developed the following research question and sub-question to help guide the retrospective case study work:



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*What conditions and practices led to better outcomes in former turnaround schools?*

- *Do things such as level of implementation of key school improvement strategies, leadership experience and background, specific support program(s) participated in, and district support for participating schools lead to improved outcomes in schools?*

In understanding these conditions and practices, we wanted to identify common practices that could potentially be considered for adoption by current and future turnaround schools and to identify those that were sustained over time. In the following section, we provide more background context and information about the Turnaround Network and the three case study schools.

## Background and Context

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### Rationale for the Turnaround Network

Similar to the experiences documented in many states using turnaround practices tied to SIG grants, CDE found that these highly prescribed interventions resulted in mixed results on student performance. In an evaluation examining results from schools receiving Tiered Intervention Grants (TIG or the state's version of SIG), CDE reported mixed performance results dependent upon the TIG model pursued (CDE, 2018). In another report published earlier by A Plus Denver, the authors noted that in 2013, a third of schools that received SIG grants had declined in academic performance relative to the pre-funding period (A Plus Denver, 2013). The report posited that these declines were likely due to the fact that schools and districts did not have the capacity to implement what they promised in their improvement plans or did not have the right staff or leadership in place to implement difficult steps required to transform their low performing schools (A Plus Denver, 2013). Based on their assessment of outcomes attained by the low performing schools supported by SIG grants, the committee concluded that a different approach with more targeted guidance was needed. The report explicitly called for the state to play a more active role in providing supports to these schools, as well as making the difficult decision to pull back funding if resources were not being deployed as stated in a school's improvement plan. This recommendation was echoed in another report commissioned by a coalition of educational groups (including CDE) interested in identifying the best support structures for turnaround schools. That report noted that despite the state's emphasis on local control, there were opportunities for CDE to play a more active supporting role, particularly for schools and districts lacking both leadership and staffing capacity to effectively plan a path forward for improvement (Baker et al., 2013).

Recognizing that the state could provide additional supports for low performing schools and districts, the state took on a more active partnership role with districts beginning with the formation of the TN and the School Turnaround Leadership Development program in 2014-15. This engagement included the development of a comprehensive menu of supports for schools, modeled after recommendations made earlier by Baker et al. (2013) and more recently by the Center for School Turnaround (2017). In Baker et al.'s (2013) report, the authors reviewed best practices across a number of states and highlighted the need to improve school leadership, build a strong teacher workforce, and institute a strong infrastructure with systems of support. According to Baker et al., tackling these three areas effectively can only be done by building



partnerships between the school, district, state, and possibly other external providers. Similarly, the Center for School Turnaround recommends that state departments of education should work with districts to enact rapid improvement strategies in schools that can target four key domains or areas to effectively impact student performance. Figure 1 presents the Center for School Turnaround framework for implementing rapid and multi-pronged interventions to transform a low performing school's leadership structure, staffing capacity, instructional and curricular programming, and culture (titled the “Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement”).



**Figure 1. Four domains for rapid school improvement. Source: The Center for School Turnaround (2017).**

The first domain, “turnaround leadership,” refers to having leadership at all levels (i.e., from the state down to the school level) communicate and enact policies establishing a strong commitment to improving student performance. The goal is to ensure that leaders at all levels coordinate their efforts to lead and manage necessary changes at low performing schools. The second domain, “talent development,” focuses on the need to hire committed personnel and to ensure that policies are in place to help retain and build capacity for educators at these schools. The third domain, “instructional transformation,” refers to enacting changes in classroom instruction grounded in the learning sciences and best teaching practices, including adequate support. The fourth domain, “culture shift,” focuses on developing a shared culture and vision across all stakeholders in the school to ensure common goals with a focus on student learning. The theory of change underlying this framework and CDE’s approach for working with turnaround schools, is the hypothesis that these four dimensions, when coordinated and pursued simultaneously, provide the key ingredients for improving student performance (The Center on School Turnaround, 2017). More importantly, the framework emphasizes that coordinating the supports at all levels (state, district and school) is critical to ensuring progress can be sustained over time. According to The Center for School Turnaround, “to the extent that this broader system – state, district, school – is recast to actively support dramatic school improvement across the board, it will allow us to progress beyond the current state of having islands of excellence to a point where all schools are able to provide all students with the education they deserve” (2017, pg.1).



Building on this framework and theory of change, CDE developed several support mechanisms designed to help address the most pressing needs of each school relative to the four domains. Although schools ideally address all four domains noted in Figure 1, CDE recognized that needs vary substantially across low performing schools; some schools might benefit most from a dedicated focus on building school culture, while others might benefit from a focus on building staff capacity. The level and types of supports provided by CDE would then vary based on each school's unique need.

Currently, chronically low performing schools can apply for grants to access several support mechanisms from CDE including the TN program. The TN requires a school to participate in an organized network of schools to learn from the experiences of other participating schools, to receive professional development customized to each school's needs, to receive feedback from CDE staff on implementing strategies aimed at improving student performance, and in some cases, to partner with an external group to receive additional supports. A key requirement for this TN work is that the school district must also be committed to supporting and engaging with network schools. Due to this requirement, district staff appointed with supporting school turnaround work attend trainings and network meetings sponsored by CDE.

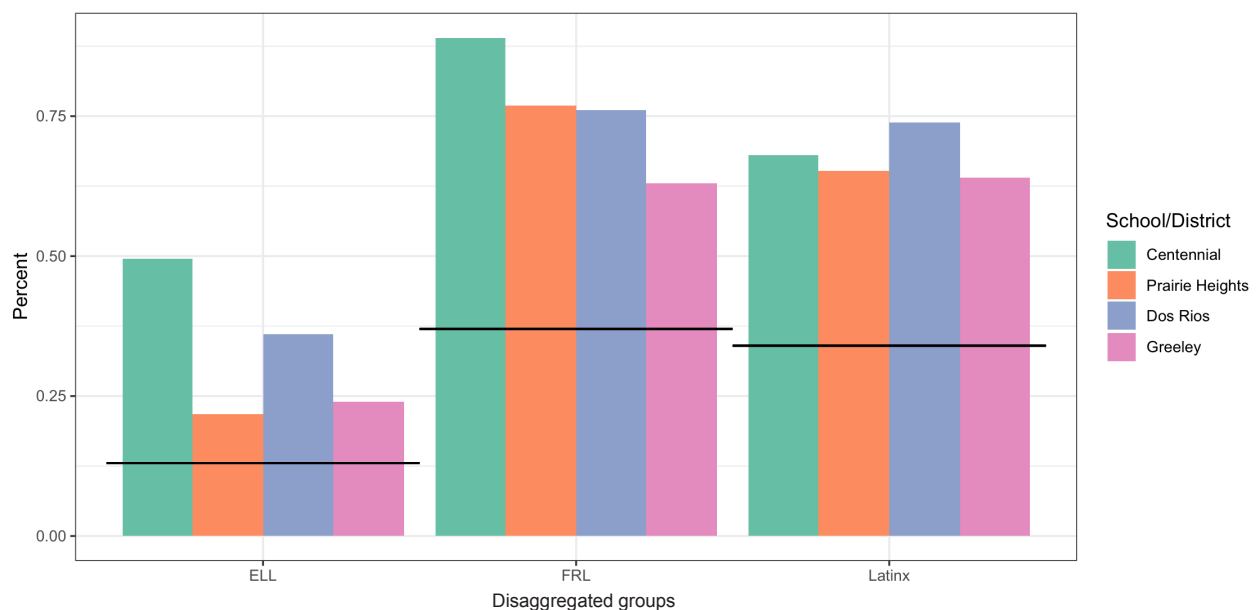
## **Site Selection Process**

We used purposive sampling (Patton, 2001) to select candidates from the population of former turnaround case study sites. The purposive criteria started with using quantitative indicators to select candidate school sites, then further narrowing the selection of schools based on strong partnerships achieved between schools and districts, and lastly using the qualitative insights offered by CDE staff to finalize the list of candidate schools. First, based on earlier quantitative work completed for a separate study, we looked at former turnaround schools that participated in earlier cohorts of the TN network and established a list of approximately 15 outlier schools based on academic performance on state assessments as reflected by high median growth percentiles and student achievement. The list was reviewed by CDE staff to first determine which set of schools were embedded in districts that had played a strong partnership support role with the turnaround schools and then narrowing down the list to schools that implemented core TN strategies with fidelity. Based on these criteria, CDE staff identified seven candidate schools that we could approach, knowing that we would limit the number of study sites to a maximum of four schools. Out of the list of seven schools approached, six indicated a willingness to participate. Although we initially recruited four schools, we moved forward with two case study schools located in the same district: Prairie Heights Middle school and Centennial Elementary School in the Greeley-Evans 6 School District (henceforth referenced as "Greeley" in this report). Out of the four schools initially recruited, one dropped out before the start of the study due to challenges presented by the ongoing health pandemic, and we made the decision to not move forward with a second site, since we learned that the school's leadership team and instructional program were being replaced to become a K-8 magnet school.

We decided to add one more case study site using input from a district leader at Greeley to find a former school within the district that did not join the TN but used the TN tools and practices to guide the improvement planning process. For this third site, we wanted to find a school that could provide insights into how the TN tools and practices could be used for school improvement purposes even for a school that did not meet the criteria for joining the network. A third school, Dos Rios Elementary School, was recruited as the third site. Case study activities were limited at this site since the activities focused largely on learning about their uses of the TN tools and practices to drive improvement planning work around school climate.

## Case Study Context

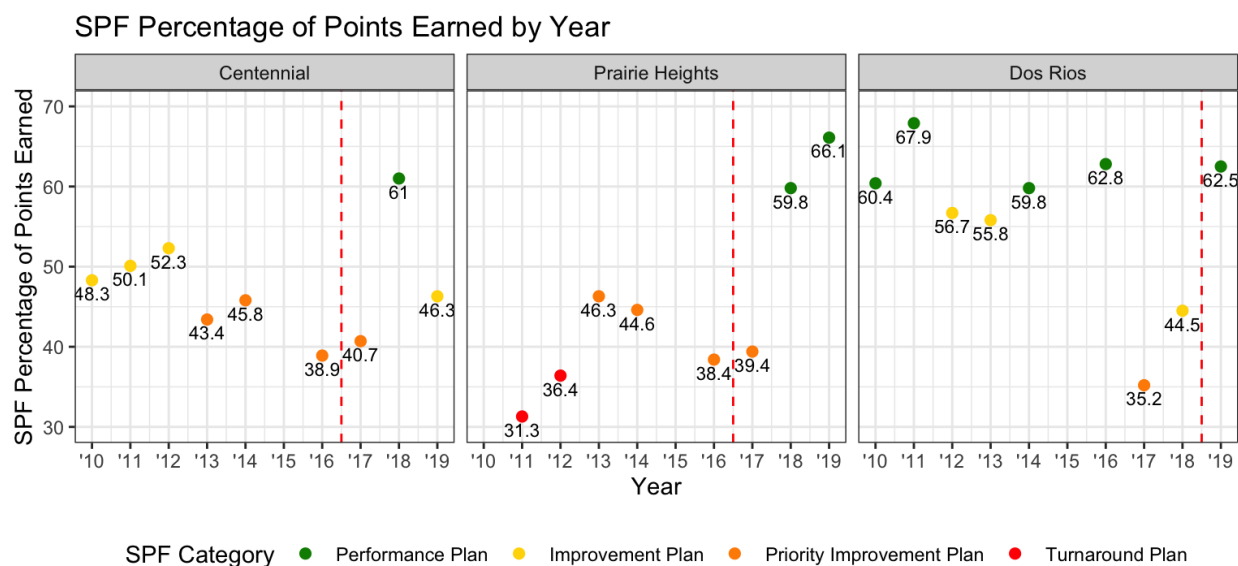
All three case study schools are in the same school district, Greeley, which is a mid-size rural district located in Northeastern Colorado. Greeley serves about 22,000 students across 11 elementary schools, five middle schools, six high schools, and a number of K-8, preschool, and online schools. The district serves a large proportion of historically underserved students relative to other districts in the state. In particular, Greeley serves a higher proportion of Latino/x students, emergent bilinguals referred to as English Language Learners (ELLs) by the state, and students eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch (FRL) relative to other districts in Colorado. Figure 2 displays the percentages of students classified in each of these demographic groups by school and for Greeley overall during this 2021-22 school year. The black horizontal lines in the figure represent state averages. As indicated by Figure 2, the district and case study schools have higher percentages of students in different sub-groups relative to the state overall. Additionally, the three case study schools have higher rates of poverty as measured by FRL compared to the district and state.



**Figure 2. Percentages of students by ELL, FRL and Latino/x students in Greeley and by case study school. The black line represents the percentages of students across the state.**

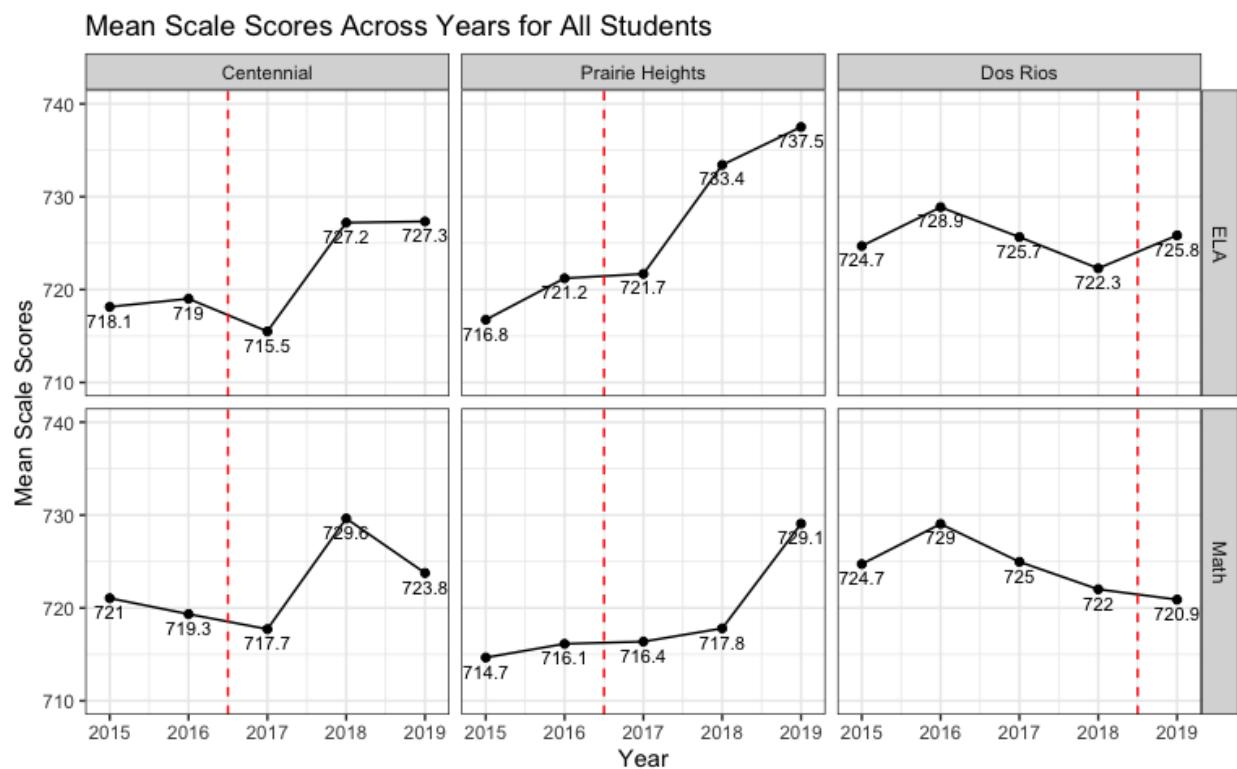
The graphs in Figure 3 present the academic performance landscape across time for the three case study schools. Figure 3 displays Colorado School Performance Framework (SPF) accountability scores for all three schools from the 2009-10 academic year to the 2018-19 academic year. Each dot represents the total percentage of overall accountability points earned by the school, and the colors represent the corresponding category ratings. The vertical dashed red lines represent the first year of the school's engagement with the TN. Centennial and Prairie Heights joined TN in the 2016-17 academic year; Dos Rios took up TN interventions in the 2018-19 academic year. The points to the left of the dashed line indicate the SPF ratings in the years prior to interacting with the TN. The points to the right of the dashed line indicate SPF ratings in the first year of work with the TN and beyond.

As indicated by Figure 3, Centennial and Prairie Heights received several consecutive years of Turnaround Plan or Priority Improvement Plan accountability ratings, which represent the two lowest ratings on the SPF. These ratings are used to flag schools as in need of improvement by the state and are the primary eligibility criteria for participating in a state turnaround program. For these schools, they achieved Performance Plan ratings after completing their second year with the TN. Dos Rios, on the other hand, did not receive as many consecutive years of low accountability ratings, and thus was not formally eligible for participation in a turnaround program. In fact, the school received one of the two highest category ratings from the 2009-10 academic year through the 2015-16 academic year. The school adopted TN strategies in 2018-19 and achieved a higher Performance Plan rating after implementing TN strategies for one year.



**Figure 3. SPF percentages of points earned by year and school.**

Figure 4 further contextualizes the academic performance of these three case study schools over time. This figure displays mean scale scores from the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) state standardized test by school, year (2014-15 to 2018-19), and subject (English Language Arts or ELA and Math). The vertical dashed red line represents the first year of engagement with the TN. On average, trends in mean scale scores in Centennial and Prairie Heights remained relatively flat in the years leading up to participation in the TN. Their mean scale scores drastically increased following their engagement with TN. Although mean scale scores in Dos Rios were generally higher than mean scale scores in Centennial and Prairie Heights between 2015 and 2017, Dos Rios experienced a steady decline in mean achievement prior to implementing the TN tools and strategies in the 2018-19 academic year.



*Figure 4. Mean scale scores in ELA and Math over time by school.*

## Joining the Turnaround Network Schools

Centennial Elementary School and Prairie Heights Middle School participated in TN for a three-year period beginning in 2016-17. School leadership from each school, in conjunction with staff from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), identified major improvement strategies to support school improvement. Figure 5 presents an overview of the general strategies taken up by each school during their TN experience. In some cases, these schools focused on a particular improvement strategy for over a year, but in other cases, they identified new focal improvement strategies for each year of work with the TN. For example, Figure 5 shows that Prairie Heights and Dos Rios focused one of their major improvement strategies on building a positive school culture for all three years. In addition to prioritizing school improvement strategies, school leadership in consultation with district and CDE staff identified metrics to be used to monitor each of the identified strategies. Next, we move into describing the early experiences of each school before and during their exposure to the TN based on the reflections offered by staff.

School	Centennial			Prairie Heights			Dos Rios		
Academic Year	16-17	17-18	18-19	16-17	17-18	18-19	16-17	17-18	18-19
Quality Tier I Instruction and Rigorous Instruction									
Routines and Procedures									
Culture and Climate									
Engagement									
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving									
Academic Language									
Summit Learning Platform									
PLCs / Data Teams									

**Figure 5. Major improvement strategies by school and year. Please see Appendix A for more details about major improvement strategies. Dos Rios did not formally participate in TN but identified three major improvement strategies each year and monitored progress using the PM tool.**

## Centennial

Prior to joining TN, Centennial was considered a chronically low performing school. The current school leader was serving as assistant principal of the school at the time. She recalls high frequencies of office discipline referrals, students not making gains as quickly as they had hoped, and a lack of clarity around key focal areas for improvement strategies. She noted, “I think there was probably a point where it was a little draining to come to school...it got tough sometimes.” Teachers recall a sense of urgency in terms of trying to meet the needs of students, but a simultaneous lack of direction in terms of where and how to improve. As one teacher noted, “there wasn’t always a lot of consistency [such as knowing] here’s what we’re going to do, here’s how we’re going to do it...in manageable pieces.”

Centennial joined the TN cohort beginning in the 2016-17 academic year. The school principal and assistant principal at the time worked closely with TN staff from CDE to identify major improvement strategies on which to focus. The current principal framed this identification of

specific improvement strategies as feeling particularly useful “whereas before when I’d give that huge list of 20 things to do...a teacher probably didn’t really know where to start.” Along with the identification of major improvement strategies, TN provided a series of trainings that helped the principal “begin to see some of [their own] gaps...and really start thinking about what [their] school needed.” Teachers recall a renewed sense of energy from leadership following initial partnership with TN; a sense of “we’ve got to get out of the box, we’ve got to do something different than what this district is doing, we’ve got to do something that works for our school, our demographics, our kids...that trickled down to all of us.”

In the spring of 2017-18 – the second year of work with TN – Centennial received their first Performance Plan SPF rating after four years. The principal describes this change in rating as a particularly celebratory moment, representing not only the removal of the school from the accountability clock, but also serving as a reflection of the work they had done in partnership with the state and district. She notes, “that’s what makes things doable, right? When you can see and feel the change...I think that just made us get more excited about [the work], and things got better.” The school leader and teachers observed not only substantial improvements in achievement and growth scores, but declines in rates of behavior incidents, increased levels of student engagement in the classroom, a greater sense of collaboration between teachers, staff, and leadership, and strengthened support of teachers in their classroom instruction and professional development.

## **Prairie Heights**

As indicated by their academic performance trajectory captured in Figures 3 and 4, the story of Prairie Heights begins with a school that could not find a clear pathway for breaking the cycle of low performance. The school leader indicated that every year before joining the TN program, the school staff felt disheartened by the results from the state assessments. According to her, “we would make little gains, but not enough to get us out of turnaround status...our work [at the time] did not have focus...we were trying everything and couldn’t do anything to improve.” Similar to the story of many turnaround schools across the nation, Prairie Heights experienced a revolving door of school principals, which heightened the challenge of establishing a clear focus for the work. Before assuming the role of principal, the current school leader had worked as a special education teacher at the school and then took on the role of assistant principal the year before the school joined the network. Although she described the staff culture as supportive, this characterization was made in relationship to educators providing moral and emotional supports for one another during a turbulent period.

Like Centennial, Prairie Heights joined TN in the 2016-17 academic year. During this period, the district assigned the Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools to work closely with turnaround schools, and this person suggested that the school join the TN. Since the school had yet to find a strategic focus for the turnaround work, the school leaders felt compelled to see whether this pathway offered viable ideas for engaging in reforms. According to the current principal, joining the TN marked the turning point for the school and their relationship with the district and the state. As stipulated in the theory of action for the network, since the TN work required participation from both school and district leaders, the network provided the first opening for all three levels to engage in productive discussions and collaborations about the strategies and priorities to be pursued by the school and supported by the district. This marked

a turning point for the school since our interviews with the current principal and educators highlighted that in the past, the relationship between the three entities was more adversarial than supportive with school-based personnel viewing the role of both state and district as punitive rather than helpful. For example, from the perspective of educators interviewed, the state messages through the SPF data only communicated poor performance and the “multiple audits” conducted by the district only resulted in echoing the same information as the state since those audits only focused on how “badly we performed.” The school leader articulated similar sentiments as her staff when recalling that the audits only pointed out “the things we’re doing...and [the same message each year] that those things are just not working.” During the period prior to TN, the district’s solution for the school was to engage in SIG strategies such as converting into a charter or closing down.

Moving into the TN period, the district’s role transitioned from one that only meted out punitive judgments to schools about their performance to one that focused on collaborating with the school and CDE as partners for identifying sound strategies supported by evidence-based practices. By joining the TN, the school participated in a diagnostic review conducted by CDE to help establish a clear focus for the turnaround work for the school and district to focus on. As noted by the current school leader, “as a school in turnaround, you can do 100 things, and prior to the Turnaround Network, we were trying to do everything but at the level of ineffectiveness.” Following the diagnostic review, a school committee comprised of school leaders and educators worked “hand-in-hand” with the district on a weekly basis to establish an innovation plan for building a new instructional vision for the school. This plan which included revamping the curriculum, also highlighted three major improvement strategies to pursue, was then brought to all staff and passed with 99% of staff agreeing to this vision. During that early period, Prairie Heights focused on three primary major improvement strategies: empowering students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers, sustaining and refining positive school culture and climate, and actively engaging staff in content-specific professional learning communities.

## Dos Rios

Dos Rios faced challenges in the 2016-2017 school year as the current leader was transitioning from assistant principal to principal at the school. As he described, “we went from being a performance school to a priority improvement school in the course of my first year as principal and just a very steep learning curve with a lot of different things going on.” He described a situation where he realized along with the district, that they “needed more help.” The response was additional technical support and mentorship during this critical time-period, which started with open communication with district leaders. The challenges at Dos Rios were scattered across too many categories and there wasn’t a clear direction for improvement. Building on existing positive relationships with CDE, they leveraged practices from the Turnaround Network to narrow their focus onto achievable goals for Dos Rios. Despite not formally participating in TN, Dos Rios used a tool provided through the network (the Performance Management or PM tool) to guide their improvement efforts. Following the diagnostic review, the school leader in collaboration with CDE staff identified areas that allowed the principal to systematically



As a school in turnaround, you can do 100 things, and prior to the Turnaround Network, we were trying to do everything but at the level of ineffectiveness.”



approach improvement in a way that was focused and manageable. In addition to the targeted planning made possible by the diagnostic review, the district provided a mentor principal, someone who had successfully managed a turnaround process, as an added layer of support for the school leader.

Beginning in the 2018-19 academic year and continuing through present day, the school has focused primarily on three areas for improvement. The first improvement strategy is providing quality tier one instruction aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards and CMAS. A central element of this work involved developing data processes that are actionable, as the principal recalled, “having a tighter cycle really created a better sense of urgency and timeliness as we’re setting targets and collecting data.” Despite gains made toward end-of-year goals, the school is still building capacity to support productive data team meetings, since student data does not yet meet implementation benchmarks.

The second improvement strategy at Dos Rios has been to support student acquisition and use of academic language. Specifically, the school aims to have teachers implementing high-leverage practices with scaffolds and differentiation to support academic discourse and writing. Although the school has succeeded in providing training to teachers, and many of the scaffolds and supports have been put in place to support student acquisition and use of academic language, the school is still working to develop consistency in implementation across classes and subjects.

The third improvement strategy at Dos Rios is refining and sustaining the positive climate and culture that has been established within the school community. In the first year of using the PM tool, this improvement strategy was focused most on creating and communicating a “school culture vision,” including, as the principal described, “consistent procedures and routines, building wide expectations for students.” This carried over into consistent expectations and practices for teachers and staff. In the past two years, this focus has shifted toward a vision of climate and culture focused on examination of inherent biases, equitable practices, leveraging family and community partnerships, and maintaining high expectations for all students. The school notes that a lot of this work is still ongoing and will need to be continually monitored but has made strides toward greater levels of engagement in the classroom, and greater levels of communication with families.

Beyond these key strategies, another important factor to be considered for Dos Rios is their status as an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. The process for maintaining this designation includes engaging the whole school community in examining their practices at regular intervals and working together to ensure their teaching meets the requirements of IB. As the principal noted, “IB really promotes voice and choice and ownership through a model of student agency,” which aligns with the improvement goals they have developed for teaching and learning practices. This is combined with a structure that places many teachers in leadership roles on the instructional team. These two additional features encourage open communication and collaboration that is supportive of the goals emerging from the PM tool, which are consistently monitored and assessed for progress.

# Data Collection

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We gathered information from a variety of sources to help establish themes, to triangulate viewpoints shared by stakeholders and to help contextualize the activities currently taking place in the two former TN schools and the one school that adopted TN tools and practices.

## Interviews

We conducted interviews with a variety of stakeholders: state directors charged with overseeing the turnaround network activities, a district leader at Greeley, and the school principal at each case study school. The interviews targeted different types of information from each stakeholder group. For the interviews with the state directors, we wanted to learn about the state's vision and outcomes for the TN work, the successes and challenges experienced, and potential future directions for the network. For the district leader, we were interested in understanding the role of the district to support turnaround schools and if or how they coordinated this support work with the state. For the school leaders, we wanted to learn about their impressions and learnings from the work they did to get off the accountability clock, to understand past and current focus areas for improvement, and to understand the set of practices that have been sustained over time. We designed the interview protocol for school leaders to tap into areas that correspond to each of the four domains.

We also conducted two separate focus groups with educators at the two former TN schools to gather their perspectives on the school's journey moving from their former turnaround status to their current higher performance standing. We only included educators that had been in the school at the start of participating in the TN in our focus groups in order to better pinpoint the areas that had changed between the past and present. For the third site, we conducted a focus group with educators to learn how the TN tools advanced their school improvement planning work.

## Collecting Documents

To support our document analysis work, we asked CDE to provide documents such as past PM tools completed by each site and information from diagnostic reviews conducted by the state to prioritize the turnaround work. We also asked our school leader partners to upload relevant documents that addressed each of the four turnaround domains, using the Cognito platform. Knowing that these schools still used the four domains as guiding principles for continuous improvement, we asked each school to upload documents that provided evidence of work undertaken in each of the domains. For example, a classroom observation protocol was uploaded by Prairie Heights to share how they focused the “look-fors” in the regular classroom observations taking place. This protocol was mapped to Instructional Transformation since this protocol is used as part of the school's practice to shift and transform instruction during the TN period through current date. Dos Rios shared their diagnostic review results when they received the TN intervention and results shared in this artifact can be mapped to all four domains.

## Publicly Available Student Performance and Demographic Data

In addition to collecting documents from each school, we gathered publicly available school accountability and performance data collected by the state for each school beginning with the year they participated in the turnaround network or turnaround activities until the last non-pandemic year test administration in 2018-19. These data were gathered to provide background context on the performance shifts that occurred at each school as they moved off the accountability clock to their current performance rating. We also downloaded publicly available demographic and enrollment data from the state to gather additional background information for each school.

## Observations

For the two former TN schools, we gathered additional context about the ongoing work at these sites to sustain higher levels of academic performance by conducting week-long observations of English Language Arts and Math classes taking place at every grade level. We also observed both general and subject focused professional learning community (PLC) sessions for both schools to watch the interactions taking place between teachers while participating in assessment and instruction focused learning opportunities. Additionally, at Prairie Heights, we had the opportunity to observe a feedback cycle session take place between a school leader and a science teacher, as well as to observe school-wide community building activities. For the one school that used the turnaround tools but did not participate in the network (Dos Rios), we observed a school improvement planning session held with teachers to progress monitor and define goals in the PM tool that this and the other two schools still use to set goals and track progress on their school improvement work.

## Analytic Approach

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To structure the data analysis, we executed a series of steps including a mix of inductive and deductive coding, document analysis and scoring of classroom observations. The purpose of undertaking these multiple steps was to engage in comparative analysis across data sources to construct and support claims for these cases. We applied this constant comparative approach which involves drawing from multiple data points, multiple sites and requires iterative analyses and comparison of data across sources and timepoints lead to the synthesis (findings) of themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These methods allowed us to include all data sources in consecutive rounds of analysis to check our findings and to add additional depth in emerging findings and comparison across contexts in the study. This approach also supports the identification of divergent findings that may prompt additional investigation.

To begin the analytical process, we imported all of the interview transcripts and PLC observation results into Dedoose qualitative analysis software. In this program we were able to develop a coding schema with definitions and a weighting scale. Our codes represented a mix of deductive and inductive codes.

We developed deductive codes using the Four Domains framework rubric developed by CDE, with codes included that corresponded with each of the dimensions defined in that rubric. The broad categories included in these sets of codes directly correspond to the four

areas highlighted in Figure 1: (1) leadership for rapid improvement, (2) talent management, (3) instructional transformation, and (4) culture shift. Each of the four categories had associated sub-codes which allowed us to identify excerpts from the data at a finer grain level of detail as they related to categories within the Four Domains rubric. Leadership and rapid improvement contained sub-codes intended to capture the school's improvement plan, leadership structure and the leadership qualities of the principal. Talent management contained additional codes focused on evaluation, recruitment and retention, and professional learning. Instructional transformation included sub-codes for data-usage, supporting knowledge and skills, and the theories of learning discussed at the school. We designed culture shift sub-codes to capture excerpts connected to supportive staff culture, equity, and supporting student learning. An example of pre-set codes constructed to align directly with the Four Domains rubric is located in Appendix B.

We established inductive codes during the coding process as we identified particular themes contained in the data that fell outside of the pre-set Four Domains codes. These included capital investments at the schools, COVID disruptions, and vertical coherence between the work at the schools and state or district partners.

Prior to coding all transcripts, the team members completed inter-rater reliability tests, with results above .8 Cohen's kappa value, to ensure consistent code applications (Salkind, 2010). In addition to codes, data were categorized by descriptor categories which allowed us to sort and create data sets based on individual schools, and time periods (prior to turnaround engagement, during turnaround intervention, current state). We applied the codes and descriptors to all transcripts and field notes from observing the professional learning communities in Dedoose.

Once the coding was complete for all documents, we utilized the analytical tools within Dedoose to drive our search for areas of interest based on the research questions. We used the code co-occurrence tables to visualize excerpts from the data with a high frequency of overlapping codes. For example, we were able to visualize and quickly extract excerpts where the leadership structure at a school overlapped with supportive and collaborative staff culture. We followed this process for all sets of codes, and this allowed us to isolate those excerpts from interviews and observations that contained specific references to the concepts in the Four Domains rubric and addressed the research questions.

Beyond co-occurrences, we used additional analytical tools to isolate individual schools and time periods to compare the code weight applications across these various dimensions of interest. We tagged the data for the time-period which they represented; either past (before engaging with TN), during engagement with TN, or current state of the school. We looked for similarities and differences in the frequency of themes referenced at different time periods and examined how these factors were similar or different in quality based on the weights of codes applied.

We completed consecutive rounds of a process that first reviewed themes that emerged from the coding, then checked against multiple data sources, and finally summarized findings in memos to describe the key themes. With these analytical outputs we developed initial findings, which we compared across data sources to check for contrasting information. Following discussions of initial findings, we specified new parameters in our data set to check for confirmation or contrasting information before finalizing key themes.

In addition to our process supported by the qualitative software, we conducted two additional analytic steps. First, we completed an artifact analysis of supplemental materials provided by the school leaders. We reviewed each of these school related documents and completed a brief annotation utilizing a shared template. This allowed us to identify any relationship between the artifacts and the codes developed from the Four Domains rubric. The template included an opportunity to summarize any key information from the artifacts that might relate to emerging findings and key themes in the qualitative analysis. From this set of documents, we selected six representative samples that demonstrated close connections with the Four Domains, and relationship to the findings. These are presented in Appendix C, and were prioritized based on (a) their specific connection to the findings, (b) their ongoing use at the school sites, and (c) documents that had shorter formats (i.e. not complete sets of PD slides, or school handbooks).

Second, a separate analytic procedure was followed for the classroom observations. Team members used a common scoring rubric, which we practiced and normed using publicly available pre-recorded classroom examples. Once we established consistency with this tool, we scored the classroom observations. We entered the scores from the rubric into Qualtrics to review these data and highlight common trends or practices used by the teachers across the school sites. We then engaged in a consensus moderation process (Baker et al., 1993; Linn, 1994; Wilson, 1994) for each observation to reconcile any differences found in scores.

## Results

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Our analyses across the various sources of data helped us to identify key themes, which we discuss in this section. We focused our analyses particularly on codes with high weights and on codes that frequently co-occurred with one another. One key finding that surfaced when analyzing the weights assigned to excerpts across time was that on average, code weights tended to increase across time periods for both former TN schools and Dos Rios. This finding affirms tighter alignment of school practices with the four domains during and after engagement with TN relative to the prior period. In the time periods during and after engagement with TN, we noticed particularly high weights in the areas of engaging in improvement plan process, leadership qualities, assessment and data use, and collaborative and supportive staff culture. See Appendix D for specific details on the weights by code.

In addition to looking at average code weights, we closely examined areas in which codes frequently co-occurred with one another. We were interested in examining areas in which we observed high co-occurrences take place between codes both within and across different domains. Looking across domains provided us with a clearer understanding of the intersections or the interrelationships between the different domains. In former TN schools, for example, we noticed particularly high co-occurrences between codes in the talent management and the instructional transformation domains. In both TN schools and Dos Rios, high co-occurrences surfaced between codes in leadership and culture, particularly in reference to collaboration. In Dos Rios, we noticed an emphasis on collaboration in connection to vertical coherence. Based on these weights and co-occurrences, we examined the accompanying excerpts from the transcripts to derive major themes pointing to the conditions and practices that were implemented during the TN period and are sustained to date.

## Key Findings and Themes

### Leveraging a Performance Management Tool to Define Major Improvement Strategies

The first major theme from this study was that for all three sites, the PM tool facilitated the process of defining a limited and focused number of key improvement areas, and this targeted approach in turn provided greater success in implementing improvement strategies.

Excerpts from the school and district leader interviews described a process that moved away from past attempts, which tried to address too many improvement strategies at once. The Prairie Heights principal described the dilemma faced in the past, “prior to being part of the Turnaround Network, we were trying to do everything. But everything at the level of ineffectiveness.” Partnership with the TN narrowed their goal setting to three key strategies that were supported by CDE and district staff. She described this as a “mindset shift” that looked different from past improvement efforts where the building leadership team was not as involved in creating priority goals and a plan.

The PM tool allowed them to be more effective by providing a clear focus that resided in a “living document” that they revisited often to monitor progress and make adjustments. She described the PM tool as something that was “easily accessible” and used at administrative and staff meetings to guide reflections throughout the year. The PM tool also served as a guide for meeting with district leadership and reflecting on progress. The use of a focusing tool resulted in a new relationship with improvement goals, as the Prairie Heights leader shared, “we knew exactly how we’re going to monitor them, when we’re going to monitor them and then plan around next steps.”

The Centennial principal discussed how the TN trainings supported this focused process by directing attention toward, “what we could do with data to help inform our decisions,” which then informed practices such as leading PD that allows teachers to understand and implement improvement strategies. As a result of this process, she reported learning new ways to, “make our process more effective.” This intentional space for reflection, guided by data gathered using the PM tool as a guide, elevated particular focal areas for improvement.

Though not formally inducted into the TN, Dos Rios found similar success through support from the TN in centering their focus onto clear goals. As the Dos Rios Leader described, when reflecting on the experience of past improvement effort, he noted, “there [was] a mismatch between the effort that we’re putting into our programs and the results that we’re getting back from the programs.” This was remedied in part by engaging with the CDE partner in a thorough diagnostic review that included reviewing multiple indicators to identify areas for focused attention, and other goals that could be trimmed out of the improvement plan.



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Before this engagement, the principal reflected that the school was, “working on about 12 different initiatives and we’re just not doing any of them well at all,” and he contrasted that with a “more intentional” process that emerged from using the PM tool, something that leadership reviews “every trimester.” Using this focused approach facilitated better use of school data to monitor goals related to curriculum and instruction. For example, ongoing use of the PM tool included the formation of weekly data team meetings at each grade level, where teachers review student data and ask questions such as, “What are we going to do for these kids that are on the bubble...what do we need to do for those that don’t have it yet? Do we see a commonality in where we can change things?” Teachers in the focus group at Dos Rios shared that part of this process is checking for alignment with goals within the PM tool, or as we observed in the focus group, making adjustments to goals within the tool throughout the year as new data are available.

At the district level, engagement with the TN staff and the review of an audit performed by a CDE partner supported increased focus on clear goals that were then transferred into professional development. We heard this described in the district leader interview, “We all didn’t have the same vision [of grade-level instruction], and so we – over the course of that year, we also worked with [the CDE partner] on a system to really train our teachers to get on the same page and help them be the best.” Another important feature noted by the district leader was the TN approach to “circle back” on these more focused goals to gain additional feedback and not leave the results of any improvement strategies unexamined.

We heard from the focus groups at each school that engagement with CDE marked a critical turning point for improvement strategies. One teacher from the Prairie Heights focus group described this shift, “I think the huge change has been that once we were in the Turnaround Network, that we were actually involved in the creating of our priority goals and really involved in how we are going to meet those goals.” This transferred into a greater school-wide understanding of the rationale for changes in the school and purposes of specific professional development.

Additionally, prior to engaging with the TN, teachers at Centennial reflected on a past state of improvement efforts that was inconsistent. They reported that, despite wanting and trying to do what is best for students, there were not always clear about how to achieve the positive results they desired. As a result of TN support, they now report, “We’ve seen how great the results have been. So, it’s been very powerful and just everyone is really trying to be on that same page.” Teachers in the focus groups at the two former TN schools also clearly described the utility of the PM tool, something that they could “build out” together, and use in weekly meetings to “keep us focused.”

Research supports the notion of defining focused improvement strategies as a key step in successful school turnaround. This includes having tools appropriate to diagnose and determine the context for necessary changes (Duke, 2015), and strategies to determine achievable goals in focal areas where there is some ability to control the factors necessary to achieve the desired

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outcomes (Meyers & Hitt, 2017). Without effective tools to diagnose and strategically plan interventions, the turnaround process goals are difficult to communicate with important actors inside and outside the school, and it is more difficult to demonstrate successes which facilitate continued buy-in from those actors. Equipped with this focused understanding of problems and strategies to address them, school leaders are able to provide a clear sense of direction, serve as an instructional leader, and be a strong resource for the growth and development of teachers and staff (Duke & Landahl, 2011).

Presently, the PM tool continues to be used to guide the improvement planning process and to monitor progress of major improvement strategies and related outcomes in these schools. In Dos Rios, for example, we observed a teacher leader meeting in which the principal facilitated a revision of the PM tool. In this meeting the principal had teachers form groups and assigned each group a separate major improvement strategy. Each group was responsible for reviewing the goals associated with that major improvement strategy in the PM tool and identifying areas in which the PM tool could be further streamlined to focus the school's improvement efforts.

For the two former TN schools, the school leaders confirmed that they also continue to use the PM tool to drive and monitor the school improvement planning work. At Centennial, the school leader noted that she found the PM tool to be a useful way to narrow in on improvement strategies of greatest priority and guide improvement efforts. At Prairie Heights, the principal described the PM tool as a “live” document that enables her leadership team and staff to continuously monitor whether the school is meeting stated improvement goals based on the quarterly benchmarks set for each year.



Teachers in the Centennial focus group also noted that ‘support from the district has gotten better each year.’ They reported that professional learning objectives and goals feel “purposeful” and are aligned between school and district, with special emphasis on equity, diversity and inclusion.”

## State and District Supports to Advance a Coherent Vision for Turnaround

The second finding that emerged as an effective practice of the three case study schools was that state and district level supports advanced a coherent vision for turnaround work at the schools. Across the interviews held with the three school leaders, we heard about the emphasis of partnership and mentoring in relationships with the district and state. One important marker of this approach was the provisioning of leadership training to invest in school leaders and help them become more effective. The Centennial principal reported high levels of support provided by the district and CDE to engage with the school as a partner to implement the turnaround vision that was not prescriptive, but rather focused on building capacity. She recalled that it was “scary” to think about being the last chance for a school to make measurable improvement, but that she “didn’t realize all the support that I would receive in doing so.” This support took the form of visits, feedback, and mentoring through strong PD offerings from district and TN staff, which lead to ideas that she was excited to try and see the results. She enjoyed the opportunity to reflect jointly on her own observations of trends and have “another set of eyes” on what she was witnessing in her school. The feedback cycles established with the district, led her to believe that she was learning with district leadership together to identify what was working and what could be improved.

Teachers in the Centennial focus group also noted that “support from the district has gotten better each year.” They reported that professional learning objectives and goals feel “purposeful” and are aligned between school and district, with special emphasis on equity, diversity and inclusion. We observed a PLC session that demonstrated a focus on both school and district priorities around reviewing student work to uncover student reasoning and to identify instructional moves. Teachers reported that the [instructional] coaches craft engaging PD that is well supported and helped them feel, “successful throughout the year.”

Similarly, the Prairie Heights principal discussed the state and district supports connected to the TN that focused on the development and implementation of the innovation plan and highlighted the mentoring and partnership role that district and state actors played in supporting the school’s direction and strategies. Reflecting on the past, the Prairie Heights principal recalled the lack of connection between the state/district turnaround recommendation (i.e. become a charter school, or close) which was not necessarily in alignment with the school’s desire to take up hard work to improve. She noted a past state of relationship with the district and state where there was “never any follow-up” and no one to provide clear action steps on how to get better. This shifted, as described the relationship with the TN as “side-by-side” in noting important challenges and developing improvement plans with clear steps. Likewise, she emphasized positive coaching from the district that included “tough questions,” and characterized the process of major improvement strategies as something district partners were, “developing with you.”

Though Dos Rios was not formally part of the TN, we heard similar themes in the focus group and leader interview. Similar to sentiments expressed by Prairie Heights and Centennial leadership, the Dos Rios principal emphasized the importance of partnerships established with district and state to build the capacity and confidence to engage in difficult change management. He reflected on his transition into the principal role and subsequent struggles as a point where the district leadership invested in his potential. He described the outreach he received at that juncture, “Hey, we’re concerned. We see that you’re not at the top of your game. We’ve seen you before. What can we do to help?” Following this there was tangible support in the form of a principal coach that allowed him to develop and grow in his position, and ongoing leadership support from the district to help him effectively guide consensus building processes within his building. Another important layer was the direct feedback from the CDE partner. As the principal expressed, there was appreciation for both having help navigating the process of self-assessment, as well as a fresh outside perspective from the CDE partner.

The teacher focus group at Dos Rios reported impressions of high vertical coherence between district and school in reference to uplifting the professionalism of teachers, leading them to feel “valued and compensated as professionals,” a shift that happened with the current superintendent. They also noted a connection between how the district encourages distributed leadership with district level committees populated with educators to strengthen connections with schools by using educator input. Teacher leadership is something that was also directly reflected in the leadership structure enacted by the Dos Rios principal that we observed as teachers reviewed the PM tool at the end of the trimester and offered feedback on how to revise goals for the year.

The findings above were echoed by district leader interview excerpts that discussed an emphasis on effective partnership with the state, and a shift away from punitive approaches. Instead, the approaches included resource intensive support and training that centered the role of school

leaders on instruction. In the district leader interview, we heard the sentiment that supports are offered in a way to make principals and teachers feel, “we’re in this work together.” The district leader noted the importance of navigating the appropriate level of outreach – the space between offering “autonomy,” versus so much support that, “they feel like they don’t have the ability to lead.” The district has high expectations of school leaders and strives to support them through offering opportunities to show their growth by reflecting on the data together.

These descriptions mark a shift away from adversarial relationships and toward a coherent system with regular interaction between actors at different levels of the system. This aligns with research on school turnaround that have suggested that it is important to consider the available supports from systems outside of the school and the policy conditions that are supportive to schools’ turnaround trajectories (Meyers & Smylie, 2017, Player et al., 2014). Demanding accountability without intensive support may lead to adversarial relationships. Drastic moves such as frequent replacements of school leadership and staff can disrupt the social cohesion necessary to sustain meaningful changes in schools. Districts can often struggle to navigate their role in turnaround process, but literature suggests that strong communication and partnership with school leaders can overcome these hurdles (Meyers & Sadler, 2018). Further, in our analysis, we found many examples pointing to the supportive relationships from district and state partners, which extended into collaborative relationships within school buildings. This supported collective understanding and buy-in from actors at all levels of the turnaround process. Fullan (2010) notes that this type of coherence is critical at the systems level for advancing school reforms. That is, establishing coherence across levels allows a school to move forward with a vision for school turnaround without running into policy barriers imposed by the state and the district, a symptom exacerbated by the SIG approach from the past (Trujillo & Renée, 2012).

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### **Integrating Routine Observations and Professional Learning through Coaching or Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles**

The third finding that emerged as conditions and practices that have been sustained at the two former TN schools is the continuous improvement approach that approximates the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle for improving instructional and assessment practices. Although neither school invoked the term “PDSA” to describe their instructional improvement work, it is helpful to refer to that model to characterize how observations and professional learning opportunities were integrated through the coaching cycle implemented at each school. Prior to joining the network, teachers and leaders at the two TN schools described past coaching and professional development practices as largely absent. For example, the current principal and teachers at Prairie Heights interviewed noted that teachers were largely “left alone” to figure out what to do in the classrooms and school leaders did not observe their classrooms. At Centennial, teachers characterized the instructional improvement approach as “everybody was doing their own thing with their own materials.” Once the two schools joined the network, the coaching cycle was adopted and used as a “major improvement strategy” during the TN period for transforming instruction, and remains as a strategy to improve teaching and learning.

Within the context of improving instructional practices, Tichnor-Wagner et al. (2017) describe the four distinct parts of the cycle as follows: the planning phase begins with considering what needs to be tested in the classrooms, the doing or testing phase entails gathering information about what happens as a result of implementing the planned work; the studying phase entails learning about the results from the test phase; and the final acting phase entails deciding whether and how to use the information. This final acting phase could also entail abandoning the strategy and devising a new one to test out if needed. At the two former TN schools, the PDSA coaching cycle created the medium for integrating observation and professional learning activities. During the turnaround period, the leadership at both schools and district leaders received an intensive weeklong training from Relay's Instructional Leadership Professional Development program to engage teachers in data reviews and instructional discussions, and to learn how to provide productive feedback to teachers on observations. As an approved external vendor for TN schools, the Relay program is intended to build the capacity of a school's leadership team. The district used these strategies to model professional development focused on instruction with principals leading low performing schools, and the principals also adopted these strategies to shape the coaching cycles at their schools.

To illustrate what this cycle looked like during the TN period, we draw on the description of the coaching cycle provided by the Centennial leader. The school leader highlighted that the cycle began with identifying a "high leverage action step" that would surface from instructional team discussions based on examining outcomes in data reviews. The principal in coordination with teachers would then either "script things out or practice" the action step during the instruction team meetings to ensure that teachers felt comfortable enacting the step during class. The following week, the principal would then schedule an observation to watch that step enacted in classrooms and then discuss the impact of that step on their practice and on students during the next instructional team meeting. Based on the observation and feedback shared, the principal and teachers would use the information to decide on next steps to take in the classroom. According to the principal, testing out one high leverage strategy rather than providing teachers with feedback on "a huge list of over 20 things to do...made [the improvement process] more exciting [for her and teachers]" since it made the work more "doable" and both principal and teachers could "see and feel the change." The feedback received from Centennial teachers about this coaching cycle during the TN period affirmed the positive impact of this process on their instructional practices. As described by one teacher on behalf of others in the room, "the ability in a safe environment to look at data and name the gap and script it out, practice it, give each other feedback, implement it...makes you a better teacher...in the past, we never did such a thing, but when we joined the network, this became part of the culture...we want to get better at what we do...we love our building professional development because it's the Centennial way and it zeroes in on what we do...everybody's all in."

At Prairie Heights, the PDSA coaching cycle described by the principal resembled the description of the cycle enacted at Centennial, but with a few key differences in the planning and developing phases of the cycle. In the Prairie Heights PLC observed, there was far less



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emphasis on establishing and practicing a scripted approach, but rather, teachers in discussion with the school leader came to consensus to agree on the type of strategies to be tested. In more than two PLCs observed, teachers were given the latitude to determine how the strategies could be implemented and therefore no time was spent during the team meetings on practicing the specific instructional moves. For teachers at Prairie Heights, the agreements established in the instructional teams not only formed the basis of trusting relationships with school leaders but also provided mentoring opportunities for teacher leaders and motivated novice teachers to stay at the school. According to a teacher who was a novice during the TN period, “If it wasn’t for administrators doing feedback loops, sticking with me, showing me what I’m missing, pairing me with other teachers who can model for me, I probably would not have stayed...I did not want to leave the building because of all of these supports to make me significantly better.”

At both schools, the present-day enactments of this PDSA coaching cycle we observed in different professional learning communities held by grade and content or school-wide strongly resembled the descriptions provided by school personnel from the TN period. That is, the Centennial cycle enacted a more scripted approach to the planning and doing phases, whereas the Prairie Heights cycle shifted more autonomy to the teacher teams to reach consensus on how best to implement the action steps identified in data and instructional review teams. In Centennial, we observed teachers in one grade-level team practice scripted approaches in a PLC to implement an instructional strategy defined in collaboration with the school leader. A few of the classrooms we observed also followed scripted approaches more closely to enact activities that had been defined in grade-level PLC teams. In Prairie Heights, we observed teachers in consultation with the school leader identify key strategies to test out in the classroom. Although the strategies were identified, the enacted steps identified stopped short of a script. Teachers in more than one grade level team built out outlines to help guide the work but these outlines did not contain prescribed steps. Classrooms observed at Prairie Heights varied in terms of how much teachers depended on the general outline to guide the classroom activities and lessons. For example, we noticed that more novice teachers at the school tended to follow a more rigid pacing of the class whereas, the more experienced teachers followed the outline but largely adapted the work to better address the needs of students in the classroom. Despite the different approaches taken by the two schools to enact the coaching/PDSA cycle, key outcomes achieved at both schools during the TN period through to present day for these cycles are the same: developing robust instructional guidance infrastructure and establishing reciprocal accountability between teachers and school leaders.

Cohen (2011) describes instructional guidance infrastructure as the array of artifacts and components supporting the infrastructure of instructional practices taking place in a school or a district such as instructional frameworks, curricula, assessments, and professional learning communities established. Hopkins and Spillane (2015) emphasize that if this infrastructure is weak and lacks coherence, educators are left in a situation where they are without a clear vision to guide instructional planning and implementation work. In other words, as described by Cohen and Spillane (1992), when this infrastructure is weak, important instructional decisions such as defining the scope and sequence for the curriculum and considering how best to



According to a teacher who was a novice during the TN period, ‘If it wasn’t for administrators doing feedback loops, sticking with me, showing me what I’m missing, pairing me with other teachers who can model for me, I probably would not have stayed...’



assess and evaluate students become shaped through individual beliefs and decisions. In fact, this scenario spelled out by Cohen and Spillane accurately captures the experience described by teachers reflecting on the pre-TN participation period.

The coaching or PDSA cycle in large part advances coherence across these different components to ensure that all educators and school leaders share the same vision for enacting the instructional work across classrooms. At Prairie Heights, this infrastructure extends to the use of common rubrics and curriculum used across grades and content areas through the Summit Platform. This common rubric (see Exhibit C.1 in Appendix C) and the curricular objectives including the assessments built into the platform serve as central reference points in the coaching/PDSA cycles to progress monitor student performance and the instructional strategies tested out. At Centennial, although a common rubric is not shared across classrooms, the frequency of the PDSA cycles help to achieve coherence in the common instructional objectives and assessment practices shared across grade level teams. That is, norming expectations based on the feedback and strategies tested out in each cycle provides the basis for reinforcing common expectations across grade level content teams.

The second area achieved as a result of these coaching or PDSA cycles is this notion of reciprocal accountability attributed to Richard Elmore (2002) who stated:

For every increment of performance I demand from you, I have an equal responsibility to provide you with the capacity to meet that expectation. Likewise, for every investment you make in my skill and knowledge, I have a reciprocal responsibility to demonstrate some new increment in performance” (pg. 5).

In the case of the coaching cycles described by teachers and school leaders, as well as observed by our team, the school leaders clearly accepted accountability for providing their teachers with the resources, time and support they needed to learn from and carry out their instructional work. Teachers in turn accepted accountability for actively participating in the PLCs, and then reflected and enacted upon the feedback received to improve teaching and learning in their classrooms. Based on the feedback received, this reciprocal accountability achieved through the PDSA coaching cycle appears to be a key factor in sustaining credibility and strength in the instructional improvement activities implemented for both school leaders and teachers.

### **Distributed Leadership to Advance a Supportive and Collaborative Staff/School Culture**

The fourth theme that emerged both from the turnaround and the current state time periods was that all three case study sites established a distributed leadership model as a strategy for advancing a supportive and collaborative school culture. Distributed leadership is highlighted as a key condition for TN schools to implement to ensure that staff have a voice in important



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policies and strategies impacting their work, and that this model builds consensus to move forward with important decisions. Prior to joining the TN or receiving similar TN support, the schools either did not have a distributed leadership model in place or did not have an effective model in place. Once the schools engaged with the network or network tools, then all three schools established clear and focused work for the distributed leadership models to institute planned reforms. Patterson et al., (2021) note that distributed leadership models can vary and can potentially be controversial when the notion of power relations is disputed, and the decision-making model is unclear. Despite the potential pitfalls of this model, Patterson et al. observe that this model is expanding both nationally and internationally since the belief persists that this approach is effective for ensuring that all teachers share the same vision for the reform work. In the case of all three schools, this distributed leadership model was characterized by leaders and educators as highly positive during the TN period and is still characterized as one of the defining conditions and practices that are still sustained because this has resulted in positive outcomes for each school.

At Centennial, distributed leadership opportunities in the past were described by teachers as “inconsistent” due to the “haphazard” decision-making mechanism that guided the work. For teachers at this school, once the school joined TN, the decision-making process not only became clearer, but this also forced the school to be more intentional and consistent with decisions and reforms enacted. The principal of the school highlighted that during the TN period, the vision and mission for the school was redefined using the leadership team which consisted of both school and teacher leaders, and that this process required working with the entire team to reach consensus before eliciting community feedback. This process of involving teachers in core decisions for the school is still maintained as verified by the input provided from teachers. According to teachers in the focus group, since the TN period up to the current period, the administration has “put an emphasis on really trying to get teachers involved and giving teachers more leadership opportunities. And a lot of our teachers, even our younger staff, are doing that...taking on more leadership roles.” Although we did not have the opportunity to observe these distributed leadership roles in action (e.g., a teacher leading a PLC), interviewed teachers affirmed that these leadership opportunities are provided to them.

Whereas Centennial teachers described the pre-TN distributed leadership model as “inconsistent” and “haphazard”, the teachers at Prairie Heights characterized distributed leadership as completely absent at the school during that period. Prior to engaging in TN, teachers agreed that in the past, they were not “involved with leadership...to define priority goals and to [contribute to discussions] on what should professional development look like to help meet those goals.” But when the school joined TN, a strong distributed leadership model was built with teachers clearly driving and making decisions with building leaders. According to the teachers, “once we got into the Turnaround Network, it was literally...we had a say in everything...we made decisions together and talked about what action steps we were going to



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take...we had a say on professional development and getting even more staff involved in that...we were even creating professional development for other staff!" This level of teacher involvement and buy-in for reforms enacted remains as a critical condition that the school maintains to leverage full staff support for continuing with their ongoing learning and improvement agenda. In our observations of a weekly cross-disciplinary grade level team and of a professional learning community for grade six English Language Arts teachers, teacher leaders led the learning agenda and facilitated the discussions in those settings. Additionally, in our observations of the professional learning sessions where school leaders served as facilitators, teachers in those settings had clear leadership roles in defining the goals and objectives for upcoming instructional work that would be tested and used in their classrooms. That is, teachers and school leaders collaborated to co-construct the instructional planning work rather than receiving top-down input from school leaders to implement their vision of teaching and learning.

At Dos Rios, the adoption of the PM tools and practices provided the impetus for teacher leaders to become actively involved in defining and monitoring school priorities along with the school leaders. According to interviewed teachers, "we sat as a leadership team and went through and built out the whole PM tool together." As a tool established to track periodic progress, the improvement strategies outlined are not static but rather are continuously reviewed in the distributed leadership team to determine whether the school is meeting stated goals. For teachers, the rapport established with the school leaders in the leadership team meetings is one of "being trusted, respected as a professional...and being treated as an equal." All the interviewed teachers highlighted that this collaborative and professional environment resulted from engaging with the TN tools and the associated practices "changed the staff climate." In the past, the teachers highlighted that more decisions were enacted in a top-down manner, whereas the TN practice of having teachers involved in decision making and with the improvement process shifted the climate from a "hierarchy" to one that has become more inclusive and collaborative over time. During our observation of a leadership team meeting focused on establishing consensus on school improvement strategies, the principal sought out the opinions of teachers regarding areas for tightening and consolidating their major improvement strategies of focus. During this meeting, teachers had the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers and propose revisions to the improvement strategies identified in the PM tool to report back to the group. Teacher leaders in the group openly provided input on what areas the school should focus their improvement strategies, and in some cases, openly challenged the principal during the discussion. The interactions established in this meeting highlighted the collaborative staff culture described in the teacher focus group, where they reported feeling trusted and respected by the principal. This also points to a type of leadership structure that invites stakeholders to voice dissension or provide opposing viewpoints to help shape important policy directions taken up by the school.

Under a distributed leadership model, leadership authority, decisions and tools can be taken up by an array of formal and informal stakeholders beyond those with formal leadership roles to advance strategic goals and objectives (Spillane, 2005). This arrangement ideally means that leadership becomes both collaborative and dispersed among stakeholders associated with the organization (Gronn, 2002). Within the context of these three case study schools, participating



For teachers, the rapport established with the school leaders in the leadership team meetings is one of 'being trusted, respected as a professional...and being treated as an equal.'"

in TN and/or using the tools from the TN provided clearer focus for the distributed leadership model instituted but most importantly, provided educators with a shared sense of responsibility and clear roles in the decision-making process. The findings from focus groups, interviews and observations were further supported by documentation provided by school leaders that demonstrated the school leadership responsibilities, such as organizational charts that outline the specific opportunities for distributed leadership (see Exhibit C.3 in Appendix C).

The attributes of these distributed leadership models are important to highlight since educational researchers (Burch et al., 2020; Patterson et al., 2021) note that distributed leadership models do not necessarily lead to the collaborative outcomes achieved in these three schools but rather depend largely on how school leaders elect to design and operationalize these models. For these three schools, their distributed leadership models center on collaboration and joint decision making as key values for driving improvement. Additionally, the democratic participation of teachers in their distributed models in large part helped catalyze the collaborative culture teachers and leaders, which persists to present day.

## Implications

The primary themes unpacked across case study sites provide examples for how other turnaround schools in partnership with their districts and the state can engage with the TN work and ultimately operationalize and fulfill the intended goals of the theory of action outlined for this turnaround model. The primary themes point to how activating focused work across the Four Domains served these schools in the TN period and remain as activities and practices sustained through present day. Our case study school leaders, teachers, and district-based leaders acknowledge that sustaining many of the routines and practices from the TN assistance period is key to continuous improvement even if the improvement strategies have shifted. For example, in the case of Prairie Heights, the school shifted instructional strategies to focus on cultivating discourse-based practices in the classrooms. Although our observations of classrooms found that the quality of discourse-based practices varied across teachers, the professional learning sessions including a one-on-one debrief session between a newer teacher and school leader focused on this area as a growth opportunity for teachers. In the debrief session specifically, strategies for engaging in extended discourse were discussed with the teacher and identified as part of a PDSA cycle to test out and learn from. These types of approaches, such as the PDSA cycles that include observation and mentoring provide a promising direction for sustaining the continued improvement process at these schools.

As described in this case study, the TN does not operate as a prescribed program, but rather represents a framework that demands a dedicated commitment for each school to implement organized structures and approaches that operationalize the four domains in a way that best serves their unique needs. For all three schools, these defined structures and approaches provide coherence in the instructional infrastructure implemented since these ultimately support the instructional vision set at each school. Further, this coherent infrastructure extends to the district and state in their designated roles as partners to support the instructional vision set



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at each school site. Consistent with outcomes shared more broadly by the literature (e.g., Bryk, 2010; Cohen, 2011; Hopkins & Spillane, 2015), the establishment of strong and coherent instructional infrastructure at these sites played a critical role for these schools to improve: academic outcomes, teacher and school leader retentions, and the collaborative culture established between all staff.

## Considerations and Recommendations

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Based on our interviews with the two CDE directors of the school transformation unit, we learned that the unit aspires to deepen the professional learning opportunities provided to TN schools particularly due to the challenges to learning imposed by the ongoing health pandemic. According to one director, putting a “stake in the ground” to deepen literacy and math instruction is critical for the TN, including meeting the needs of emergent bilinguals. The other director corroborated the perspective of her colleague about the need to strengthen teachers’ general pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge at TN schools and to involve content experts in the ongoing turnaround work. In light of these future plans to strengthen the instructional practices and content knowledge for educators at TN schools, we highlight a few areas for consideration, not just for the TN program, but also for our case study schools and non-TN schools to consider in their continuous improvement journey. We identified these four areas, noting that the classrooms we observed at the two former TN schools offered few opportunities for these important classroom practices. These practices are supported by a robust research base for advancing student equity.

### 1. Designing authentic learning and assessment experiences

Based on our classroom observations, review of lesson plans and the activities planned during the instructional team meetings, many of the tasks and activities used had real-world references embedded but did not activate an immersive problem-solving experience within an authentic context. For example, the following represents the type of word problem encountered in many of the math classes observed:

*Customers at the gym pay a membership fee to join and then a few for each class they attend. Here is a graph that represents the situation. Explain what the slope represents in this situation. Write a complete sentence.*

Although this word problem is set within a real-world context, the task’s reference to understanding the relationship between gym membership fees and number of classes attended may not active personal or relevant connections for these middle school students. Additionally, this example does not provide a real-world problem that encourages students to consider and generate solutions for solving using acquired knowledge and skills learned. Darling-Hammond et al., (2013) note that assessments that encourage students to demonstrate knowledge and skills through authentic tasks meets high-quality assessment criteria. More specifically, they note that tasks designed with authentic connections allow students to identify the solutions needed to solve a problem, “develop and apply their own solution strategy, use appropriate tools, and explain their conclusions” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2013, p.8). Further, when authenticity and the problem solving aspects of the task is connected to larger societal questions, this can also students to enter a space where they begin to think of themselves as active agents

with the potential to help solve larger societal challenges and issues. As part of the continuous improvement journey, the two former TN schools and the network may want to consider how to embed some opportunities for students to engage in authentic tasks or assessments. Considering that designing and implementing this type of work is not easy, this could be tried out by a few teachers as part of the short-cycle learning enacted in the PLC. For the network, this may entail providing models of authentic assessments and tasks for TN schools to try out as they develop approaches to strengthen student engagement and interest in learning.

## 2. Establishing peer feedback/assessment structures

In many of the classrooms observed, activities enacted were largely teacher directed and students looked to the teacher for validation in their responses. A considerable research base points to the benefits of enacting peer feedback and assessment since these opportunities can build distributed leadership in the classroom, where students become acknowledged as builders and contributors of knowledge (Cowie & Khoo, 2018). In addition to building the confidence of students to become contributors of knowledge, peer feedback can also directly benefit both the student assessor and the assessed student since these opportunities can help students clarify and internalize success criteria used (Lu and Law, 2012; van Popta et al., 2017). Researchers note the importance of clearly designing and modeling these structures so that over time, students feel comfortable engaging in these structures. These former TN schools and the network may want to consider providing teachers with resources to help them design, model and test out peer feedback/assessment as part of the regular coaching and professional learning cycle enacted.

## 3. Providing opportunities for student self-assessment

Self-assessment provides another opportunity for students to foster important meta-cognitive skills to evaluate where their learning is currently situated and to consider what they need in order to move toward achieving particular learning objectives (Andrade et al., 2010). During our week-long observations at both former TN schools, self-assessment did not occur in the classroom activities observed. We recognize that self-assessment takes time to enact well as part of regular classroom routines; however, we would encourage these schools and the network to build in this practice as another way for allowing students to develop a sense of autonomy and self-efficacy for their own learning (Andrade et al., 2010; Brookhart et al., 2004; McDonald & Boud, 2003). Most importantly, the reflective process involved in self-assessment can help students reorganize knowledge as well as deepen disciplinary understandings of content learned (Yan & Brown, 2017). This strategy along with peer feedback/assessment provide different pathways for students to learn materials more deeply, while allowing teachers to move classrooms toward more equitable and student-centered practices.

## 4. Scripting with caution

This final recommendation is framed as a word of caution about using scripted approaches - particularly with novice teachers - participating in the TN. At Centennial, interviewed teachers noted their appreciation for scripting and practicing scripts as part of the coaching/PDSA cycles since these teachers noted that acquiring more facility with these instructional moves can “make you a better teacher.” Although, this approach can be helpful, both novice and experienced teachers should also feel comfortable moving “off script” when needed to address unanticipated student responses and to adjust instructional moves outside of the script. This

would require deepening a teacher's general pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge so that teachers can adjust pacing as well as draw on a range of formative assessment strategies to check for student understanding. We put forward this recommendation as a caution for school leaders to ensure that their novice teachers use the scripts as guides rather than as a crutch for both pacing and instructing students.

Ensuring that teachers can feel empowered to pivot and go off script is particularly critical for areas such as science where scripting would be difficult to enact within the context of phenomena-based experiences that require students to engage in sense-making activities as expected by the Next Generation Science Standards (Lotan, et al., 2019). More importantly, this will also ensure that scripting practices do not potentially undermine needed flexibility to adjust instruction to address unanticipated student responses or ignore needed changes in pacing to accommodate the needs of different learners (Ede, 2006; Lotan et al., 2019).

As CDE staff works on strengthening instructional transformations at TN schools, the above recommendations could potentially be used to inform key strategies deployed to deepen teacher pedagogical content knowledge in literacy, math, and other content areas.

## Considerations

In addition to the instructionally focused recommendations for our case study sites and for future TN professional development planned by CDE, we identify two considerations for CDE to take up based on our case study findings.

1. Using the TN partnership approach as a model for other initiatives aimed at improving student performance at other low performing schools (e.g., for schools on directed board action).

A key takeaway emphasized in the introduction and findings in this report is the idea of establishing trusting relationships and partnerships as a basis for motivating change at low performing schools. This model moves away from traditionally deployed punitive models that take top-down reform approaches to forcing change at these schools. Within the context of these case study schools as well as in other case studies of turnaround efforts, when done well, the partnership model appears to build intrinsic motivation for change and empowers at each site. Meyers (2020) and others (e.g., Galindo et al., 2016; Schueler, 2018) point to examples of how state-district-school partnership models to enacting turnaround reforms at case study sites have helped to empower these low performing schools and subsequently improve both student outcomes and school climate. In contrast, there is little evidence that the top-down SIG models have fostered the type of relationship and trust between actors across levels (i.e. schools, districts and state) to help sustain the reforms enacted at low performing schools over time. Considering that other pathways for low performing schools, such as board directed action, are likely to be perceived as punitive and top-down, CDE staff may want to consider piloting the network approaches with a handful of chronically low performing schools that have typically faced top-down choices for enacting reforms. This pilot work can be used to learn whether this combined partnership and ground-up approach can support transformative changes at those sites.

2. Providing mentoring resources and support for principals, particularly for those located in remote rural areas of the state or who cannot directly benefit from participating in the TN.

The case of Dos Rios provides a compelling rationale for considering what mentoring relationships and resources can be provided to schools that may not have access to the type of support provided in the TN or lack a robust network of support due to limited support provided in some remote/rural locations. Although Dos Rios was not eligible for the TN, because this school was embedded in a district that had established a strong instructional infrastructure around the four domains, this school was given the opportunity to access the tools and training provided to TN schools. Further, the school leader received mentoring from both district and state partners and described this mentoring support as essential for him as a leader to build up the confidence and capacity to effectively enact needed reforms.

Although the instructional infrastructure appears to be robust in sites such as Greeley that are committed to deploying resources and partnership support work for their low performing schools and other schools requesting assistance, this is likely not the case for other districts across the state. That is, other school districts may lack sufficient staff or resources to provide the type of mentoring partnership work that a district such as Greeley can provide to principals seeking those supports. Even if it may not be feasible for CDE to provide the same type of capacity building services they provide for TN schools to additional sites, CDE staff may want to consider how to provide open-source modules or tools. For example, CDE could design a training module for schools to use the PM tool for improvement planning purposes and make this an open-source module for any school leader. In addition to providing the field with broader access to network tools, CDE may also want to gauge interest from school leaders across the state to investigate the possibility of establishing a mentoring network that could pair a principal with strong mentors based in other locales. Similar to the mentoring work provided to principals by the TN, the mentoring work in this broader network could also focus on building the instructional leadership capacity of principals to either implement or sustain an equity-centered vision for teaching and learning.



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# Appendix A:

## Details about Major Improvement Strategies

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### Centennial

2016-17

- **Quality Tier I Instruction:** Identify and implement high quality instructional practices using research-based models that accelerate language development, increase student engagement, and content achievement and growth for all students in reading.
- **Engagement:** Increase student engagement through intentional instructional strategies.
- **Professional Learning Communities / Data Teams:** Implement a robust data analysis process in math that allows teachers to use common assessments to plan and deliver instruction.

2017-18

- **Routines and Procedures:** Ensure a positive student culture through the implementation of routines and procedures, regular feedback from administrators to teachers, teacher visits to Bright Spot schools, and Title I Interventionists as co-teachers in classrooms.
- **Rigorous Instruction:** Ensure instruction is on grade level and appropriate to student needs through standards-based learning and planning, identification of students for intervention needs by MTSS, DDI process (match student work to rigorous exemplars), weekly feedback from administrators to teachers, and Title I Interventionists as co-teachers in classrooms.
- **Engagement:** Ensure all students are participating at a high level in the classroom as monitored through weekly attendance and student engagement techniques from RELAY. Provide engagement support through an after-school program, parent engagement meetings and wraparound services, and Title I Interventionists.

2018-19

- **Routines and Procedures:** Ensure a positive student culture by refining routines (arrival/breakfast, hallway transitions, in-class procedures, and exit from class), implementing new routings (classroom entry and “do now” routine) and regular feedback from administrators to teachers.
- **Rigorous Instruction:** Same as 2017-18, plus train teachers to use Monitor Aggressively data to “Stop the Show” and provide immediate reteach opportunities to ensure students are mastering standards.
- **Engagement:** Same as 2017-18, plus maximize the after-school program to meet student needs by using one hour for academics/intervention (coordinated with the day supports) and one hour of STEM related/enrichment activities.

## Prairie Heights

2016-17

- **Culture and Climate:** Sustain and refine the positive climate and culture that has been established within the school community through the implementation of Well Managed Schools and the culture of accountability (all staff is responsible for the learning of all students).
- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:** Empower students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers through the use of Costa's House to guide instruction and curriculum development.
- **Professional Learning Communities / Data Teams:** Ensure active staff engagement in content-specific professional learning communities. Establish weekly meetings to collaborate and develop strategies to guide instructional practices centered around critical thinking and problem solving. Incorporate student data and work samples.

2017-18

- **Culture and Climate:** Improve culture by creating and implementing systems at the school level (morning meetings, breakfast/lunch, dress code policy, hallway transitions, arrival/dismissal procedures); classroom level (entering and exiting, transition between activities, classroom environment), and teacher level (Teach Like A Champion techniques, positive framing, strong voice, tracking, etc.).
- **Summit Learning Platform:** Implement Summit Personalized Learning program. Fully implement each of the three pillars: Mentoring, Personalized Learning Time (PLT), and Project Time (PT).
- **Professional Learning Communities / Data Teams:** Implement Professional Learning Communities in each grade for: English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Use a specific Weekly Data Team protocol to facilitate the instructional conversations, which will be grounded in student work.

2018-19

- **Culture and Climate:** Refine culture by implementing new systems both in the classroom and schoolwide that maximize instructional time, engage students, and provide a sense of belonging and community for all students.
- **Summit Learning Platform:** Continue implementation of Summit Learning with an instructional focus on academic discourse, writing, and cognitive skills development.
- **Professional Learning Communities / Data Teams:** Provide time for weekly data team meetings around content and student data with associated cognitive skills from Summit. After first instruction, use data to analyze student data to identify the gap for reteaching.

## Dos Rios

2018-19

- **Quality Tier I Instruction:** Use quality first instruction based on data, including International Baccalaureate (IB) and Primary Years Programme (PYP) practices.
- **Culture and Climate:** Refine and sustain the positive culture and climate that has been established within the school community. Create and communicate a school culture vision, including non-negotiables for attendance, behavior, and communication.
- **Academic Language:** Support student acquisition and use of academic language. Through the teaching learning cycle, implement high-yield pedagogical practices to support academic discourse.

2019-20

- **Quality Tier I Instruction:** Continue to use quality first instruction through a data-informed approach, including IB and PYP practices.
- **Culture and Climate:** Refine and sustain a positive climate and culture within the school community that develops agentic learners. Focus on examining inherent biases, developing equitable practices, leveraging family and community partnerships, and maintaining high expectations for all students.
- **Academic Language:** Support student acquisition and use of expressive academic language, focusing on speaking and writing. Through the teaching and learning cycle, implement high-leverage practices with scaffolds and differentiation to support academic discourse and writing.

2020-21

- **Quality Tier I Instruction:** Same as 2019-20.
- **Culture and Climate:** Same as 2019-20.
- **Academic Language:** Same as 2019-20, but also incorporate Universal Design Learning.



## Appendix B: Example of codes and descriptions from codebook for Culture and Shift domain

Code	Description
Culture and Shift	
Supporting Students' Learning Experiences (Includes Social Emotional/Behavioral)	The school implements a series of supports to support students' learning experiences. For example, hallways and classrooms display student work that reflect the rigorous learning environment, lessons allow for high levels of student thinking, the school has clear routines and procedures for the school, teachers integrate social-emotional and behavioral supports into the classroom, the school provides a handbook to students and families on expectations, behavior, discipline, and supports, the school recognizes and celebrates students' academic performance, the discipline policy ensures that consequences and supports appropriately match student behaviors, and the school has a process in place to ensure that behaviors that break trust are followed up on and appropriate restoration takes place.
Equity	The school has systemic practices in place that provide staff and students the opportunity to talk about differences, biases, and question inequitable, systemic practices. Differences and diversity are encouraged and celebrated and the school is free from discriminatory practices. The school ensures equitable access to spaces where decision making takes place. School staff are committed to challenging the status quo by challenging values, systems, and mindsets to allow for a more equitable environment. The school makes visible commitments to meeting the needs of all students and engages in practices that support diverse backgrounds and learners.
Community/Family Engagement	The school includes parents, guardians, and community members in cultivating a culture of high expectations for students' learning. School staff regularly engage in meaningful communication with all families and about students' academic and social progress. The school environment is welcoming to all families and community members, and the school invites family and community participation in school activities that are related to school performance goals.

## Appendix C: Selected Documents Connected to the Four Domains

Appendix Location	Name of School	Name of Document	Description of Document	Leadership	Development	Transformation	Culture Shift
C.1	Prairie Heights	Excerpt of Cognitive Skills Rubric	Provides evidence of common expectations set across all staff through this common analytic rubric used across all classrooms. This tool plays an important role in PD provided for novice teachers.		x	x	
C.2	Prairie Heights	Observation tool-monitor progress	This tool reflects the protocol used to guide the coaching cycles including the one feedback cycle we observed for one teacher. We saw how many aspects of this template was implemented in the feedback cycle to highlight goals, where the teacher could improve, and establishing clear next steps for the next observation and feedback cycle	x	x	x	x
C.3	Centennial	Organizational chart	Highlights all staff positions in the school and provides a hierarchy of leadership structure	x			
C.4	Prairie Heights	PHMS SDL Planning template	Provides key guidance for teachers to engage in a root cause analysis to better support student learning and then to set goals to evaluate progress made by students.			x	
C.5	Centennial	Tiered Behavior Interventions	Provides a summary of strategies used in tiered interventions that focus on enhancing behavioral/ social-emotional and academic learning.			x	x
C.6	Centennial	Mission, Vision and Creed	Guiding mission and vision statement affirming commitment to deep investments in capacity building and fostering a learner-centered culture	x	x	x	x

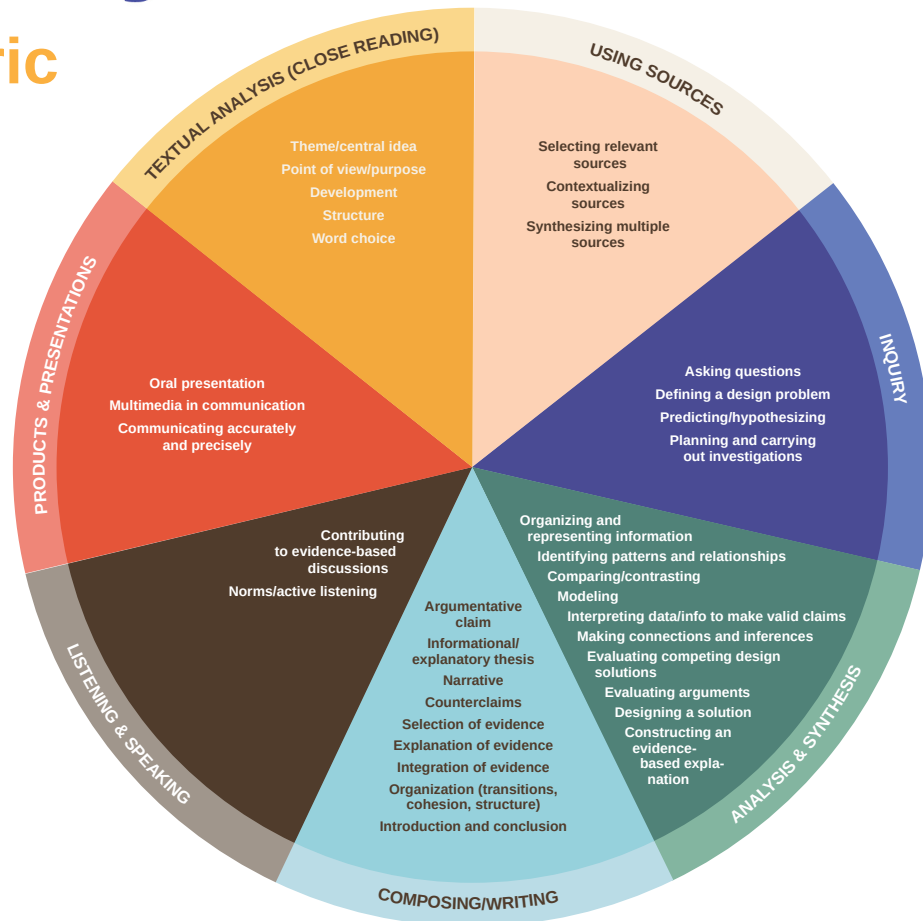
## Exhibit C.1



### Cognitive Skills Rubric

The Summit Learning Cognitive Skills Rubric is an assessment and instruction tool that outlines the continuum of skills that are necessary for college and career readiness. Cognitive Skills are interdisciplinary skills that require higher-order thinking and application, such as Making Connections and Inferences and Evaluating Arguments. The rubric includes 36 skills and 8 score levels applicable to students in grades 3 through 12.

Through Summit Learning, students practice and develop Cognitive Skills in every subject and in every grade level. The use of a common analytic rubric for assessment of project-based learning allows for targeted, standards-aligned feedback to students and supports the development of key skills over time.



# Exhibit C.1

## Summit Learning Cognitive Skills Rubric

DOMAIN: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS (CLOSE READING)					DIMENSION: THEME/CENTRAL IDEA			
High-Level Description: Determining theme(s)/central idea(s) using details.								
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No evidence of identifying a theme/central idea in a text.	Identifies a theme/central idea in a text and provides few key details.	Identifies a theme/central idea in a text and <b>uses</b> key details to <b>explain the theme/central idea</b> .	Identifies a theme/central idea in a text using key details,  AND <b>Elaborates on how key details support the central idea.</b>  OR <b>Uses key details to describe how characters/speakers view events/topics.</b>	Identifies a theme/central idea in a text and <b>provides brief explanation of how specific details support development of the theme/central idea</b> .	Identifies a <b>major</b> theme/central idea in a text and provides an <b>accurate</b> explanation of how specific details support the development of the theme/central idea.  OR <b>Provides some explanation of how the theme/central idea interacts with supporting ideas or other elements in the text (e.g., setting, plot, character).</b>	Identifies <b>multiple</b> themes/central ideas in a text, when relevant, and provides an accurate <b>analysis of their development and interaction with each other and with supporting ideas or other elements in the text (e.g., setting, plot, character)</b> .	Identifies multiple themes/central ideas in a text, when relevant, and provides a <b>thorough, accurate analysis of their development and interaction with each other and with supporting ideas or other elements in the text (e.g., setting, plot, character)</b> .  <b>When relevant, interprets theme/central idea through a critical lens or framework.</b>	Identifies multiple themes/central ideas in a text, when relevant, and provides a <b>sophisticated analysis</b> of their development and interaction with each other and with supporting ideas or other elements in the text, <b>including an evaluation of which theme/central idea is the most significant and why</b> .  <b>When relevant, persuasively interprets theme/central idea through a critical lens or framework.</b>

# Exhibit C.1

DOMAIN: INQUIRY				DIMENSION: DEFINING A DESIGN PROBLEM				
High-Level Description: Defining the criteria and constraints for addressing a real-world problem through engineering design.								
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No evidence of defining a design problem.	Begins to define a simple design problem with incomplete description of criteria or constraints.	<b>Definition of</b> a simple design problem is <b>mostly complete</b> .  Representation of criteria for success and constraints is <b>general</b> .	Definition of a simple design problem is <b>complete</b> .  <b>Includes several</b> criteria and <b>practical</b> constraints ( <b>e.g., materials, time, or cost</b> ).	Definition of <b>the problem</b> or design statement is complete.  <b>Identifies relevant</b> criteria and constraints.	Definition of the problem or design statement is complete <b>and includes rationale</b> .  Addresses <b>multiple</b> criteria and constraints <b>relevant to the problem</b> .	Definition of the problem or design statement is complete and includes rationale.  Addresses multiple criteria and constraints, <b>including one or more social, technical or scientific</b> constraints relevant to the problem.	Definition of the problem or design statement is <b>thorough</b> and includes rationale.  <b>Fully</b> addresses criteria and <b>important</b> social, technical and/or scientific constraints relevant to the problem.	Definition of the problem or design statement is thorough, <b>precise</b> , and includes rationale.  Fully addresses <b>all</b> criteria and the <b>complex interactions among</b> important social, technical, and scientific factors relevant to the problem.  <b>When relevant, addresses unknowns and raises relevant questions to more clearly define the problem.</b>

# Exhibit C.1

DOMAIN: ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS					DIMENSION: MODELING			
High-Level Description: Developing, using, and revising models (i.e., diagrams, physical replicas, mathematical representations, analogies, and computer simulations) to describe and predict phenomena or represent and test design solutions.								
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
No evidence of developing, using, or revising models to describe a phenomenon or design solution.	Develops/ uses a simple, partial model to describe a phenomenon or design solution.  Model includes significant errors.	Develops/ uses a simple, partial model <b>based on observations or prior knowledge</b> to describe a phenomenon or design solution.  Model includes <b>minor</b> errors.	Develops/ uses a <b>mostly complete</b> model based on evidence to describe a phenomenon. <b>Also identifies limitation(s) of the model.</b>  OR <b>Develops a partially complete diagram or simple physical prototype of proposed object, tool, or process.</b>	Develops/ uses a <b>complete</b> model based on evidence to <b>predict</b> and/ or describe phenomenon. Also identifies limitation(s) of the model.  OR Develops a <b>complete</b> diagram or simple physical prototype of proposed object, tool, or process <b>that is specific enough to show and potentially test cause-and-effect relationships.</b>	Develops/uses a complete model based on evidence to predict and/ or describe phenomenon/ <b>unobservable mechanisms, including specific relationships between variables.</b> Also identifies limitation(s) of the model.  OR Develops a complete diagram or simple physical prototype of proposed object, tool, or process that is specific enough to <b>generate some data to predict and explain phenomena or design solutions. Also evaluates limitation(s) of the model of proposed object or tool.</b>	Develops/uses a complete model based on evidence to predict and/ or describe phenomenon/ unobservable mechanisms, including specific relationships between variables. Also identifies <b>merits</b> and limitation(s) of the model.  OR Develops a complete diagram or simple physical prototype of proposed object, tool, or process that is specific enough to generate <b>all</b> data needed to predict and explain phenomena or design solutions. Also evaluates limitation(s) of the model of proposed object or tool.	Develops/uses a complete model based on evidence to predict and/ or describe phenomenon, including specific relationships <b>within and between systems.</b> Also <b>evaluates</b> merits and limitation(s) of the model <b>in order to evaluate validity of the model.</b>  OR Develops a complete <b>model (including computational representations)</b> of a proposed object, tool, or process that is specific enough to generate all data needed to predict and explain phenomena or design solutions. Also evaluates <b>merits and</b> limitation(s) of the model of proposed object or tool <b>in order to evaluate validity of model.</b>	Develops/uses a complete model based on evidence to predict and/ or describe phenomenon, including specific relationships within and between systems. Also evaluates merits and limitation(s) of the model <b>and compares to other models in order to select best model.</b>  OR Develops a complete model (including computational representations) of a proposed object, tool, or process that is specific enough to generate all data needed to predict and explain phenomena or design solutions. Also evaluates merits and limitation(s) of the model of proposed object or tool <b>and compares to other models in order to select best model.</b>



## Exhibit C.2



**Directions:** Use this observation tool to record evidence during the Observation to Monitor Progress to Goal phase of the Summit Learning Coaching Cycle. As you observe instruction, do the following:

- Record notes related to the effective or ineffective implementation of the Summit Learning Instructional Strategies at the focus of the teacher's coaching cycle.
- Record notes related to the teacher's progress toward his/her goal.
- Determine if the teacher achieves his/her goal.
  - If the teacher **does** achieve the goal, shift to recording observations on [this document](#) in order to prepare to establish a new focus for the teacher's next coaching cycle.
  - If the teacher **does not** achieve the goal, continue using this document to plan the next steps in this teacher's coaching cycle.

<a href="#">8/23/21</a>		
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### Observation to Monitor Progress Tool

Date	8/23/21
Coach	
Context (date, grade, class, etc.)	

<b>Teacher's Goal</b> (the goal set during the Kickoff Meeting)
<b>Teacher's Instructional Strategy</b> (the SLIS the teacher committed to implementing during the Kickoff Meeting)
<b>Technique from Teach Action Checklist</b> (the observable teacher actions within the teacher's SLIS)

## Exhibit C.2

Evidence of EFFECTIVE implementation of SLIS		Evidence of INEFFECTIVE implementation of SLIS		
<b>Highest-Leverage “Gap”</b> <i>(What else does the teacher need to do OR do differently in order to implement the strategy effectively?)</i>				
<b>Confirm Correct Path</b> <i>(Do I still believe the teacher will reach his/her goal by implementing this SLIS effectively?)</i>				
<p>*Before planning next steps, the coach confirms that he/she still believes that the teacher will reach the goal by implementing this SLIS effectively. It is <b>rare</b> that the coach decides at this point, based on observation, that the teacher needs to implement a <i>different</i> SLIS in order to meet the goal.</p> <p>If “<b>yes</b>” → Plan next steps of this coaching cycle            If “<b>no</b>” → Prepare for a new Kickoff Meeting in order to select a new SLIS with the teacher to accomplish the goal.</p>				
<b>Plan Next Steps</b> <i>(What are the next coaching actions to take to support the teacher to close this gap and in order to achieve his/her goal?)</i>				
<b>Observation-Feedback</b> <i>Hypothesis: Seeing video of instruction with the coach's guidance will allow the teacher to realize the absence or ineffective implementation of a key part of the instructional strategy. Practicing that key part with the coach's guidance will close the teacher's gap.</i>	<b>Planning</b> <i>Hypothesis: Planning/scripting what the teacher will do and say into daily lesson plans will close teacher's gap.</i>	<b>Modeling</b> <i>Hypothesis: Seeing effective implementation of the SLIS by the coach or another teacher and practicing to replicate that teacher's effective actions will close the teacher's gap.</i>	<b>Analyzing Data</b> <i>Hypothesis: Collaboratively reviewing student work with the coach's guidance will allow the teacher to realize the absence of ineffective implementation of a key part of the instructional strategy. Practicing that key part with the coach's guidance will close the teacher's gap.</i>	<b>Practicing</b> <i>Hypothesis: Rehearsal of a written/scripted plan will close teacher's gap.</i>
My coaching next steps for this teacher:				

### Additional Resources:

- [Master List of Summit Learning Instructional Strategies](#)
- [Summit Learning Coaching Cycle Overview](#)
- [Observation to Monitor Progress to Goal Protocol](#)

# Exhibit C.2

## Observation to Monitor Progress Tool

Teacher	
Coach	
Context (date, grade, class, etc.)	

Teacher's Goal  
(the goal set during the Kickoff Meeting)

\*Paste teacher's goal here\*

Teacher's Instructional Strategy  
(the SLIS the teacher committed to implementing during the Kickoff Meeting)

\*Paste teacher's SLIS here\*

Technique from Teach Action Checklist  
(the observable teacher actions within the teacher's SLIS)

\*Paste the technique(s) from the checklist for teacher's SLIS here\*

## Exhibit C.2

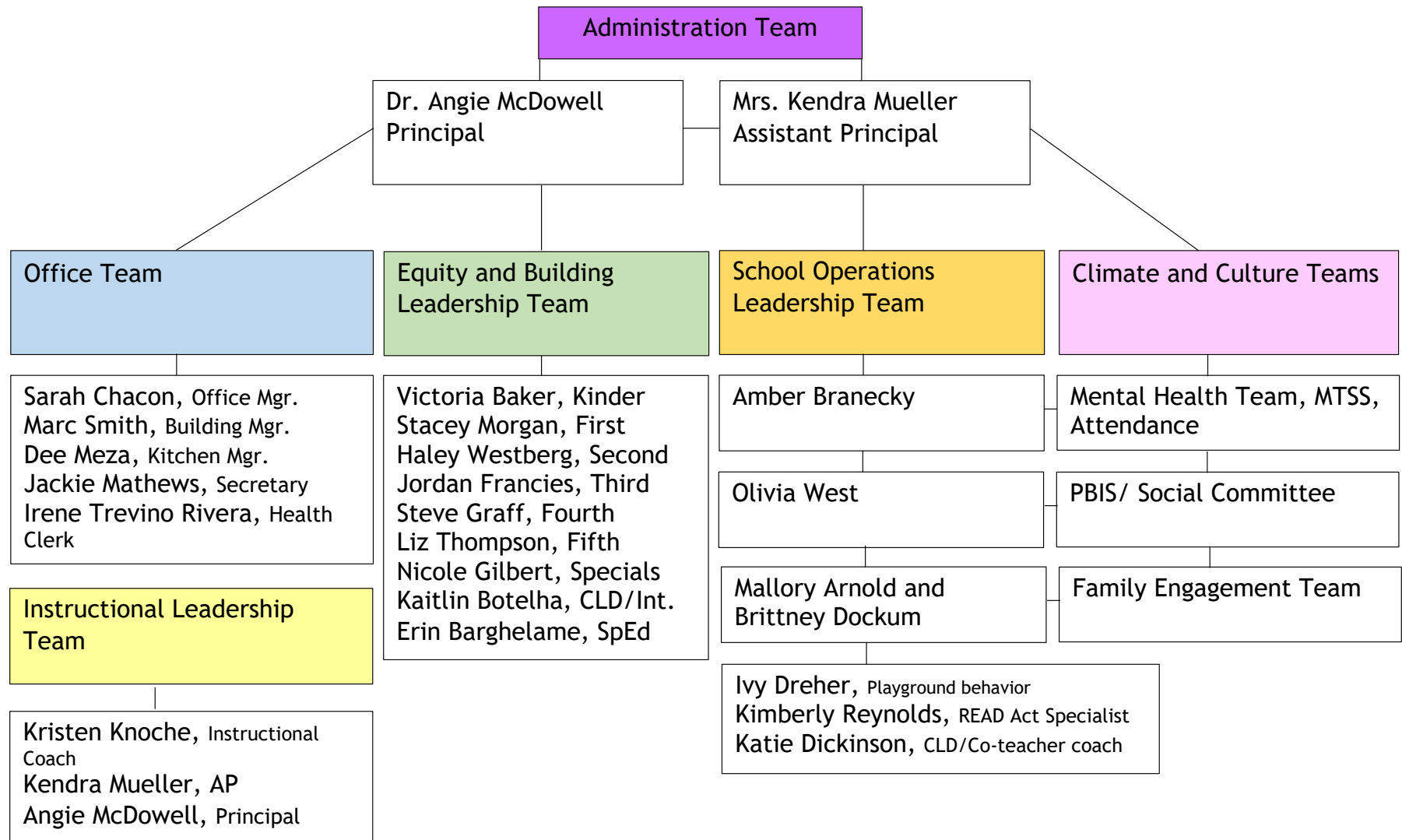
Evidence of EFFECTIVE implementation of SLIS		Evidence of INEFFECTIVE implementation of SLIS		
<b>Highest-Leverage “Gap”</b> <i>(What else does the teacher need to do OR do differently in order to implement the strategy effectively?)</i>				
<b>Confirm Correct Path</b> <i>(Do I still believe the teacher will reach his/her goal by implementing this SLIS effectively?)</i>				
<p>*Before planning next steps, the coach confirms that he/she still believes that the teacher will reach the goal by implementing this SLIS effectively. It is <b>rare</b> that the coach decides at this point, based on observation, that the teacher needs to implement a <i>different</i> SLIS in order to meet the goal.</p> <p>If “<b>yes</b>” → Plan next steps of this coaching cycle            If “<b>no</b>” → Prepare for a new Kickoff Meeting in order to select a new SLIS with the teacher to accomplish the goal.</p>				
<b>Plan Next Steps</b> <i>(What are the next coaching actions to take to support the teacher to close this gap and in order to achieve his/her goal?)</i>				
<b>Observation-Feedback</b> <i>Hypothesis: Seeing video of instruction with the coach's guidance will allow the teacher to realize the absence or ineffective implementation of a key part of the instructional strategy. Practicing that key part with the coach's guidance will close the teacher's gap.</i>	<b>Planning</b> <i>Hypothesis: Planning/scripting what the teacher will do and say into daily lesson plans will close teacher's gap.</i>	<b>Modeling</b> <i>Hypothesis: Seeing effective implementation of the SLIS by the coach or another teacher and practicing to replicate that teacher's effective actions will close the teacher's gap.</i>	<b>Analyzing Data</b> <i>Hypothesis: Collaboratively reviewing student work with the coach's guidance will allow the teacher to realize the absence of ineffective implementation of a key part of the instructional strategy. Practicing that key part with the coach's guidance will close the teacher's gap.</i>	<b>Practicing</b> <i>Hypothesis: Rehearsal of a written/scripted plan will close teacher's gap.</i>
My coaching next steps for this teacher:				

### Additional Resources:

- [Master List of Summit Learning Instructional Strategies](#)
- [Summit Learning Coaching Cycle Overview](#)
- [Observation to Monitor Progress to Goal Protocol](#)

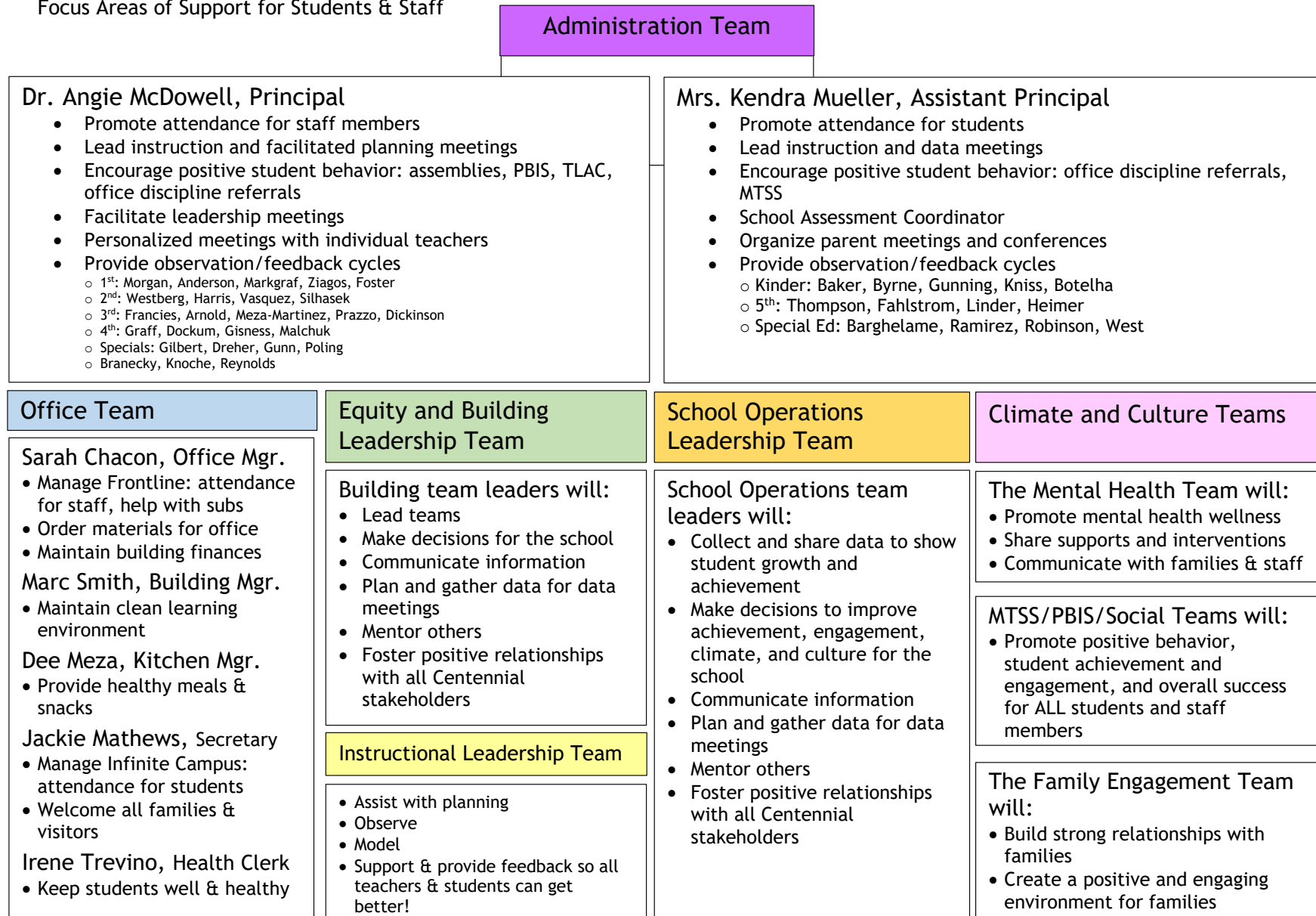
# Exhibit C.3

## 2021-22 Organizational Chart Centennial Elementary



# Exhibit C.3

## 2021-22 Organizational Chart Focus Areas of Support for Students & Staff





# Exhibit C.4



## Resource

### SDL Preparation

### Root Cause Analysis

1. Consider each student and the root cause(s) for off-track. Choose 2-3 root causes maximum for each student.

Student(s)/Root Cause	Cognitive Skill GAP	Concepts GAP	Content Knowledge GAP	Habits GAP	Learning Strategy GAP	Foundational Skill GAP	Environmental Factor
Student Name							
Total							

2. Determine the top 3 Root Causes across all students. Choose at least 1 intervention to commit to in order to address the top root causes

#### Types of Interventions

Core interventions

when a data trend affects  $\geq 80\%$  of students

Targeted interventions

when a data trend affects  $\geq 30\%$  of students.

Intensive, Individual interventions

when a handful of individuals are very far behind

Students	Priority Root Cause	Intervention(s)	Core, Targeted, Individual?	Completion Date

## Exhibit C.4

Reflect (2 min)		
<b>Brief purpose</b>	Students reflect on if they were able to meet their goals and what processes led to that result.	
<b>Planning Considerations</b>	What goal setting, planning, and/or reflection practices will you use?	
	Question prompts to promote reflection	
	How will you support students struggling using the year page to prioritize?	

Set a Goal with a Plan (3 min)		
<b>Brief purpose</b>	To meet their larger goal of the week, students set smaller goals for the self-direction block and a plan (strategy) to achieve those goals.	
<b>Planning Considerations</b>	What aspect of a SMART goal will you emphasize in your model?	
	What learning strategy will be modeled today?	

Learn (20-40 Min)		
<b>Brief purpose</b>	Students spend the majority of time learning to achieve their goal. Once a week students complete their 1:1 check in with their mentor. When appropriate, students attend workshops to learn critical academic skills. When ready students will take content assessments.	
<b>Planning Considerations</b>	What workshop(s) are needed to address academic skills gaps?	
	How will you monitor development of academic skill(s)?	

Show (5-15 min)		
<b>Brief purpose</b>	Students show how they have met goals (demonstration of learning)	
<b>Planning Considerations</b>	What additional levels of support will be provided to support struggling students?	

Reflect (2 min)		
<b>Brief purpose</b>	At the end of the block, students check off goals and celebrate progress.	
<b>Planning Considerations</b>	What process(s) need to be celebrated to continue to promote progress?	

## Exhibit C.4

Reflect (2 min)		
<b>Brief purpose</b>	Students reflect on if they were able to meet their goals and what processes led to that result.	
<b>Planning Considerations</b>	What goal setting, planning, and/or reflection practices will you use?	
	Question prompts to promote reflection	
	How will you support students struggling using the year page to prioritize?	

Set a Goal with a Plan (3 min)		
<b>Brief purpose</b>	To meet their larger goal of the week, students set smaller goals for the self-direction block and a plan (strategy) to achieve those goals.	
<b>Planning Considerations</b>	What aspect of a SMART goal will you emphasize in your model?	
	What learning strategy will be modeled today?	

Learn (20-40 Min)		
<b>Brief purpose</b>	Students spend the majority of time learning to achieve their goal. Once a week students complete their 1:1 check in with their mentor. When appropriate, students attend workshops to learn critical academic skills. When ready students will take content assessments.	
<b>Planning Considerations</b>	What workshop(s) are needed to address academic skills gaps?	
	How will you monitor development of academic skill(s)?	

Show (5-15 min)		
<b>Brief purpose</b>	Students show how they have met goals (demonstration of learning)	
<b>Planning Considerations</b>	What additional levels of support will be provided to support struggling students?	

Reflect (2 min)		
<b>Brief purpose</b>	At the end of the block, students check off goals and celebrate progress.	
<b>Planning Considerations</b>	What process(s) need to be celebrated to continue to promote progress?	

## Exhibit C.5

### Centennial Elementary School - Tiered Academic Interventions

	General Academic	Math	Reading & Writing
Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring student thinking</li> <li>Grade Level instruction with Scaffolding</li> <li>Exit Tickets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TI grouping and online platforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TI grouping and online platforms</li> </ul>
Tier 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reteaching in small groups</li> <li>One-on-one practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small groups for math (in the classroom) - based on exit ticket data</li> <li>Guided discourse to address misconceptions</li> <li>Small groups for TI (pull-out)</li> <li>Extramath.org for fact fluency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SIPPS</li> <li>Explicit Phonics</li> <li>Targeted folders in reading with what each student is struggling with</li> </ul>
Tier 3			

## Exhibit C.5

### Centennial Elementary School - Tiered Behavior Interventions

	Behavior
Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Allow breaks or movement within the classroom (e.g. frequent breaks, movement breaks in the back of the classroom, snack break, send student on an errand, etc.)</li> <li>● Provide positive praise (e.g. acknowledge positive behavior, praise student frequently, praise students who are on task, cooperative and well behaved, praise good attitudes and involvement when they occur, etc.)</li> <li>● Provide rewards (e.g. classwide or individual reward systems or incentives, call parent or send positive note home)</li> <li>● Have clear, consistent and predictable consequences (e.g. call parent or send note home, color change, complete unfinished work during recess or unstructured time, apology notes/reflections, etc.)</li> <li>● Consider environmental arrangements (move student to a new location in the classroom, proximity to students, student arrangement, transitions)</li> <li>● Avoid power struggles</li> <li>● Posted classroom expectations/routines/systems</li> </ul>
Tier 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide alternate seating (e.g. individual work space, sitting in desk rather than the floor, standing while working, wiggle seat or seating disk, etc.)</li> <li>● Provide alternative modes of completing assignments (e.g. break down or chunk assignments, break down directions, reduce assignments)</li> <li>● Assign a peer buddy or partner to help support student</li> <li>● Frequent home contact for positive behavior/behavior concerns</li> <li>● Close proximity to the student</li> <li>● Teach emotional regulation techniques (e.g. requesting a break, drinking water, counting to 10, deep breaths, drawing a picture, etc.)</li> <li>● Use a visual schedule or desk timer for expected work time/transitions/breaks/etc.</li> <li>● Provide student with choices (e.g. do you want to do your math sheet with a marker or a crayon?)</li> <li>● Reduce distractions (e.g. turn desk around, provide container for student belongings, etc.)</li> <li>● Provide sensory tools if appropriate (e.g. wiggle seat, velcro under desk, stress ball or fidget, etc.)</li> <li>● Provide structured, consistent breaks</li> <li>● Check-in/check-out with the student</li> <li>● Individualized token economy system/reinforcement system</li> <li>● Social stories for problem behaviors</li> <li>● Directly teach social/relationship/conflict resolution skills</li> <li>● Priming or precorrection (reminding students of expectations, routines or procedures)</li> <li>● Begin data collection systems for behavioral concerns</li> </ul>

## Exhibit C.5

Tier 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complete daily behavior tracking form/communicate daily behavior with parents</li><li>• Take ABC data (antecedent, behavior, consequence)</li><li>• Create behavior contract/self monitoring system with student</li><li>• Provide structured activities during unstructured time</li></ul>
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# Exhibit C.6



Centennial Elementary School  
1400 37<sup>th</sup> Street  
Evans, Colorado 80620  
(970) 348-1100

Angie McDowell, Principal  
Kendra Mueller, Assistant Principal

## Centennial Mission Statement

Our mission is to create a collaborative academic community in order to empower all learners to meet high expectations and to believe in their own ability to achieve success.

## Centennial Vision Statement

Our vision is to create a dynamic school designed to close the achievement gap and prepare scholars to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college or be career ready. We believe that success in the classroom is closely linked to hiring and retaining great teachers and leaders. We will invest heavily in the training of our educators and building systems that help leaders to lead, teachers to teach, and students to learn. We work hard to ensure that students are engaged and challenged with rigorous work because every minute matters. We will know we are successful when our scholars are fully engaged and working to their fullest potential.

The school will achieve its vision by offering the following:

- Student-centered, data-driven instruction
- Differentiated and personalized instruction
- High expectations of achievement for all students
- Positive, caring, and nurturing relationships
- A safe, respectful, and positive learning environment
- Opportunities for student creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving
- Engaging learning experiences
- Reduced risk of academic failure and promoted risk taking
- Productive partnerships between parents, students, and community
- The belief that all students can succeed

## Centennial Creed

We believe that:

Students have a right to learn and teachers have a right to teach.

As a Centennial Eagle I will:

- Attend school every day.
- Respect myself, others, and property.
- Be responsible for my actions.
- Keep myself and others safe.
- Be the best that I can be.

Together we will cooperate to learn and to teach. We are here to learn.

*One school, one vision. Together, we are on a mission!*

## Appendix D: Code Weights by Time Period for TN Schools and Dos Rios

Code	Past	TN	Current	Change from Past to TN	Change from TN to Current
Improvement plan process	1	2.5	3	1.5	0.5
Leadership qualities	1.5	2.33	2.81	0.83	0.48
Leadership structure	1	2.44	2.58	1.44	0.14
Evaluation for improvement	1	2.38	2.77	1.38	0.39
Professional learning	1.33	2.41	2.67	1.08	0.26
Retention/recruitment	1	2.5	2.2	1.5	-0.3
Assessment and data use	1	2.5	2.81	1.5	0.31
Supporting student knowledge and skill acquisition	1	2.27	2.68	1.27	0.41
Theory of learning	1	1.5	2.33	0.5	0.83
Collaborative and supportive staff culture	2	2.14	2.82	0.14	0.68
Equity	1.29	2	2.4	0.71	0.4
Supporting learning experiences	1.14	2.14	2.65	1	0.51
Vertical coherence	1	2.67	2.4	1.67	-0.27
COVID disruption	0	0	2.67	0	2.67

**Table C1. Code weights by time period for TN schools**

Code	TN	Current	Change from TN to Current
Improvement plan process	2.82	3	0.18
Leadership qualities	3	2.9	-0.1
Leadership structure	2.6	3	0.4
Evaluation for improvement	3	3	0
Professional learning	3	1.78	-1.22
Retention/recruitment	3	3	0
Assessment and data use	2.89	2.6	-0.29
Supporting student knowledge and skill acquisition	3	3	0
Theory of learning	3	3	0
Collaborative and supportive staff culture	2.56	2.83	0.27
Equity	3	2.86	-0.14
Supporting learning experiences	3	3	0
Vertical coherence	3	2.27	-0.73
COVID disruption	0	3	3

**Table C2. Code weights by time period for Dos Rio**