

Academy name: <<REDACTED>>

Principal: <<REDACTED>>

Quality School Review Report

Lead Reviewer – Class Measures: Tim Boyce

Team Reviewer 1 – Class Measures: Christine Brandt

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Review dates: May 9/10

Context of the school:

General Information:

Skills and the ability to be a scholar is very important than the ability to remember facts. Therefore, all coaching and instruction centers on college Readiness standards (SAT & ACT) through the lens of subject area content (i.e. US history teacher is teaching reading through history)

Within this structure teachers have the ability to innovate, design curriculum, develop best practices, and emerge as experts through interim assessment data.

What this means for our scholars is that teachers are passionate about and invested in the curriculum, which leads to scholar motivation and engagement because the material are interesting. (i.e. Freshman Lit teacher taught lesson on top rap album, to kill a butterfly.)

Contextual factors that support learning:

Strength of discipline code that decreases behavior issues in the classroom

Instructional coaching that is growth oriented instead of evaluative (coaching)

Every teacher serves in 3 PLC 's (advisory, grade level, content)

Collins Program

Advisory Program

Weekly Newsletter

Bi-weekly progress report

Report Card Pick-up

Contextual aspects that limit student learning:

Building space

Transportation

High number of scholars living below poverty (88%)

General School Information:

	Figures for the previous year	Figures for this year
Grades taught in the school:	9-12	9-12
The number of students enrolled:	390	399
The number of general education students:	339	336
The percentage of special education students:	13.1%	15.8%
The percentage of English language learner students:	0	0
The number of students that have been excluded	-	1
The number of students that have been suspended	-	81
The number of students that are Title 1 eligible:	343	350
The latest attendance percentage:	87.1%	90.6%
The percentages of students from different ethnic groups.	Black: 99.5% Latino: 0.025% Caucasian: 0.025%	Black: 99.5% Latino: 0.5%

Student Performance Data

Section	2014	2015
Composite	16.0	16.3
English	15.2	16.2
Mathematics	15.8	15.7
Reading	15.9	16.1
Science Reasoning	16.6	16.8

Class	Section	September 2014 ACT	June 2015 ACT	Growth
2016	Composite	13.8	16.3	2.5
	English	12.1	16.2	4.1
	Reading	14.2	16.1	1.9
	Math	14.5	15.7	1.2
	Science	13.6	16.8	3.2
Class	Section	September 2014 Plan	June 2015 Plan	Growth
2017	Composite	13.9	14.4	0.5
	English	15.0	14.5	-0.5
	Reading	12.4	12.9	0.5
	Math	13.3	14.9	1.6
	Science	14.4	14.7	0.3
Class	Section	September 2014 Explore	June 2015 Explore	Growth
2018	Composite	11.5	13.8	2.3
	English	11.7	15.8	4.1
	Reading	11.1	13.2	2.1
	Math	10.6	13.1	2.5
	Science	12.1	12.7	0.6

Class	% Enrolled at 4-Year Universities (September 2015)	% Enrolled at 2-Yr Colleges (September 2015)	Total % Enrolled in College/University
2015	67.4%	15.2%	82.6%
Class	% Accepted to 2-Year Colleges (as of May 2016)	% Accepted to 4-Year Universities (as of May 2016)	Total % Accepted College/University
2016	64.4%	33.3%	97.8%

Table 4: Staff Survey Survey Data

TOP 5 SCORES			
Indicator	Ave Q2	Ave Q1	Difference
The mission/purpose of our school makes me feel my job is important.	4.14	4.14	0.00
I have a friend(s) at work.	4.14	4.24	-0.10
My co-workers are committed to doing quality work.	4.05	3.90	0.15
My principal seems to care about me as a person.	4.05	3.79	0.26
During this school year I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.	4.05	3.93	0.12
TOP 5 GROWTH			
Indicator	Ave Q2	Ave Q1	Difference
I am provided with the HR support necessary to excel in my work.	3.86	3.28	0.59
My principal, overall, does an excellent job.	3.91	3.45	0.46
There is a collegial atmosphere among the faculty at our school.	3.95	3.52	0.43
In the last two weeks, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	3.68	3.28	0.40
My campus has a transparent decision making process that appropriately involves our input.	3.24	2.86	0.38
BOTTOM 5 SCORES			
Indicator	Ave Q2	Ave Q1	Difference
My operations leader is responsive and helpful.	2.68	N/A	N/A
My principal ensures staff receive useful, specific feedback on performance.	3.14	3.21	-0.07
I am provided with the IT support necessary to excel in my work.	3.23	3.14	0.09
My instructional leader meets with me at least 2-3 times per month to provide feedback on my instruction, plan for the upcoming week, or do a general check-in.	3.24	3.74	-0.50
My instructional leader helps me to use data to drive instruction.	3.24	3.18	0.06
My campus has a transparent decision making process that appropriately involves our input.	3.24	2.86	0.38
BOTTOM 5 GROWTH			
Indicator	Ave Q2	Ave Q1	Difference
My instructional leader meets with me at least 2-3 times per month to provide feedback on my instruction, plan for the upcoming week, or do a general check-in.	3.24	3.74	-0.50
I have a friend(s) at work.	4.14	4.24	-0.10
In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	3.91	4.00	-0.09
My principal ensures staff receive useful, specific feedback on performance.	3.14	3.21	-0.07
My instructional leader provides helpful planning and curriculum development.	3.53	3.58	-0.05

Table 5: Parent Survey Data

Item	Term	Average	% Agree or Strongly Agree
I am pleased with the education my child is receiving this year.	Q3	4.35	85.9%
	Q2	4.32	86.0%
Item	Term	Average	% Agree or Strongly Agree
My child feels safe at school.	Q3	4.46	93.6%
	Q2	4.39	90.8%
	Q1	4.68	96.1%
Item	Term	Average	% Agree or Strongly Agree
When calling the school, I am able to reach the person I need.	Q3	3.84	61.1%
	Q2	4.08	77.8%
	Q1	4.12	77.9%
Item	Term	Average	% Agree or Strongly Agree
My child's teachers are available and responsive to my needs.	Q3	4.34	87.6%
	Q2	4.28	86.7%
	Q1	4.45	89.2%
Item	Term	Average	% Agree or Strongly Agree
My child likes coming to school.	Q3	4.05	76.1%
	Q2	4.12	75.0%
	Q1	4.38	83.9%

General Grade Descriptors

Grade	Descriptor	Definition
1	Beginning	Major organizational structures and systems are poorly developed or are missing. Significant support and guidance is required since the school is currently not meeting the learning needs of most students. Academic and personal progress is only in the beginning stages and students are not generally achieving grade level expectations in core content areas. Achievement g<<REDACTED>> are large.
2	Developing	Structures and systems are in broadly place but are not being implemented with sufficient consistency. Support and guidance is required in specific are for the school to continue its development and to ensure that it consistently promotes the learning of all students in all content areas. Achievement g<<REDACTED>> are still too wide.
3	Established	Structures and systems are embedded in all major areas and the school requires only minimal support. Almost all students are making good progress in all content areas. Students demonstrate good levels of social maturity and almost all are achieving grade level expectations. Achievement g<<REDACTED>> are closing steadily.
4	Transformational	Structures and systems are highly developed and the school is a center of excellence that is transforming the lives of its students and exemplifies the very best practice. Students take full responsibility for their own learning and demonstrate very high levels of independence and creativity as they produce work that consistently exceeds grade level expectations. Achievement g<<REDACTED>> have been virtually eliminated.

Aspect 1: – The overall quality of learning is *developing with some established features*.

The main strengths of the learning:

- A growing number of students are graduating from school. In 2015 the graduation rate was 95% and the post-secondary enrollment rate was 88%. The school is expecting to at least match those outcomes in 2016.
- Most students are enthusiastic about learning and participate in lessons as active learners. This was exemplified in a Grade 10 ELA class when students were discussing and writing about whether the death penalty should be abolished, or not.
- Most students behave well, resist distractions and maintain concentration productively. They generally respond positively when redirected as, for example, in a math lesson on parallelograms.
- Most students collaborate effectively and relate well in pairs or larger groups. Students worked together very well and concentrated hard, for example, in a Grade 11 algebra class on polynomials.
- Most students solve problems, think critically and thoughtfully question what they are taught. Students in an algebra class helped the understanding of the rest of the class by asking a good clarifying question.
- Most students are developing the personal, social and emotional capabilities required for life, including self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision making.
- Most students demonstrate a growing resilience and a determination to succeed that are building their capacity to successfully graduate from college.

The most significant aspects of the learning recommended as priorities for improvement:

- Although students were observed asking good clarifying questions, the skills of many students are not sufficiently developed when they are required to think critically or solve problems.
- Many students have not developed that skill of using prior knowledge and the knowledge gained elsewhere to solve new problems.
- A small but significant proportion of students are slow in developing the personal, social and emotional capabilities required for life, including self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision making and this is holding back the development of college readiness skills.
- Many students still find it very difficult to manage and organize their learning in a calm way and to complete work of a high quality when working to a tight schedule. Students do not always organize their work well enough and fail to hand in work or deliver letters from school in a timely manner.
- Many students rush into rash decisions and do not consider all the reasonable alternative options before making up their minds.
- Although many students are making average or better progress, the results of state assessments show that most are not achieving the levels expected for their grade level.

Learning improvement strategies would be even better if:

- Students were provided with better and more frequent opportunities to think critically and solve problems. There are many opportunities to challenge students more effectively by introducing more intense problem solving opportunities across all subjects in the curriculum, including math, science and in the STEM class.
- Students were encouraged through pertinent questioning to see the connections between knowledge gained in previous lessons or in other academic disciplines.
- Teachers integrated more opportunities for the teaching of social and emotional competencies into their lessons, requiring them to make decisions, to defend their views and to debate pertinent issues.
- Students were required to take more responsibility and were actively taught strategies that would help them to organize their work more effectively.
- Students were more regularly put in role-play situations where they have to consider all the options before making considered and sometimes irreversible choices.

Aspect 2: – The overall quality of teaching is *developing*.

The main strengths of the teaching:

- Teachers generally establish learning objectives and success criteria at the beginning of the lesson so that all students understand what they are learning and why it is important. This was done particularly well done in an algebra lesson where the lesson began with the question “Does my design make sense”?
- The instructional model being utilized is highly appropriate to the age and prior experience of all of the students in the school and is enabling the students to make steady progress and reduce learning deficits.
- Students are given many good opportunities to engage in academic discourse and to learn from each other when discussing learning tasks and problems in pairs or small groups. This was a particular feature in many of the math lessons observed and helped students to increase their confidence in the subject.
- Students are effectively encouraged to self-assess their work through the regular use of rubrics. As a result, they generally know what they need to do to achieve higher academic standards. There is scope for the further development of the use of exemplars so that students can analyze examples of high quality work.
- Teachers generally establish and consistently implement standards of conduct and effectively handle resistance, conflict and stress. For example, a potentially disruptive student in a geometry lesson was respectfully redirected in a calm and effective way and quickly got on with his work.
- While elements of social and emotional skill development are woven into instruction in other subject areas, this aspect is covered very effectively during advisory classes. These events are generally very effective in keeping students focused and helping them to organize their often rather chaotic lives.
- Most students are slowly developing the skills of determination, resilience and independence that they will need to complete their courses and to graduate from college.
- Teachers are generally adept at using carefully timed and weighted questions to check for understanding. As a result, most know exactly when they need to move on to the next concept or when they need to loop back and re-teach something.
- Some lessons show a good awareness of different learning styles and several math lessons included useful visual models.

The most significant aspects of the teaching recommended as priorities for improvement:

- Teachers do not always reprise the learning objective during lessons to remind students what the focus is and to check whether they are on track to meet the success criteria. There is some good use of exit tickets, but more could be done in this regard.
- Lesson planning is not as strong as it needs to be and as a result planning is often more concerned with what the teacher will do rather than how learning will be facilitated for the students. More work needs to be done to support teachers in planning lessons that are intrinsically engaging and excite all the students.
- In too many lessons there is insufficient use of performance data to plan and deliver instruction that is accurately matched to the learning needs of all students. As result while work is appropriate for those students that are furthest behind, it is often far too easy for the higher achieving students.
- Teachers do not generally provide enough high-quality opportunities for students to become independent learners, critical thinkers, and thoughtful problem solvers. This seriously limits the development of college readiness and indicates that much more work needs to be done to ensure that teachers are making the instructional shifts that are fundamental to CCSS.
- While teachers are generally good at using questioning and discussion techniques to check for understanding there are too few higher order questions that could extend deeper thinking and develop real mastery of the content.

The quality of teaching would be even better if:

- Teachers routinely reminded students of the purpose of the lesson and the success criteria at opportune moments to maintain focus and ensure successful completion within the time available and even better use was made of exit tickets.
- Lesson planning was monitored more effectively by school leaders to ensure that it is data driven, contains all of the required elements and is focused on the facilitation of student learning rather than the actions of teachers. Care must also be taken to ensure that a higher proportion of lessons are engaging and excite all the students.
- Teachers provided students with better and more frequent opportunities for students to take part in activities that encourage independence, critical thinking and the solving of complex problems. While work in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) should be contributing significantly to the improvements in this area, work in this curricular is not currently at the required level.
- Teachers were given targeted PD in developing higher order questions that extend deeper thinking and develop real mastery of the content.

Aspect 3: – The overall quality of leadership and management in the school is *developing*.

The main strengths of the leadership and management:

- As evidenced by the accuracy of the self-assessment form, school leaders have a realistic understanding of most of the main strengths and areas for improvement that exist in the school.
- The school, well supported by the network, has been effective in recruiting, hiring and retaining many of the talented staff that work in the building.
- Good opportunities exist for promotion within the school and the network and recent promotions have seen hard work and potential rewarded by increased responsibility and the promotion to more senior positions. Both the Dean of Students and the Instructional Dean have been promoted internally this year and are already repaying the faith that has been shown in them. A Dean of Culture has just been recruited from within the staff and other promotions are also planned.
- The Instructional Dean is skilled and highly effective. She knows good instruction, is highly analytical, works hard and communicates well with teachers.
- The Dean of Students knows the needs of the students well and provides them with excellent advice. She listens well and is an effective coach for both staff and students.
- The principal makes effective use of all of the supports available the <<REDACTED>> (<<REDACTED>>) network and is particularly appreciative of the advice he receives from the Superintendent and the Chief Academic Officer.
- The school leaders effectively manage the day to day relationship with the charter management organizer to ensure that all students are making steady progress.

The most significant aspects of leadership and management recommended as priorities for improvement:

- Although there is a shared commitment among administration and teachers to the idea of high expectations, the new leadership and management team has yet to discuss and agree the values and beliefs that will eventually underpin the vision for the school.
- The school leadership team (SLT) has not yet confirmed the roles and responsibilities of each of the post holders. The exact roles and responsibilities of the principal remain unclear and the new Dean of Culture is too new to her position to be able to judge the impact of her work.

- Communication between the Dean of Operations and the rest of the SLT is strained and much work will be required to turn these individuals into a coherent and coordinated team that can take the school forward.
- School leaders do not have a fully developed improvement plan to ensure the realization of the values and beliefs and the achievement of long term goals and short-term benchmarks.
- School leaders do not yet effectively collect and analyze data to monitor student and teacher outcomes and take swift action either to celebrate successes or to engage in timely crucial conversations with individuals and teams to address performance challenges.
- There are not currently effective procedures in place to measure the effectiveness of learning and teaching through observations of lessons, analysis of student work, and the review of lesson and unit planning and provide feedback so that student achievement can be further improved.
- Lesson observations are not taking place with sufficient frequency and staff are not receiving sufficient regular feedback to help them to improve their professional practice, there has been minimal progress made with developing systems to analyze student work and the systems and procedures to ensure that the quality of lesson and unit planning meets the required standard have been suspended.

The leadership and management of the school should be improved by:

- The principal and SLT making time during the summer break to share and agree their values and beliefs and identify the main components of the school's vision and mission. Once these core beliefs have been established they must be communicated to the school community so that all stakeholders (staff, students, families and community members) know exactly what they are expected to do to ensure the success of the school moving forward. School leaders should consider inviting someone from outside the school and the network to facilitate these key processes.
- The school leadership team (SLT) ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of each team member are clarified and defined during the summer break so that there are clear of demarcation between each member of the team. The role of the principal must be clearly defined and clarity must be given to the roles of Dean of Culture and Dean of Operations.
- School leaders working together with the school community to develop a detailed school improvement plan to ensure the realization of the values and beliefs and the achievement of long term goals and short-term benchmarks.
- School leaders developing a simple one or two-page action plan that identifies the two main priorities for action and designates who is responsible for doing what and to what timescale. School leaders should consider inviting someone from outside to facilitate these processes.
- School leaders ensuring that there are effective systems and procedures in place to collect and analyze data to monitor student and teacher outcomes and take swift action either to celebrate successes or to engage in timely crucial conversations with individuals and teams to address performance challenges.
- School leaders ensuring that there are effective procedures in place to measure the effectiveness of learning and teaching through the frequent observations of lessons followed by constructive feedback and the development of professional improvement goals. This is particularly important at JRLA which has a preponderance of relatively inexperienced staff.
- School leaders developing a process for regularly reviewing students work as an essential component of grade level and vertical meetings. This will lead to the sharing of best practice and will tease out any inconsistencies in the grading of work and the allocation of demerits.
- School leaders developing a proportionate differentiated process for monitoring the quality of teacher lesson and unit planning and providing constructive feedback.

Aspect 4: – The overall quality of the culture for learning in the school is *developing with established features*.

The main strengths of the culture for learning:

- School leaders have developed a positive culture, focused on learning, where most adults have high expectations of the achievement and behavior of all students and are effective in helping them to achieve consistently high standards.
- School leaders and teachers are generally effective in supporting positive student growth through the development of key social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. This is achieved both through advisory and the integration of these SEL competencies across the curriculum.
- School leaders and teachers model and reinforce clear expectations of appropriate student behaviors through a balance of positive reinforcement, feedback and redirection that is sensitive to individual need and is respectful of their personal dignity.
- School leaders ensure that the school is a safe, clean and orderly learning environment for staff and students. The building, while providing only limited space for staff and students is an attractive and purposeful learning environment with a clear focus on college readiness.
- School leaders and staff have worked together well to develop a can-do culture where every student expects and is expected to succeed and prosper either at college or a technically challenging career.

The most significant aspects of culture for learning recommended as priorities for improvement:

- School leaders have yet to develop a fully effective culture of continuous professional improvement for all staff based on the frequent monitoring of teacher planning and delivery and the analysis of student work.
- Teachers do not yet have sufficiently specific professional performance goals set for them by school leaders.

The culture for learning should be improved by:

- School leaders developing a fully effective culture of continuous professional improvement for all staff based on the frequent monitoring of teacher planning and delivery and the regular analysis of student work. Teachers should all have and know what their specific professional performance goals are.

Aspect 5: – The overall quality of the curriculum in the school is *developing*.

The main strengths of the school curriculum:

- School leaders, network staff and teachers generally provides all students with access to wide range of rigorous and enriching courses and programs including the study of real-world issues and events.
- Teachers use homework and extended-day activities to effectively reinforce and extend classroom learning experiences. Teachers frequently organize “homework hangouts” where students can meet and complete their homework in an environment where on-going support is available from the teacher.
- School leaders and teachers provide students with regular opportunities to complete internships and work experience during the summer vacation. This is effective in preparing them for life after full time education
- School leaders and teachers provide students with a very positive curricular experience that prepares them for the next stage in their education and gives them a good chance of graduating college.

The most significant aspects of school curriculum recommended as priorities for improvement:

- School leaders and teachers still have a lot of work to do to develop a curriculum appropriately aligned to state standards with suitable plans, pacing guides and benchmarks to promote effective learning. Teachers are still required to invest a lot of time developing the curriculum that they need to teach the core skills and concepts.
- While the curriculum is appropriate to the age of the students, it is not always suitably aligned with the prior experience of all the students in the school and is not always fully effective in bridging the gap between the level student learning and the grade level they are in.
- Students are not provided with sufficient high quality opportunities to develop and use technology skills and knowledge across the curriculum. Although regular opportunities are provided to facilitate the discussion and coordination of curriculum planning between educators within and across grade-levels, to ensure alignment and consistency, there is still work that remains to be done before the task is complete.

The quality of the curriculum should be improved by:

- School leaders and teachers allocating a suitable block of time during the summer break to developing a curriculum appropriately aligned to state standards with suitable plans, pacing guides and benchmarks to promote effective learning. This will involve unpacking and gaining a thorough knowledge of the CCSS and in identifying the standards that are most effective in leveraging change.
- School leaders and network staff providing support so that teachers are better able to bridge the gap between the grade level students are functioning at and the grade level they are in.
- School leaders and network staff developing a strategy for gradually increasing and improving the access that students across the school have to technology. This process should begin with those students that have the best technology skills and who will make best use of the new equipment.

Aspect 6: – The overall quality of the relationship that the school has with families and community members is *developing*.

The main strengths of the relationship the school has with families and community members:

- School leaders and board members are very effective in encouraging community members to contribute as partners in raising student achievement. Many organizations contribute time and money to the school.
- School leaders and teachers manage conflict effectively to reach the swift resolution of problems and respond to the concerns of families in a professional and timely manner.

The most significant aspects of relationship that the school has with families and the community recommended as priorities for improvement:

- School leaders and teachers have not yet been effective in engaging with families and persuading them to commit as partners in raising student achievement.
- School leaders and teachers are still designing and developing formal and informal systems of communication to ensure families are provided with information about the academic and personal progress of students, using home languages as appropriate.
- School leaders and teachers are not yet sufficiently adept in engaging parents as partners when dealing with poor performance, discipline, attendance and tardiness, and much more work will be required until both groups are working together as a cohesive and coherent team work with them to ensure success.
- School leaders and teachers are not yet sufficiently effective in celebrating student achievements, school successes and the cultural diversity of the students.

Links with families and community members would be improved if:

- School leaders and teachers made the development of effective links with parents and families a priority for action at the earliest possibility. Attendance is still very low at just over 90 percent and many students are still operating at a level that is at least two years behind grade level.

Aspect 7: – The quality of the way the charter school board demonstrate responsible governance is established.

The main strengths of the governance of the school:

- The board meets monthly and receives regular reports from <<REDACTED>>, the school’s educational service provider. Meeting minutes indicate that <<REDACTED>> regularly provides the board with a school performance dashboard and monthly financial reports. Board members interviewed by the team expressed satisfaction with the information provided to the board by <<REDACTED>>.
- The board has adopted an evaluation rubric for evaluating <<REDACTED>> and has provided <<REDACTED>> with a written evaluation of its performance. The board’s October 2015 evaluation gave <<REDACTED>> higher ratings for implementing the school’s educational program and curriculum, demonstrating progress toward achieving the school’s educational goals and measures, complying with reporting and document submission requirements of the authorizer and the state, working cooperatively with the board attorney and auditor, and managing “in good faith and in the Academy’s best interests.” The evaluation gave <<REDACTED>> lower ratings for working to keep the board informed of hiring and firing decisions, complying with the List of Emergency Contact Situations, obtaining and monitoring parent feedback, and managing donor relations.
- The board is actively engaged in oversight of the school. The board meeting minutes indicate that the board regularly discusses the school’s academic performance and financial condition. The board’s budget subcommittee reviews and approves the budget prepared by school leaders.
- The board is actively engaged in oversight of <<REDACTED>>. In December 2015, according to board minutes, the board adopted a new communication plan with <<REDACTED>> that includes an update matrix, conference calls, and in-person meetings between board officers and <<REDACTED>>.
- In December 2015, the board created board subcommittees intended to improve the board’s oversight of the following five aspects of the school: strategic planning; communication/trust; the voice of the school; fundraising and facilities.
- In April 2016, the board approved an amendment to its management contract with <<REDACTED>> to extend the term and add “clear metrics for performance,” according to board minutes. This amendment is currently being reviewed by the school’s authorizer, Central Michigan University.
- Board meeting minutes indicate that the board has consistently voted to adopt updated board operating policies provided by the National Charter Schools Institute, and the team reviewed hard copies of these policies.

The most significant aspects of school governance recommended as priorities for improvement:

- Although the board is comprised of high-level leaders from the business and nonprofit sectors, none of the current board members is a trained and experienced educator or educational leader.
- The board has not adopted a succession plan for board leadership. Interviews and documents suggest that much of the board’s work, including oversight of <<REDACTED>>, is carried out by the board president. The lack of a succession plan exposes the board and the school to instability in the event that the board president is no longer available to fulfill his current responsibilities.

- Although the board recently established a strategic planning subcommittee, the board has not developed and adopted a strategic plan to guide the school's future academic and financial decisions.

The leadership and management of the board would be even more effective if:

- The board's strategic planning subcommittee initiated the development of a strategic plan that sets forth the board's vision, its short-term and long-term goals, strategies for achieving the goals, the resources required, and a timeline identifying key tasks, milestone dates, and leaders accountable for completing the tasks by the specified dates. The strategic planning process should be inclusive, engaging all school stakeholders in the development of the plan. After approving the strategic plan, the board should disseminate the plan widely and institute a systematic progress monitoring and reporting process.
- The board developed a succession plan for board leadership by assessing the experience and expertise of current board members, identify areas of experience and expertise needed by the board in the near term and longer term, and develop a plan for identifying and recruiting new board members with the necessary skills and expertise, including educational expertise. The succession plan should include a clear transition process for replacing board leaders, including the president, in the event of their departures.

Aspect 8: – The quality of the way the school demonstrates fiscal responsibility is *established*.

The main strengths of the fiscal management of the school:

- The independent auditors' reports on the school's audited financial statements for fiscal years 2014 and 2015 provided unqualified opinions and identified no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies.
- The school's fund balance has increased, according to the most recent independent auditors' report. <<REDACTED>> provides the board with monthly financial reports.
- Board minutes show that the board regularly engages in discussion of the school's finances and audit findings.
- School leaders reported that they are actively engaged in developing the school's budget.
- In April 2016, according to the minutes, the board approved revisions to the existing facility lease with Operation Graduation, the school's landlord that included a 10 percent rent reduction.

The most significant aspects of fiscal management recommended as priorities for improvement:

- The team learned from interviews with school leaders that the Dean of Operations has repeatedly failed to fulfill her duties, such as ordering textbooks and paper, paying bills, and maintaining records. Her procurement and bill paying responsibilities have now been assigned to a newly hired financial analyst, and the <<REDACTED>> director of operations is providing direct oversight of her performance.
- The most recent management letter from the school's independent auditors reported that eight of 32 cash disbursements selected for testing lacked purchase orders as required by the school's purchasing policy.
- According to school leaders the school's current facility is an impediment to student learning. School and <<REDACTED>> leaders reported the following disadvantages: insufficient classrooms to ensure small class sizes; insufficient space to seat students at desks rather than tables in some classrooms; lack of science labs; lack of showers, insufficient infrastructure to support technology upgrades.
- Although the board plans to increase the school's grade span and enrollment, the revisions to the facility lease recently approved by the board included a three-year lease extension.
- The board has not developed and adopted a mid- to long-term facility plan to address the facility deficiencies affecting student learning and to accommodate the board's school expansion plans.

The financial management by the board would be even more effective if:

- The board ensured that the school's fiscal operations are effectively staffed and administered by qualified, reliable staff.
- The board developed and adopted a mid-to long-term facility plan to address the current facility deficiencies that are impediments to student learning and to accommodate the planned increases in the school's grade span and enrollment.
- Although Operation Graduation, the school's landlord, was established by the school's founders and is currently managed by the board president's assistant, the board should consider all available facility options based solely on the interests of the school and its students.

Overall Summary

<<REDACTED>> is at a pivotal point in its development with a lot of factors working in its favor as it moves forward under a new and relatively untried leadership and management team. It is important that everyone works together as a cohesive and coherent team and it will be essential that the SLT uses the summer break effectively to debate and agree the values and beliefs that will underpin the vision and mission for the school as it moves forward. Once this direction has been established, it must be shared and communicated with all sectors of the school community so that everyone knows exactly what they need to do to help the cause. Having established direction the next important step will be the development of a medium to long-term improvement plan and the creation of a short to medium-term action plan that identifies priorities and details how and when they will be implemented and who is responsible for their completion.

The school building, while somewhat limiting, is in a good state of repair and provides bright, clean and suitable accommodation for staff and students. There are some very talented members of the leadership team with the Dean of Instruction and Dean of Students already providing valuable support and encouragement to the staff and students. Teachers are generally enthusiastic, hard-working and talented and it is clear that the network has an effective system for attracting, hiring and recruiting new talent. Even better news is that retention rates are high and that staff are generally both dedicated and committed to the cause.

A growing number of students are graduating from school. In 2015 the graduation rate was 95% and the post-secondary enrollment rate was 88%. The school is expecting to at least match those outcomes in 2016. The quality of learning and teaching are both developing well and there are aspects of both that are best described as established. The leadership and management of the school is an interesting mix of established features and those that are very much at the beginning stage and key members of the team will need considerable additional support moving forward. The culture of the school is very strong with an established "can-do" attitude and a healthy concentration on success and college completion. The curriculum needs much further development and there are weaknesses in several key areas, including technology. Both governance and financial management are established but there is a lot of work to be done developing a secure working partnership with families so that attendance can be improved and standards can continue to rise.

The Charter Management Company is proving generally effective in supporting the board and there is an effective working relationship between the two organizations that augers well for the future.

Overall Strengths:

A growing number of students from the school are graduating from school and enrolling at college. In 2015 the graduation rate was 95 percent with 88 percent enrolling in various colleges.

As evidenced by the self-assessment, school leaders have a suitably accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement that exist in the school.

The Dean of Instruction is a skilled and effective. She knows good instruction, is highly analytical and communicates well to teachers what they need to do to improve their professional practice.

The Dean of Students knows the students well and provides them with strategies that help them to organize their lives. She is a good listener and is very willing to learn.

The instructional staff members are generally hard-working and dedicated and are committed to the students. They provide a wide range of after school activities and are developing good levels of skill.

Students are generally well behaved and are appreciative of the 'family' atmosphere that exists in the school. They collaborate well and are determined to succeed.

There is an effective instructional model based on high expectations which, through advisory, includes a good emphasis on social and emotional learning as well as college readiness.

There have been many good hires and dedicated staff have good opportunities for advancement.

School leaders and staff have high expectations of students and a "can-do" approach but also demonstrate empathy and understanding of the circumstances of students that face challenges.

The school is responsive to student views and opinions.

The school receives generous support from community partners who donate both time and money.

Structures and systems to support governance and the financial management of the school are well established.

Recommendations for Improvement:

While students are making steady growth as measured by state assessments many students are still below grade level.

The SLT is very new and several of its members have yet to develop their roles or to fully understand their responsibilities. It will be essential for this leadership team to take time during the summer break to discuss and agree the values and beliefs that will underpin the school vision and mission. Once these key elements have been agreed, they must be communicated to the entire school community and implemented with complete fidelity.

The school leaders must then develop, as a priority, an improvement plan to ensure the realization of these values and beliefs and the achievement of long term goals and short-term benchmarks. This improvement plan will be built out from a brief action plan which identifies a small number of priorities that the school needs to work on straight away. This action plan should include success criteria, the names of the people responsible for each action, the time-frame for completion and interim benchmarks.

School leaders and staff must work with students and families to find ways of incentivizing and encouraging much better attendance as the school will not achieve the success it desires on ninety percent attendance.

School leaders must work with grade level teams to use performance data to tier and strategically target and concentrate attention on those students whose improvement will have the greatest impact on the school's overall performance.

The school must, as a matter of urgency, improve and implement consistently its procedures for measuring the effectiveness of learning and teaching through observations of lessons, analysis of student work, and the review of lesson and unit planning and provide feedback so the professional practice of teachers is further improved and student achievement is raised.

Links with parents require considerable further development and it will be essential for school leaders and teachers to develop effective working partnerships with family members and their students.

Students are not developing the technology skills that they will require to be successful at college and the school should work with the network to develop a phased plan to improve the quality of this support.

School leaders and teachers need to give greater emphasis to the celebration of success and consider introducing additional systems for rewarding high attendance, good behavior, academic growth and high achievement.

Given the relative inexperience of the faculty, it is essential that the maximum amount of time available is dedicated to professional development. More care is required to ensure that Friday afternoons are planned very carefully so that there is a better balance between PD and the time taken by administrative meetings and PLCs.

The school's purchasing systems are not run effectively and this matter should be resolved quickly.