

## 2015 Leadership Assessment/Diagnostic Review Addendum

The purpose of this addendum is to provide feedback on progress made in addressing identified deficiencies in the 2011-2012 Leadership Assessment Report for the Fleming County School District.

**Overview:** Fleming County Schools has made tremendous growth since March 2014. Beginning in September 2014, the district established the vision of becoming a “District of Distinction,” utilizing Advanc-ED Standards for Quality. Along with becoming a "District of Distinction", our focus is on obtaining SACS accreditation for the district. The district has used the diagnostic review process as practice for earning accreditation and aligning processes and systems. We have extensively utilized Advanc-ED's Standards for Quality Concept Map to align the district processes and focus in order to experience growth at the district, school and classroom levels.

**Deficiency 1: There is a lack of clarity in the understanding of roles and responsibilities among central office staff.**

District	Team	
		This deficiency has been addressed in an exemplary manner.
X (2015)		This deficiency has been addressed satisfactorily.
X (2014)		This deficiency has been partially addressed.
	X (2014)	There is little or no evidence of improvement with regard to this deficiency.

**District Evidence:**

- Linkage Charts
- Point of Contact Document
- Organizational Chart
- Job Descriptions
- Priority Actions Calendar
- Senior Leadership Team Member Calendars
- Communication Plan
- Leadership Framework
- District Leadership Team Meetings
- Senior District Leadership Team Meetings
- Leadership Connection
- FCS Board Briefs
- District Website

**District Comments:**

Clarity and understanding of central office certified and classified employee roles has been established in the past year due to the collective efforts by the District Leadership Team

(certified and classified). Job duties have been clarified and reassigned, as needed, to provide greater efficiency and also to correct loose and inappropriate practices that existed in the past. In addition, all central office employees meet as a District Team each Monday morning. These meetings serve to build teamwork and communication among the team members and to promote shared leadership at the district level. Both certified and classified employees work together as equal partners to create a cohesive, efficient team.

The Senior District Leadership Team (superintendent, instructional supervisor, finance director, personnel director, special education director, and chief information officer/technology coordinator) meet at least once weekly to focus on progress toward the district's strategic goals and the 30-60-90 day plan, as well as monitoring and planning for continuous improvement in student achievement. These meetings frequently take place outside of the district office and in the schools to facilitate meeting times and district level walkthroughs.

School Leadership Team meetings (which include principals and Senior Leadership Team) take place twice monthly. These meetings are used to stress the district's mission and vision as well as organize and plan the work of continuous improvement. Principals report on school progress on PDSAs, work together to define the work to be done in the district to develop and implement systems (such as PLCs). The team also analyzes data, updates the district data wall, and plans for professional learning and implementation of identified instructional strategies.

A new district communication plan has been developed by a committee to improve communications between the central office, school administrators, district staff, parents, and community. The purpose of the communication plan is to create a system that promotes two-way communication and transparency.

A complete set of district procedures has been a high priority. While this work began under the former superintendent, work was incomplete and often confusing due to lack of clarity and communication. This process was started again from the beginning and progress is being made by using a teamwork approach. The district Senior Leadership Team has met with Kim Barker from KSBA to clarify the work that needs to be done and the team has accepted the responsibility, collectively, to complete the process. The documents are being organized and housed with a district administrative assistant who meets with the team and serves as a liaison between the district and KSBA.

The district's recent difficulties with financial issues has been remedied with the hiring of a full time finance director and very close monitoring of spending practices. In fact, a number of ineffective practices have been corrected and additional accountability has been established. Bookkeeping responsibilities have been reassigned to provide for greater efficiency and to create internal controls within the system. The district has also found additional means to save money so that more funds can be channeled toward the classroom level. These efforts include the use of a fleet card for fuel purchases, and the implementation of labor analysis to ensure the appropriate number of staff are employed for various job duties (such as custodians and cooks).

The district has created or re-vamped a number of district level committees to increase two-way communication between the district and stakeholders. These committees include the Superintendent's advisory council, district personnel committee (recruitment, recognition, and retention), communication committee, health/wellness/crisis committee, effective grading practices committee, certified evaluation committee, finance, technology, and operations (FTO) committee, and curriculum design team (instructional leadership team and grant implementation team).

**Next Steps Identified by the District:**

- Continue work with finances to further ensure district fiscal stability.
- Continue work as a district team to ensure accountability toward achieving the district's mission/vision.
- Ensure implementation and fidelity of the district communication plan.
- Plan for next school year staffing as a team in order to address over/under staffing discrepancies.
- Continue to strengthen two-way communication with stakeholders.

**1. Since the last review, there continues to be a lack of clarity of expectations, roles and responsibilities among central office staff (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) All job descriptions have been reviewed and Board approved. These descriptions are posted online along with the revised District Organizational Chart. A Classified Evaluation Plan has been approved by the Board and communicated to staff members. Weekly District Team meetings focus on our improvement initiatives, with each staff member providing updates on their programs and projects. A district Point of Contact list has been created and posted online. Duties among central office support staff have been evaluated and redistributed as a result of changes in staffing levels and the need to improve internal controls for district financial processes. All central office staff members are currently in the process of developing linkage charts to further self-evaluate their roles in the organization. Upon completion of these linkage charts, senior leadership will evaluate to determine if there are gaps or overlaps in roles and responsibilities. All central office staff contributed to a district Priority Actions Calendar which designates important events and due dates. This calendar will be utilized at the weekly District Team meetings to ensure adherence to all program and project requirements.

**2. There appears to be inequity of job responsibilities among central office staff (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) The district has clarified each individual's role as it pertains to establishing a highly effective organization. All district team members meet every Monday to identify upcoming processes during the week and to seek assistance if needed. The district staff has focused on teamwork to accomplish district processes. District staff works together to accomplish tasks. The District Team meetings each week assist in keeping everyone up to date on calendars and upcoming projects/deadlines, etc. Furthermore, the meetings assist the district in ensuring that the focus of our work centers around teaching and learning. The district delivers training such as Linkage Charts, Standards for Quality and Strategic Leadership

through weekly True North activities, all of which ensures that staff members will be more efficient and effective in their individual roles.

**3. There is a lack of transparent communication to all district and staff (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Improving communication is a major focus during the 2014-2015 school year. Weekly Leadership Connection messages are distributed to principals who share with their staff. Board Briefs are distributed monthly to all staff in order to summarize actions taken by the Board. Monthly District newsletters and Transportation newsletters are disseminated to staff to communicate important information. These are available on the district website along with agendas and meeting minutes from leadership meetings, Board meetings, staff meetings, and district committee meetings. Additionally, the district utilizes Twitter and the Bright Arrow notification system to keep stakeholders informed via phone, email, and text. A focus for the 2015-2016 school year will be to improve the information available and increase the frequency of updates to the school and teacher webpages. The implementation of district committees and department meetings assist the district in communicating with all stakeholders (two-way communication). The district holds monthly meetings with students, principals, parents, custodians, student services, bus drivers, other staff and teachers. The district is active in soliciting input from all stakeholders in our commitment to shared and transparent leadership.

**4. Interviews of staff indicate that they are not held accountable for their area of responsibility and that little or no monitoring is occurring (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) The weekly District Team meeting are a form of monitoring and accountability. Each week district staff identify what they will be working on, as well as, upcoming projects along with updates on projects identified at an earlier meeting. Furthermore, the district staff provides reports to the school board each month. Our goal is to keep all stakeholders informed of what we are doing as a district, but we also feel the need to hold ourselves accountable. The Senior Leadership Team meets weekly to evaluate the growth of the district and identify areas of strength as well as areas for improvement. The superintendent performs monthly self-evaluations on his individual job performance and those are shared with the Board, Superintendent's Council and then posted online for all stakeholders to see. Additionally, the district conducts monthly evaluations of our progress toward the Standards for Quality. These evaluations are then reviewed on a bi-weekly basis by the district's Quality Assurance Team. The QAT operates outside of the district's influence so that true accuracy of the bi-weekly assessment of the district's work is authentic.

**5. From interviews and documentation, there appears to be lack of congruity among staff responsibilities. (March 2014 - Comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) The district has focused on removing the silos that once existed. In doing, the district has ensured that everyone understands their role in becoming a "District of Distinction." A district systems diagram has been developed to assist in the understanding of how each employee and department work together toward achieving our vision. We view teamwork as critical. The district prides itself on the staff's commitment to the organization and there is a concerted effort by the district to keep the focus on teaching and learning.

<b>Team Evidence:</b>
<b>Team Comments:</b>

**Deficiency 2: The school district and community do not have a shared understanding of the characteristics of high performing schools.**

District	Team	
		This deficiency has been addressed in an exemplary manner.
X (2015)		This deficiency has been addressed satisfactorily.
X (2014)		This deficiency has been partially addressed.
	X (2014)	There is little or no evidence of improvement with regard to this deficiency.

<p><b>District Evidence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent/Community Engagement Plan</li> <li>• PREP (Parents Reinforcing Educational Priorities)</li> <li>• Parent Night PowerPoint Presentation</li> <li>• Data Nights</li> <li>• Stakeholder Committees</li> <li>• Work with City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Extension Office</li> <li>• Work-Ready Community</li> <li>• Teaching &amp; Learning Updates at board meetings</li> <li>• Twitter</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Facebook</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> <li>• Bright Arrow information system</li> <li>• Local newspapers</li> <li>• Board Briefs</li> <li>• Superintendent's report at board meetings</li> </ul>
<p><b>District Comments:</b></p> <p>During the 2014-2015 school year, the district has worked diligently to communicate the vision of becoming a "District of Distinction." One key piece to this vision is community engagement and stakeholder input. Throughout the school year we have created committees that are comprised of both district and school staff, along with stakeholders from the community, including parents/guardians and students. In our view, a "District of Distinction" enjoys shared leadership among stakeholders and provides avenues for stakeholder input.</p>

At monthly board meetings the district provides a district level progress report and spotlights an individual school's teaching and learning report. The purpose is to keep the board informed about what the district is doing in regards to teaching and learning; but more importantly, provides the board an understanding of what a "District of Distinction" should look like.

Furthermore, the district website is updated regularly to keep the public informed about the district happenings. One component that we are most proud of is the district commitment to regularly updating the district's website and posting artifacts that are aligned to Advanc-ED's Standards for Quality and to the vision of becoming a "District of Distinction." Not only do we utilize the district's website to share information, we also utilize Twitter and the telephone to spread common themes about becoming a "District of Distinction". For instance, we often send tweets about "students of distinction," "teachers of distinction," and even "bowlers of distinction." We convey to the stakeholders that everything we do centers around our vision of becoming a "District of Distinction." In fact, all correspondence includes our vision statement of becoming a "District of Distinction."

#### **Next Steps Identified by the District:**

- During the 2015-2016 school year the district must focus on connecting the components of the system.
- Next year it will be critical for the district to continue the implementation and begin monitoring and evaluating our systems for success.

**1. The district does not understand how to connect with the community for support in addressing issues standing in the way of progress (i.e. budget cuts, paying for athletics, paying student fees). (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) The district is utilizing several means to connect with the school community. Each month, the district holds several committee meetings as a way to address issues and to share decision making. The district views the different committees as a way to convey the district's message, but more importantly, allow stakeholders to provide input regarding the district's vision and other district processes.

**2. The district developed and scheduled 4 days of professional development focused on Math and Literacy Design collaborative models. (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) In August 2014, the district sponsored two days of professional development focused on the needs established from staff surveys and teacher evaluations. Day One consisted of the use of CIITS/EDS to reflect on professional practice, develop professional growth goals, and student growth goals and assessments to support student growth goals. Day Two offered a variety of sessions teachers could choose to address their own professional learning needs (instructional technology, formative assessment strategies, standards-based grading, use of rubrics to assess student work, close reading, Literacy Design Collaborative, Next Generation Science Standards, Social Studies C3 Framework, etc.). Day Three on November 4 was a school-focus day, while Day Four is a flexible day - teachers may receive hours from other sources such as workshops and conferences or online sources. In addition to

the four days of required professional development, teachers are provided professional learning through professional learning communities, faculty meetings, and other content/grade level meetings. Plans for professional learning for 2015-16 are in progress and will focus on major district needs such as assessment development, use of exemplars, analysis of student work, and data utilization -- things that are not just events but job-embedded and on-going.

**3. A district self-analysis team included members from all stakeholder groups who received training on the standards and participated in the Self-Assessment process. (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) completed the initial self-assessment process and each month's subsequent self-assessment. The SLT utilizes stakeholder feedback and observations to determine the monthly self-rating. Once the SLT conducts the monthly self-evaluations and monthly focus evaluations, they are then posted online to keep stakeholders informed of what is occurring in the district. The Senior Leadership Team has utilized the district's Quality Assurance Team to validate the monthly self-evaluation against the Standards for Quality. The Quality Assurance Team will continue to operate even after the diagnostic review in March 2015 as a compliance committee and will also be used as the district seeks to become SACS Accredited.

**4. In December 2013, the superintendent formed a parent-student advisory committee to focus on the mission, vision and beliefs, but these committees have yet to meet. (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Weekly District Team meetings include True North activities designed to focus on our vision, mission, and core beliefs. Additional input from district stakeholders (parents, community, students, and staff) via a Transition Survey, Strategic Plan Survey, district committee meetings, and district staff meetings have resulted in the development of a shared district vision and core beliefs. These are posted on the district website, and all district communications include our vision of becoming a "District of Distinction". Moments of Distinction are shared via the district website and Twitter account.

In addition to communication, there are regular monthly superintendent council meetings and superintendent student advisory meetings. Minutes from both are posted online.

**Team Evidence:**

**Team Comments:**

**Deficiency 3: The high school is not focused on high academic achievement for all students.**

District	Team	
		This deficiency has been addressed in an exemplary manner.
X (2014/2015)		This deficiency has been addressed satisfactorily.
	X (2014)	This deficiency has been partially addressed.
		There is little or no evidence of improvement with regard to this deficiency.

**District Evidence:**

- CSIP
- 30-60-90 Plans
- Quarterly Reports
- Engage NY/StemScopes Curriculum
- Benchmark Assessments
- PLC Framework
- Program Review
- Name & Claim
- PDSAs
- Walkthroughs/ELEOT Data
- School Report Card
- Professional Learning/Release Time
- Superintendent’s Council/Student Council
- Principal’s Monitoring Document
- Superintendent’s Self-Evaluation
- Staff Training
- Admin/Leadership Team Meetings

**District Comments:**

Fleming County Schools, through analysis of data, chose to focus not only on academic achievement at the high school but instead is taking a K-12 approach to addressing high academic achievement. We understand that in order to address the continually low academic achievement at the high school (the roof) we must ensure that the middle school (the walls) and the elementary schools (the foundation) also focus on high academic achievement for all students. As such, the district has implemented several components that we feel will lead to increased student achievement across the board. The components are: 1) district-wide benchmarks; 2) a common PLC framework; 3) a common, vertical reading and math curriculum; and 4) professional learning opportunities.

At the request of principals and teachers, the district implemented common benchmarks in reading and math. Teachers, at all grade levels, indicated that they wanted to measure student



learning across the district and across each grade level to find trends and collect data to address areas of improvement collectively. This focus on “common” was a big step for the district, because up to this point, teachers did not have a common means to measure student learning. The benchmarks are aligned to the district’s pacing guides and the common core standards. The benchmarks allow teachers to evaluate student learning and collect data based on the standards. More rigorous benchmarks go hand and hand with rigorous instruction, as we have seen and heard. Many teachers have indicated that they now understand that lessons and learning activities must be more rigorous in order to meet the level of questioning seen on the district benchmarks. The data collected from the benchmarks are used to implement interventions specific to the student and the standards, as well as extension and acceleration opportunities for students. In addition to the district-wide benchmarks, the district also implemented an ACT Ready assessment for juniors in January, 2015. This assessment was ACT-like and provided the high school data for intense last minute remediation to juniors in class and through the PRIDE period.

While implementing benchmarks, the district has seen the need for more effective professional learning communities. As the district has emphasized the need to use of benchmark data to guide instruction and improve student learning. The district has a PLC Framework based on the PLC protocol from Fleming County High School. Furthermore, we have encouraged principals to take teams of teachers to visit professional learning communities occurring in the district, as well as, PLCs in other districts. There is an emphasis on the need to utilize the professional learning communities to create common lessons and assessments and to analyze student data and learning. The evaluation of student work has begun; however, evaluating student work and data is a major focus for the 2015-2016.

The district’s third emphasis is implementing a K-12 common curriculum. During the 2014-2015 school year, beginning in September, the district began piloting EngageNY in reading and math in all grade levels. Several teachers in different schools were already using EngageNY resulting in high student achievement scores on the KY state assessments. EngageNY is free, aligned to the common core and provides an all-in-one curriculum for teachers. Furthermore, the curriculum is mapped out by lesson and is rigorous, but more importantly, is vertically aligned. This vertical alignment allows the district to focus on the gaps in student learning that has occurred over the years resulting in low student achievement at the high school level. One of the many requests that high school teachers indicated was the need for a vertically aligned curriculum. Utilizing a common curriculum also allows for common planning among teachers – a key component in professional learning communities. In addition to EngageNY, middle and high school science teachers has begun using STEMScopes, which is a common curriculum in science. Similar to EngageNY, STEMScopes provides science teachers with a rigorous curriculum, separated by lessons, that includes engaging, higher order student exercises and activities. Our major focus for 2015-2016 is to implement EngageNY and STEMScopes across the K-12 system, as our commitment is to have a common curriculum in all core subjects.

A final emphasis for the district in our efforts to establish high academic achievement across the K-12 system is the district’s commitment to professional learning. Teachers have been

provided several professional development opportunities over the past couple of years; however, as a district we have seen the need to focus more on professional learning. As a district we want job embedded opportunities focused on 1) effective professional learning communities; 2) data-driven instruction; 3) creating common assessments; and 4) strategies for high academic achievement.

**Next Steps Identified by the District:**

- Fully implement EngageNY in Reading and Math and STEMScopes in 2015-2016 school year.
- Pilot a science and social studies curriculum (when standards are adopted) in 2015-2016.
- Analyze student work in professional learning communities.
- Implement common assessments/benchmarks in all core subjects beginning in 2015-2016.

**1. Interviews, observations, and review of documentation/artifacts indicate a decline in the sense of urgency at the high school after the first year of progress of state accountability. (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Because of the sharp increase in overall accountability scores (attributed to focus on CCR rate) soon after the identification of FCHS as a priority school, teachers and administration became complacent and did not continue to address priority improvement areas, especially academic ones. Now that there is an understanding of the importance of analyzing student data and since the implementation of the benchmark system, teachers and leaders have a means of measuring progress toward improvement goals.

**2. Standard-based grading policies are not being consistently implemented across the district. (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Current district grading policies and guidelines outline the process and scale to be used for standards-based grading; however the same policies and guidelines allow for inconsistent implementation. While professional learning has been provided for standards-based grading, many teachers still do not understand all components and several have chosen not to implement these practices in their classrooms. The district is currently in the process of developing a plan for effective grading practices throughout the district which will outline the policies and procedures for grading and reporting at all grade levels in all schools, leaving no room for interpretation or choice. The district leadership fully understands that there must be consistent grading and reporting practices across the district in order for students and their parents to understand what is being graded, how it is being graded, and what those grades mean. Next steps after the communication of the policy/procedures for 2015-16, will be the monitoring and evaluation of this plan across the district. These measures will need to be a part of the plan and communicated with the policy/procedures. It will be important for district and school leadership to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the grading and reporting policy/procedures so that the district (and the high school) can move beyond the issues that have arisen from lack of understanding and confusion.

**3. Student data notebooks are not being used consistently across the district. (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Elementary schools are using a variety of student-level data tracking methods -- data folders, data notebooks, data boards, data backpacks in order to engage students in the tracking and study of their own progress which develops a sense of ownership on the part of students for their own achievement. Taking this a step further, teachers have also begun to use the PDSA process with their students as a classroom or individually. While this is not consistently being done district-wide, there is now a great deal of interest and willingness to try these processes with students.

**4. Few teachers differentiate or use high-yield instructional strategies to enhance student engagement in high school classrooms. (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) The high school has begun to implement evidence-based strategies such as Kagan, Marzano, and Allen. These strategies have also been shared with elementary and middle school administration for implementation at those levels as well. Next steps of district and school leadership would include the monitoring of the effectiveness of identified key strategies.

**5. The superintendent did not provide walkthrough reports to the teachers "due to the lack of capacity" of the staff conducting the walkthroughs. (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Beginning Fall 2014, district leadership has been trained in the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the walkthrough process, and the ELEOT instrument. This SLT has been conducting walkthrough observations and providing quality feedback to the school principals to use in their improvement efforts. Each walkthrough experience is accompanied by a debriefing session which includes the identification of "quick wins" for the school. If the school focuses on these "quick wins," improvement in the overall picture painted by the walkthroughs will be evident. For the 2015-16 school year, ELEOT will be utilized and school evaluations will be based on the Standards for Quality for Schools.

**Team Evidence:**

**Team Comments:**

**Deficiency 4: Instructional practice in the high school is not of sufficient rigor to create high academic achievement.**

District	Team	
		This deficiency has been addressed in an exemplary manner.
X (2015)		This deficiency has been addressed satisfactorily.
X (2014)		This deficiency has been partially addressed.
	X (2014)	There is little or no evidence of improvement with regard to this

		deficiency.
--	--	-------------

**District Evidence:**

- ELA/Math Pacing Guides
- Engage NY/StemScopes Curriculum
- Program Assessments
- Professional Learning/Release Time
- Walkthrough/ELEOT Data
- CCR Rate
- Intervention Plan (PRIDE)
- Benchmark Assessments
- AP Training
- Purchase of ELA/Science curriculum aligned resources

**District Comments:**

During the 2014-2015 academic year, the district has focused on vertically aligning the K-12 curriculum in the district. Fleming County Schools is committed to increasing not just rigor, but also relevance. The lack of understanding pertaining to rigor at the elementary and at the middle school has led to issues at the high school. As a result of teacher surveys, parent conversations, and student feedback, the district implemented the following components designed to raise expectations through rigor and relevance. Additionally, at the center of all of our decisions is the focus on the quality of the teaching and learning process.

A major component that is different in 2014-2015 is that the district's Senior Leadership Team performs district-wide walk-throughs using ELEOT and other evaluation tools. We conduct the walk-throughs in order to identify strengths and areas for improvement pertaining to the teaching and learning process at the classroom and school level. The walk-throughs allow the district to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of components that are being piloted and implemented this year. Using the walk-through data, we have been able to identify the lack of understanding of what rigorous and relevant teaching and learning looks like among teachers and administrators. Through these observations we also gathered data that indicated, as a district, we lacked the understanding of the value of a common curriculum and common assessments. Furthermore, we saw a strong need to provide training for teachers and administrators on how to design engaging lessons and quality assessments, and training for principals on how to evaluate student engagement and the level of rigor in lessons.

The identification and implementation of district-wide benchmarks was a major step for the district, which began by teachers requesting the ability to evaluate student learning using common assessments. As a result, the district implemented in October 2014 district-wide benchmarks in reading and math. The benchmark assessments provide the district the means to evaluate student learning against specific Common Core standards. Additionally, the benchmarks allow teachers to design interventions and acceleration strategies that are

strategically individualized by student and by standard. The biggest impact that the benchmarks have had is the mirroring of what is expected by students on KPREP assessments. Teachers are engaging in discussions centered around the need to design lessons to meet the rigor of the benchmarks, which are closely aligned to the rigor found in both the curriculum (EngageNY) and KPREP assessments. The benchmarks also allow the district to determine the rigor of instruction across the district and design professional learning opportunities.

Another component that the district feels will make a significant impact on increasing rigor is the use of the EngageNY and STEMScopes curricula. EngageNY is aligned to the math and reading Common Core standards; while STEMScopes is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards. As mentioned previously, both aligned to the standards, which are already rigorous. This alignment to the Common Core standards and the Next Generation Science Standards allow teachers to increase rigor to prepare all students to be college and career ready.

The district is also committed to providing ongoing training through professional learning opportunities and professional learning communities. During the 2014-2015 school year, the district has focused on establishing professional learning communities throughout the district using the PLC framework. As teachers are provided opportunities to plan, share and collaborate together on lessons, assessments and data, rigor in the classroom will most certainly increase. Furthermore, as teachers are able to vertically meet by subject area, the effectiveness of the curriculum increases, resulting in increased rigor and relevance. Additionally, teachers are provided time to participate and engage in professional learning opportunities in their school buildings, in the district or in other schools and districts. Through professional learning opportunities teachers are able to share effective and rigorous strategies. We have discovered that many teachers fail to understand what rigor looks like in the classroom, or how to align lessons to the standard. By strategically allowing teachers time to observe and collaborate with highly effective teachers, they are then able to integrate rigor into their lessons.

The most obvious component is the district's focus on creating and implementing a common curriculum and benchmarks in all core subjects. The district believes that rigor must be integrated at all grade levels and in all subjects, if we expect the rigor at the high school to be sufficient and aligned to preparing all students to be college and career ready. During the 2015-2016 school year, a big piece toward ensuring the district's success will be determined by our ability to consistently monitor and evaluate the implementation and use of the district's strategies that are geared to increasing rigor and relevance in all classrooms.

**Next Steps Identified by the District:**

- Consistent monitoring and evaluation of the components implemented during the 2014-2015 school year
- Work with all teachers to implement rigorous lessons and assessments in all core subject areas.
- Provide strategic professional learning opportunities to teachers who are struggling based on benchmark data, ELEOT data and other observation data.

- Guide principals in effective instructional leadership using the Avanc-ED Standards for Quality and PGES.

**1. As evidenced through observation data and interviews, there has been a decline in the sense of urgency at the high school after the first year of progress of state accountability (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Because of the sharp increase in overall accountability scores (attributed to focus on CCR rate) soon after the identification of FCHS as a priority school, teachers and administration became complacent and did not continue to address priority improvement areas, especially academic ones. Now that there is an understanding of the importance of analyzing student data and since the implementation of the benchmark system, teachers and leaders have a means of measuring progress toward improvement goals.

**2. The superintendent did not provide walkthrough reports to teachers "due to the lack of capacity" of the staff conducting the walkthroughs (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Beginning Fall 2014, district leadership has been trained in the use of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the walkthrough process, and the ELEOT instrument. The SLT team has been conducting walkthrough observations and providing quality feedback to the school principals to use in their improvement efforts. Each walkthrough experience is accompanied by a debriefing session which includes the identification of "quick wins" for the school. If the school focuses on these "quick wins," improvement in the overall picture painted by the walkthroughs will be evident. For the 2015-16 school year, ELEOT will be utilized and school evaluations will be based on the Standards for Quality for Schools.

**3. A common understanding of the use of effective instructional strategies is not consistent across the district, but was identified as pending for development and implementation (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) The high school has begun to implement evidence-based strategies such as Kagan, Marzano, and Allen. These strategies have also been shared with elementary and middle school administration for implementation at those levels as well. Next steps of district and school leadership would include the monitoring of the effectiveness of identified key strategies.

**4. PLC protocols are not currently developed (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) The district has created and implemented a PLC Framework. The framework was developed using protocols that were found effective at Fleming County High School. Principals have been trained on how to use the framework and the district has created opportunities for principals and teachers to visit Fleming County High School's Social Studies PLC, as well as, other schools and district's professional learning communities. Furthermore, the Senior Leadership Team has implemented its own PLC where there is a weekly focus on a continuous improvement process.

**5. PLCs are in the initial stages of development for data analysis in some content areas (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) As a district, though we may still be in the initial stages, the principals and teachers see the benefits of regular, ongoing Professional Learning Communities. Principals are collaborating, as evidenced by the usage of PDSAs and the PLC Framework in our schools. Data, lessons and instructional strategies are being reviewed and shared, with some student work being reviewed. During the 2015-2016 school year, the district will monitor the effective use of Professional Learning Communities - both formally and informally. We have a laser focus on two-way communication, encouraging teachers and principals to collaborate, which will lead to sustained growth. As a district we are extremely proud of how far we have come in regards to Professional Learning Communities, data usage and communication - all of which go hand and hand.

**6. Few teachers differentiate or use high-yield instructional strategies to enhance student engagement in high school classrooms. (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) As a district, we have seen growth in high-yield instructional strategies. We feel that as professional learning communities continue to grow and become engrained in the culture of Fleming County Schools, the use of high-yield instructional strategies will spread across all classrooms. Furthermore, with the district's emphasis on implementing a common curriculum and assessments, aligned to the Common Core, the necessity to use high-yield instructional strategies becomes much more critical in the classroom. In the past, teachers were able to use medium to low-level strategies, as a result of not having a common curriculum. Implementation of a common curriculum in reading and math K-12 has led to sharing of strategies. Common planning, professional learning opportunities and benchmarks will assist in the monitoring and evaluation of instructional strategies. Teachers will no longer be able to teach in isolation.

**Team Evidence:**

**Team Comments:**

**Deficiency 5: The classroom assessments at the high school are not consistently rigorous, authentic, or aligned with current academic standards.**

District	Team	
		This deficiency has been addressed in an exemplary manner.
		This deficiency has been addressed satisfactorily.
X (2015)		This deficiency has been partially addressed.
X (2014)	X (2014)	There is little or no evidence of improvement with regard to this deficiency.

**District Evidence:**

- Professional Learning/Release Time (Math/ELA/Science)

- Analysis/Check of Final Trimester Assessments
- Benchmark Assessments
- Score 21 Test Bank
- EOC Release Items
- ACT READY Assessment
- Assessment Framework
- Benchmark Feedback
- PLC Framework

**District Comments:**

The district has provided professional learning/release time for all core teachers K-12 for curriculum review and development so that these teachers may collaborate on improvements to the curriculum as well as begin developing common assessments. The district has also encouraged the use of the Score 21 test bank, EOC released items, KPREP released items, as well as ACT Quality Core formative item bank as a means of increasing the quality and rigor of classroom assessments. These resources provide not only ready-made assessment items for classroom use; but also a model for teachers to create their own.

Fleming County High School has implemented "final" exams at the end of each term, which have been collected for review. The district encourages all teachers to evaluate common assessments for congruency to the standards. The district must begin to collect and evaluate assessments at the district level to provide feedback to principals and teachers. The district PLC framework, which is based upon continuous improvement processes, should be used as a guide for evaluating classroom assessments. Teachers in PLCs must review classroom assessment data and have conversations around instructional strategies used and meaningful assessments. As a result, teachers use classroom assessment as a tool to measure student learning rather than simply a means to grade.

As stated earlier, the district has also provided benchmark assessments for reading and math at all grade levels, as well as the ACT READY assessment, which act as common formative assessments for teachers to use to drive instruction in all of these classrooms. At the conclusion of each round of benchmarks, teachers are given an opportunity to provide feedback to the district in relation to the quality of the benchmark assessments which are reviewed at the district level and communicated to the vendor in order to improve the experience for the next round. In addition, the district has also provided social studies benchmark assessments at grades 7 and 8 at the request of school administration.

As a result of teacher and principal feedback, the district implemented common benchmarks across the district in reading and math. The benchmarks are aligned to the Common Core standards, which are rigorous and designed to prepare students to be College and Career Ready. In 2015-2016, the district is committed to implementing district-wide benchmarks in all course subjects. Our focus on common benchmarks will also lead to continued growth in professional learning communities across the district. As data becomes more standardized, both the ability and need to work together to identify strengths and areas for improvement with student learning will lead to sustained growth.

Furthermore, principals and the Senior Leadership Team are taking a more active approach in the assessments that are administered in our classrooms. Our goal is to make sure that we evaluate all teacher-made assessments that are given to students. Ideally, we want this evaluation to be performed in professional learning communities where teachers work as a team to develop and evaluate common assessments. Our focus is to educate teachers on the need to design and use effective assessments to



measure student learning and not just to be used to give grades.

**Next Steps Identified by the District:**

- Monitor and evaluate the quality and alignment of all common assessments (formative and summative) to the standards.
- Provide professional learning around the progression of the standards and the development of high quality assessments.

**1. Classroom Observations consistently indicated a lack of assessments being used to modify instruction and improve student performance (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Through Senior Leadership Team walk-throughs and assessment evaluations, we agree that assessments are still being used as a means to grade, instead of measuring student learning. As a result of feedback from teachers and principals, the district has implemented common benchmarks in reading and math that are aligned to the Common Core and meets the rigor of KPREP assessments, across the K-12 system. Our commitment is to have common benchmarks in all core subject areas by the end of 2015-2016. The district is now seeing the impact of ongoing professional learning opportunities and professional learning communities in regards to assessments. We are now seeing teachers using data to guide instruction and to measure student learning (PDSAs, data walls). This growth by teachers is improved each day. Furthermore, principals are using benchmark data, along with data from the District Sponsored Teaching and Learning Internal Review to create PDSAs. Additionally, teachers are now creating PDSAs in the classroom in order to strategically focus on increasing student learning, and some teachers even have students creating PDSAs focused on their own personal growth.

**2. PLC work was initiated at the end of February to focus on EOC benchmark assessments.**

(March 2015 - FCHS) PLC work at FCHS started in August this school year with a renewed focus on instruction and continuous improvement in all content areas. The school adopted the PLC process used in Pulaski Co High School (Hub School) in order to address the need for a school wide-focus on instruction and assessment. Through collaboration of principals, the PLC protocols are now being shared throughout the district. The process follows the Plan-Do-Study-Act cycle every four weeks, and each professional learning community creates its own improvement plan or PDSA which is updated throughout the cycle. This process has been effective this year in creating a means and a purpose for analyzing classroom assessment data within schools and across the district.

**3. The EOC benchmark PLC evidence shows a lack of consistency in rigor (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) The district has focused on establishing professional learning communities not as a means to address one specific event; but instead to address all components related to the teaching and learning process. The district has created a PLC framework based on the components from the Fleming County High School PLC Protocol. This framework is designed to provide principals, teachers and staff protocols for establishing an effective professional learning community at all levels. Though still in early stages in many locations, professional learning communities are taking root, as a result of principals and teacher leaders throughout the district.

**4. There is ERL planned training for the LDC/MDC and formative assessments (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Professional Learning Communities and professional learning opportunities, along with the district's assessment framework, are guiding the district's processes in creating effective,

common formative assessments. The ultimate goal is to have a database of questions for all core subjects that can be used as a means to formatively assess student learning. Furthermore, the district is working to develop a toolkit of formative strategies that is shared from one central location, where teachers can access as needed. The district still has considerable amount of work to complete before teachers are using formative assessments systematically. Our focus, here again, is geared toward training teachers on the understanding that formative assessments are to be used to guide instruction, improve student learning.

The district has been engaged in Literacy Design Collaborative and Mathematics Design Collaborative work for three years through the Integration Grant. All teachers have received training in these highly effectively strategies. Furthermore, the district is continuing a focus on these strategies through the Instructional Transformation grant. In addition to EngageNY, LDC and MDC strategies will provide sustained growth in teacher ability to provide rigorous and relevant instruction.

**5. The PLC work shows limited evidence to inform future instruction (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Professional Learning Communities are taking root across the district, as a result of the commitment of principals and teacher leaders. Both principals and teacher leaders see the benefit of teachers and administrators working collaboratively in a community to improve the teaching and learning process. Continuous improvement is woven throughout the PLC process and will lead to increased student achievement and teacher effectiveness.

**6. There was not a comprehensive plan for analyzing the data in PLCs. PLCs are in their initial stages. (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) With the implementation of the improved PLC process in August 2014, the high school now has a defined process for analyzing data in PLCs, as well as a schedule for each teacher/course to bring their data to the table for analysis. Under this new system, borrowed from Pulaski Co., teachers are responsible for ensuring that they are assessing teaching and learning on an on-going basis, rather than focusing on a single assessment or event. In addition, the district's assessment framework guides the school assessment processes as well as the analysis of data. For the first time, the district has a system approach to assessment and data analysis.

**Team Evidence:**

**Team Comments:**

**Deficiency 6: Teachers at the high school do not routinely collaborate in a common protocol to analyze student work for the purpose of informing instruction.**

District	Team	
		This deficiency has been addressed in an exemplary manner.
		This deficiency has been addressed satisfactorily.
X (2014) X (2015)	X (2014)	This deficiency has been partially addressed.
		There is little or no evidence of improvement with regard to this deficiency.

**District Evidence:**

- PLC Framework
- PLC Agendas
- Department PDSAs
- Portfolio Day Protocol
- End of Course Action Plan

**District Comments:**

During the 2014-2015 school year, Fleming County Schools has made a concentrated effort to provide teachers and administrators the opportunity to collaborate. Through common planning, grade level meetings, school leadership meetings and professional learning communities, a system approach to leadership has begun to develop. An emphasis on data analysis has been communicated and teachers have responded by using the data available to them to impact instruction. However, there has been sporadic review of student work, with some pockets of success.

As mentioned, we are very proud of the work that is being done around professional learning communities. Currently, professional learning communities focus on student data and not so much on student work. Beginning in the Fall of 2014, we worked with principals and teachers on the need to utilize student exemplars, as well as, evaluating student work in professional learning communities. At the request of teachers, professional learning opportunities were provided so that teachers could collaborate together - across departments, subject areas and grade levels. During the 2015-2016 school year, additional opportunities will be made available - as we already see small gains in student learning, effective instructional strategies and teacher morale.

**Next Steps identified by the District:**

- Begin a systematic process to analyze student work in PLCs in conjunction with student data.
- Implement and monitor PDSAs at the classroom and student level.

**1. There is no consistency of data analysis among and across grade levels (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) With the implementation of the district assessment framework, every school in the district has a guide for administering assessments and for data analysis. It is expected that data analysis take place in school level professional learning communities and leadership team meetings (or data teams). As evidence of this work, schools have established data walls and/or data rooms where the analysis takes place. Charts and graphs of student achievement and progress are testament to the work that teachers across the district have undertaken in order to improve instruction through assessment. While this process has begun in all schools, including FCHS, more work is needed to make this process truly systematic.

**2. EOCs are the only areas having assessments analyzed - the principal indicated they would expand this analysis to other areas (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) The district senior leadership team and principals are looking at all assessments and understand the importance of effective assessments in all subjects. The senior leadership team has reviewed the 1st Trimester Exams and saw rigor and standard alignment was lacking across all subjects at the high school. Even though we feel that the common district benchmarks are effective, we evaluate them for effectiveness and ask teachers to evaluate for alignment to the pacing guides and common core standards. Our goal during the 2015-2016 school year is to collect and evaluate all common assessments and provide feedback. More importantly, we will have principals and teachers to evaluate assessments in professional learning communities, as we provide support and needed resources to do so. Again, our focus is on educating teachers on the need to use assessments to measure student learning not as a means to give grades. Additionally, we want teachers to utilize the data collected to improve instruction and assessments as a means to systematically improve student learning across the district.

**3. There is limited evidence that district leadership has provided high school teachers with real-time professional learning for analyzing results of various assessments (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) At the request of teachers and principals, professional learning opportunities were provided to English, Science and Math teachers at the high school, along with Social Studies and Science teachers at the middle school. Beginning in March 2015, elementary teachers will be provided professional learning opportunities to meet as grade level teams to revise the pacing guides, curriculum implementation plan and assessments for core subject areas. Additionally, common planning periods are provided to high school teachers to meet once a week as a professional learning community focused on continuous improvement using student data. During each PLC, teachers present data, discuss lesson plans and assessments and develop next steps. This professional learning community model is the basis of the district's PLC framework. We understand that data analysis along with evaluation of student work will lead to sustained growth in student learning and more effective lessons, assignments and assessments.

**4. There is limited evidence that district leadership has monitored to ensure teachers have opportunities to collaborate on analysis of student work (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Not only has the district leadership ensured teachers have opportunities to collaborate, many times, a member of the district's Senior Leadership Team is present during the collaboration. As a leadership team, we are there not to monitor, but to be engaged in the collaboration and to provide needed resources. In 2014-2015 we have made several professional opportunities available to teachers where they could collaborate as a department, subject or grade level, both inside and outside the district. Our only concern is that we do not see the analysis of student work enough. We are seeing sporadic analysis of student work; however, discussion of student work is beginning in professional learning communities and at school leadership meetings and in classrooms.

**5. There is limited evidence that any analysis is used to inform future instruction (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Effective professional learning communities are beginning to take off, as principals and teacher leaders become more convinced that collaboration is key to creating a systematic teaching and learning process. Some of our professional learning communities are effective, in that, they analyze student data, review student work, evaluate lessons, develop assessments and identify next steps. These are not isolated to one school - but can be seen throughout each school - elementary through the high school. However, our goal is to make sure that all professional learning communities are effective. Again, this requires the district's commitment to a common curriculum and common assessments in all core subjects as both lay the foundation to increased student achievement.

**6. There is no consistency in the coaching and mentoring plan (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Coaching/mentoring is an area for improvement across the district. Efforts were made to identify an LDC and an MDC leads in the building and provide them with an additional planning period during which they could collaborate and/or coach their colleagues in the implementation of these strategies; however, this failed to be beneficial to the school. In fact, the scheduling was problematic as was the monitoring of the coaching/mentoring efforts. Moving forward to 2015-16, this is an area for improvement. A plan is currently being developed at the district level to involve the hiring of 1-2 Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment specialists who would work with teachers individually and in professional learning communities to provide support in those areas and assist the principal with the monitoring of curriculum implementation, instruction, and assessment issues. Additionally, through the Instructional Transformation Grant, 16 teachers will be identified as ELA or math teacher leads at the K-8 level and will provide coaching/mentoring and instructional support for their colleagues across the district.

**7. Standards-based grading is not consistently being used by all teachers at the high school (March 2014 - comments)**

(March 2015 - FCS) Current district grading policies and guidelines outline the process and scale to be used for standards-based grading; however the same policies and guidelines allow for

inconsistent implementation. While professional learning has been provided for standards-based grading, many teachers still do not understand all components and several have chosen not to implement these practices in their classrooms. The district level committee of teachers, counselors, and principals is currently in the process of developing a plan for effective grading practices throughout the district which will outline the policies and procedures for grading and reporting at all grade levels in all schools, leaving no room for interpretation or choice. The district leadership fully understands that there must be consistent grading and reporting practices across the district in order for students and their parents to understand what is being graded, how it is being graded, and what those grades mean. Next steps after the communication of the policy/procedures for 2015-16, will be the monitoring and evaluation of this plan across the district. These measures will need to be a part of the plan and communicated with the policy/procedures. It will be important for district and school leadership to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the grading and reporting policy/procedures so that the district (and the high school) can move beyond the issues that have arisen from lack of understanding and confusion.

**Team Evidence:****Team Comments**

**Final Remarks:** Fleming County Schools is pumped about the work accomplished during the 2014-2015 school year. The Senior Leadership Team, as well as other stakeholders, are seeing positive changes occurring - with more expected. We are most proud of the level of communication, teamwork and shared leadership that has developed. Our commitment to becoming a "District of Distinction," as well as earning SACs Accreditation has been able to unite stakeholders. The growth that has taken place this year has been incredibly significant through teamwork. As can be seen through evidence, the district has learned to embrace continuous improvement as a means to reach our goals.

As the district prepares for 2015-2016, our two main areas of focus will be monitoring and evaluating for success. We must continue our commitment to continuous improvement in order to sustain what we have accomplished up to this point. Furthermore, through regular monitoring and evaluation, as a district we will be able to address: 1) engagement of all students; 2) common curriculum and assessments; 3) data and student work analysis through professional learning communities; 4) empowering stakeholders through shared leadership; and 5) connecting the systems.

This is Our Vision. Our Bridge. Our Journey... as we become a "District of Distinction"!