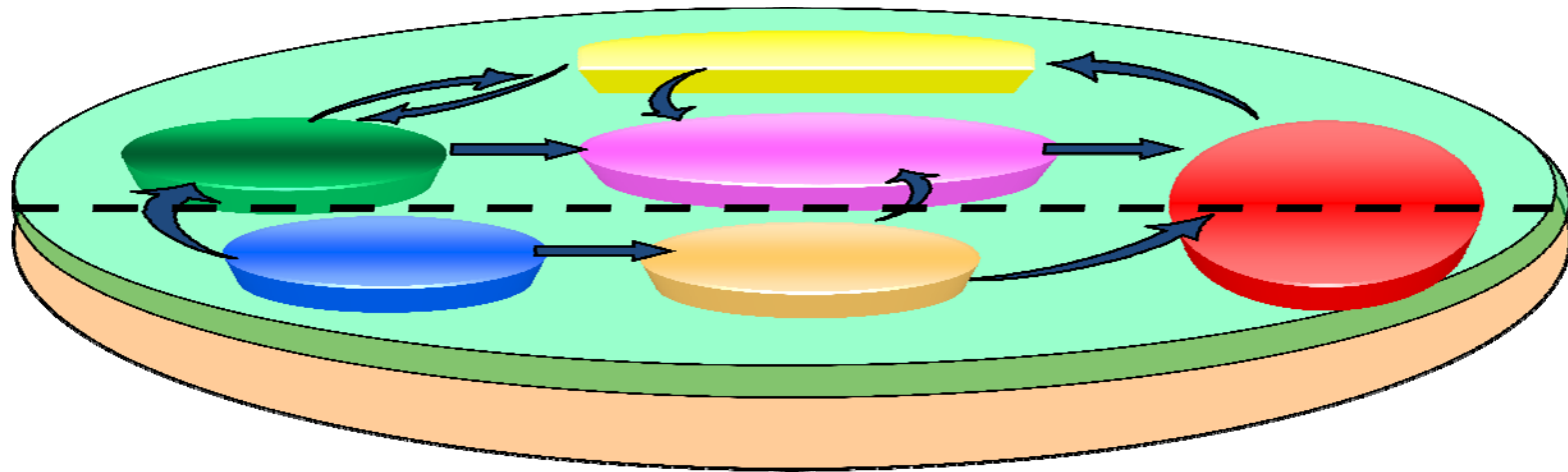




## Lockport High School District 205 System Assessment Feedback Report

The following system assessment feedback report was developed for Lockport High School District 205 by the System Assessment Review Team of the Consortium for Educational Change.

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



This feedback report was developed reflecting on the indicators described on the next few pages. It is a response to written information provided by the school as well as from information gathered from interviews.

It is not intended to represent the perspective of all school administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents. Its accuracy is dependent on the information presented and discussed

<b>Correlation Among Continuous Improvement Frameworks</b>			
<b>Baldrige Performance Excellence Criteria</b>	<b>Correlates of Effective Schools</b>	<b>Professional Learning Community Characteristics</b>	<b>Standard Bearer</b>
Leadership Collaborative Relationships/Structures Communication	Instructional Leadership Roles and Responsibilities Enhanced Communication	Mission/ Shared Vision/ Shared Values Communication	Standard 1- Developing a shared understanding of the need for change Standard 2- Developing shared beliefs and vision Standard 4- Developing structures for participatory leadership
Strategic Planning SMART Goals/ Indicators/Measures/Targets Aligned Performance Appraisal	Focused Mission/Goals/Action Plans	Goals	Standard 3- Developing a focus on students & on the quality of work provided to students Standard 5- Developing structures for results-oriented decision making Standard 6- Developing structures for continuity
Student and Parent Focus Requirements Expectations Satisfaction	High Expectations for ALL Home School Relations	Clarify What Students Must Know and Be Able to Do Creating a Focus on Results That Impacts Schools, Teams, and Teachers	Standard 3- Developing a focus on students and on the quality of work provided to students.
Data, Information and Analysis Student Responsibility for Learning	Frequent Monitoring of Progress Use of Data	Assessing Whether Students Have Learned the Essential Curriculum	Standard 3-Developing a focus on students and on the quality of work provided to students Standard 5- Developing structures for results-oriented decision making
Staff Focus Knowledge, Skills Professional Development	Safe, Orderly, Complete Environment for Learning	Collaborative Teams of Teachers Focus on issues That Directly Impact Student Learning	Standard 7- Providing ongoing support Standard 8- Fostering innovation

			and flexibility Standard 9- Employing technology Standard 10- Fostering collaboration
Process Management Focus on Learning Systematic Processes Plan-Do-Study-Act	Opportunities to Learn/ Time on Task/ Strategies/ Interventions	Systematic Intervention Ensure Student Receive Time and Support for Learning	Standard 3- Developing a focus on students and on the quality of work provided to students. (Design Qualities)
Performance Results	Frequent Monitoring of Progress	A Focus On Results	Standard 3- Developing a focus on students and on the quality of work provided to students. Standard5- Developing structures for results- oriented decision making

**SYSTEM ASSESSMENT SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:**

The district first completed a self-assessment. The district presented data and information in response to questions aligned to the framework and vision. The district presented its best attempt to describe the “AS IS” state. The Review Team examined the information and data prior to the site visit. They developed a list of questions to explore as part of the site visit. The Review Team interviewed all stakeholder groups.

On the first day the team interviewed:

- Superintendent/Executive Council
- Board Members
- Union Leaders
- Business, Curriculum, Human Resource Leaders
- Co-Curricular, Assessments/Data, Intervention/ Special Education Leaders
- Building Principals and Assistant Principals

On the second day, the team interviewed:

- Department Chairs
- Students

- Teachers
- Parents
- Support Staff
- Building Leadership Team - Central Campus

Schedules were set by the district with the guidelines that representatives interviewed should reflect demographics of the system.

Following interviews, the team reviewed its findings and prepared an oral report to give the district a preview of overall strengths and opportunities for improvement aligned to the framework and vision. The week following the visit, the team communicated electronically to prepare the final written feedback report. This final report was sent to the district within seven days of the visit.

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

**System Assessment team members included:**

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## SUMMARY OF OVERALL STRENGTHS

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

- The district has defined common learning targets/benchmarks for all core courses. This is practice that sets Lockport Township High School ahead of most high school districts in the state of Illinois
- Common assessments (quarter and semester) are developed for all core courses and linked to those common learning targets/benchmarks. This is also a practice that sets Lockport Township High School ahead of most high school districts in the state of Illinois.
- There are assessment reports available for students and teachers that report the status of mastery of common learning targets/benchmarks. The assessments indicate for each student what has been mastered successfully and what has not been mastered in relationship to expectations. Department chairs interact in discussion with teachers around what the results indicate and their implication for curriculum, assessment, and instructional improvement. This is a powerful data system that has the potential to help students take responsibility for their own learning and to help ALL students be more successful in their learning.
- The district continues to provide a comprehensive co-curricular program to meet the needs of students. There are 28 varsity sports and 42 clubs/activities. There is a strong commitment to co-curricular activities/athletics/clubs. The facilities and equipment associated with the co-curricular programs is phenomenal.
- The board and administration believe in reflecting on the current system to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement to make the school system better. There is a strong commitment to continuous improvement. There is a commitment to ensuring that ALL students are successful in their learning. They are to be commended for allowing an external assessment to identify both strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- The following leadership structures exist to discuss issues and plans strategy on a full range of district and building matters: Executive Council, Administrative Council, Department Chair Council, Building Leadership Team, and Department Meetings.
- There are opportunities for staff to participate in decision making through department meetings, the BLT, and via the Union. There is a monthly meeting between administration and union to identify and resolve issues. Leaders from both groups report a positive working relationship. There are a number of ad hoc committees formed on an as-needed basis (Equity Action Committee, Literacy Council Technology Committee, Schedule Committee, etc). These committees are charged with studying an issue and making recommendations for improvement.
- Department Chairs are very involved in decision-making and provide opportunities for two-way communication between

teachers and administration.

- The district has provided electronic access for students and parents to receive information about academic progress through ParentConnect and SharePoint. Parent CONNECT allows parents to daily monitor their student's academic attendance, and discipline. Regular email and phone communication is available for parents. Parents interviewed were very satisfied with staff response to their concerns and needs in a timely way.
- Parent and Staff Satisfaction data was collected last year. Parents interviewed support the 9<sup>th</sup> grade campus and viewed it as a great transition from elementary to high school. They enjoy the smaller school feel and personalization that can be offered to 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- Students interviewed reported the majority of teachers are helpful, care about them, are fun, and are hardworking. Students interviewed reported they enjoy high school.
- The district has three long-range goals. The goals have become part of the superintendent's contract/evaluation. There are periodic goal status reports given to the board of education. Administrators lead action plans to accomplish goals.
- The district reported 2009 ACT results demonstrates an aggregate composite score of 22.0, thus exceeding the comparable statistic for the state and nation which stand at 20.8 and 21.1 respectively, This is a new high for LTHS student performance.
- The district reported financial RECOGNITION status rating from the state board of education which is the high rating for fiscal health.

## SUMMARY OF OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES

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

- Overcrowding permeates every facet of the organization. The district reports the number one deterrent to a positive work environment is overcrowding and school schedule. The district reports that the failure of five referenda along with a significant variance in staff working conditions due to the change in the daily school schedule has created anxiety amongst the staff. Further the district reports this results in the staff uncertainty of board and administrative leadership. The district reports the number one deterrent to a positive work environment is overcrowding and school schedule.
- While there are common learning targets/benchmarks identified for all core courses, staff do not always see the relationship between those benchmarks and their unit planning. Students cannot articulate what the benchmarks are for each unit with the exception of AP courses. Student cannot articulate what benchmarks they have mastered on each common assessment and which they still need to mastery. Students report outside of AP courses they feel a disconnect in subject area courses from 9-10-11-12.
- Students do not see the data from common assessment as valuable to them. Students report there are inconsistencies in how they interact with common assessments. They report a score on an exam but little or no descriptive feedback on questions they do not answer correctly. There are no systematic expectations or processes to guide all students should be doing with assessment data.
- Some teachers report the data from common assessments are not valuable to them. There are no systematic expectations or processes to guide what all teachers should be doing with assessment data. Department chairs need a consistent framework to guide the use of assessment data. Expectations for shared responsibility and accountability are not consistent from department to department.
- There are tracked courses being offered that do not ensure high learning expectations for all students. All students are not held to the same standards and thus are not being guaranteed access to the same curricular standards. Students entering high school are not being held to consistent curricular standards in all elementary feeder systems.
- There are no department consistent policies to guide grading decisions with regard to grading effort, participation, incomplete assignments, extra credit, “zeros”, retakes in quizzes or tests, etc. The district reports the process for individual class and quarterly grade determination has been left to the individual teachers, subject area teams, and departments.
- Response to Intervention (the system to provide extra time and support for student who are struggling) is not clearly

understood and owned by all teachers. It is unclear who leads the RtI plan. There is no data to show that current interventions are making a difference. There were no results presented that evaluates the effectiveness of current interventions. Achievement gaps are not closing. Almost 30% of the students are not meeting or exceeding achievement expectations. Graduation rates for some subgroups are alarming. Scheduling conflicts and different start times make some interventions difficult. Teachers report they are struggling to meet the needs of these learners.

- There is no systematic process for setting long-range district goals and strategies that includes stakeholder input. Union leaders have had little involvement in long-range planning. Teachers and parents have little ownership in long-range planning. The board of education has little ownership of the current goals. The board has a need to set priorities. The board feels the goals have insufficient measures. Goals are lacking clear measures and targets by which to monitor, track, and report progress.
- The staff feels a lack of administrative presence and visibility. There are low teacher morale and trust issues. Staff feels impact of schedule demands on both their personal and professional lives. There is insufficient time to listen and dialogue with staff. Teachers often report they feel they have little voice. This is more apparent at the East Campus than the Central Campus. The last three contract negotiations have gone to arbitration. Support staff do not feel valued in their work.
- Students reported difficulty in adjusting to the new schedule and in meeting the demands of early start, class instruction, clubs/athletics, and homework. Some students reported impact of schedule on family structure/time. There was no student satisfaction data collected or reported.
- Administrative and Department Chair evaluation systems are informal and are not tied to measures and targets to attain goals. Department Chair evaluations of teachers are informal and inconsistent and do not reflect student achievement results. Those who evaluate teachers have not had recent consistent training with clarity of expectations. There are inequities in the workloads of Department Chairs due to size of departments, number of teachers to evaluate, courses taught.
- The district is not making adequate yearly progress. Academic Watch: Status Year 4 through state testing results. Hispanic, Students with Disabilities, and Economically Disadvantaged Students are not meeting AYP. The graduation rate for Hispanic students raises concerns. There are still achievement gaps with African-American students.
- The district reported student enrollment exceeds the limits related to facility usage. Portable classrooms are in use. The district reported five failed attempts to pass referenda to address overcrowdedness.

## **NEXT STEPS**

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

### **Priority: Focus on Learning**

There appears to be a focus on teaching in the district as opposed to a focus on learning. A larger percentage of district students are not meeting academic expectations.

- There needs to be systematic expectations or processes to guide what teachers should be doing with the assessment data. That data should drive decisions regarding interventions to help students who are struggling receive additional time and support for their learning. Differentiation of instruction should provide for opportunities of re-teaching.
- There needs to be systematic expectations or processes to guide what students should be doing with the common assessment data. Students should be able to identify what they still need to learn and know how to go about getting that support. They need to be held responsible and accountable for learning what assessment data indicates they still need to learn.
- Both students and teachers need to focus more on formative, day-to-day, week-to-week assessment data rather than summative assessment.
- As the achievement gaps are addressed, there needs to be an advocate for each struggling student. The Response to Intervention program needs to be clear aligned and understood by all stakeholders.

### **Priority: Collaborative Culture**

The district needs to resolve its space needs. Overcrowding permeates every facet of the district.

- There needs to be a new long-term strategy developed in partnership with stakeholders to convince

the community to support the need for additional space to meet the learning needs of all students.

- There needs to be a short-term strategy to relieve the current stress and morale for students, parents and staff associated with the current split schedules. The failure of five referenda along with a significant variance in staff working conditions has created incredible anxiety. This has resulted in trust and uncertainty of the board and administration among stakeholders. The current climate does not help the district in meeting the needs of ALL students. It has created further barriers in providing time for extra learning and support.

### **Priority: Results Orientation**

The board needs to develop a new district long-range plan based on the review of the data and needs/requirements of its stakeholders. The board has little ownership of the current goals. It needs to establish priorities and set clear direction.

- Current goals are lacking clear measures and targets by which to monitor, track, and report progress. Current action plans are lacking clear measures and targets by which to monitor, track, and report progress to be certain changes are adding value and providing a return on investment.
- Data measures need to be aligned from the classroom to the boardroom to ensure a system of shared accountability.
- Performance evaluation systems need to include analysis of this data system at all levels of the system and goal setting that targets improvement.