

# Cognia Diagnostic Review Report

Results for: Conway Middle

December 2-5, 2019

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# Introduction

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

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

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

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

<b>Stakeholder Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>District-Level Administrators</b>	1
<b>Building-Level Administrators</b>	4
<b>Professional Support Staff (e.g., Counselor, Media Specialist, Technology Coordinator)</b>	10
<b>Certified Staff</b>	22
<b>Noncertified Staff</b>	5
<b>Students</b>	39
<b>Parents</b>	6
<b>Total</b>	87

# Cognia Standards Diagnostic Results

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

## Leadership Capacity Domain

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

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

## Learning Capacity Domain

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

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

# Resource Capacity Domain

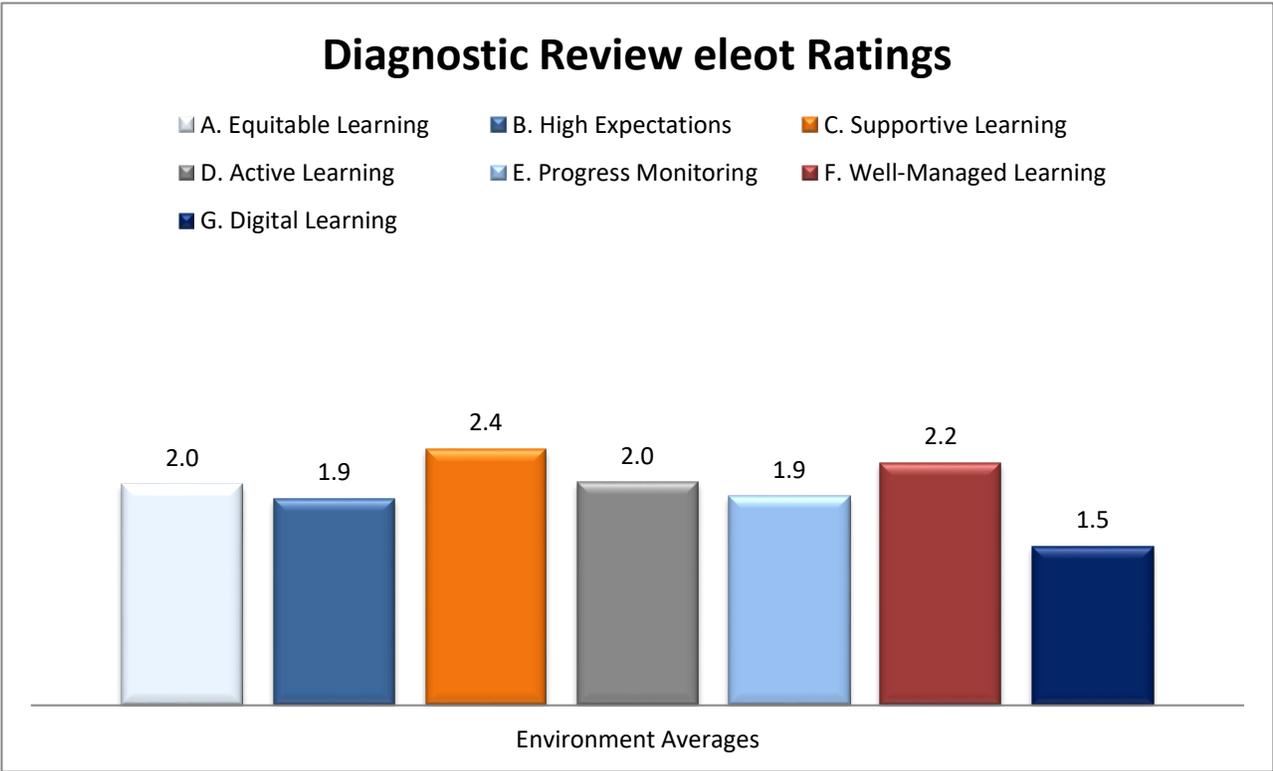
The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably so that the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning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

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

# Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) Results

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

Every member of the Diagnostic Review Team was eleot certified and passed a certification exam that established inter-rater reliability. Team members conducted 27 observations during the Diagnostic Review process, including all core content learning environments. The following charts provide aggregate data across multiple observations for each of the seven learning environments.



A. Equitable Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
A1	1.2	Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs.	81%	15%	4%	0%
A2	2.6	Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support.	7%	33%	52%	7%
A3	2.8	Learners are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner.	4%	33%	44%	19%
A4	1.5	Learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions and dispositions.	63%	22%	15%	0%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>2.0</b>			

B. High Expectations Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
B1	1.8	Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher.	44%	37%	15%	4%
B2	2.2	Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable.	22%	37%	37%	4%
B3	1.4	Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work.	63%	30%	7%	0%
B4	2.0	Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing).	26%	52%	19%	4%
B5	2.1	Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning.	19%	59%	19%	4%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>1.9</b>			



C. Supportive Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
C1	2.3	Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful.	19%	44%	30%	7%
C2	2.3	Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback).	19%	44%	30%	7%
C3	2.4	Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks.	11%	44%	37%	7%
C4	2.5	Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher.	11%	41%	37%	11%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>2.4</b>			

D. Active Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
D1	2.2	Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and teacher predominate.	15%	56%	26%	4%
D2	2.0	Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences.	37%	37%	19%	7%
D3	2.3	Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities.	4%	63%	30%	4%
D4	1.7	Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments.	48%	33%	19%	0%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>2.0</b>			

<b>E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment</b>						
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>
E1	1.8	Learners monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored.	33%	56%	11%	0%
E2	2.2	Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work.	22%	41%	33%	4%
E3	2.3	Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content.	19%	41%	37%	4%
E4	1.4	Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed.	70%	19%	7%	4%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>1.9</b>			

<b>F. Well-Managed Learning Environment</b>						
<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Not Observed</b>	<b>Somewhat Evident</b>	<b>Evident</b>	<b>Very Evident</b>
F1	2.4	Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other.	15%	44%	22%	19%
F2	2.4	Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others.	15%	44%	26%	15%
F3	1.9	Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another.	44%	22%	30%	4%
F4	2.1	Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions.	37%	19%	37%	7%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>2.2</b>			

G. Digital Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
G1	1.6	Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning.	70%	7%	11%	11%
G2	1.5	Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning.	78%	4%	7%	11%
G3	1.2	Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning.	89%	4%	4%	4%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>		<b>1.5</b>				

## eleot Narrative

The Diagnostic Review Team conducted 27 classroom observations, which provided ample opportunities for instructional practices and learning environments to be observed across the school. Of the seven learning environments, the Supportive Learning Environment and the Well-Managed Learning Environment earned the highest overall average ratings of 2.4 and 2.2 respectively on a four-point scale. The Digital Learning Environment had the lowest overall average rating of 1.5.

Classroom observations revealed few strengths within the seven learning environments. The highest-rated item was found in the Equitable Learning Environment. Instances in which “learners are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner” (A3) were evident/very evident in 63 percent of classrooms. The second-highest-rated item was also found in the Equitable Learning Environment. In 59 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that “learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support” (A2).

The Diagnostic Review Team found several important practices absent or inconsistently implemented across all seven learning environments. In the Equitable Learning Environment, for instance, students who “engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs” (A1) were evident/very evident in four percent of classrooms. Also, the team primarily observed teacher-directed instruction with few opportunities for student collaboration. This observation was confirmed by findings that revealed in 19 percent of classrooms it was evident/very evident that “learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments” (D4).

Classroom observations revealed low academic expectations in many classrooms with instruction frequently failing to engage students in rigorous and challenging learning experiences. To illustrate, it was evident/very evident in 19 percent of classrooms that “learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher” (B1). In addition, instances of learners who “engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)” (B4) were evident/very evident in 23 percent of classrooms. These findings provide the school with an opportunity to increase the complexity and rigor in instructional practices, integrate those expectations into teaching and learning, and clearly communicate those high expectations to students as a way to improve their achievement.



Another area that emerged as a concern related to the lack of learning opportunities students have to demonstrate and/or practice cultural competency. It was evident/very evident in 15 percent of classrooms that “learners demonstrate and/or have opportunities to develop empathy/respect/appreciation for differences in abilities, aptitudes, backgrounds, cultures, and/or other human characteristics, conditions, and dispositions” (A4), with data indicating that in 63 percent of classrooms observers could not confirm this practice was in place. Furthermore, classroom observation data revealed a loss of instructional time in several classrooms, with students who “use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions” (F4) being evident/very evident in 44 percent of classrooms.

Most students were unable to articulate the attributes of high-quality work. The Diagnostic Review Team observed few students using exemplars or rubrics to guide them in reaching proficiency, as confirmed by it being evident/very evident in seven percent of classrooms that “learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work” (B3). Moreover, students seldom received or used teacher feedback to guide their learning, as it was evident/very evident in 37 percent of classrooms that “learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work” (E2). Learners who “understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed” (E4) were evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms.

Finally, student use of digital tools was identified by the Diagnostic Review Team as an area that the school could leverage to improve motivation and student achievement. All items in the Digital Learning Environment were rated low. For example, students who “use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning” (G2) were evident/very evident in 18 percent of classrooms and who “use digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning” (G3) were evident/very evident in eight percent of classrooms. Although the team observed technology in the hands of students, classroom observation data showed few students used technology effectively.

By carefully examining data from classroom observations for all items within the seven learning environments, the school staff and leaders will be able to identify additional areas that can be leveraged to improve instructional capacity and increase student learning. In addition, the Improvement Priorities outlined within this report will guide the school in prioritizing areas of focus.

# Findings

## Improvement Priorities

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

### Improvement Priority #1

Revise, monitor, and provide feedback on the implementation of the school's existing instructional framework to ensure quality and fidelity of instructional practices to meet all learners' needs. Revision should include evidence-based instructional practices that (1) support active student engagement and learning, (2) are differentiated to meet individual student needs, (3) clearly inform students of learning expectations and standards of performance, and (4) provide frequent checks of understanding with specific and timely feedback to students about their learning. (Standard 2.1)

#### **Evidence:**

##### **Student Performance Data:**

Student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, suggested a set of shared values and beliefs based upon high expectations and rigor were not embedded into the school's continuous improvement and instructional practices to support student learning and improve student success at all levels. The percentage of seventh-grade students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in math on the K-PREP assessment increased from 14.9 percent in the 2017-2018 school year to 17.5 percent in the 2018-2019 school year; however, the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished at Conway Middle in all content areas at all grade levels indicated performance below their peers at the state level. In reviewing gap group data for Conway Middle, the highest percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in any content gap area was less than 44 percent, with the Not Consolidated Student Group scoring the highest among all subgroups in all content areas. The student growth index data for Conway Middle for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years in reading, math, English Learner, and growth indicator all lagged behind the state index.

##### **Classroom Observation Data:**

Classroom observation data clearly suggested the school did not systemically implement research-based instructional practices that were differentiated and responsive to individual students or that clearly informed students of expectations and standards of performance. The High Expectations Learning Environment received an overall rating of 1.9 on a four-point scale. Students who "engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" (B2) were evident/very evident in 41 percent of observed classrooms. During classroom observations, learners who "engage in rigorous coursework, discussions and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking" (B4) and who "strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher" (B1) were evident/very evident in 23 percent and 19 percent of classrooms, respectively. Furthermore, it was evident/very evident in seven percent of classrooms that learners "demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work" (B3). The Diagnostic Review Team noted learners who "monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored" (E1) was evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms.

The Diagnostic Review Team also found little evidence that indicated students were informed about how their work would be assessed. The Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment received an overall rating of 1.9. A concern of the team was that learners who "understand and/or are able to explain how their work



is assessed” (E4) were evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms. A limited number of students “collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments” (D4) which was evident/very evident in 19 percent of classrooms. Moreover, it was evident/very evident in 34 percent of classrooms that “learners are actively engaged in the learning activities” (D3).

The Equitable Learning Environment received an overall rating of 2.0, with classroom observation data indicating it was evident/very evident that “learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support” (A2) in 15 percent of classrooms. Although classroom observation data revealed it was evident/very evident in 63 percent of classrooms that students “are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner” (A3), students who “engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs” (A1) were evident/very evident in four percent of classrooms.

There were limited opportunities for students to access technology, as it was evident/very evident in 18 percent of classrooms that “learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning” (G2). The Diagnostic Review Team also observed few learners who “use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning” (G1), which was evident/very evident in 22 percent of classrooms. Collectively, these data suggested the absence of instructional practices and effective strategies that engage students in learning to ensure achievement of academic expectations.

#### **Stakeholder Interview Data:**

Stakeholder interviews revealed that some teachers are utilizing the school’s existing instructional framework for lesson planning and engaging in conversations about evidence-based instructional strategies during professional learning community (PLC) meetings; however, building-level administrators indicated these strategies were not fully embedded into all teachers’ instructional practices in the classroom. Furthermore, interviews with school administration revealed the need to shift the school’s priorities to rigorous instruction, student engagement, and the effective integration of technology in order to support the teaching and learning process. This need was substantiated by classroom observation data and overall student performance results on the K-PREP. Stakeholder interviews and informal observations revealed that some student performance data were being reviewed and shared during PLC meetings; however, there was no discussion of how these data result in the adjustment of instruction to meet individual learners’ needs. Stakeholder interviews revealed that administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers were focusing on an enhanced PLC process, but there were few examples shared of differentiated learning activities based on the analysis of student performance data. Stakeholder interviews and classroom observation data revealed a lack of understanding best practices for engaging students in challenging, collaborative, and differentiated learning opportunities. Furthermore, teacher interviews revealed the implementation of the school’s existing instructional framework was inconsistent across all grade levels and content areas. Although school leadership shared that instructional delivery was a leverage point for improvement in all classrooms, stakeholder interviews revealed the lack of a monitoring system to ensure the quality and fidelity of implementation to support improved student achievement.

#### **Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:**

Stakeholder survey data suggested inconsistencies exist related to the implementation and monitoring of research-based instructional practices that differentiate and respond to individual student needs and actively promote a high level of learner engagement. Sixty-three percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “All teachers in our school personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of students” (E2). This instructional practice is not consistent with the classroom observation data that indicated learners who “engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs” were evident/very evident in four percent of observed classrooms. In addition, 44 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs” (E9). Staff survey data revealed 59 percent agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “In our school, challenging curriculum and learning experiences provide equity for all students in the development of learning, thinking, and life skills” (E11), which was comparable to student survey data indicating 65 percent agree/strongly agree with the



statement, “My school provides me with challenging curriculum and learning experiences” (E2). Conversely, 81 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “All of my child’s teachers provide an equitable curriculum that meets his/her learning needs” (E1); however, parents were less agreeable regarding the personalization of instruction with 70 percent indicating they agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “All of my child’s teachers meet his/her learning needs by individualizing instruction” (E4). Finally, 62 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “All of my teachers use a variety of teaching methods and learning activities to help me develop the skills I will need to succeed” (E8), suggesting the revision and monitoring of the school’s existing instructional framework to meet all learners’ needs could be leveraged to improve student learning and achievement.

### **Documents and Artifacts:**

A review of documents and artifacts revealed a schoolwide PLC template to support the use of this collaborative time for improving student achievement and professional practice; however, there was no evidence of how this document was being utilized to provide feedback to teachers specific to their implementation of the school’s existing instructional framework and/or evidence-based instructional practices that respond to individual students and actively promote a high level of learner engagement. Although provided documents indicated teachers were utilizing the Adolescent Literacy Model and Illustrative Math for core instruction, stakeholder interviews revealed the math program was not being implemented with fidelity, as an analysis of student performance data indicated students at Conway Middle were performing well-below grade level and were not able to academically access the curriculum contained in Illustrative Math. The principal’s presentation identified areas of instructional focus to improve student achievement and professional practice throughout the school; however, there was little evidence provided for how these initiatives were being monitored for quality and fidelity of implementation and/or what evaluative feedback was being provided to improve teaching and learning. While the school’s mission statement and instructional framework posters (i.e., driving question, essential standard, learning targets, and assessment) are posted in classrooms, stakeholder interviews and classroom observations revealed the school’s existing instructional model did not provide guidance on the quality of instructional delivery and was not being consistently utilized to focus the intended learning. Lastly, there were few results of data from assessment directly related to students’ personalized learning experiences shared as evidence and/or visible in the hallways and classrooms.

## Improvement Priority #2

Facilitate and monitor the fidelity of implementation of the school's documented curriculum to ensure alignment of all instructional components (i.e., content, skills, assessments, activities, and resources) across and within all grade levels that prepare learners for the next level. This process should include (1) common pacing guides based upon approved state standards and an assessment calendar, (2) periodic, common, formative, and summative assessments to check student progress, (3) staff analysis of student performance data and collaboration regarding adjustments to curriculum and instructional practices, and (4) consistent monitoring and feedback of the process by school leadership. (Standard 2.5)

### Evidence:

#### Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, suggested the school was not effective in implementing and continuously monitoring a schoolwide process of review and adjustment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Data revealed that reading scores for students at Conway Middle fell from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019, with the exception of seventh grade. According to K-PREP student performance data, reading achievement in eighth grade dropped from 39.2 percent in 2017-2018 to 31.1 percent in 2018-2019 of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished. The state average of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished for 2018-2019 was at 62.6 percent. Eighth-grade writing scores also fell well-below state average with 11.5 percent of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished as compared to 31.9 percent at the state level. Science had the lowest percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in the 2018-2019 school year with 6.3 percent of students obtaining this level of achievement. As discussed in Improvement Priority #1, the student growth index data for Conway Middle for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years in reading, math, English Learner, and growth indicator all lagged behind the state index.

#### Classroom Observation Data:

Classroom observation data suggested the school did not develop an effective process to monitor the quality and fidelity of the implementation and revision of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. The High Expectations Learning Environment received an overall rating of 1.9 on a four-point scale. During classroom observations, it was evident/very evident in 19 percent of classrooms that "learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher" (B1). The Diagnostic Review Team noted learners who "engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" (B2) were evident/very evident in 41 percent of classrooms and learners who "engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)" (B4) were evident/very evident in 23 percent of observed classrooms.

Classroom observations revealed that learners who "are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks" (C3) were evident/very evident in 44 percent of classrooms, and learners who "demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work" (B3) were evident/very evident in seven percent of classrooms.

The Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment received an overall rating of 1.9, suggesting limited evidence that students were informed about how their work would be assessed. While learners who "receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work" (E2) were evident/very evident in 37 percent of classrooms, learners who "monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored" (E1) were evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms. A concern of the Diagnostic Review Team was that learners who "understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed" (E4) were evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms.



### **Stakeholder Interview Data:**

Interview data revealed stakeholders were unable to articulate a schoolwide process for the review and adjustment of curriculum and instruction. The principal communicated a sense of urgency around accelerated improvement and instructional priorities; however, the facilitation of a formal process to monitor and provide feedback on the quality and fidelity of implementation of adopted curriculum to ensure alignment with all instructional components was lacking. Stakeholder interviews revealed some teachers were collaboratively discussing high-yield instructional strategies during PLC meetings, but a systemic instructional process did not exist that ensured alignment with the school's approved curriculum, standards, and vision. Furthermore, stakeholder interviews revealed that rigorous instruction and student engagement continued to be challenges for the school, which was substantiated by classroom observation data and overall student performance results on the K-PREP.

Stakeholder interviews revealed that some student performance data were being reviewed and shared during PLC meetings; however, there was no discussion of how this data resulted in the adjustment of curriculum and instruction to meet individual learners' needs. Although there was some evidence in classrooms of student goal-setting, teacher interviews revealed limited use of student assessment data to monitor and track student progress. Moreover, the use and analysis of common formative and summative assessments to measure student progress, to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices, or to provide data for potential revisions to the curriculum were not present.

Interviews with the leadership team indicated they deployed a walkthrough schedule related to the implementation of "The Big Five" improvement priorities at Conway Middle. Collected data was then used to provide immediate feedback to teachers through the walkthrough form, face-to-face, email, or the feedback card. Although the principal and Academic Instructional Coaches (AICs) were trained in the Rutherford Method of Coaching and coaching conversations took place with all teachers at least once during each six-week grading cycle, teacher interviews revealed there was not a consistent, intentional use of feedback received from these coaching conversations to review and adjust curriculum and instruction to meet the personalized needs of students. Although teachers noted they follow the district-approved curriculum, they believed they have little freedom to adjust based upon the individual needs of their students, specifically to Illustrative Math. Furthermore, teachers could not articulate processes used to monitor curriculum and instruction across the school or speak to data being used to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. Overall, stakeholder interviews and longitudinal student performance data did not provide evidence of the effectiveness of the implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.

### **Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:**

Stakeholder survey data related to the review and adjustment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment revealed that systems and processes were not consistently monitored or implemented. Although survey data indicated 82 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "Our school uses data to monitor student readiness and success at the next level" (G5), stakeholder interviews revealed that administrators, professional support staff, and teachers could not articulate a schoolwide process for the review and adjustment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Staff survey data indicated 75 percent agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school use a process to inform students of their learning expectations and standards of performance" (E5). Parents corroborated this practice with 85 percent stating they agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My child knows the expectations for learning in all classes" (E10); however, classroom observation data revealed learners who "understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed" (E4) were evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms. Moreover, 64 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school provide students with specific and timely feedback about their learning" (E6). In addition, staff survey data revealed 69 percent agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school use multiple types of assessments to modify instruction and to revise the curriculum" (E7). While 81 percent of parents agreed/strongly

agreed with the statement, “All of my child’s teachers provide an equitable curriculum that meets his/her learning needs” (E1), student survey results revealed 65 percent agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “My school provides me with challenging curriculum and learning experiences” (E2). Furthermore, 69 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “In my school, the principal and teachers have high expectations of me” (D3).

Of concern to the Diagnostic Review Team was that survey results showed 55 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “In my school, a high-quality education is offered” (C3), highlighting a need to consider how student feedback can be effectively utilized to review and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices to ensure student needs are being met in the school.

### **Documents and Artifacts:**

A review of evidence and artifacts revealed there was not a consistent process to ensure the systematic review and adjustment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment based on multiple student performance data and professional practices. Data reviewed also suggested a limited use of walkthrough data to monitor the quality and fidelity of curriculum implementation. Although the school had an approved, adopted curriculum in place and some evidence to indicate lesson-planning documents were intentionally aligned with learning standards and measures of student success, there was no evidence shared indicating that data were collected and analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum to meet learner needs throughout the school. Although PLC agendas indicated teachers were collaboratively planning lessons to implement curriculum, results of student achievement across grade levels and content areas related to the school’s learning expectations were not present. Furthermore, there was no evidence presented indicating that student performance data were being analyzed and used to assess student preparedness for the next level or to inform potential revisions to the curriculum. While stakeholder interviews revealed the school was collecting data to inform their decision-making, longitudinal data and results related to the effectiveness of the implementation of curriculum and revision process were not evident. These data substantiate a need for the school to facilitate and monitor a schoolwide process that engages stakeholders in the review and adjustment of curriculum and instruction.

## Improvement Priority #3

Formalize and monitor the professional learning community (PLC) structure to ensure all learners have personalized and equitable learning opportunities to develop skills and achieve the learning priorities established by the school. Utilize the PLC structure to ensure all staff use a broad range of quantitative and qualitative data to group learners and differentiate instruction by examining student work to target enrichment and interventions and revising curriculum, assessments, and instructional strategies. (Standard 2.7)

### Evidence:

#### Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, suggested classroom instruction was not being effectively monitored and adjusted to meet individual learner's needs. In reviewing gap group data for Conway Middle, student performance data revealed 35.7 percent of English Learners Monitored scored Proficient/Distinguished in reading during the 2018-2019 school year; however, zero percent of this same subgroup scored Proficient/Distinguished in math. Female students outperformed their male peers in reading, science, and writing, with 20.3 percent of females scoring Proficient/Distinguished in writing compared to 4.1 percent of males. Furthermore, Economically Disadvantaged students scored lower in all content areas when compared to their Non-Economically Disadvantaged peers, with the largest discrepancy of achievement found in social studies with a 10.7 percentage point difference. Group gap data revealed a significant achievement gap between white students and most other student subpopulations at the school. As considered in Improvement Priority #1, student growth index data for Conway Middle for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years in reading, math, English Learner, and growth indicator all lagged behind the state index.

#### Classroom Observation Data:

Classroom observation data suggested the school's PLC structure was not effective in ensuring all learners have personalized and equitable learning opportunities to develop skills and achieve the learning priorities established by the school. The Equitable Learning Environment received an overall rating of 2.0 on a four-point scale. Students who "engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs" (A1) were evident/very evident in four percent of classrooms, with data indicating that in 81 percent of classrooms, observers could not confirm this practice was in place. During observations, learners who "engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" (B2) were evident/very evident in 41 percent of classrooms. While the Supportive Learning Environment received the highest overall rating of 2.4, it was evident/very evident in 44 percent of classrooms that "learners are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks" (C3).

The team also found little evidence that indicated students were informed about how their work would be assessed. The Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment received an overall rating of 1.9. The Diagnostic Review Team noted that learners who "monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored" (E1) were evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms. Furthermore, it was evident/very evident in 11 percent of classrooms that "learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed" (E4). Finally, it was evident/very evident in 41 percent of observed classrooms that students "demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content" (E3). Collectively, classroom observation data indicated a need to formalize and monitor the school's PLC structure to ensure instruction is adjusted to meet individual learner's needs.

#### Stakeholder Interview Data:

The principal's overview revealed the implementation of an enhanced PLC process as one of the school's "Big Five" initiatives for this school year, which was intended to ensure all students are successful; however, stakeholder interviews did not reveal the consistent, meaningful use of data to guide collaboration and/or discussion of improved student achievement and learning during weekly PLC meetings. Teacher interviews revealed PLC time was predominantly used to collaborate with grade level and/or content area peers in lesson



planning and the development of common formative assessments. Although student performance data (i.e., Measures of Academic Progress [MAP] scores) were being used to group students for intervention time on Cougar Day, purposeful discussion around teaching and learning with the use of data inconsistently occurred during PLC time. In addition, stakeholder interviews revealed inconsistent monitoring or evaluation regarding the impact of instruction on learners through common formative and summative assessments.

Stakeholder interviews revealed four critical questions that guide the PLC process at Conway Middle: What is it we want our students to know and be able to do? How do we know if students have learned it? How do we respond when students have not learned? and How do we respond when students do learn? Although stakeholder interviews suggested a high level of staff engagement in the PLC process, administrators voiced concern regarding the amount of time teachers actually spend engaged in collaborative conversations related to the third and fourth questions on the PLC agenda. Interviews revealed teachers use Google docs to post PLC agendas, take notes, and share planning with building administrators. Some indicated their PLC facilitator provided feedback; however, this practice was not consistent. Stakeholder interviews revealed the current implementation and monitoring of PLC time did not result in improved student achievement and/or professional practice.

Interviews with administrators and teachers revealed they did review MAP data; however, the intentional use of this data to systemically guide decisions was not evident. In addition, the principal shared that the PLC process in years prior was implemented from a compliance perspective versus a growth mindset intended to ensure all learners have personalized and equitable learning opportunities. From their perspectives, stakeholders indicated there was great work taking place in the school relative to teaching and learning; however, processes were not always visible, communicated, or monitored systematically.

Interviews with students and parents indicated data were not routinely being used to engage in conversations about student performance, learning, or the setting of individual goals for achievement. Some students indicated they did not know their MAP scores or how they performed. In addition, students revealed they did not believe some teachers taught in the manner they learned. Students voiced a desire for hands-on instruction, higher expectations, more challenging work, and increased opportunities for projects, collaborative learning, and technology. Overall, stakeholder interviews revealed that the implementation of the school's PLC structure did not result in the examination of student work in order to target enrichment and interventions or the revision of curriculum, instruction, and assessment for improving student achievement.

### **Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:**

Stakeholder survey data indicated the school's PLC process was not effective in ensuring that the implementation of evidence-based instructional practices were differentiated and responsive to individual student needs. Sixty-three percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school personalize instructional strategies and interventions to address individual learning needs of students" (E2). Classroom observation data substantiated this instructional practice was not consistent, as learners who "engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs" (A1) were evident/very evident in four percent of observed classrooms. In addition, 44 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs" (E9). Although 75 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment based upon data from student assessments and examination of professional practice" (E1), there was no review of lesson plans tied to data-driven decision-making and no examples of differentiated learning activities based on an analysis of student performance data included as evidence. Sixty-nine percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All teachers in our school use multiple types of assessments to modify instruction and to revise the curriculum (E7), suggesting common formative and summative student performance results are not being consistently used to revise curriculum, instruction, and assessment to meet the needs of individual learners as part of the PLC process. Furthermore, 70 percent of parents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "All of my child's teachers meet his/her learning needs by individualizing instruction" (E4), and 55 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, "My school provides learning



services for me according to my needs” (E7). Seventy percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement, “All teachers in our school have been trained to implement a formal process that promotes discussion about student learning (e.g., action research, examination of student work, reflection, study teams, and peer coaching)” (E10), suggesting additional professional development may be necessary to support the effective implementation of the school’s PLC process.

**Documents and Artifacts:**

A review of documents and artifacts revealed a communicated set of expectations for the PLC process and a PLC agenda template outlining the four critical questions intended to guide these collaborative conversations; however, informal observations of PLC time revealed varied levels of implementation specific to the quality and fidelity of the established process. While the enhanced PLC process was identified as one of “The Big Five” initiatives for improving instruction and student achievement, there was no analysis of classroom and instructional data shared. Evidence and artifacts revealed an emphasis on the PLC process, including notes from the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), the school’s professional development plan for the 2019-2020 school year, the PLC calendar, an agenda of presentation items for the Accelerated Improvement Schools (AIS) week prior to the start of school, and a PLC administration checklist; however, there was little to no evidence cited to support the quality and fidelity of implementation of this process to improve teaching and learning. There was no review of lesson plans tied to data-driven decision-making, and there was a lack of examples of differentiated learning activities based on an analysis of student performance data. Furthermore, there was limited evidence to suggest common formative and summative student performance results were being used to revise curriculum, instruction, and assessment to meet the needs of individual learners as part of the PLC process.

## Insights from the Review

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

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

### Strengths:

Throughout the Diagnostic Review, positive themes related to student success and organizational effectiveness emerged at Conway Middle. The school developed a common vision and mission that helped shape the organization's beliefs about teaching and learning and expectations for learners. This purpose and direction emphasized improved outcomes for all students through an intentional focus on high-quality instruction and the removal of barriers that interfere with the educational process. Staff survey data clearly indicated they believe the school's mission statement is focused on student success. While stakeholders communicated that the school's vision and priorities place an emphasis on high expectations for learning, understanding the needs of each individual student, and catering to the social and emotional well-being of each child, observations were limited of how these shared beliefs were communicated and practiced throughout the school.

Stakeholder interviews and informal observations suggested the principal and staff established a positive culture and climate that supports teaching and learning at Conway Middle. The leadership and staff appeared to genuinely care for the students of their school community and openly expressed their desire to offer students an excellent education. Moreover, stakeholder interviews revealed administrators and teachers shared a common belief that all students can learn and are heavily involved in the welfare of their students. Staff, parents, and students spoke highly of the principal and his leadership. Teachers expressed the principal's level of support as one of the reasons they sought to teach at Conway Middle and/or remained at the school year after year. As a result, the school was able to retain experienced teachers. Currently, there are no vacancies and no first-year teachers in the building. In addition, students voiced their trust in the principal and his leadership using words and phrases such as "caring," "understanding," "nice," "helpful," "true leader," and "he listens to me" to describe him. One student even stated, "He's my friend." Students also spoke highly of the adults in the school and could easily identify multiple teachers and staff members they were comfortable in seeking out for assistance. An eighth-grade student expressed the following to describe the school, "Conway is a big family." Stakeholders indicated all administrators were visible in the building. Teacher attendance was high and data suggested student attendance was improving as a result of supportive systems and programs being implemented.

The principal's overview, stakeholder interviews, and classroom observations revealed some improvement systems and instructional priorities were established to support the teaching and learning process and had the potential for gains in student achievement. The school implemented weekly PLC time for teachers to collaborate; an intervention/enrichment period for math (Cougar Day) to support students at all levels; the Adolescent Literacy Model (ALM) to support literacy across all content areas; Illustrative Math's curriculum to improve core instruction in math; RACE writing responses in social studies classes; and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to continue to shape the culture and climate of the building. Furthermore, the school embedded into its



schedule a student advisory period used to engage students in lessons specific to community building, schoolwide expectations and routines, goal setting, development of interpersonal skills, and help to ensure students have a positive and productive school year. Through formalizing and monitoring the school's professional learning community (PLC) structure to ensure all staff members are using a broad range of data to group learners and differentiate instruction, target interventions, and refine curriculum and assessments, the school has an incredible opportunity to utilize their Cougar Day, student advisory period, and core instructional programming to meet the unique needs of all students.

The principal's overview, stakeholder interviews, and classroom observations indicated the school had a classroom instructional framework to help ensure the quality and fidelity of instructional practices to meet learners' needs. Stakeholder interviews revealed some teachers were utilizing the school's existing instructional framework for lesson planning and engaging in conversations about evidence-based instructional strategies during PLC meetings. In addition, data gathered during district-level learning walks suggested there was evidence of improvement efforts, and classroom observation data revealed some instances of high-quality instruction. Moreover, a review of documents revealed Conway Middle had the highest percentage of students with artifacts in their digital backpacks of all identified AIS schools.

Interviews with the leadership team indicated they deployed a walkthrough schedule related to the implementation of "The Big Five" improvement priorities at Conway Middle. Collected data was then used to provide immediate feedback to teachers through the walkthrough form, face-to-face, email, or the feedback card. Although the principal and Academic Instructional Coaches (AICs) were trained in the Rutherford Method of Coaching and coaching conversations took place with all teachers at least once during each six-week grading cycle, teacher interviews revealed there was not a consistent, intentional use of feedback received from these coaching conversations to review and adjust curriculum and instruction to meet the personalized needs of students.

Stakeholder interviews indicated school leadership created opportunities for students and families to become directly involved in the school. The school positively engaged and leveraged its community partners, such as the University of Louisville and Youth Service Center, to better meet the needs of students and their families. In addition, Conway Middle offered a variety of sports, clubs, and activities to engage students and create a higher degree of engagement and ownership in the school. Parents and students shared a plethora of opportunities available to students throughout the school year (i.e., athletics, tutoring, Saturday School for credit recovery, Men of Quality, No Girl Lost, Sources of Strength, Student Technology Leadership Program, Trauma Care, and peer mediators). Parent interviews also revealed the principal was open and helpful in the revamping of the school's parent organization, which appeared to be very active and supportive of the staff and students through activities like Teacher Appreciation Week.

The principal worked diligently to develop strategic resource management and allocate resources in support of the school's purpose and direction. Stakeholder interviews indicated resource allocations were based on identified needs and key priorities in the school, such as the staffing of AICs, a mental health counselor, and an AmeriCorps worker. Observations revealed the building was a clean, safe learning environment, and the school employed two security guards. In addition, the principal made considerable efforts to support technology integration in the school through grant opportunities, such as the Verizon (VILS) Grant, intended to support innovation and extend learning beyond the school day through a 1:1 iPad with data plan. Stakeholder interviews revealed there was an intentional focus on the rebranding and marketing of Conway Middle in the community (i.e., Raise The Bar-Expect More, #TheConwayWay, and My Why posters). The next critical step for the school is the monitoring and adjustment of desired practices, processes, or programs for quality and fidelity of implementation.

### **Continuous Improvement Process:**

Addressing curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices are areas of needed improvement for Conway Middle. Classroom observations revealed a lack of rigorous instruction being consistently implemented. Furthermore, high-quality work and meaningful feedback occurs seldomly. Assessment practices indicate teachers sometimes use data in purposeful ways to inform instruction. Teachers do participate in PLCs; however,



the use of formative assessment data to determine student mastery of standards is unclear, and there is no routine conversation of how the examination of professional practice directly links to curriculum, instruction, and assessment decisions. The school must find ways to actively engage teachers in collaboration related to curriculum alignment, assessment development, data use to assess student progress, and differentiating instruction to meet the individual needs of students. Furthermore, the school must engage all staff members in a collaborative process to implement and monitor instructional processes that emphasize evidence-based instructional practices that are responsive to individual student needs, engage students in rigorous and challenging learning experiences, and clearly inform students of learning expectations and standards of performance. The use of instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection, and critical thinking skills, and that provide differentiated instruction, frequent checks for understanding, opportunities for re-teaching, and the effective integration of technology to support academic achievement will be important. Steps have been taken in the school to improve student achievement and professional practice through the implementation of Active Learning Method (ALM), Illustrative Math, RACE (restate the question, answer the question, cite your evidence, and explain your answer) writing strategies, Cougar Day intervention, PBIS, an enhanced PLC process, and coaching/feedback conversations with teachers; however, stakeholder interviews revealed there is no formal system of review of curriculum, instruction, and assessment or the examination of professional practices being systemically implemented and monitored. There is little differentiation taking place in classrooms and no formalized plan to adjust curriculum and instruction based on student performance data. Steps must be taken to facilitate the alignment of curriculum with all components of the instructional process (i.e., content, skills, assessments, activities, and resources) to ensure learners are prepared for the next level.

Stakeholder interviews and a review of evidence and artifacts revealed little to no evidence of the existence of a systematic data collection and analysis process to inform decision-making regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment decisions for continued school improvement. Although data sources were included as evidence, there was no analysis or triangulation of data presented to provide a picture of programming effectiveness. Therefore, it will be important for the school to develop and implement an evaluation process for the school to monitor program effectiveness, schoolwide initiatives, and verifiable growth in student learning. It is imperative that school leadership and staff members commit to the use of data to inform the teaching and learning process. In addition, this process can be used to identify gaps and prioritize and connect all systems across the school. By having the ability to evaluate the impact and success of new or existing programs, the school will be able to make informed decisions with supporting evidence to identify programs that are working, programs that need revision, and programs that should be discontinued. Moreover, evidence gathered through this process can be used to help determine resource allocation for programming to support the school in achieving its vision and mission.

Although the principal's overview and stakeholder interviews referred to the implementation of an intervention/enrichment initiative, Cougar Day, to address the needs of students through differentiation and targeted interventions, classroom observation data and stakeholder interviews suggested the school has not formally identified a learning support system to address the unique learning needs of all students. Some student performance data are collected and analyzed; however, staff shared that there is not a formally documented process for determining the fidelity of delivery of identified interventions or the monitoring of these support services to determine successful outcomes. In addition, classroom observation data revealed a lack of differentiated learning opportunities for students with support and assistance to understand content and accomplish tasks being provided infrequently. While support and assistance were provided in some classrooms, additional/alternative instruction and feedback at the appropriate level of challenge to meet the needs of individual students were minimally observed. It is imperative that school personnel provide and coordinate learning support services to meet the unique learning needs of all students across the school.

The principal's overview and stakeholder interviews indicated some professional development has been made available to staff members (e.g., AIS week); however, a documented, formalized plan of professional learning based upon the identified needs of the school was not evident. There was no discussion of planned professional learning activities based upon data-driven needs assessments and data aggregated from supervision and evaluation processes. Moreover, stakeholder interviews revealed that not all staff members have received training

specific to the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data to support student achievement. Although teachers spoke of common planning time and weekly PLC meetings, the consistent, deliberate use of data to guide these collaborative conversations was inconsistent. Staff survey data suggested some teachers gather and use formative and summative data to modify their instruction; however, stakeholder interviews and classroom observation data revealed that an ongoing and effective use of data to drive decision-making by leaders and teachers was not evident in practices and processes. A professional development plan that incorporates data analysis and use, is aligned with the school's continuous improvement plan, and is evaluated regularly will offer professional learning to all educators that will enhance opportunities for student achievement. Furthermore, the development of a professional learning plan that allows educators to monitor and verify progress and modify curriculum and instructional practices will lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.

The principal's overview and stakeholder interviews revealed the implementation of an enhanced PLC process as one of the school's "Big Five" initiatives for this school year intended to ensure all students are successful; however, stakeholder interviews did not reveal a consistent, meaningful use of data to guide collaboration and/or discussion of improved student achievement and learning during weekly PLC meetings. Teacher interviews revealed that PLC time was predominantly used to collaborate with grade level and/or content area peers in lesson planning and the development of common formative assessments. Although student performance data (i.e., MAP scores) were being used to group students for intervention time on Cougar Day, purposeful discussion around teaching and learning with the use of data (i.e., common formative and summative assessments) inconsistently occurs during PLC time. While stakeholder interviews suggested a high level of staff engagement in the PLC process, evidence gathered as part of the Diagnostic Review process revealed the implementation and monitoring of the school's PLC structure has not resulted in the examination of student work to target enrichment and interventions or the revision of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure all learners have personalized and equitable learning opportunities to develop skills and achieve the learning priorities established by the school.

Interviews suggested a willingness and desire among stakeholders to improve the educational experiences and learning opportunities afforded to students who attend Conway Middle. The Diagnostic Review Team encourages the school to utilize the results of this report and the Improvement Priorities identified as part of this review process to build on a foundation of growth and improvement for all staff and students. This emphasis will ensure all students receive a challenging and equitable education through the implementation of rigorously aligned curriculum, differentiated learning experiences, and improved instructional practices.

## Next Steps

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

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

- Review and share the findings with stakeholders.
- Develop plans to address the improvement priorities identified by the Diagnostic Review Team.
- Use the findings and data from the report to guide and strengthen the institution's continuous improvement efforts.
- Celebrate the successes noted in the report



# Team Roster

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

Team Member Name	Brief Biography
<b>Dr. Lynn Simmers</b>	Dr. Lynn Simmers serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Southwest Allen County Schools in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Her interests include literacy and math instruction, analyzing statistical trends to promote improved student achievement, and professional development related to instructional coaching, grading, assessment practices, and teacher induction programs. Simmers' professional career spans 26 years, including experiences as a teacher, assistant principal, curriculum coordinator, principal, and assistant superintendent. She has extensive experience as a Lead Evaluator of school and system accreditation visits and Diagnostic Reviews for Cognia.
<b>Jim Hamm</b>	Jim Hamm has more than 35 years' experience as a teacher and administrator. He is currently serving the Kentucky Department of Education as Co-Lead for Diagnostic Reviews and providing support for TSI schools. He has served as both an elementary and high school principal. He has also held central office positions. The last nine years of his career were spent with the Kentucky Department of Education. He served as a Professional Growth and Effectiveness Lead, Education Recovery Leader, State Assistance Monitor and State Manager during this time. His last assignment was as State Manager of the Breathitt County School District.
<b>Charlotte Jones</b>	Charlotte Jones has 22 years' experience in the education field. Currently, she is in her sixth year working with the Kentucky Department of Education as an Education Recovery Specialist serving schools that are identified as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement school. Prior to this position, Charlotte was a high school social studies teacher at Montgomery County High School in Mount Sterling, Kentucky. She also served as the Gifted and Talented Coordinator, Building Assessment Coordinator, and School Based Decision-Making Vice Chair, and volunteered for various student support organizations and events.
<b>Julia Rawlings</b>	Julia Rawlings has over 26 years of experience as a teacher and administrator. She is currently the Assistant Superintendent for Rowan County Schools in Morehead, Kentucky. In that position, she coordinates curriculum, assessment, and instruction for four elementary schools, one middle school, one high school, and one alternative school in the district. Mrs. Rawlings also has experience as a science consultant and does extensive work with school turnaround in Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools.
<b>Susan Hillman</b>	Susan Hillman is the Principal of W.H. Justice Elementary in Winchester, Clark County's only <i>Leader in Me</i> school. She is in her sixth year at Justice after serving as principal at Strode Station Elementary, also in Winchester. Prior to coming to Clark County, Ms. Hillman worked as both a teacher and administrator in Fayette County. She taught at the primary level at Lexington's Cardinal Valley Elementary and later served as an assistant principal at both Cardinal Valley and Meadowthorpe Elementary. Ms. Hillman has served previously on Cognia accreditation teams and has led her schools through the accreditation process twice during her time as principal.

# Addenda

## Student Performance Data

### Conway Middle Performance Results

Content Area	Grade	%P/D School (17-18)	%P/D State (17-18)	%P/D School (18-19)	%P/D State (18-19)
Reading	6	33.2	59.7	29.4	59.0
	7	27.4	57.4	27.5	57.4
	8	39.2	62.9	31.1	62.6
Math	6	17.2	47.5	14.3	46.7
	7	14.9	47.4	17.5	47.1
	8	10.4	46.1	8.9	45.3
Science	7	6.3	25.9	6.3	26.0
Social Studies	8	22.8	60.2	23.0	58.8
Writing	8	11.2	44.3	11.5	31.9

#### Plus

- Three areas (grade 7 reading, grade 7 math, and grade 7 social studies) improved from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019.

#### Delta

- The percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished at Conway Middle in all content areas at all grade levels indicated performance below their peers at the state level.
- Reading scores for students fell from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 with the exception of seventh grade.
- Eighth grade writing scores also fell well below the state average with 11.5 percent of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished as compared to 31.9 percent at the state level.
- Science had the lowest percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in the 2018-2019 school year.

### Growth Index Middle

Content Area	School (17-18)	State (17-18)	School (18-19)	State (18-19)
Reading	12.8	16.1	46.7	56.1
Math	6.2	8.0	38.4	48.8
English Learner	3.6	5.4	48.9	56.3
Growth Indicator	9.5	12.1	42.6	52.5

*Note: The formula for calculating growth changed between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. Comparisons should only be made between school and state ratings.*

Delta

- Student growth index data for Conway Middle for the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years in reading, math, English learner, and growth indicator all lag behind the state index.

## 2018-2019 Percent Proficient/Distinguished

Group	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies	Writing
African American	15.0	7.6	0.9	6.6	4.9
Alternative Assessment					
American Indian					
Asian					
Consolidated Student Group	18.9	8.2	1.9	10.0	5.6
Disabilities (IEP)	9.3	4.7	2.3	5.6	0.0
Disabilities Regular Assessment	9.3	4.7	2.3	5.6	0.0
Disabilities with Acc.	7.8	3.9	0.0		
Economically Disadvantaged	27.0	12.3	5.5	20.0	8.7
English Learners	33.3	0.0			
English Learners Monitored	35.7	0.0			
Female	32.1	11.8	7.2	20.3	20.3
Foster					
Gifted and Talented					
Hispanic	42.6	14.9	6.7	31.3	18.8
Homeless	7.7	7.7		8.3	8.3
Male	26.8	15.2	5.6	25.2	4.1
Migrant					
Military					
No Disabilities	32.3	14.9	7.1	25.6	13.2
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	36.2	17.1	8.8	30.7	18.7
Non-English Learners	29.3	13.8			
Non-Migrant	29.3	13.6	6.3	23.0	11.5
Not Consolidated Student Group	43.9	21.1	12.4	41.8	20.0
Not English Learners Monitored	29.2	13.8			
Not Gifted and Talented		13.4	6.3	23.0	11.5
Not Homeless	30.4	13.9	6.5	23.6	11.6
Pacific Islander					
Total Students Tested	29.3	13.6	6.3	23.0	11.5
Two or More	30.0				
White	40.1	19.4	10.4	38.2	17.9

#### Plus

- The Not Consolidated Student Group (Whites, Asians, and Economically Disadvantaged) achieved the highest scores among all subgroups.

#### Delta

- Female students outperformed their male peers in reading, science, and (significantly higher) writing.
- Males outperformed Females in math and social studies.
- There is a significant gap between White students and most other student subpopulations.
- The highest percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in any content gap area was less than 44 percent.
- Student performance data revealed 35.7 percent of English Learners Monitored scored Proficient/Distinguished in reading during the 2018-2019 school year; however, zero percent of this same subgroup scored Proficient/Distinguished in math.



# Schedule

## Monday, December 2, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
4:00 p.m.	Brief Team Meeting	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members
5:00 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.	Principal Presentation	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members
5:45 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #1	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

## Tuesday, December 3, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
7:30 a.m.	Team arrives at institution	School Office	Diagnostic Review Team Members
8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Interviews / Classroom Observations / Stakeholder Interviews / Artifact Review	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #2	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

## Wednesday, December 4, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
7:30 a.m.	Team arrives at institution	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Interviews / Classroom Observations / Stakeholder Interviews / Artifact Review	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
3:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Team Work Session #3	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

## Thursday, December 5, 2019

Time	Event	Where	Who
8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Final Team Work Session	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members



# School Diagnostic Review Summary Report

## Conway Middle

Jefferson County Public Schools

December 2-5, 2019

The members of the Conway Middle Diagnostic Review Team are grateful to the district and school leadership, staff, students, families, and community for the cooperation and hospitality extended during the assessment process.

Following its review of extensive evidence and in consideration of the factors outlined in 703 KAR 5:280, Section 4, the Diagnostic Review Team submitted the following assessment regarding the **principal's capacity** to function or develop as a turnaround specialist, including if the principal should be reassigned, to the Commissioner of Education:

The principal does have the capacity to function or to develop as a turnaround specialist and, accordingly, should continue as principal of Conway Middle.

The Commissioner of Education has reviewed the Diagnostic Review and recommends, pursuant to KRS 160.346(6), the Superintendent adopt the assessment of principal capacity submitted by the Diagnostic Review Team.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Associate Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education

I have received the Diagnostic Review for Conway Middle.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal, Conway Middle

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent, Jefferson County Public Schools