

Cognia Diagnostic Review Report

Results for: Fulton County Schools

January 21-24, 2020

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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.

| Stakeholder Groups | Number |
|---|---------------|
| Board Members | 5 |
| District-Level Administrators | 9 |
| Building-Level Administrators | 2 |
| Professional Support Staff (e.g., Counselor, Media Specialist, Technology Coordinator) | 1 |
| Certified Staff | 15 |
| Noncertified Staff | 16 |
| Students | 47 |
| Parents | 11 |
| Community Members/Partners | 2 |
| Total | 108 |

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 system commits to a purpose statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for learners. | Initiating |
| 1.3 | The system engages in a continuous improvement process that produces evidence, including measurable results of improving student learning and professional practice. | Initiating |
| 1.4 | The governing authority establishes and ensures adherence to policies that are designed to support system effectiveness. | Improving |
| 1.6 | Leaders implement staff supervision and evaluation processes to improve professional practice and organizational effectiveness. | Initiating |
| 1.7 | Leaders implement operational processes and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning. | Initiating |
| 1.8 | Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the system’s purpose and direction. | Initiating |
| 1.9 | The system provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness. | Initiating |
| 1.10 | Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement. | Insufficient |
| 1.11 | Leaders implement a quality assurance process for its institutions to ensure system effectiveness and consistency. | Insufficient |

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 system. | 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 system's learning expectations. | Initiating |
| 2.9 | The system implements processes to identify and address the specialized needs of learners. | 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 system implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning. | Insufficient |

Resource Capacity Domain

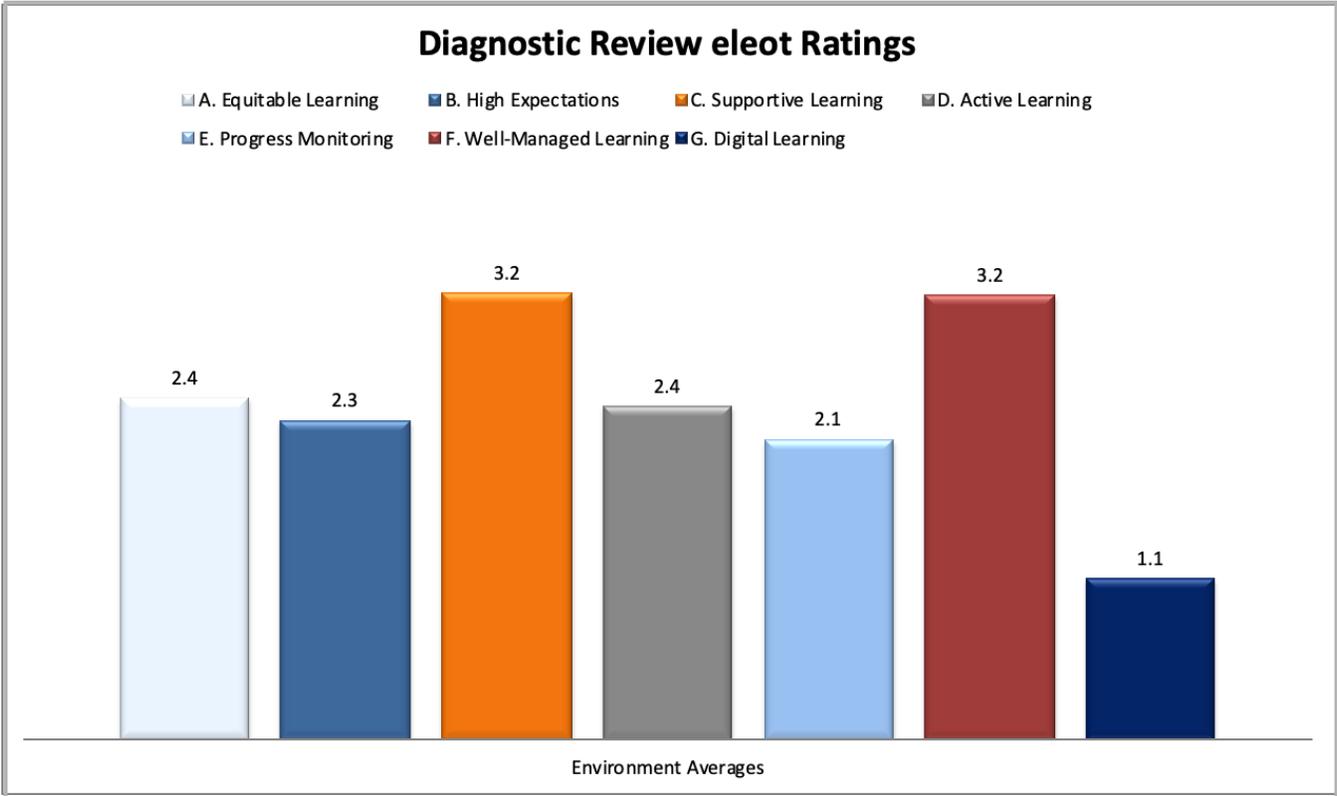
The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably so that the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning 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 system plans and delivers professional learning to improve the learning environment, learner achievement, and the system’s effectiveness. | Initiating |
| 3.2 | The system’s professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness. | Improving |
| 3.4 | The system attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the system’s purpose and direction. | Initiating |
| 3.7 | The system demonstrates strategic resource management that includes long-range planning and use of resources in support of the system’s purpose and direction. | Improving |
| 3.8 | The system allocates human, material, and fiscal resources in alignment with the system’s identified needs and priorities to improve student performance and organizational effectiveness. | Initiating |

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 29 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 | 1.4 | Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs. | 77% | 7% | 13% | 3% |
| A2 | 3.1 | Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support. | 3% | 13% | 53% | 30% |
| A3 | 3.6 | Learners are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner. | 0% | 3% | 37% | 60% |
| A4 | 1.6 | 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. | 57% | 30% | 10% | 3% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: | | | 2.4 | | | |

| B. High Expectations Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---------|--|--------------|------------------|---------|--------------|
| Indicators | Average | Description | Not Observed | Somewhat Evident | Evident | Very Evident |
| B1 | 2.5 | Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher. | 10% | 37% | 43% | 10% |
| B2 | 2.4 | Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable. | 13% | 43% | 37% | 7% |
| B3 | 1.9 | Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work. | 47% | 27% | 20% | 7% |
| B4 | 2.3 | Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing). | 17% | 43% | 37% | 3% |
| B5 | 2.3 | Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning. | 20% | 33% | 43% | 3% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: | | | 2.3 | | | |



| C. Supportive Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---------|--|--------------|------------------|---------|--------------|
| Indicators | Average | Description | Not Observed | Somewhat Evident | Evident | Very Evident |
| C1 | 3.1 | Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful. | 3% | 17% | 47% | 33% |
| C2 | 2.9 | Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback). | 7% | 23% | 40% | 30% |
| C3 | 3.2 | Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks. | 0% | 17% | 43% | 40% |
| C4 | 3.4 | Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher. | 3% | 3% | 40% | 53% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: | | | 3.2 | | | |

| D. Active Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---------|--|--------------|------------------|---------|--------------|
| Indicators | Average | Description | Not Observed | Somewhat Evident | Evident | Very Evident |
| D1 | 2.6 | Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and teacher predominate. | 3% | 50% | 30% | 17% |
| D2 | 2.1 | Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences. | 27% | 37% | 33% | 3% |
| D3 | 2.9 | Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities. | 7% | 23% | 43% | 27% |
| D4 | 1.8 | Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments. | 50% | 30% | 7% | 13% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: | | | 2.4 | | | |

| E. Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|--|---------|---|--------------|------------------|---------|--------------|
| Indicators | Average | Description | Not Observed | Somewhat Evident | Evident | Very Evident |
| E1 | 1.8 | Learners monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored. | 43% | 37% | 17% | 3% |
| E2 | 2.6 | Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work. | 0% | 47% | 43% | 10% |
| E3 | 2.7 | Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content. | 0% | 37% | 53% | 10% |
| E4 | 1.4 | Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed. | 73% | 20% | 3% | 3% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: | | | 2.1 | | | |

| F. Well-Managed Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---------|--|--------------|------------------|---------|--------------|
| Indicators | Average | Description | Not Observed | Somewhat Evident | Evident | Very Evident |
| F1 | 3.4 | Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other. | 3% | 7% | 37% | 53% |
| F2 | 3.4 | Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others. | 3% | 3% | 43% | 50% |
| F3 | 2.9 | Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another. | 10% | 20% | 37% | 33% |
| F4 | 2.9 | Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions. | 3% | 30% | 40% | 27% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: | | | 3.2 | | | |

| G. Digital Learning Environment | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---|--------------|------------------|---------|--------------|
| Indicators | Average | Description | Not Observed | Somewhat Evident | Evident | Very Evident |
| G1 | 1.2 | Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning. | 80% | 17% | 3% | 0% |
| G2 | 1.2 | Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning. | 93% | 0% | 3% | 3% |
| G3 | 1.0 | Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning. | 97% | 3% | 0% | 0% |
| Overall rating on a 4 point scale: | | 1.1 | | | | |

eleot Narrative

The Diagnostic Review Teams for Fulton County Elementary and Fulton County Middle School conducted 29 classroom observations in core academic classrooms, which provided the District Diagnostic Review Team sufficient information about the classroom learning environments. Of the seven learning environments, the Supportive Learning Environment earned the highest overall rating of a 3.2 on a four-point scale. The Digital Learning Environment had the lowest overall average rating of 1.1.

Classroom observation data revealed three items identified as strengths. The highest-rated item emerged in the Equitable Learning Environment, where instances of students who “are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner” (A3) were evident/very evident in 97 percent of classrooms. The next two highest-rated items emerged in the Supportive Learning and Well-Managed Learning Environments. It was evident/very evident in 93 percent of classrooms that students “demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher” (C4) and “demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others” (F2).

The four lowest-rated individual items emerged in the Digital Learning and Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environments. Observation data revealed it was evident/very evident in zero percent of classrooms that students “use digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning” (G3), while instances where students “use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning” (G2) were evident/very evident in six percent of classrooms. Also in six percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students “understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed” (E4). Additionally, it was evident/very evident in three percent of classrooms that students “use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning” (G1).

The District Diagnostic Review Team identified additional items needing improvement in all seven learning environments. The classroom observation data showed that instances of students who “engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs” (A1) were evident/very evident in 16 percent of classrooms. Additionally, it was evident/very evident in 27 percent of classrooms that students “demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work” (B3). The team also found in 20 percent of classrooms, it was



evident/very evident that students “collaborate with peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments” (D4).

In conclusion, the classroom observation data revealed students were rarely exposed to differentiated learning opportunities, high expectations, or rigorous course work. Students had few differentiated tasks and ongoing activities to connect classwork with their own and other’s backgrounds and real-life experiences. The data also revealed a lack of student understanding about how work was assessed, as well as few instances where students worked collaboratively on projects. By examining classroom observation data for all items within the seven learning environments, leaders and staff members at Fulton County Schools will be able to identify additional leverage points to help the district and schools improve instructional capacity and increase student performance.



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

Design, implement, and monitor a collaborative data-driven continuous improvement process. Ensure the continuous improvement process contains specific goals and strategies to address needs identified from multiple sources of data, including Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP), benchmark assessments, needs assessment, and teacher walkthrough data. Annual results of the continuous improvement process should be reviewed and adjusted based on student performance data. (Standard 1.3)

Evidence:

Student Performance Data:

Student performance, as detailed in an addendum to this report, suggested the absence of a continuous data-driven improvement process. Student achievement data, as measured by K-PREP, revealed that the percentage of students at Fulton County Elementary who scored Proficient/Distinguished was below the state average in all content areas in 2018-2019. Additionally, the percentage of students who scored Proficient/Distinguished in fourth-grade decreased by 29.2 percentage points (from 60.9 percent to 31.7 percent) in reading and 19.4 percentage points (60.9 percent to 41.5 percent) in mathematics.

Similarly, student performance data for Fulton County Middle School was below the state average in all areas. Of concern to the District Diagnostic Review Team was the decrease in percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in reading from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 in seventh- and eighth-grades and in eighth-grade social studies. The data revealed the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in seventh- and eighth-grade reading decreased by 40 percentage points in each (from 79.4 percent to 38.1 percent in seventh-grade and from 80.5 percent to 36.1 percent in eighth-grade). The percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in eighth-grade social studies decreased by 41.6 percentage points (from 80.5 percent to 38.9 percent).

K-PREP data further revealed that the percentages of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in science at both schools was significantly below the state average for both the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years.

Stakeholder Interview Data:

Stakeholder interview data revealed that few district and school staff members were able to articulate a continuous improvement process. Interview data also indicated inconsistencies in the process for monitoring and evaluating strategies and activities to determine districtwide implementation effectiveness. Interview data further showed that while district leaders collected and analyzed data, little time was dedicated to assessing the effectiveness of implemented programs and practices, examining the fidelity of implementation, or adjusting instruction to meet students' needs. The stakeholder interview data also showed while most teachers at Fulton County Elementary and Middle Schools met in professional learning community (PLC) meetings, they did not follow a common protocol, so the meetings were inconsistently implemented. Interview data further revealed that most PLC meetings focused on reviewing data, but not on what to do with the data. When asked about the district's continuous improvement process, the superintendent responded, "That's our downfall. We only have



outlined the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan (CDIP).” The superintendent further acknowledged that the district timelines for the CDIP were different than those required by the state.

Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:

Staff survey data showed that 80 percent of staff members at Fulton County Elementary and Middle Schools agreed/strongly agreed with the statements “Our school leaders monitor data related to school continuous improvement goals” (G7) and “Our school has a systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and using data” (G3), respectively. Meanwhile, 67 percent of middle school students agreed/strongly agreed with the statement “In my school, the purpose and expectations are clearly explained to me and my family” (C2) and 59 percent of elementary school students agreed that “My principal and teachers ask me what I think about school” (G1). Staff survey data further revealed 84 percent of middle school staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement “Our school has a continuous improvement process based on data, goals, actions and measures of growth” (C5). Additionally, 80 percent of middle school parents agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school has established goals and a plan for improving student learning” (C3) and “Our school communicates effectively about the school’s goals and activities” (D5). Student survey data also showed that 43 percent of middle school students agreed/strongly agreed that “All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs” (E9). The survey data results suggested the absence a consistently implemented, data-driven continuous improvement process.

Documents and Artifacts:

A review of several documents and artifacts (i.e., Fulton County Schools 2019-2020 District Improvement Plan Phase Two: The Needs Assessment for Fulton County Schools, Fulton County Elementary and Middle Schools (FCEMS) Leadership Team meeting agenda and minutes) revealed the absence of a data-driven continuous improvement process. There was no evidence that the Fulton County School Board established a current, documented, and up-to-date strategic plan. Additionally, development of curriculum and/or pacing guides was in its infancy and a districtwide protocol for the implementation of PLCs was absent.

Improvement Priority #2

Develop and implement a documented, systematic quality assurance process for district schools to ensure system effectiveness and consistency. When implementing the district's quality assurance process, district leaders should: 1) provide feedback to school staff members on their implementation of the district's expectations and improvement efforts, 2) collect, analyze, and monitor the progress made toward achieving the district's educational expectations, 3) evaluate and monitor the process to ensure adjustments to the system's education expectations are made, 4) provide projected performance targets for students and staff members, and 5) present a quarterly report to the school board focused on improvement with rationales for adjustments in the teaching and learning process. (Standard 1.11)

Evidence:

Student Performance Data:

The student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, indicated the absence of a documented, systematic quality assurance process that ensures effectiveness and consistency across district schools. The performance data were considered by the District Diagnostic Review Team to identify Improvement Priority #2

Stakeholder Interview Data:

In interviews, district leaders were able to quote the district's vision (Proficiency, Positive Relationships and Pilot Pride). While this vision was adopted in 2005, interview data revealed it had not been revisited since its inception. Furthermore, during interviews, district leaders shared that a formal process to review and update the vision did not exist. Stakeholder interview data also revealed district leaders and board members were unable to share a mission/purpose statement defining beliefs about teaching and learning. Interview data also showed the district did not develop a five-year strategic plan outlining Fulton County Schools' goals and objectives to improve student outcomes and organizational effectiveness. Stakeholder interview data showed most district leaders identified a need to develop a systemic process whereby schools monitored and ensured the quality and fidelity of implementing a continuous improvement process. Stakeholder interview data further indicated that professional development was needed to train leaders and teachers to improve instructional practices.

Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:

Survey data revealed 87 percent of Fulton County Elementary and 84 percent of Fulton County Middle staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement "Our school has a continuous improvement process based on data, goals, actions, and measures of growth" (C5). Additionally, 85 percent of elementary school and 84 percent of middle school staff members agreed/strongly agreed with the statement "Our school's governing body or school board complies with all policies, procedures, laws, and regulations" (D1). Staff survey data further showed that 66 percent of middle school staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school's governing body or school board maintains a distinction between its roles and responsibilities and those of school leadership" (D2). Survey data also revealed that 80 percent of Fulton County Middle School and 85 percent of Fulton County Elementary staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school has a systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and using data" (G3). Additionally, 80 percent of elementary and 84 percent of middle school staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school's leaders engage effectively with all stakeholders about the school's purpose and direction" (D9). Eighty percent of middle school staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "Our school ensures all staff members are trained in the evaluation, interpretation, and use of data" (G4) while 65 percent of elementary staff members agreed/strongly agreed with that statement. Staff survey data further indicated that 83 percent of middle and 85 percent of elementary staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "In our school, all staff members participate in continuous professional learning based on identified needs of the school" (E17). Student survey data revealed 54 percent of Fulton County Middle School students agreed/strongly agreed that "My school considers students' opinions when planning ways to improve the school" (G2).



Documents and Artifacts:

A review of documents and artifacts (e.g. 2019 Comprehensive District Improvement Plan, Fulton County Board policies) revealed the absence of a districtwide, systematic quality assurance process or plan that ensured the effective, consistent, and accurate implementation of district initiatives and programs. The district did not have a five-year strategic plan.



Improvement Priority #3

Develop and implement a systematic process for monitoring and analyzing formative and summative assessment data. Ensure instructional staff use the process to monitor and verify students' progress toward meeting learning expectations and modify instruction and learning experiences for students. (Standard 2.11)

Evidence:

Student Performance Data:

The student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, indicated the absence of a systematic process for monitoring and analyzing formative and summative assessment data that ensured instructional staff monitored and verified students' progress toward meeting learning expectations and modified instruction and learning experiences for students. The performance data were considered by the District Diagnostic Review Team to identify Improvement Priority #3.

Classroom Observation Data:

Classroom observation data from Fulton County Elementary and Fulton County Middle School, as previously detailed in this report, revealed instances where students "engage in differentiated learning opportunities" (A1) were evident/very evident in 16 percent of classrooms. Furthermore, in 27 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that students "demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work" (B3). Additionally, instances where students "engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" (B2) were evident/very evident in 44 percent of classrooms. Observation data also revealed that, in 53 percent of classrooms, students "receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work" (E2). Classroom observations further revealed students who "monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored" (E1) was evident/very evident in 20 percent of classrooms. Finally, in six percent of classrooms observed, it was evident/very evident that students "understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed" (E4).

Stakeholder Interview Data:

The stakeholder interview data revealed that while there were several sources of documentation for planning efforts to analyze data, a consistent process was absent to monitor and make adjustments to instruction in order to meet individual student needs. During an interview, a district administrator stated, "We always looked at data but did not react to data." Interview data revealed that while all teachers participated in PLC meetings, this time was not consistently used to discuss lesson plans and/or analyze data to adjust instruction. The interview data further showed the absence of a districtwide protocol for PLCs. Additionally, district leaders expressed the need for further professional development for teachers in analyzing data and making data-informed decisions. When asked about the district's continuous improvement process, the superintendent responded, "That's our downfall. We only have outlined the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan (CDIP)." The superintendent further acknowledged the district timelines for the CDIP are different than those required by the state.

Stakeholder Perception/Experience Data:

The stakeholder perception data showed 84 percent of staff members at Fulton County Middle School agreed/strongly agreed with the statement "All teachers in our school monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment based on data from student assessments and examination of professional practice" (E1). Furthermore, while 83 percent of middle school staff members agreed/strongly agreed that "All teachers in our school use multiple types of assessments to modify instruction and to revise curriculum" (E7), 43 percent of middle school students agreed/strongly agreed "All my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs" (E9). Stakeholder perception data further revealed 60 percent of staff members at Fulton County Elementary agreed that "All teachers in our school have been trained to implement a formal process that promotes discussion about student learning" (E10) and 83 percent of staff members at Fulton County Middle School agreed/strongly agreed with the same statement.



Documents and Artifacts:

A review of documents and artifacts (e.g., Seven Minute Reading Room, Fulton County Teaching and Learning Walkthrough Procedures, minutes of Fulton County Leadership meeting for 6/11/19) revealed the absence of a plan to monitor the fidelity and consistency of implementation of protocols to revise and adjust instruction.



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:

The Diagnostic Review Team found that the district, under the leadership of the superintendent and with support from the school board, made attempts to support the newly identified Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools by providing additional resources (e.g., interventionists, additional positions, and Seven Minute Reading Room staffed with volunteers). Additionally, the superintendent had a positive relationship with the board and the district's multiple stakeholders. Board members expressed a belief in the ability of the superintendent and a commitment to working with him and district leaders to support continuous improvement for Fulton County Schools. Furthermore, under the direction of the superintendent and with the approval of the board, the district made significant efforts in resource management, which resulted in a larger contingency in the district's budget.

Over the past five years, Fulton County Schools secured multiple grants supporting teaching and learning. The expansion of the Head Start Program and the creation of the Four Rivers Career Academy provided increased learning opportunities for students entering and exiting the district. The creation of a strong early childhood program, as well as increased opportunities for high school students to participate in a variety of career education and dual-credit experiences, provided much needed services and budget relief to an impoverished community.

Continuous Improvement Process:

Interview and survey data and a review of documents and artifacts indicated teachers and leaders inconsistently engaged in a continuous improvement and decision-making process to build instructional and organizational capacity. The ongoing and effective use of data to drive decision-making by teachers and leaders was not evident in practices or processes. Additionally, an established, ongoing process to nurture instructional improvement was implemented inconsistently.

The district was in the early stages of developing and implementing a process that clearly defined high expectations and the appropriate level of rigor that could positively affect student achievement. Moreover, while the district had an established protocol for monitoring instruction, the District Diagnostic Review Team found that the focus was not on the implementation of planned high-yield instructional strategies. Classroom observation and stakeholder interview data, survey results, and a review of documents suggested the district did not successfully establish effective, results-driven continuous improvement planning processes. In addition, the district did not use data to routinely evaluate program effectiveness, monitor the impact of specific strategies, or determine attainment of improvement goals. The District Diagnostic Review Team suggests the district establish and commit to a clear set of performance benchmarks and measures to monitor and determine its ability to meet future improvement goals as a way to leverage school and district improvement.



Addressing curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices is critical. Classroom observation data revealed a lack of consistency in implementing research-based, rigorous instruction. Furthermore, students engaging in high-quality work and teachers providing meaningful feedback were rarely observed. The team recommends the district find ways to actively engage teachers in ongoing, structured collaboration related to curriculum alignment, assessment development, data analysis and its translation into actionable steps, differentiated instruction, and student learning tasks.

Since 2005, the district has had the motto/vision “Proficiency, Positive Relationships, and Pilot Pride.” Interview data revealed that the motto/vision has not been revisited since its inception. Furthermore, district leaders shared during interviews that a formal process to review and update the vision did not exist. Stakeholder interview data further showed district and school leaders and board members were unable to share a mission/purpose statement that defined beliefs about teaching and learning. During interviews, district leaders stated that a five-year strategic plan outlining Fulton County Schools’ goals and objectives to improve student outcomes and organizational effectiveness was not developed. The governing body and district leadership should work collaboratively in the development, implementation, and monitoring of such a plan anchored in a measurable mission statement that defines beliefs about teaching and learning, including the expectations for students.

District leadership should consistently implement systematic processes to ensure the efficacy of implementing initiatives, monitoring instruction, evaluating programs, coaching, mentoring, supporting all staff members, and becoming adept at providing and participating in opportunities to share and build on the strengths of the staff. In a genuine effort to be helpful to the district in the immediate years ahead, the team identified the three Improvement Priorities contained herein as most critical.

Next Steps

The results of the Diagnostic Review provide the next step 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 |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <p>Milagros Fornell</p> | <p>Milagros Fornell is an educator who has had a powerful impact on her community, students, parents, and peers since her first day as a mathematics teacher in 1978. Throughout her 36-year career with Miami-Dade County Public Schools, she has served as school-site administrator, regional curriculum director, regional superintendent, Associate Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer and Chief of Staff. During her six years as Chief Academic Officer, the district eliminated all F-rated high schools, student performance increased on both state and national measures, participation in and performance on Advanced Placement (AP) exams increased, graduation rates improved, and the district was awarded the Broad prize.</p> |
| <p>Tim Huddleston</p> | <p>Tim Huddleston is currently an Education Recovery Leader for the Kentucky Department of Education serving Additional Targeted Support and Improvement schools. He is in his 29th year of education, in which his experiences consist of a middle school classroom educator, high school assistant principal, middle school and high school principal, and school improvement specialist. For the past five years, he has been actively involved in K-12 school improvement work and has extensive experience with analysis of data, curriculum, instruction, assessments, and systems.</p> |
| <p>Felicia Duncan</p> | <p>Felicia Duncan retired from Wilson County Schools after more than 42 years in public education in Tennessee and California. She has held positions as an elementary and middle school teacher, middle high/high school Home Economics teacher, Principal/Director of Easter Seal School for the Handicapped, and as Supervisor of Instruction for elementary and middle schools in Wilson County, TN. Her supervision area included K-12 Testing and Assessment coordination and data training, both for her own system and for the State Department of Education. It also included supervision of instruction in grades Pre-K-8, K-12 libraries, district guidance counselors, Gifted Education, ESL and Migrant Education, Title II federal program, and Accountability and School Improvement. She provided many professional development programs for her district, other state school systems, and the State Department of Education, specializing in the areas of value-added assessment and school improvement. For more than 25 years, Mrs. Duncan has served on and led numerous school and district accreditation teams and led her own district to system accreditation.</p> |
| <p>Kanna Edison</p> | <p>Kanna Edison has 13 years of experience as a teacher and instructional coach. She is currently in her third year as an Education Recovery Specialist for math for the Kentucky Department of Education. She taught high school math for 7 years in Louisville, KY. Following her classroom experience, she served as a District Math Goal Clarity Coach for three years with the role of supporting Jefferson County Middle and High Schools with curriculum design, curriculum implementation, and instructional coaching. In her current position, she is assigned to support schools by assisting in strategic thinking/planning, alignment of instructional systems, and providing coaching for teachers and administration. Throughout her career she has served on many local, state, and national committees and presented at several conferences.</p> |

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Connie J. Smith | Dr. Connie Smith has been an educator for 42 years as a Special Education Teacher in Tullahoma, a Special Education Supervisor in Wilson County, a Principal in New York City, and an Assistant Superintendent. She has worked with Tennessee school board members as Executive Director in professional development/strategic planning training and risk management. For 17 years, she worked in the Tennessee Department of Education working to develop statewide initiatives in school improvement planning, accountability, and combining state approval and regional accreditation practices. She served as the Executive Director of Accountability for the State of Tennessee for 12 years. She also served as the State Department of Education's Takeover Agent for Schools/School Systems not meeting federal requirements. Dr. Smith currently serves as Regional Director for Cognia for the states of Tennessee, Ohio, and Virginia. |
|------------------------|--|

Addenda

Student Performance Data

Elementary school 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 | 3 | 38.5 | 52.3 | 32.6 | 52.7 |
| | 4 | 60.9 | 53.7 | 31.7 | 53.0 |
| Math | 3 | 48.7 | 47.3 | 21.7 | 47.4 |
| | 4 | 60.9 | 47.2 | 41.5 | 46.7 |
| Science | 4 | 10.9 | 30.8 | 12.2 | 31.7 |

Plus

- Student performance data showed the percentage of fourth-grade students who scored Proficient/Distinguished in science increased from 10.9 percent in 2017-2018 to 12.2 percent in 2018-2019.

Delta

- Student performance data revealed the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in third-grade reading declined from 38.5 percent in 2017-2018 to 32.6 percent in 2018-2019.
- Student performance data indicated the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in fourth-grade reading declined from 60.9 percent in 2017-2018 to 31.7 percent in 2018-2019.
- Student performance data revealed the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in third-grade math declined from 48.7 percent in 2017-2018 to 21.7 percent in 2018-2019.
- Student performance data showed the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in fourth-grade math declined from 60.9 percent in 2017-2018 to 41.5 percent in 2018-2019.

Growth Index elementary

| Content Area | School (17-18) | State (17-18) | School (18-19) | State (18-19) |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| Reading | 18.8 | 19.7 | 33.8 | 57.8 |
| Math | 12.4 | 14.5 | 30.8 | 57.6 |
| English Learner | | 18.8 | | 70.5 |
| Growth Indicator | 15.6 | 17.1 | 32.3 | 57.7 |

Note: The formula for calculating growth changed between 18-19 and 19-20. Comparisons should only be made between school and state ratings.

Plus

- No pluses noted in this section.

Delta

- In 2018-2019, the school’s growth index in reading was 33.8 percent, below the state average 57.8 percent.
- In 2018-2019, the school’s growth index in math was 30.8 percent, below the state average of 57.6 percent.
- In 2018-2019, the school’s growth indicator was 32.3 percent, which was significantly below the state average of 57.7 percent.

2018-19 percent Proficient/Distinguished elementary (3-4)

| Group | Reading | Math | Science | Social Studies | Writing |
|---------------------------------|---------|------|---------|----------------|---------|
| African American | 13.0 | 8.7 | | | |
| Alternative Assessment | | | | | |
| American Indian | | | | | |
| Asian | | | | | |
| Consolidated Student Group | 17.1 | 9.8 | 6.3 | | |
| Disabilities (IEP) | 18.8 | 6.3 | | | |
| Disabilities Regular Assessment | 18.8 | 6.3 | | | |
| Disabilities with Acc. | 18.2 | 0.0 | | | |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 21.4 | 17.9 | 4.2 | | |
| English Learners | | | | | |
| English Learners Monitored | | | | | |
| Female | 34.9 | 32.6 | 13.0 | | |
| Foster | | | | | |
| Gifted and Talented | | | | | |
| Hispanic | | | | | |
| Homeless | | | | | |
| Male | 29.5 | 29.5 | 11.1 | | |
| Migrant | | | | | |
| Military | | | | | |
| No Disabilities | 35.2 | 36.6 | 11.8 | | |
| Non-Economically Disadvantaged | 51.6 | 54.8 | 23.5 | | |
| Non-English Learners | | | | | |
| Non-Migrant | 32.2 | 31.0 | 12.2 | | |
| Not Consolidated Student Group | 45.7 | 50.0 | 16.0 | | |
| Not English Learners Monitored | | | | | |
| Not Gifted and Talented | 29.3 | | | | |
| Not Homeless | | | 12.2 | | |
| Pacific Islander | | | | | |
| Total Students Tested | 32.2 | 31.0 | 12.2 | | |

| Group | Reading | Math | Science | Social Studies | Writing |
|-------------|---------|------|---------|----------------|---------|
| Two or More | | | | | |
| White | 40.4 | 42.1 | 16.7 | | |

Plus

- Performance data showed the percentage of Female students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in reading was 34.9 percent while the All Students group was 32.2 percent.
- Performance data showed the percentage of Female students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in math was 32.6 percent while the All Students group was 31.0 percent.
- Performance data showed the percentage of Female students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in science was 13.0 percent while the All Students group was 12.2 percent.

Delta

- Performance data showed the percentages of Male students scoring Proficient/Distinguished were 29.5 percent in reading, 29.5 percent in math, and 11.1 percent in science, which were all below the Total Students Tested group at 32.2 percent in reading, 31.0 percent in math, and 12.2 percent in science.
- Performance data showed the percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students scoring Proficient/Distinguished were 21.4 percent in reading, 17.9 percent in math, and 4.2 percent in science, which were all below the Total Students Tested group at 32.2 percent in reading, 31.0 percent in math, and 12.2 percent in science.
- Performance data showed the percentages of African American students scoring Proficient/Distinguished were 13.0 percent in reading and 8.7 percent in math, which were well below the Total Students Tested group at 32.2 percent in reading and 31.0 percent in math.
- Performance data showed the percentages of Disabilities with IEPs students scoring Proficient/Distinguished were 18.8 percent in reading and 6.3 percent in math, where were below the Total Students Tested group at 32.2 percent in reading and 31.0 percent in math.

Middle school 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 | 5 | 55.1 | 57.8 | 18.0 | 57.9 |
| | 6 | 65.9 | 59.7 | 48.0 | 59.0 |
| | 7 | 79.4 | 57.4 | 38.1 | 57.4 |
| | 8 | 80.5 | 62.9 | 36.1 | 62.6 |
| Math | 5 | 34.7 | 52.0 | 30.0 | 51.7 |
| | 6 | 63.6 | 47.5 | 38.0 | 46.7 |
| | 7 | 61.8 | 47.4 | 31.0 | 47.1 |
| | 8 | 58.5 | 46.1 | 25.0 | 45.3 |
| Social Studies | 5 | 57.1 | 53.0 | 24.0 | 53.0 |
| | 8 | 80.5 | 60.2 | 38.9 | 58.8 |
| Writing | 5 | 20.4 | 40.5 | 20.0 | 46.6 |

| | | | | | |
|----------------|---|------|------|------|------|
| | 8 | 24.4 | 44.3 | 11.1 | 31.9 |
| Science | 7 | 8.8 | 25.9 | 14.3 | 26.0 |

Plus

- During the 2017-2018 school year, the percentages of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in reading and math were higher than the state averages in grades 6, 7, and 8.
- During the 2017-2018 school year, the percentages of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in social studies were higher than the state averages in grades 5 and 8.

Delta

- During the 2018-2019 school year, the percentages of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished were below the state averages in all content areas in all grades.

Growth Index middle

| Content Area | School (17-18) | State (17-18) | School (18-19) | State (18-19) |
|-------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| Reading | 10.3 | 16.1 | 19.9 | 56.1 |
| Math | -1.1 | 8.0 | 26.7 | 48.8 |
| English Learner | | 5.4 | | 56.3 |
| Growth Indicator | 4.6 | 12.1 | 23.3 | 52.5 |

Note: The formula for calculating growth changed between 18-19 and 19-20. Comparisons should only be made between school and state ratings.

Plus

- No pluses noted in this section.

Delta

- During the 2018-2019 school year, the overall growth indicator was considerably lower than the state average.
- During the 2018-2019 school year, the growth indices for reading and math were considerably lower than the state averages.

2019-20 percent Proficient/Distinguished middle (5-8)

| Group | Reading | Math | Science | Social Studies | Writing |
|-----------------------------------|---------|------|---------|----------------|---------|
| African American | 21.3 | 24.6 | 0.0 | 21.9 | 12.5 |
| Alternative Assessment | | | | | |
| American Indian | | | | | |
| Asian | | | | | |
| Consolidated Student Group | 18.7 | 23.1 | 0.0 | 22.2 | 15.6 |

| Group | Reading | Math | Science | Social Studies | Writing |
|---------------------------------|---------|------|---------|----------------|---------|
| Disabilities (IEP) | 12.0 | 16.0 | | 13.3 | 13.3 |
| Disabilities Regular Assessment | | | | | |
| Disabilities with Acc. | | | | | |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 30.1 | 25.7 | 9.7 | 26.5 | 14.7 |
| English Learners | | | | | |
| English Learners Monitored | | | | | |
| Female | 39.6 | 33.0 | 12.0 | 26.3 | 23.7 |
| Foster | | | | | |
| Gifted and Talented | 80.0 | 90.0 | | | |
| Hispanic | | | | | |
| Homeless | | | | | |
| Male | 29.9 | 29.9 | 17.6 | 33.3 | 10.4 |
| Migrant | | | | | |
| Military | | | | | |
| No Disabilities | 38.6 | 34.0 | 16.2 | 33.8 | 16.9 |
| Non-Economically Disadvantaged | 50.0 | 50.0 | 27.3 | 44.4 | 22.2 |
| Non-English Learners | | 31.4 | | 30.2 | 16.3 |
| Non-Migrant | 34.8 | 31.5 | 14.3 | 30.2 | 16.3 |
| Not Consolidated Student Group | 51.7 | 40.2 | 31.6 | 39.0 | 17.1 |
| Not English Learners Monitored | 35.1 | 31.0 | | 30.2 | 16.3 |
| Not Gifted and Talented | 30.7 | 28.0 | 14.3 | | 14.8 |
| Not Homeless | | | | | |
| Pacific Islander | | | | | |
| Total Students Tested | 34.8 | 31.5 | 14.3 | 30.2 | 16.3 |
| Two or More | 13.3 | 20.0 | | | |
| White | 47.4 | 37.1 | 28.6 | 35.4 | 16.7 |

Plus

- No pluses noted in this section.

Delta

- Disabilities with IEPs students performed below their peers in reading, math, science, and social studies.
- African American students performed below their peers in every content area.
- The percentages of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished were lowest in science and writing for the Total Students Tested group.

Schedule

Tuesday, January 21, 2020

| Time | Event | Where | Who |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 4:00 p.m. | Brief Team Meeting | Hotel Conference Room | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 4:30 p.m. - 5:15 p.m. | Principal/Superintendent Presentation | Hotel Conference Room | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 5:15 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. | Team Work Session #1 | Hotel Conference Room | Diagnostic Review Team Members |

Wednesday, January 22, 2020

| Time | Event | Where | Who |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 7:45 a.m. | Team arrives at institution | District Office | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. | Interviews / Board Member Interviews / Artifact Review | District Office | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. | Team returns to hotel | | |
| 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. | Team Work Session #2 | Hotel Conference Room | Diagnostic Review Team Members |

Thursday, January 23, 2020

| Time | Event | Where | Who |
|------------------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 8:00 a.m. | Team arrives at institution(s) | District Office | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. | Interviews / Board Member Interviews/ Artifact Review | District Office | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 12:00 noon | Teams arrive at schools for school visits | Schools | Diagnostic Review Team Members |
| 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. | Team returns to hotel | | |
| 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. | Team Work Session #3 | Hotel Conference Room | Diagnostic Review Team Members |

Friday, January 24, 2020

| Time | Event | Where | Who |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. | Final Team Work Session | District Office | Diagnostic Review Team Members |



District Diagnostic Review Summary Report
Fulton County School District
January 21-24, 2020

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

Following its review of extensive evidence and in consideration of the factors outlined in 703 KAR 5:280, Section 5, the Diagnostic Review Team submitted the following assessment regarding the **district's capacity** to the Commissioner of Education:

The district does have the capacity to manage the intervention in the schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement.

The Commissioner of Education adopts the assessment of district capacity by the Diagnostic Review Team.

_____ Date: _____
Interim Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education

I have received the diagnostic review report for Fulton County School District.

_____ Date: _____
Superintendent, Fulton County Public Schools