

# Cognia Diagnostic Review Report

Results for: Fulton County Middle School

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.

<b>Stakeholder Groups</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>District-Level Administrators</b>	4
<b>Building-Level Administrators</b>	1
<b>Professional Support Staff (e.g., Counselor, Media Specialist, Technology Coordinator)</b>	4
<b>Certified Staff</b>	12
<b>Noncertified Staff</b>	10
<b>Students</b>	105
<b>Parents</b>	8
<b>Total</b>	144

# 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.	Initiating
1.7	Leaders implement operational process and procedures to ensure organizational effectiveness in support of teaching and learning.	Insufficient
1.8	Leaders engage stakeholders to support the achievement of the institution's purpose and direction.	Insufficient
1.9	The institution provides experiences that cultivate and improve leadership effectiveness.	Insufficient
1.10	Leaders collect and analyze a range of feedback data from multiple stakeholder groups to inform decision-making that results in improvement.	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 institution.	Insufficient
2.2	The learning culture promotes creativity, innovation and collaborative problem-solving.	Insufficient
2.5	Educators implement a curriculum that is based on high expectations and prepares learners for their next levels.	Insufficient
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.	Insufficient
2.10	Learning progress is reliably assessed and consistently and clearly communicated.	Insufficient
2.11	Educators gather, analyze, and use formative and summative data that lead to demonstrable improvement of student learning.	Insufficient
2.12	The institution implements a process to continuously assess its programs and organizational conditions to improve student learning.	Insufficient

# Resource Capacity Domain

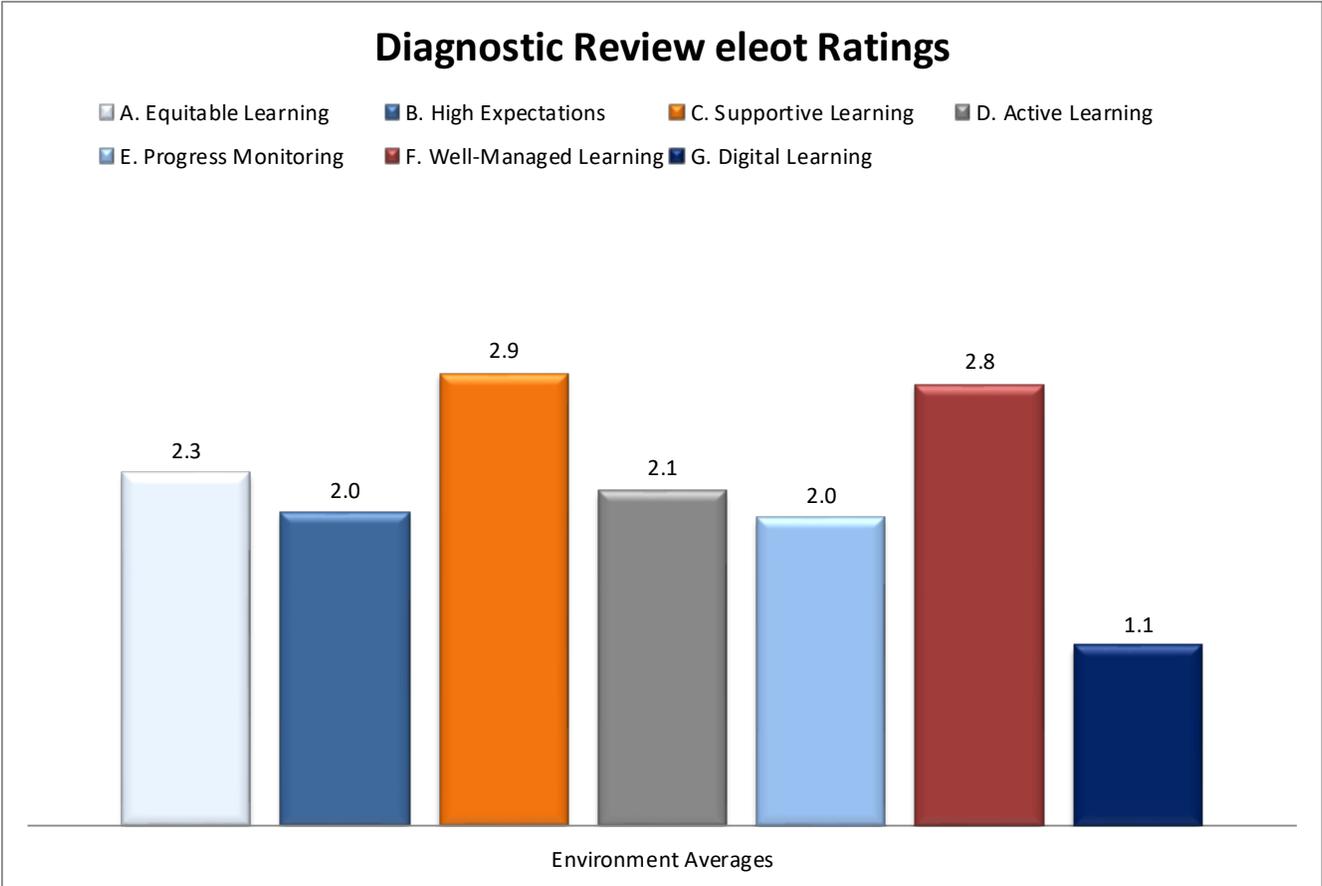
The use and distribution of resources support the stated mission of the institution. Institutions ensure that resources are distributed and utilized equitably so that the needs of all learners are adequately and effectively addressed. The utilization of resources includes support for professional learning 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.	Insufficient
3.2	The institution's professional learning structure and expectations promote collaboration and collegiality to improve learner performance and organizational effectiveness.	Insufficient
3.4	The institution attracts and retains qualified personnel who support the institution's purpose and direction.	Insufficient
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.	Insufficient
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.	Insufficient

# Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool<sup>®</sup> (eleot<sup>®</sup>) 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 seven 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	1.0	Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs.	100%	0%	0%	0%
A2	2.4	Learners have equal access to classroom discussions, activities, resources, technology, and support.	14%	29%	57%	0%
A3	3.4	Learners are treated in a fair, clear, and consistent manner.	0%	14%	29%	57%
A4	2.1	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.	14%	57%	29%	0%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>2.3</b>			

B. High Expectations Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
B1	2.4	Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher.	0%	57%	43%	0%
B2	1.9	Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable.	29%	57%	14%	0%
B3	1.4	Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work.	71%	14%	14%	0%
B4	1.7	Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing).	43%	43%	14%	0%
B5	2.6	Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning.	14%	14%	71%	0%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>2.0</b>			

C. Supportive Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
C1	3.0	Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful.	14%	14%	29%	43%
C2	2.3	Learners take risks in learning (without fear of negative feedback).	14%	43%	43%	0%
C3	3.0	Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks.	0%	43%	14%	43%
C4	3.3	Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher.	14%	14%	0%	71%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>2.9</b>			

D. Active Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
D1	2.1	Learners' discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and teacher predominate.	14%	71%	0%	14%
D2	2.4	Learners make connections from content to real-life experiences.	14%	29%	57%	0%
D3	2.3	Learners are actively engaged in the learning activities.	14%	43%	43%	0%
D4	1.7	Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments.	57%	29%	0%	14%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>2.1</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	1.6	Learners monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored.	57%	29%	14%	0%
E2	2.4	Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work.	0%	71%	14%	14%
E3	2.6	Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content.	0%	43%	57%	0%
E4	1.3	Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed.	86%	0%	14%	0%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>2.0</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	3.1	Learners speak and interact respectfully with teacher(s) and each other.	14%	14%	14%	57%
F2	3.0	Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others.	14%	0%	57%	29%
F3	2.6	Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another.	29%	0%	57%	14%
F4	2.6	Learners use class time purposefully with minimal wasted time or disruptions.	14%	29%	43%	14%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>			<b>2.8</b>			

G. Digital Learning Environment						
Indicators	Average	Description	Not Observed	Somewhat Evident	Evident	Very Evident
G1	1.1	Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning.	86%	14%	0%	0%
G2	1.3	Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning.	86%	0%	14%	0%
G3	1.0	Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning.	100%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Overall rating on a 4 point scale:</b>		<b>1.1</b>				

## eleot Narrative

The Diagnostic Review Team conducted seven observations in core content classrooms. Strengths were observed in two of the seven learning environments. The Supportive Learning Environment had an overall average rating of 2.9 on a four-point scale and the Well-Managed Learning Environment had an overall average rating of 2.8. These strengths were related to interactions between adults and students and to classroom management. It was evident/very evident in 72 percent of classrooms observed that “Learners demonstrate a sense of community that is positive, cohesive, engaged, and purposeful” (C1). In 71 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that “Learners demonstrate a congenial and supportive relationship with their teacher” (C4). The data revealed that it was evident/very evident in 71 percent of classrooms that “Learners speak and interact respectfully with the teacher(s) and each other” (F1) and that “Learners transition smoothly and efficiently from one activity to another” (F3). In addition, it was evident/very evident in 86 percent of classrooms that “Learners demonstrate knowledge of and/or follow classroom rules and behavioral expectations and work well with others” (F2).

Classroom observation data suggested that the school was not systematically implementing effective instructional practices to increase student achievement. In the Equitable Learning Environment, Diagnostic Review Team members observed that it was evident/very evident in zero percent of classrooms that “Learners engage in differentiated opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs” (A1). Students were also observed working from the same workbook or packet to complete assignments.

The High Expectations Learning Environment was an area of concern with an overall rating scale of 2.0. It was evident/very evident in 14 percent of classrooms that “Learners engage in activities that are challenging and attainable” (B2), that “Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work” (B3), and that “Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)” (B4). Whole-group instruction was observed with students responding to short answers and recall-level questions. Students were also observed responding individually or chorally as a class to complete a class assignment.

Few students were involved in or understood the assessment process, as evidenced in the Progress Monitoring and Feedback Learning Environment. It was evident/very evident in 14 percent of classrooms that “Learners monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored” (E1) and that



“Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed” (E4). In addition, in 28 percent of classrooms, it was evident/very evident that “Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work” (E2).

The Diagnostic Review Team observed little use of digital resources, as it was evident/very evident in zero percent of classrooms that “Learners use digital tools/technology to gather, evaluate, and/or use information for learning” (G1) and that “Learners use digital tools/technology to communicate and work collaboratively for learning” (G3). It was evident/very evident in 14 percent of classrooms that “Learners use digital tools/technology to conduct research, solve problems, and/or create original works for learning” (G2).

Additional areas to leverage to increase student learning were identified in the Active Learning Environment. It was evident/very evident in 14 percent of classrooms that “Learners’ discussions/dialogues/exchanges with each other and teacher predominate” (D1) and that “Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks and/or assignments” (D4).

# 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

Develop and communicate a systemic and collaborative continuous improvement process that increases student learning. Establish a protocol to implement and monitor systems to enrich professional practice and to enhance organizational effectiveness based on the analysis and use of data. (Standard 1.3)

#### **Evidence:**

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

Student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, and the school's status as a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school suggested core instruction remained a concern for all students. Fulton County Middle School students performed below state averages in the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in all core content areas in 2018-2019. Test data showed a significant downward trend from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019, suggesting the lack of a formalized process for making and implementing effective instructional decisions.

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

Classroom observation data revealed little to no progress in implementing a rigorous curriculum based on Kentucky Academic Standards. Lesson plans posted outside the classrooms included references to the standards, and students were able to state the learning targets as they were written on the whiteboards. However, it was evident/very evident in zero percent of classrooms that "Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that meet their needs" (A1). It was evident/very evident in 14 percent of classrooms that "Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing) (B4).

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

Interviews revealed that school administrators supported some steps of a continuous improvement process. Teachers were engaged in a needs assessment of the Key Core Work Processes for developing strategies for the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP). Teachers were also revising curriculum maps, collecting evidence from AIMSweb to schedule students for Response to Intervention (RtI), and participating in professional learning communities (PLCs) by grade level. However, the improvement process was not formalized with protocols that provide clear direction for staff in order to improve instruction and student learning. While interview data revealed that efforts were made to provide professional learning, the Diagnostic Review Team did not find a systematic approach for using student achievement data to align staff training with current student academic needs. The team found limited evidence indicating that training and other staff supports were based on student behavioral and academic data analysis or monitored for effectiveness.

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

The staff survey data revealed that 84 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement "Our school has a continuous improvement process based on data, goals, actions, and measures of growth" (C5). While staff and



administrator interviews supported that some work was occurring on these components of a continuous improvement process, the connection to and direct effect on teaching and learning remained unclear.

Although 80 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed with the statement “Our school has a systematic process for collecting, analyzing, and using data” (G3), the degree to which this practice was positively affecting student achievement was not substantiated. Interviews revealed that while staff was working hard, student performance results were not reflective of their efforts. Additionally, data were not formally and systemically monitored to ensure curricular and instructional adjustments were made based on students’ needs.

The parent survey revealed a strength in parents’ views of the school’s expectations for their children. Eighty percent of parents surveyed agreed/strongly agreed that “All of my child’s teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and learning activities” (E3). In addition, 100 percent of parents surveyed agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school has high expectations for students in all classes” (D3).

Sixty-seven percent of students in grades 6 through 8 agreed/strongly agreed that “In my school, the purpose and expectations are clearly explained to me and my family” (C2). In addition, 43 percent of these students agreed/strongly agreed that “All of my teachers change their teaching to meet my learning needs” (E9).

**Documents and Artifacts:**

A review of PLC agendas revealed few actions were taken as a result of these meetings. Teachers and administration reported data; however, there was little evidence to suggest that an in-depth analysis of data resulted in specific instructional goals or a change in strategies or practices to address the root causes of the problems with student performance.

## Improvement Priority #2

Implement a system for adopting, monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting a quality curriculum to ensure alignment of all instructional components (i.e., content, skills, tasks, assessments, and resources) across all grade levels that results in increased student learning. (Standard 2.5)

### Evidence:

#### Student Performance Data:

Student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, revealed a downward trend in the academic performance of Fulton County Middle School students. While the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in 2017-2018 was above state averages in several areas (i.e., sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade reading and math and fifth- and eighth-grade social studies), the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in 2018-2019 was below state averages in all core content areas. In 2018-2019, students scoring Proficient/Distinguished was 21.7 percentage points below the state average in fifth-grade math and 39.9 percentage points below the state average in fifth-grade reading. Moreover, the school's growth indicators for reading and math for 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 were significantly below the state averages. These data suggested the lack of a systematic process for adjusting the curriculum based on student needs, high expectations, and high-yield strategies.

#### Classroom Observation Data:

It was evident/very evident in 43 percent of the classrooms that "Learners strive to meet or are able to articulate the high expectations established by themselves and/or the teacher" (B1). Student expectations were posted in the classrooms and in the hallways; however, some students were unclear about what was expected on assignments.

It was evident/very evident in 14 percent of classrooms that "Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" (B2); that "Learners demonstrate and/or are able to describe high quality work" (B3); and that "Learners engage in rigorous coursework, discussions, and/or tasks that require the use of higher order thinking (e.g., analyzing, applying, evaluating, synthesizing)" (B4). The Diagnostic Review Team observed that whole-group instruction was prevalent throughout the school with no differentiation. Students worked on the same assignment and the teacher led the lesson asking recall-level questions.

While it was evident in 71 percent of classrooms that "Learners take responsibility for and are self-directed in their learning" (B5), students were observed completing their assignments as instructed and with prompting from the teachers. It was evident/very evident in 57 percent of the classrooms that "Learners are supported by the teacher, their peers, and/or other resources to understand content and accomplish tasks" (C3) and in 14 percent of classrooms that "Learners collaborate with their peers to accomplish/complete projects, activities, tasks, and/or assignments (D4). The students had little opportunity to work with others in the classroom.

While some classrooms utilized strategies such as bell ringers and exit slips to start and close lessons, these strategies were seldom used to inform instruction or to provide feedback to the students. It was evident/very evident in 14 percent of the classrooms that "Learners monitor their own progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning progress is monitored" (E1). Furthermore, it was evident/very evident in 28 percent of the classrooms that "Learners receive/respond to feedback (from teachers/peers/other resources) to improve understanding and/or revise work" (E2). Many classrooms followed a question/answer format directed by the teacher. In 57 percent of the classrooms, it was evident/very evident that "Learners demonstrate and/or verbalize understanding of the lesson/content" (E3). In 14 percent of the classrooms, it was evident/very evident that "Learners understand and/or are able to explain how their work is assessed" (E4).

Classroom observation data and the downward trend in performance data suggested that a system for evaluating, adjusting, and monitoring a curriculum aligned to the Kentucky Academic Standards was needed.



### **Stakeholder Interview Data:**

The student interview data revealed that most teachers implemented whole-class instruction (lecture) or required students to complete packets or worksheets. Students understood that AIMSweb assessments and learning checks determined their level of performance during the year. However, students indicated they seldom received feedback on how they were performing other than a score (percentage or number). Students were unaware of opportunities for reteaching and retesting.

In interviews, staff indicated that common pacing guides and curriculum maps were constructed in each core content area, and staff used multiple online resources to develop curriculum maps and summative assessments. Some staff described the need for a more teacher-specific approach to professional development through evaluation and coaching.

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

The staff survey revealed that 84 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed that “All teachers in our school use a process to inform students of their learning expectations and standards of performance” (E5) and that “All teachers in our school provide students with specific and timely feedback about their learning” (E6). Eighty-three percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed that “All teachers in our school use multiple types of assessments to modify instruction and to revise the curriculum” (E7). Regarding the use of data, 100 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed that “Our school uses data to monitor student readiness and success at the next level” (G5).

From the survey of students in grades 6 through 8, 69 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that “In my school, a high quality education is offered” (C3) and 85 percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that “In my school, the principal and teachers have high expectations of me” (D3). Seventy-six percent of students agreed/strongly agreed that “My school provides me with challenging curriculum and learning experiences” (E2) while fewer students, 63 percent, agreed/strongly agreed that “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). Observation data revealed students generally worked independently on assigned tasks with few opportunities to collaborate with each other.

The survey of fifth-grade students revealed that 82 percent agreed that “In my school I am learning new things that will help me” (C2). In addition, 91 percent of them agreed that “My teachers help me learn things I will need in the future” (E1) and 88 percent agreed that “My teachers tell me how I should behave and do my work” (E4).

### **Documents and Artifacts:**

Data were collected from approximately 22 classroom walkthroughs conducted during the first semester, but teachers were provided limited feedback. Documents and artifacts did not reveal an analysis of summative assessment data or a process to monitor student progress on assessments aligned to the curriculum.

Although curriculum maps were provided, they were missing critical pieces, including goals, learning targets, power standards, activities, and formative and summative assessments.



## Improvement Priority #3

Refine, implement, and monitor the process for analyzing formative and summative data to determine students' progress toward demonstrating the level of engagement required by the Kentucky Academic Standards. Commit to and demonstrate consistent use of these data to modify instructional practices to improve student learning. (Standard 2.11)

### **Evidence:**

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

Student performance data, as detailed in an addendum to this report, suggested the staff lacked a process for the consistent use of data to verify learner progress and improve instructional practices. The percentage of Fulton County Middle School students scoring Proficient/Distinguished was below state averages in all core content areas in 2018-19. More specifically, the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished was more than 20 percentage points below state averages in fifth- and eighth-grade reading, math, and writing and in fifth-grade social studies. Additionally, the 2018-2019 growth index data for all reported areas (reading, math, and growth indicator) were below the state averages.

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

The Diagnostic Review Team observed teachers engaging students with bell-starter activities, reviewing learning targets from the previous day, and having students state the learning target for the day. However, not all students completed the bell-starter activities, and students did not make connections between past and present lessons. Minimal instances of the use of research-based instructional practices and/or strategies (e.g., differentiation, higher-order thinking skills, student-centered learning using digital tools) were observed in the classrooms. It was evident/very evident in zero percent of classrooms that "Learners engage in differentiated learning opportunities and/or activities that met their needs" (A1). Further, it was evident/very evident in 14 percent of classrooms that "Learners engage in activities and learning that are challenging but attainable" (B2).

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

The Diagnostic Review Team attended two PLC meetings, which revealed inconsistencies in how the meetings were conducted and in the depth of content discussion. While both PLC teams worked from the same agenda, one team spent time discussing content, data, and potential improvements to student learning, while the other team did not go into deep discussions regarding content and data. Teachers in the first team had in-depth discussions about where they were in the curriculum and discussed strategies to get back on schedule. The team talked about moving students from one tier to another based on the student data board.

Staff indicated that walkthroughs provided little to no feedback. The type and quality of feedback depended on the individual conducting the walkthrough.

Staff interviews also revealed that staff measured student progress through AIMSweb data for Response to Intervention (RtI) and grades. These data were used to group students for their afternoon schedules of writing, math reflex (assistance with math fluency), reading, and math RtI. Some teachers used online resources, such as Teachers Pay Teachers and some others, for assessing students.

Parent interview data suggested that more time was needed for reteaching and retesting of concepts. Both students and parents indicated that students worked on worksheets and packets, with some time given for working collaboratively with other students.

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

The staff and student surveys revealed discrepancies in the use of multiple assessment types to modify instruction and revise curriculum in order to address students' learning needs. The staff survey revealed that 84 percent agreed/strongly agreed that "All teachers in our school monitor and adjust curriculum, instruction, and assessment based on data from student assessments and examination of professional practice" (E1). Likewise,



83 percent of staff agreed/strongly agreed that “All teachers in our school use multiple types of assessments to modify instruction and to revise the curriculum” (E7) and that “In our school, all staff members use student data to address the unique learning needs of all students” (E14). However, 71 percent of students in grades 6 through 8 agreed/strongly agreed that “My school gives me multiple assessments to check my understanding of what was taught” (E1), and 72 percent agreed/strongly agreed that “All of my teachers use tests, projects, presentations, and portfolios to check my understanding of what was taught” (E11).

**Documents and Artifacts:**

PLC meetings were held weekly and teams adhered to an agenda prepared by the principal. One PLC focused on “Using Assessments to Inform Instruction—Formative & Summative Assessments.” It was evident that teachers were taught the differences between formative and summative assessments but were unclear how this information was used to improve 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

Parents, teachers, support staff, students, the principal, and Central Office administration worked together to create a positive, warm, and caring climate and culture for all. Students were greeted throughout the day and responded appropriately to each adult. Students were observed receiving handshakes, high-fives, fist-bumps, and pats on the back throughout the day. Students responded in kind and greeted visitors with enthusiasm. Pilot Pride Expectations were visible throughout the school.

The master schedule provided time weekly for teachers to work and plan together in PLCs. The master schedule was adjusted during the week that the Diagnostic Review Team was on site in order to meet a critical teaching need. The staff and other stakeholders supported the principal in doing what was best for students.

The school had a culture of collecting and analyzing data, as evidenced by the data wall posted outside the principal's office. Some teams were assessing student needs based on the data and adjusting the teaching and learning strategies for particular content. Teachers created curriculum maps based on Kentucky Academic Standards. The school planned to utilize CASE (Collaborative Assessment Solutions for Educators) Benchmark Assessments during the 2020 spring semester.

## Continuous Improvement Process

Student performance data, stakeholder interview data, classroom observations, and a review of documents and artifacts revealed the lack of a clear continuous improvement process connected to the school improvement plan and to needs assessments. The school was beginning to focus on gathering and analyzing data; however, efforts to revise and adjust the curriculum and then monitor the classroom environment for implementation were not occurring. While curriculum maps were written, critical components were missing (i.e., goals, learning targets, power standards, activities, formative and summative assessments). Teachers were left to "fill in the gaps" and to select and use activities and assessments that were not aligned to the Kentucky Academic Standards.

The Diagnostic Review Team recommends that the school administration monitor and protect instructional time to increase student performance, conduct walkthroughs on a regular basis, and provide documented feedback to teachers. Appropriate research-based professional development opportunities should be provided in order to grow the teachers' toolbox of learning strategies.

The team also recommends that teachers share their expertise with other teachers and serve as mentors to new and inexperienced teachers. Teachers could become collaborative partners in making curricular and instructional adjustments to improve student achievement.



By leveraging the positive environment, the school is well positioned to continue to develop, communicate, collaborate, and implement the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan and to monitor and adjust the plan as needed. Establishing a protocol to implement and monitor systems for enriching professional practice would build a foundation to sustain the organization and increase professional growth.

## 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
<b>Nancy Lee</b>	Nancy Lee has over 30 years' experience as a teacher and administrator. She spent most of her professional career in the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District as a teacher and district administrator. In her position as secondary instructional technology coordinator, she identified instructional technology tools for 15 middle schools and 10 high schools. She led professional development efforts at the district and school levels with a focus on technology integration in core curriculum areas. Ms. Lee also taught math online and assisted state universities in moving traditional degree programs to accelerated online degree programs. Ms. Lee has served as Lead Evaluator for Cognia Diagnostic Reviews in Kentucky and South Carolina.
<b>Todd Tucker</b>	Todd Tucker is an Education Recovery Director for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), serving northern Kentucky schools. Mr. Tucker served as the Education Recovery Leader at Pulaski County High School and assisted the school leadership in transforming the school from priority status to high performing. In addition, Mr. Tucker serves as a trainer for LEAD, Kentucky's National Institute for School Leadership, and has served on numerous Cognia Diagnostic Reviews.
<b>Josh Belcher</b>	Josh Belcher has 14 years' experience as a teacher and administrator. He is currently the principal at North Butler Elementary in Butler County, Kentucky. In that position, he serves as the leader of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices for the school. He conducts professional development activities for the school and models instruction through a coach-like process for teachers.
<b>Roger Kissling</b>	Roger Kissling has over 18 years' experience in education. Currently, Mr. Kissling is an Education Recovery Specialist for the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), assisting schools in the central region of the state. Mr. Kissling supports schools that have been identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools by providing coaching, professional development, and other assistance. Mr. Kissling also served as a content specialist for the National Institute of School Leadership and as a consultant for Go College training.
<b>Chris Gilkey</b>	Chris Gilkey has 19 years' teaching experience in both middle and high schools. He served as assistant principal at Hopkinsville High School and North Drive Middle School. Mr. Gilkey served as the director of alternative programs for Christian County Public Schools and is currently the principal of Christian County Day Treatment, a court-ordered educational program for at-risk students.

# Addenda

## Student Performance Data

### Fulton County 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

- In 2017-2018, the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in reading and math was higher than the state averages in grades 6, 7, and 8.
- In 2017-2018, the percentage of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished in social studies was higher than the state averages in grades 5 and 8.

#### Delta

- In 2018-2019, the percentages of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished was below the state averages in all grades in all content areas.

### 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

- In 2018-2019, the overall growth indicator was significantly lower than the state average.
- In 2018-2019, the growth indices for reading and math were significantly lower than the state averages.

### 2018-19 percent Proficient/Distinguished middle (grades 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
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

Group	Reading	Math	Science	Social Studies	Writing
<b>Not Gifted and Talented</b>	30.7	28.0	14.3		14.8
<b>Not Homeless</b>					
<b>Pacific Islander</b>					
<b>Total Students Tested</b>	34.8	31.5	14.3	30.2	16.3
<b>Two or More</b>	13.3	20.0			
<b>White</b>	47.4	37.1	28.6	35.4	16.7

Plus

- No pluses noted in this section.

Delta

- The Disabilities (IEP) subgroup performed below all other subgroups in reading, math, and social studies.
- The African American subgroup performed below the White subgroup in every content area.
- The content areas with the lowest percentages of students scoring Proficient/Distinguished were science and writing.

# 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. - 8:30 p.m.	Team Work Session #1	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

## Wednesday, January 22, 2020

Time	Event	Where	Who
7:30 a.m.	Team arrives at school	School Office	Diagnostic Review Team Members
7:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Interviews/Classroom Observations/Stakeholder Interviews/Artifact Review	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
3:15 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
4:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	Team Work Session #2	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

## Thursday, January 23, 2020

Time	Event	Where	Who
7:30 a.m.	Team arrives at school	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
7:45 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Interviews/Classroom Observations/Stakeholder Interviews/Artifact Review	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
3:15 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Team returns to hotel		
4:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	Team Work Session #3	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members

## Friday, January 24, 2020

Time	Event	Where	Who
7:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Final Team Work Session	School	Diagnostic Review Team Members
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 pm	Final Team Meeting	Hotel Conference Room	Diagnostic Review Team Members



**School Diagnostic Review Summary Report**  
**Fulton County Middle (5-8) School**

Fulton County Schools  
January 21-24, 2020

The members of the Fulton County Middle (5-8) School 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 Fulton County Middle (5-8) School.

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
Interim Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Education

I have received the Diagnostic Review for Fulton County Middle (5-8) School.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal, Fulton County Middle (5-8) School

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent, Fulton County Schools