



School District of the City of York

District Diagnostic | July 2015

SECTION II: RECOMMENDATIONS

This is the second section of a three-section report.

- I. **Section I** includes the diagnostic findings and 2013 Recovery Plan updates, as well as recommended focus areas.
- II. **Section II** includes recommended focus areas and possible actions.
- III. **Section III** includes an appendix and additional resources.

Part I: Overview (p. 3)

Part II: Recommendations (p. 10)



Purpose of the SDCY/Mass Insight Partnership

The purpose of the collaboration between the School District of the City of York (SDCY) and Mass Insight Education is to identify district strengths and opportunities for growth in order to update the 2013 Recovery Plan with high-impact action items that will increase student achievement.



Objectives of the District Diagnostic

1

To gather information about the district's current status and to identify key strengths and areas of growth.

2

To engage in reflective conversations about the district's current performance relative to its desired state.

3

To identify opportunities to improve performance by providing recommendations designed to promote organizational effectiveness, and efficiency, while maintaining an unwavering focus on student achievement.

4

To identify progress made since the 2013 Recovery Plan.



Multiple Levers for District-Wide Improvement

Transform the Central Office to better support schools



Improve schools and accelerate student achievement



District Diagnostic Process Overview

Step 1: Data Collection

Mass Insight collected data from a variety of sources to evaluate district systems and processes. Data collection included a review of performance data, existing reports and documents, feedback gathered from interviews and focus groups, as well as surveys collected from school and central office staff.

Step 2: Review and Synthesis

Mass Insight analyzed data by looking across ten major domains in order to identify organizational strengths and areas for growth and improvement.

Step 3: Recommendations

Mass Insight developed a manageable set of recommendations based on the findings of the diagnostic process. Recommendations are intended to be implemented over the next three years.



Data Collection



Data and Document Review

Includes organizational charts, strategic plans, past audits, job descriptions, budgets, handbooks, general data, and other materials.



Survey Results

Includes Central Office staff, school leaders, teachers, and other school-based staff members.



Interviews and Focus Groups

Interviews include Central Office leaders, school board members, and school principals; focus groups include school and Central Office personnel, students, and community members.

Data Review & Analysis

Interviews:

13 one-on-one interviews completed, including:

- 5 Central Office employees
 - 3 school administrators
 - Board and union leadership
 - York mayor
 - State Representative
 - Superintendent
 - Chief Recovery Officer
-

Focus Groups:

27 focus groups completed with **more than 150** participants, including:

- 15 Central Office focus groups
 - 3 school administrator focus groups (1 principal, 2 Assistant Principal)
 - 6 parent and community member focus groups
 - 3 teacher focus groups
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Surveys:

2 surveys administered with a total of **277** responses, including:

- 50 responses to the Central Office survey
- 227 responses to the school staff survey

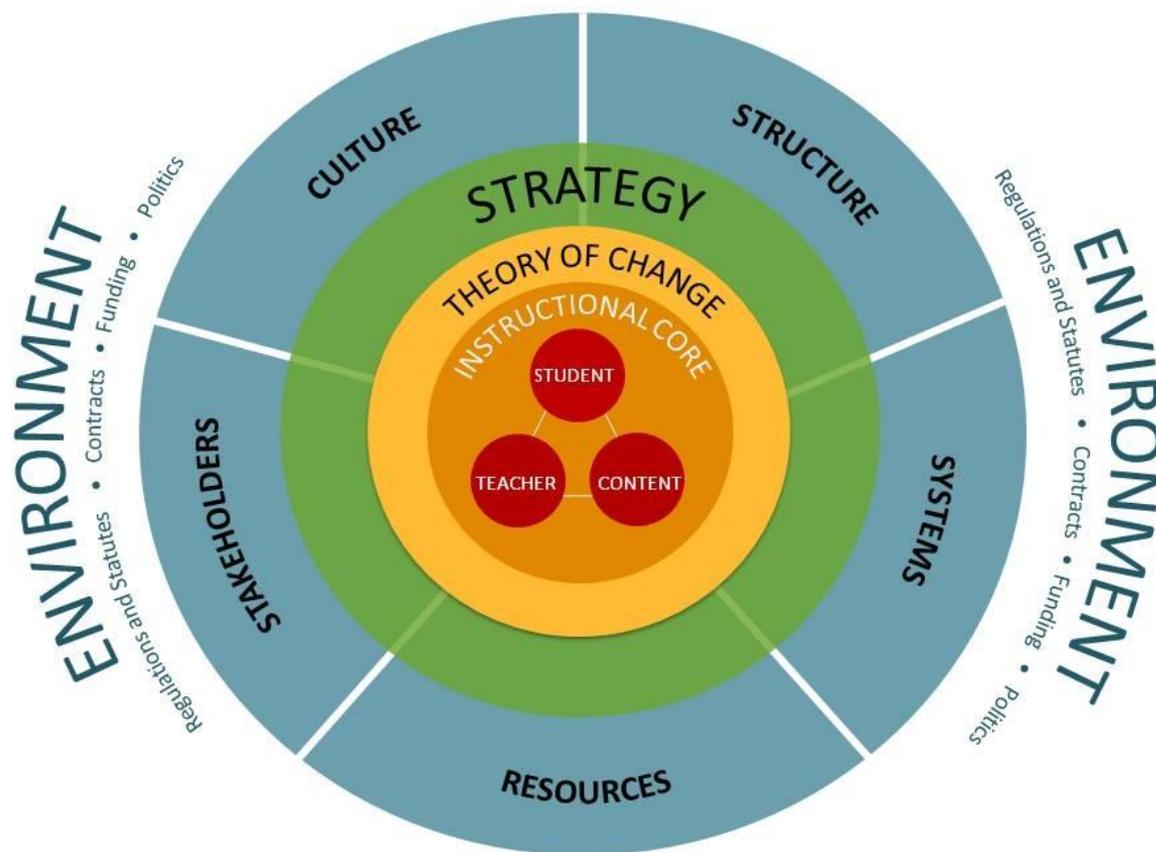


Part I: Overview (p. 3)

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A strong strategy focuses on the Instructional Core – the interaction between the student, the teacher, and the content



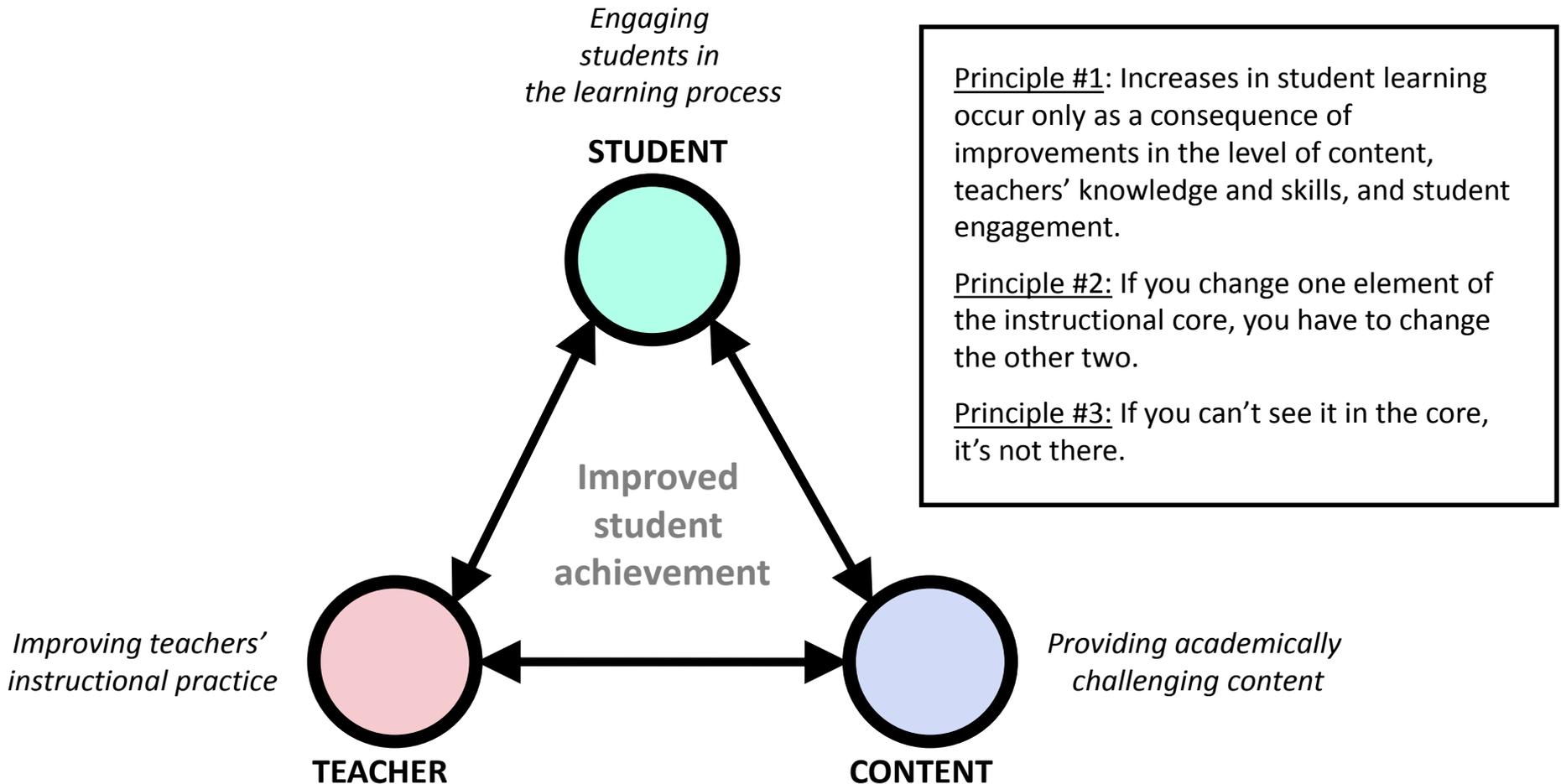
The district needs a set of strategies that support the instructional core.

Source: Harvard Public Education Leadership Program, Adapted from Tushman and O'Reilly's Congruence Model, 2002

<http://pelp.fas.harvard.edu/book/coherence-framework>



Supporting the Instructional Core



Principle #1: Increases in student learning occur only as a consequence of improvements in the level of content, teachers' knowledge and skills, and student engagement.

Principle #2: If you change one element of the instructional core, you have to change the other two.

Principle #3: If you can't see it in the core, it's not there.

Recommendations are intended to help focus Central Office and school attention and resources on strengthening the instructional core



Assumptions

- The following recommendations are intended to identify possible strategic priorities for the district to utilize moving forward that apply the lens of the instructional core. We do not advise the district to implement all of the following suggestions. Rather, a manageable subset should be selected for inclusion in an amended Recovery Plan.
- A “manageable subset” of priorities ranges from 2-5 strategies to focus on at any given time.
- The recommendations are categorized into five focus areas and are prioritized based on phases for implementation. (Phase I, II, III, and IV). Timelines for each phase are to be determined by the Chief Recovery Officer (CRO).
- Each focus area is followed by a series of examples of best practices from other districts and/or research reports.
- The CRO will develop a plan informed by the recommendations and her own assessment of the district.
- The CRO will oversee implementation of the improvement strategy.



Five Focus Areas

Support for
Instruction

Communications

Talent

Resource
Alignment

Performance
Management



Recommendations

- Develop a clear theory of action and strategy for district improvement that places student learning at the center of school and district work.
- Deliver consistent communications about the district's theory of action and improvement strategies.

Phase

- Phase I
- All Phases



Possible Actions: *Develop a clear theory of action and strategy for district improvement that places student learning at the center of school and district work.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Utilize multiple district leaders' input and relevant research when developing a theory of action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What internal or external expertise is available to provide support with this work?
When amending the Recovery Plan, include a limited number of improvement strategies to ensure successful initiatives already underway are supported and not disrupted by new strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will be the nature of the planning process? • What is the term of the plan?



Possible Actions: *Deliver consistent communications about the district's theory of action and improvement strategies.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Identify a source of professional communication assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the district allocate resources to create a position for new staff or an outside consultant? • In which office(s) could this individual work and who would be his/her supervisor?
Have the Superintendent and Chief Recovery Office present the plan at every school and at Central Office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When should meetings occur so that all stakeholders have the opportunity to attend?
Launch monthly Central Office meetings, reviewing plan implementation, and correcting course or amending plans when necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is meeting monthly the optimal frequency?
Rebuild the district's website with a focus on communicating plan strategies and progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who can lead this work? • How can feedback be gathered to maximize the community's use of the website?
Conduct a senior leadership retreat for Central Office leadership and school leaders to discuss strategies, goals, and action plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who should plan the retreat?
Coordinate opportunities for district leadership to check-in regularly with municipal leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often should this occur?



Resources & Examples

Some district websites include portals or pages directed specifically to the community, with information on how to become a partner to donate resources or services. For example, the Fort Bend Independent School District in Texas has a [series of pages on its website](#) with information for community members and local businesses. A [2014 report from the U.S. Department of Education](#) highlights effective parent and community engagement practices for turnaround schools and districts.

Dunlap School District in Peoria, IL, created a [communications plan](#) which coincided with the roll-out of the district's new strategic plan. The plan outlines a series of mediums for communication, including the website, a blog, emails, hard copy newsletters, direct mail, mobile phone applications and text messages, and an online interactive calendar. Such communication materials would be augmented by consistent events with parents and community members. All communication would be monitored and assessed to ensure functionality and satisfaction.

A district's website should provide students, parents, staff, and the public with information about the district, current initiatives and programs, school and departmental contacts, etc. Examples of strong websites include [Round Rock, TX](#), [Syracuse, NY](#), and [Houston, TX](#). A similar sized district, Central Falls, RI, uses the free Google Drive platform to house documents the public may need to access, such as enrollment information and HR forms. Websites should also cater to commonly spoken languages in the district, highlight the district's mission and vision, and announce upcoming events to the community.



Sample Theory of Action

What is a theory of action?

A theory of action is an “if...then” statement which describes the set of underlying assumptions or actions that will lead to a particular goal; in this case, better outcomes for students.

IF...

- Teachers work together to engage students in learning using materials aligned with standards, deliver content consistently using the district’s scope and sequence, and differentiate instruction to meet students’ needs; and
- Principals lead school-wide efforts to support teacher collaboration and students’ readiness to learn; and
- Other school staff contribute to a school environment that fosters effective teaching and learning; and
- Students attend school prepared to learn and families are engaged in students’ learning; and
- Central office staff support school principals by setting clear expectations, providing needed resources in a timely manner, tracking and reporting progress on goals, and facilitating communication with all stakeholders;

THEN...

- Student learning will increase, and over time, all York City students will graduate prepared for college and careers.



Recommended Focus Area: Talent

Recommendations

- Ensure staff stability by formalizing 3 or 4 year commitments from all senior level staff.
- Identify opportunities for outside coaching support for school leaders.
- Engage outside help to facilitate ongoing collaboration with the union.
- Strengthen board governance with additional training and contact or collaboration with other boards.

Phase

- Phase I
- Phase II
- Phase II
- Phase III



Possible Actions: *Ensure staff stability by formalizing 3 or 4 year commitments from all senior level staff.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Ask all principals and assistant principals for a 3- or 4-year commitment to their schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the right people in place? • How can leadership retain the ability to let people go for poor performance?
Ask the Central Office leadership team for a 3- or 4-year commitment to the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the right people in place? • How can leadership retain the ability to let people go for poor performance?
Consider offering bonus payments for retention and meeting goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are bonus payments possible under existing contracts? • What are the potential unanticipated consequences of such an approach?



Possible Actions: *Identify opportunities for outside coaching support for school leaders.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Contract with an external partner for turnaround leadership training and coaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which external partner is the best fit (e.g. UVA Darden/Curry Partnership for Leaders in Education; Relay National Principals Academy)? • What can the district afford? Which funds can be allocated to a contract for turnaround leadership coaching?
Partner with a neighboring district for leadership coaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the challenges in other local districts similar to those in York City? • Would principals be open to coaching from peers from another district?



Possible Actions: *Engage outside help to facilitate ongoing collaboration with the teachers union.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Engage an expert to facilitate union/management discussions about improvement strategy implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the union be open to this sort of assistance? • What is the history with this type of support? • Who is the right provider (e.g. Stinson Stroup from PSEA; Jo Anderson from Consortium for Educational Change)?
Establish regular meetings with the union to review improvement strategies and the implementation of the distributed leadership plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often should these meetings occur? • Who should be in attendance?
Propose a joint district/union effort to address the lack of substitute teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the root cause of the problem? • What are the options for solving the problem?



Possible Actions: *Strengthen board governance with additional training or collaboration with other boards.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Identify a “governance coach” for the school board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would The Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS) or the Education Policy Leadership Council be good options to provide this support?
Enroll the board in the available PA School Board Association training .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Lancaster or another nearby district doing this work? What is the level of engagement required to participate?
Encourage board members to attend relevant state and national conferences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a mechanism in place for board members to learn about these opportunities?
Encourage board members to attend meetings of high-functioning local school boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which districts within reasonable distance have a high-functioning school board willing to serve as a mentor or coach to York City’s school board?



Resources & Examples

The Relay Graduate School of Education's National Principals Academy Fellowship is based on Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* and Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's *Driven by Data*. The fellowship is a one-year program with the goal of preparing principals to be effective instructional and cultural leaders. Relay provides intensive training to principals on implementing data-driven instruction, a positive student culture of high expectations, and effective observation and feedback.

A [2014 report by the Center for American Progress](#) highlights lessons learned from a union/management partnership in a 21,000 student district in California. The report finds that such collaboration benefits student achievement, and is most likely to succeed with support from state-level policy.

Lessons learned from a [2011 Aspen Institute report about labor/district collaboration](#) include:

- Communicate on topics beyond the contract – create a culture of transparency around all issues, from least-controversial to contentious.
- Set an example at the leadership level.
- Avoid the traditional negotiation process and instead use a problem-solving approach, including practitioners in the conversation as much as possible.



Recommended Focus Area: Support for Instruction

Recommendations

Phase

- Provide schools with a consistent scope and sequence, materials, and assessments in core subjects; don't roll it out until it is ready. ➤ Phase I
- Review school practices regarding RtII implementation and the special education referral process, and increase the number of Tier III interventions. ➤ Phase III
- Build a quality instructional coaching system for teachers. ➤ Phase IV
- Expand the Communities in Schools partnership to all campuses. ➤ Phase IV
- Modify student enrollment processes to improve efficiency and reduce student mobility. ➤ Phase IV



Possible Actions: *Provide schools with a consistent scope and sequence, materials, and assessments in core subjects.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
<p>Complete the ongoing work to adapt Pennsylvania’s ELA and math modules to a curriculum, ensuring consistency and quality so the curriculum mapping process will not need to repeat annually.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the district have the capacity to get done this well? • What is a realistic timeline? • How will teachers be supported with implementation?
<p>Suspend the use of select common assessments until the curriculum map is in place and the common assessments are revised.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What assessments could be used in the interim period?



Possible Actions: *Review school practices regarding RtII implementation and the special education referral process, and increase the number of Tier III interventions.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
<p>Design an accountability system to ensure RtII practices outlined in the district’s RtII Handbook are timely and implemented with fidelity across all schools and include clear protocols for both starting and exiting RtII services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who will make sure the accountability system is successful? • Are there opportunities for staff to safely share successes, challenges, and concerns about RtII implementation at their schools?
<p>Review the Cornerstone mission, vision, referral process, parent communication systems, and other protocols to ensure stakeholders have a common understanding of its purpose and design.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How should new Cornerstone information be conveyed to stakeholders? • Who will monitor referral practices for consistency?
<p>Using student data to guide decision-making, determine a small set of additional research-based academic and behavior Tier III interventions to purchase (e.g. Wilson Reading System). Develop a professional development plan to support teacher adoption of new materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the best way to acquire and analyze this data? • What are possible sources of additional funding for interventions? • Who can design and lead professional development to assist teachers with adopting new programs? When could trainings, observations, etc. occur?
<p>Review the special education referral process with school leadership and consider amending systems to improve efficiency and efficacy of the student evaluation process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is communication breaking down at particular schools? Where are the gaps? • Is the referral process consistent across schools?
<p>Review systems to support students with exiting programs, such as Cornerstone or Special Education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no systems are in place, what should be implemented?



Possible Actions: *Build a quality instructional coaching system for teachers.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Define the role and responsibilities of instructional coaches and the reporting structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who should structure, recruit, hire and supervise these positions?
Hire people with demonstrated capacity to deliver the agreed-upon services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will these positions be funded? • Will the compensation be competitive enough to attract high-quality applicants? • What is the hiring process?
Provide coaches with the necessary training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is responsible for training the coaches? • What curricula will be used for the trainings?
Provide coaches with consistent and practical support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who can provide the support? What district capacity is available? • How will the support plan be developed and monitored?
Consider using coaches to also share strategies to support instruction for the district's high ELL population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should familiarity with best practices for teaching ELLs be part of the coaching job description? Should an additional coach be hired to address this need?



Possible Actions: *Expand Communities in Schools partnership to all campuses*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Document the performance of the Communities in Schools for this year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can Communities In Schools provide documentation to justify expansion?
Seek funding for an expansion to all schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are possible sources of funding?
Consider additional means of supporting students' social and emotional needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What additional socio-emotional learning supports could complement Communities in Schools?



Possible Actions: *Modify student enrollment processes to improve efficiency and reduce student mobility.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
<p>Collect and analyze data on student mobility by school, grade, and month to clarify the nature and scope of the problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this data available? • Who can compile this information? • Does the data justify a change in practice?
<p>Consider establishing a central student enrollment/transfer function within Central Office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could an enrollment center also provide counseling to families or connections to social service providers? • Who could take responsibility for this center?



Resources & Examples

A plethora of resources on RtII and Special Education are provided for free online. Some of the best examples include:

- The National Center on Intervention at American Institutes for Research offers a clean snapshot of various [research-based interventions](#).
- The Center on Response to Intervention at American Institutes for Research provides [resources](#) to examine and support schools' RtII implementation, as well as examples of districts that have utilized the tools. A rubric and worksheet to examine district-level capacity with supporting RtII implementation are also available on their [website](#).

- Columbus City Schools uses a [centralized enrollment system](#) that includes online student registration and a single enrollment facility for parents to meet with district staff.
- [Research](#) suggests that school mobility – even within a district – negatively impacts reading, math, language, and overall achievement scores.



Aligning Resources to Reach Goals

Recommendations

Phase

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align Central Office staffing, roles, and responsibilities to support the instructional core. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Phase I |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for and communicate about new initiatives, such as the Freshman Academy and teacher looping proposal. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Phase I |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a strategic budgeting process to align any new funding with strategic priorities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Phase III |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to review payments to charter schools. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Phase III |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximize the use of federal funds. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Phase III |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve capacity and support for administrative and instructional technology. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Phase III |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the Bearcat Cyber Academy's performance and impact. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Phase III |



Possible Actions: *Align Central Office staffing, roles, and responsibilities to support the instructional core.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
<p>Compare York City's Central Office staff size and departmental configurations to similar districts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the Central Office staff size seem appropriate for a district its size? • Are some departments lacking or overstaffed?
<p>Review job descriptions to ensure responsibilities ultimately support the instructional core.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can staff's responsibilities be traced back to the instructional core? What revisions should be made to particular roles to ensure this is a consistent practice?
<p>Review Central Office's organizational structure and share an updated organizational chart with district staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who should be part of this conversation? • What is the best way to convey this information to Central Office and school-based staff?



Possible Actions: *Plan for and communicate about new initiatives, such as the Freshman Academy and teacher looping proposal.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Develop a detailed action plan for each initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is leading this work? Who else is responsible for providing support or serving as a point of contact?
Review timelines and resources to ensure that plans can be implemented successfully.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have adequate funds been allocated to support these initiatives? Do staff assignments reflect the needs of the initiatives?
Develop a plan for communicating information to all stakeholders, i.e. students, families, teachers, and the local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who will own the plan?



Possible Actions: *Use a strategic budgeting process to align any new funding with strategic priorities.*

Possible actions	Questions for consideration
Develop budgets for each of the major improvement strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the budgeting process and schedule? • What systems can be developed to monitor funding so that it remains aligned to district priorities?
Ensure any incoming funding from the community (grants or donations) are aligned to strategic priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which community members, businesses, or foundations are interested in supporting the work? • How do their interests align to or complement the strategic priorities?



Possible Actions: *Continue to review payments to charter schools.*

Possible actions

Questions for consideration

Develop a schedule for reviewing payments to charter schools.

- How often should this occur?



Possible actions: *Maximize the use of federal funds.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
<p>Prepare a report on how federal funds are being used by schools and by Central Office.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who can collect and compile the data?
<p>Determine which improvement strategy expenses can be supported with federal funds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can schools and the district either begin or conclude doing with federal money to optimize its use? • Who decides how federal funds are used? Are there opportunities for additional input to help ensure it is used strategically?



Possible Actions: *Improve capacity and support for administrative and instructional technology.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Assess instructional technology needs, either internally or through an external provider.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the Pennsylvania Intermediate Units (IUs) be a resource?
Assess administrative technology needs, either internally or through an external provider.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the Pennsylvania Intermediate Units (IUs) be a resource?
Compare technology needs with the district's existing capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who should conduct this analysis? What needs should be prioritized for deeper analysis?
Identify gaps and begin to reallocate resources and seek new capacity. Consider staff training needs in plan design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who should own this process? Can this work be done internally? Would the Council of Great City Schools or technology teams from neighboring districts be useful resources?



Possible Actions: *Assess the Bearcat Cyber Academy's performance and impact.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Prepare a report on the school's performance during SY 2014-15.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who can prepare the report? What data is available for analysis?
Assess the viability of continuing the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is an appropriate timeline? What set of measures should be used when examining data?
Provide transition supports to all enrolled students exiting the program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can students experience a seamless transition back into district schools? Who can provide the transition support? How can parents be partners in the transition process?



Resources & Examples

According to a [literature review](#), only a very specific subpopulation of students is generally successful with virtual schooling – examples of attributes of these students include being self-motivated, possessing strong time management skills, and being independent learners.

Montgomery County Public Schools was awarded the [2010 Broad Prize mostly as a result of their strong culture of clear expectations](#). The district compiled a series of 7 goals – such as “Algebra II completion by grade 11 with a ‘C’ or higher” – and supported these lofty targets by reallocating resources to schools with the highest rates of struggling students.

The Madison, WI Metropolitan School District developed a [comprehensive and goal-oriented technology plan](#) aligned to their district vision for student success. The plan is the result of research, the examination of best practices currently used in other districts throughout the country, and almost 30 sessions with school staff, students, parents, technology experts, and faculty from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. (Please note that to ensure financial feasibility and sustainability of district investments, the budget required some [amendments](#).)



Managing Performance to Reach Goals

Recommendations

- Write an amendment to the Recovery Plan organized around the delivery of quality instruction.
- Use the distributed leadership model to implement school-based improvement strategies.
- Build systems for cross-school learning.
- Build district information management and analytic capacity.
- Publish an annual report and district scorecard.
- Closely manage the implementation of major improvement strategies.

Priority Level

- Phase I
- Phase I
- Phase I
- Phase II
- Phase IV
- All Phases



Possible Actions: *Write an amendment to the Recovery Plan organized around the delivery of quality instruction.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
<p>Have the Chief Recovery Officer develop an amendment to the Recovery Plan centered around instruction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When does the amendment need to be completed? • How will the amendment be communicated to district stakeholders?
<p>Encourage the plan and implementers to share the following assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not begin anything until you believe it will be successful; • Ensure regular and transparent reporting on progress; and • Assume a 3-4 year timeline. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can the team ensure they maintain these beliefs?



Possible Actions: *Use the distributed leadership model to implement school-based improvement strategies.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Orient UPenn distributed leadership trainers to updated Recovery Plan priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the best way to do this so that it is impactful? • Who else should be involved in this dialogue?
Focus the distributed leadership trainings for school teams on supporting improvement strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who can ensure the plan strategies thread throughout the training?



Possible Actions: *Build systems for cross-school learning.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
<p>Identify the school-based roles that can benefit from additional cross-school communication, e.g. assistant principals or instructional coaches. Start with a small number (2-3 groups) and focus on the highest leverage roles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which positions should be prioritized?
<p>Provide time/structures for cross-school staff meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who can be responsible for building this cross-school collaboration? Is it possible to select one school-based person to lead this work?



Possible Actions: *Build district information management and analytic capacity.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Identify district data management and analysis needs and prepare a job description based on the identified needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What relationship should this role have with the technology and finance departments? • Which office should this position be a part of? What is the position's link to accountability, performance management, and/or technology?
Determine how much capacity is required to meet this need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should this be one person's role or is greater capacity required?
Recruit the appropriate person(s).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any strong internal candidates?



Possible Actions: *Publish an annual report and district scorecard.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
<p>Build on Superintendent Holmes' school scorecards to create a set of district performance measures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What indicators are most important to the district? • Who should oversee this process?
<p>Use the report as an opportunity to engage community stakeholders (e.g. Annual State of the Schools luncheon).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of event will best engage the community? • How else can the report be shared with stakeholders? • Should quarterly progress updates also be given to the community? If so, how should information be conveyed?



Possible Actions: *Closely manage the implementation of major improvement strategies.*

Possible Actions	Questions for Consideration
Identify an owner for strategy and performance management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who should own this key role?
Develop detailed work plans that identify who does what when for each of the major improvement strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How should Central Office communicate that this is the major work of the district for the near future?
Develop a process for progress monitoring and problem solving, beginning with a biweekly review of progress (to be scaled back when appropriate).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who can develop the process? Who can monitor fidelity to the process?
Hold Central Office and school staff accountable for progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who can lead this key responsibility?



Resources & Examples

Schools in East Boston have both formally and informally begun collaborating on professional learning opportunities for both teachers and administrators. This work has entailed shared professional development sessions, completing cross-school learning walks, and discussing best practices.

A [2013 report from The Wallace Foundation](#) highlights effective practices of school leaders, which are tied to increasing student achievement. Among other recommendations, the report emphasizes the importance of principals being strong leaders while also developing others' leadership skills.

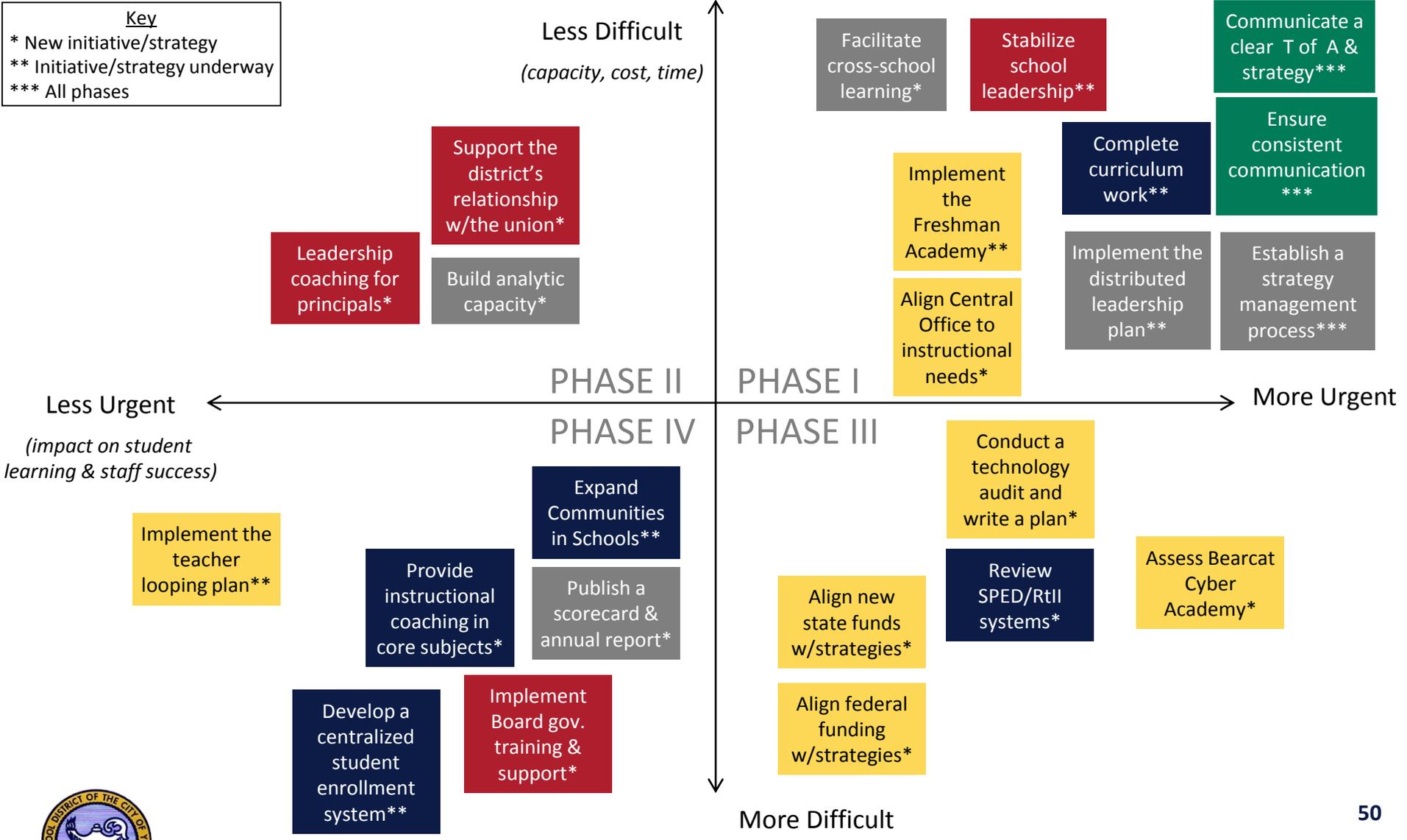
In [Montgomery County Public Schools](#), the superintendent borrowed business practices to apply to the district setting. Specifically, the district required managers and leaders of all kinds to produce flow charts and duty maps to show how problems were being solved. These maps included descriptions of tasks, who was responsible, and how long the tasks were to take. This is effective because not only can everyone get a clear picture about what others in the district are doing, but also see where things break down.



Priority Selection: *Using Urgency & Difficulty to Guide Decision-Making*



Key
 * New initiative/strategy
 ** Initiative/strategy underway
 *** All phases



Initial Recommendations

Section II: Recommendations provides a menu of recommendations aligned to the following categories or “priority areas”: **support for instruction**, **communications**, and **talent**. These priority areas will only be successful through effective **resource alignment**, and clear and consistent **performance management**.

Within the first several weeks following the July 15, 2015 submission of this report, the Chief Recovery Officer will begin creating 90-day plans and an amendment to the 2013 Recovery Plan. Immediate recommendations include:

Create and communicate a clear theory of action and strategy.

Ensure a system for consistent communication.

Establish a strategy management process.

Align Central Office to support school instructional needs.

Facilitate ongoing cross-school collaboration.

Continue to implement the freshman academy, distributed leadership, and curriculum adoption initiatives.

Stabilize school leadership.

Next Steps

Mass Insight Education will continue a short-term partnership with York City School District leadership to support next steps and 90-day plan implementation.

