Needs Assessment Summary

District: Bibb County Schools

School: Bruce Elementary

Principal: Dr. Johnson

Date: September 29-30, 2016

Solution Tree Coach: Geri Parscale

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Part 1

Purpose of the Needs Assessment for Continuous School Improvement

The Needs Assessment for Continuous School Improvement is utilized to determine how the school is performing in relation to the Critical Practices and Guiding Principles to be leveraged in the Professional Learning Community process. The process is data-driven and objectively identifies a school's strengths as well as opportunities for improvement. This report offers specific direction for school improvement based on the findings.

Critical Practices and Guiding Principles for Continuous School Improvement

The table below outlines the critical practices and guiding principles that are foundational to a school improvement process leveraging Professional Learning Communities. Each component falls within one or more of the three big ideas of a Professional Learning Community to include:

1. A Focus on Learning
2. A Collaborative Culture With a Focus on Learning for All
3. Results Orientation

The purpose of the work is to ensure that all students learn at high levels. Helping all students learn requires a collective and collaborative effort. A school wide focus is necessary with able and willing adults ready to implement any needed changes in order for students to reach proficiency. In order to assess the effectiveness of our work and the student progress, there must be evidence of student learning continuously. A school must be prepared to respond immediately to students who need intervention or extensions.

Culture of Success	A culture of success supports a safe, orderly, and equitable learning environment. There is an expectation of high levels of learning for all and culture of doing whatever it takes for each student to succeed. Creating Collective Commitments is a first step in establishing a culture of success.
Engaging in the Right Work	Implementation of an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles (unit by unit) of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Collaboration is the engine that drives the school improvement process. Teams focus on answering four critical questions that guide the process and ensure everyone is engaged in the right work.

1. What is it we expect students to know and be able to do?	A guaranteed and viable curriculum (1) gives students access to the same essential learning regardless of who is teaching the class and (2) can be taught in the time allotted. Teachers must work collaboratively to determine the guaranteed and viable curriculum for each course and grade level. The essential learnings are derived from the state standards and broken down into learning targets.
2. How will we know when they have learned?	The teachers collaboratively create common formative and summative assessments to help students acquire agreed upon knowledge and skills. Formative assessments for learning are part of an ongoing process to monitor each student's progress on a continuous basis, to inform the teachers of the effectiveness of their practices, and to provide scaffolding to students. SMART goals are established to monitor the progress made.
3. How will we respond when they do not learn?	A multi-tiered system of interventions in a school wide plan ensures that every student in every course or grade level will receive additional time and support for learning as soon as they experience difficulty in acquiring essential knowledge and skills. The intervention occurs during the school day and students are required to devote the extra time and secure the skills. This is a collective school wide responsibility.
4. How will we respond when they have already learned?	Extension opportunities are created for students who have reached proficiency with the guaranteed and viable curriculum. This group of students will engage in extensions of learning connected to the essentials.
Shifting From All to Each	School schedules, operational systems, grouping of students, and any activities impacting student learning are all focused to provide each student with the necessary skills and knowledge to become proficient in the guaranteed and viable curriculum. All decisions are made with this purpose as the most crucial goal.
Leadership for Learning	A Guiding Coalition comprised of teachers and administrators will be established to lead and monitor the school improvement processes that ensure learning for all. The building principal is responsible for implementing the Professional Learning Community at Work framework with fidelity. This includes but is not limited to data review weekly, scheduling, protecting instructional time, and supporting teachers with embedded professional development and time to do the work.
Engaging Students in Owning Their Learning	Schools and teachers adopt and ensure a growth mindset to improve achievement for each student. Students set their own learning goals in the form of SMART goals and track their own growth. Teachers create learning opportunities that personalize and engage students in owning their learning, bringing meaning to the process.

Methodology: Summary of Observations, Interviews, and Team Meetings

Methodology	Quantity
Classroom Observations	6
Interviews with Teachers, Administrators, and Students	13
Observations of Content and Grade Level Team Meetings	2
Observation of School Leadership Team Meeting	1
Document Review	3

Classroom observations, interviews with stakeholders, team meetings, review of curriculum documents, school achievement data, and demographic statistics informed the recommendations of this needs assessment.

Part 2

Background and Demographics

This report shares the results from a comprehensive needs assessment conducted through a contract with Solution Tree at Bruce Elementary on September 29-30, 2016 and concludes with recommended SMART goals and an action plan to further improve student learning.

Charles H. Bruce Elementary School (BES) is a Title I inner-city school in the Bibb County School District located in south Macon, Ga. BES serves students in Pre-K through fifth grade. The school has a population of 472 students, 97% are African American, 2% Hispanic, and 1% Caucasian. South Macon has a high concentration of poverty-stricken families. According to an article in the Macon Telegraph, James Beverly, State Representative for Georgia District 139, reported that Georgia's poverty level ranks 3rd nationally and states that 43% of that poverty is concentrated in East and South Macon.

According to the 2010 census, the population of Bibb County is 156,433 with approximately 25% under the age of 18. The racial makeup of Bibb County is 52.5% black and 44.1% white.

The school has many outside challenges such as poverty and high adult illiteracy. Many parents are unable to assist in supporting the education goals and requirements for their children due to illiteracy and lack of basic math skills. The school has a very transient population due to the socioeconomic status of the population in which the school serves. This impacts student achievement in that students can move one street over in either direction and are required to transfer to another school based on streets zoned for each school.

The immediate neighborhoods that surround C.H. Bruce Elementary School are comprised of low-income housing projects, rental housing and single-family homes. The neighborhood also consists of several neighborhood churches, restaurants, a variety of gas stations and convenient stores.

The school has undergone many changes. The original Charles H. Bruce Elementary School was built in 1926. In 2002, the school transitioned from a Pre-K-5th grade to a third grade through fifth grade school. In 2003, a plan for reconstruction required C. H. Bruce and Cynthia Weir Elementary schools to combine in one building on the Bruce Elementary School site. In 2004, the staff and students were relocated into the old Cynthia Weir Elementary School building while the Bruce Elementary School site was demolished and rebuilt, transforming it into a beautiful modern facility. The new school was completed in 2006 on the original Charles H. Bruce Elementary School site with over 600 students and three mobile trailers to begin the new school year.
The current principal, Dr. Ramon K. Johnson, began his administration in December 2005, and has served as the only principal in the new building since the fall of August 2006. Prior to December2005, Bruce School had three principals in three years. During the past seven years, the school has experienced growth in student achievement but not at the level required by state standards.

Grades Served	PK-5
Enrollment	463
% of Students on Free and Reduced Lunch	99%
% of English Language Learners	0%
% of Students With Special Needs	3.3%
Student Attendance Rate	95.88%
Teacher Attendance Rate	91%

Leadership Interview Summary

The current principal, Dr. Ramon K. Johnson, began his administration in December 2005, and has served as the only principal in the new building since the fall of August 2006. Prior to December 2005, Bruce School had three principals in three years.
Dr. Johnson is a quiet, strong leader who was originally sent to Bruce to change the culture. When he arrived, there was little respect for the school. There was disrespectful language between the parents and the teachers. Dr. Johnson was instruction to "clean it up". He did and now, with an appreciation for the school, parents and staff alike know that when they walk into Bruce, it is a safe and secure environment.
Dr. Johnson's vision for Bruce is now to support that staff and work toward having EVERY child who enters the doors to be at or above grade level each year. He believes to do that we need to move from a culture of "oh, these poor kids" to "These kids are the best in Bibb County."

Teacher Focus Group Summary

I spoke with 10 teachers (a portion who served on the leadership committee) at Bruce Elementary. All teachers were positive about the school, its celebrations and the kids. They seemed happy that they worked at Bruce.
The expressed three areas of frustration as we spoke:

1. The students that attend Bruce often live in homes where there are many concerns. Due to this, the teachers fail to believe or treat students with the "learning for all, whatever it takes". This is the culture that Dr. Johnson would like to change.
2. The teachers feel very, very stressed due to the structure of the schedule. While collaboration has been fixed in each schedule, the time is often dedicated to other issues that arise. Ultimately, the teachers do not collaborate on the right things.
3. The district has given the pacing guide and "essential outcomes" to the teachers. In short, much work needs to be done to separate the "nice to knows" from the "have to knows". The amount to "teach" in the teachers' opinion is too vast.

Student Focus Group Summary

Students speak very highly of Bruce Elementary and compliment the teachers highly.

Parent Focus Group Summary

I had the opportunity to speak to two parents, with only one who had children attending Bruce Elementary. They had very high praise for the teachers and feel that they have the best at heart when working with their children. Their concern was the environment that the students have in their lives and the question of "can our children actually make it".

Part 3

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Walkthrough Summary

Instructional Rounds

Observer:_Geri Parscale___Grade/Subject:___K-5___Date:_September 29-30, 2016

Stimulus Observed - What are students doing? (Engaged in dialogue, independent, worksheet, project based, manipulatives, writing, reading, etc.)

Reading together in pairs
Working on SMART board
Reading silently
Discussions with shoulder partners
Turn and Talk
Manipulatives

Cognitive Demand – Circle Thinking observed/facilitated

Analysis/Interpret   Apply IIIIII   Cause/Effect III

Compare/Classify/Categorize   Create/Develop IIIIIII   Draw Conclusions

Generalize III   Infer   Justify/Evaluate

Make Connections Summarize IIIII   Predict/Estimate IIIIII   Sequence/Order

Synthesize

Locus of Control – Who is responsible for most of the Thinking/Talking? Teacher/Students? Note Evidence observed.

Teacher   III

Students   IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII

Learning Targets – What is the connection between what the students are doing and the posted learning target?

All classrooms had power standards and learning targets. All were connected with what I observed the students doing in class.

Differentiated Instruction – What scaffolding/support for differentiated learning was observed?
(modeling, graphic organizers, visual supports, small group instruction, manipulatives, project based, extended time, etc.)

Modeling
Manipulatives
Small Group Discussions
Large Group Discussions
Visual support round the rooms
Centers/Stations

Classroom Environment – Desk Configuration, Anchor Charts, Literacy/Numeracy Rich, etc

Most classes had desks arranged in small groups of students. However, the number in each group varied. Some had 3 in a group where others had as many as 5 in a group. The K-1 classes did much at the "carpet area".
All classes had many visual supports around the room such as problem solving strategies, shapes, colors, handwriting, rules and guidelines

Instructional Strategies Observed –

In all classrooms, I observed many instructional strategies that included small and large group discussions, reading in pairs, manipulatives (base ten blocks), whiteboards, SMART board, Turn and Talk, Pair Work, and Role Play. Each class had students and teachers engaged in the lessons!

I liked…

- Think, Pair, Share
- The classroom discussions that is going on
- Teacher had control and had students very engaged in the lesson by involving everyone.
- 5th grade math teacher had great engagement!

I wonder...
- If the teachers ever present for one another for professional development
- Is data used in classrooms
- Do teachers know how each student is doing?

Classroom Observation Summary

Effective research-based instructional strategies must be utilized to leverage more rigorous and relevant student engagement. All classrooms had teachers who seemed very focused on their instruction. Through class discussions, pair work and SMART board work, the teachers try to engage students and have good relationships with their children in their class.

It is important to note that Bruce has 16 new teachers this year.

Part 4

Performance Data

Student Learning Data
*Please see attachments for data available at this time.

INDICATOR	CURRENT YEAR	PREVIOUS YEAR
% of Students Reading at Grade Level—1st grade	% Proficient or Advanced	% Proficient or Advanced
State Test Results Reading/English/Writing (by grade level or course)	% Proficient or Advanced	% Proficient or Advanced
State Test Results Mathematics (by grade level or course)	% Proficient or Advanced	% Proficient or Advanced
Gap Analysis State Assessment Results for Reading/English/Writing by Subgroups	% Proficient or Advanced	% Proficient or Advanced
Gap Analysis State Assessment Results for Mathematics by Subgroups	% Proficient or Advanced	% Proficient or Advanced

District/Benchmark/Interim Assessment Results	% Proficient or Advanced	% Proficient or Advanced
Literacy Data (Lexile Levels, Fluency, or Other Measures School Wide)	% Proficient or Advanced	% Proficient or Advanced
% of Student Failing Courses Reading/English/Writing by course or grade level		% Course/grade failures
% of Student Failing Courses in Mathematics by course or grade level		% Course/grade failures
High School Graduation Rate	NA	NA
Other Achievement Indicators (ACT, SAT, Work Keys, Course Recovery, Aspire, ELL Assessments, etc.)	NA	NA

Documents Review

In addition to assessment results the needs assessment includes a review of pertinent documents. These may include but are not limited to school and team schedules, school improvement plans, leadership and collaborative team meeting agendas, meeting records, team norms, team SMART goals, common formative assessments, curriculum guides, pacing information, standards and learning targets, intervention schedules and learning plans, lesson plans, formative data, etc.

Documents Reviewed
Bruce Essential Outcomes
PLC Data Protocol
Lesson Plans for various teachers

Part 5

Major Findings in Examining Critical Practices and Guiding Principles for Continuous School Improvement

Culture of Success

To establish a culture of learning for all, strong leadership is needed. Sharp perception, vision and mission building and team building are only a few of the necessary qualities needed as we build to a culture of success. I feel the teachers have a strong desire to see all students to do well. However, a stumbling block is the perception that since the students do come from different levels of concern in the home, these children cannot learn at high levels. A shift in culture is needed from just providing a safe and secure environment where some could learn to a culture where all will learn at high levels.

A schedule has been developed by a company hired by the district and allows for collaboration each day. As of now, the teachers are required to collaborate daily but each day it is taken over by someone or a task that the teachers must complete. Changing this focus to looking at student work will help give some time for the collaboration that is needed. Also, my observation is that the teachers are given no time to individually plan, to gather needed materials for differentiation, etc. Because the schedule allows for collaboration every day of the week, I believe that we could require 2-3 days a week to collaborate, rather than using every day.

Additionally, there are 16 new staff members this year so this is a perfect time to be speaking about the why of being at school and what must happen, without negotiation, while the students are at school. Begin the discussion and building a strong mission and vision and discussing our focus, changing it from a focus on teaching to that of learning will be powerful for the Bruce Elementary staff this year.

Engaging in the Right Work

Professional Learning Communities

In a Professional Learning Community, teachers and adult stakeholders focus on three big ideas:
1.   A Focus on Learning
2.   A Collaborative Culture with a Focus on Learning for All
3.   Results Orientation

Currently, the staff at Bruce Elementary have 50 minutes every day set in their schedule to collaborate, using Wednesday as Data Days and Friday for specific focus on RTI.   I would advise that Monday, Tuesday and Thursday be designated for individual plan time, allowing teachers to use this time to plan for the differentiated instruction that must happen.

Additionally, the time that is used for collaboration must be structured. As teachers collaborate on Wednesday and Friday, the agenda could include:

- Updated norms for each group
- Essentials
- Assessments, student work
- Student Concerns
- Celebrations
  (Agenda can be developed to meet the needs of the team)

1. *What is it we expect students to know and be able to do?*

*Teachers have been given outcomes for subject areas from the district. However, the teachers at Bruce need to develop **essential outcomes for each grade level/subject level** and have discussions that add clarity about the standards, rigor, level of proficiency, and individual student learning needs.*
In addition, pacing guides for these essential outcomes must be developed and utilized to ensure proficiency occurs by the end of the school year on all essential standards for the grade level.

2. *How will we know when they have learned it?*

Teachers must be systematically and collectively able to respond to student learning with additional time and support that close achievement gaps. While AIMs Web data is used to progress monitor, it is not enough to ensure that we know where every child is on a regular basis. Teachers must work collaboratively to define proficiency for each standard. Additionally, common formative assessments must be created and used by teaching teams to determine if students have reached proficiency with a particular standard. These must be used frequently for immediate feedback and action.

As these are developed for a unit, teachers then can become accustomed to looking at student learning, rather than just teaching the lesson and assuming that their students have mastered the skills and targets.

3. *How will we respond when they do not learn?*

Data driven decision making for rapid feedback and re-teaching is critical. Teachers can collaboratively analyze the data and identify which students did not master the skills and targets. Once this happens, teachers can plan for individuals, specific to what they need, to help those individual's mastery of the concept. This will take practice in looking at data and what it is saying to them regarding the needs of the student, but I believe the teachers who are staying are strong and can do this work for sure!

4. *How will we respond when they do learn?*

Along the same collaborative nature, teachers look at the data to see who has mastered the skills and concepts. Data driven decision making for rapid feedback and re-teaching is critical. Systems of intervention and re-teaching must be institutionalized. The staff all needs to plan for individuals who need help at extending and enriching. As teams work to determine collective interventions and develop differentiation strategies, it will be important to also identify students in need of enrichment and be able to define a quality extension for students to deepen the learning.

Shifting From All to Each

Interventions

Effective research-based instructional strategies must be utilized to leverage more rigorous and relevant student engagement. Although the teachers feel a great love and demonstrate a nurturing attitude, they must begin moving students to and through the grade level bar. With guidance, the teachers will be able to provide interventions. This has not been systematic in nature throughout Bruce Elementary. Each grade has a 40-minute intervention time built into the schedule. Dr. Johnson will need to guide the staff in building an operational system that gets results for this allocated time. Upon implementation during the school year, teachers will become more proficient at analyzing data and making good decisions regarding what the students need. A critically missing component is identifying the guaranteed and viable curriculum or WHAT is going to be done, once it is decided that the student needs help. It needs to be very specific and focused to their need.

Remediation

There is no evidence of a systematic plan to address the needs of students who have significant deficits in their learning. This is an area of need immediately for Bruce Elementary. Students come into the school with holes in their learning and the teachers have a moral imperative to help to identify this immediately and respond with a system of helping the student get up to speed with a sense of urgency.

Leadership for Learning

To lead Bruce Elementary effectively, the administrators needs to be self-reflective, motivational and able to build and lead a team in developing the vision and mission for the school. Both administrators at Bruce are strong, caring people with knowledge of the community and the school. They are well positioned to lead. Teachers and staff know that they are safe and supported.

With that being said, the area of focus that MUST be addressed is culture. The teachers at Bruce care so much about the students BUT are quick to give excuses "well, they come from so little, we cannot expect too much of them". Bruce Elementary must be about student learning, not teachers teaching. The teachers must begin embracing all students and owning the "learning for all, whatever it takes" way of living. Administration and curriculum leaders can help form the culture of doing whatever it takes for every student that walks in the doors of Bruce.

Engaging Students in Owning Their Learning

Students must be engaged in their own learning in order to know what they have learned and what they have not learned yet. While I witnessed student engagement in classrooms and students who were excited about what they were learning, teachers should build on the capacity and skills to engage students with rigor and relevance while also giving them ownership of their learning by self-tracking their own progress.

Challenges and Creating First Steps

The following action items were derived in the closing meeting with the Dr. Johnson and the Solution Tree Coach.

Challenges

- Development of a guaranteed viable curriculum with aligned common formative assessments
- PLC time that is focused on student achievement with data analysis
- Systems of intervention that are built into the schedule
- Pacing guides/pencil calendars that allow for mastery of the guaranteed and viable curriculum within a school year for a specific grade level

Action Steps

- Knowledge of and unpacking of essential standards
- Building formative assessments
- Increase student self-assessment, goal setting

SMART Goals

Goal 1: Culture: By May 2017, Bruce Elementary will develop a strong understanding of what the Professional Learning Community process looks like in a small school setting. In working toward this goal, evidence will be collected regarding the progress on the action items and increased student proficiency as measured by the NWEA Spring assessment.

Goal 2: By May 2017, Elementary will increase the percentage of students who score in levels three and four in that area of Language Arts by 10% as measured by the Georgia Milestone Assessment.

Goal 3: (Curriculum) • By May 2017, Bruce Elementary will identify essential standards and elements within our adopted programs that align to those standards in math for grades Kindergarten through Fifth Grade and align formative assessments and interventions to said standards.

30-60-90 Day Plan

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN FOR MCKIBBEN LANE ELEMENTARY

DATE: SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

PRINCIPAL: DR. RAMON JOHNSON

SOLUTION TREE COACH: GERI PARSCALE

PRIORITIES BASED UPON NEEDS ASSESSMENT
In a Professional Learning Community, teachers and adult stakeholders focus on three big ideas: 1.   A Focus on Learning 2.   A Collaborative Culture with a Focus on Learning for All 3.   Results Orientation There is an immediate need to refocus the work of the collaboration time to target individual learning needs and results as further described below.
Teachers will have a knowledge level understanding of what is important at each grade level. Also, once it is complete, we can look across the grade levels to see what is common and how it is taught throughout the grade levels.
Data collection, analyzing and providing focused instruction on students' needs must be a priority.

Smart Goals (30 day plan)	By December 15, Bruce Elementary will develop a shared understanding of a professional learning community culture and articulate the goals of the 2016-2017 professional learning plan.
Actions	Create a draft PL plan for the Spring of the 2016-2017 school year. Create Mission, Vision, Values and Goals as a staff

Level of Implementation	Laying the foundation: Awareness level of PLC process Beginning stages of developing a Mission, Vision, Values and Goals document for the Bruce. Utilize PL time in November
Expected Impact	Teachers understand the shifts in PD time and have an idea of what collaboration will look like in the Spring. Principal will gain a deeper understanding of how to lead a PLC culture at Bruce
Evidence	Completed draft of PD plan - developed with support of PLC coach Draft of Mission, Vision, Values, Goals
End Date	December 15, 2016
Person(s) Responsible	Principal(s), Academic Coach, Staff will work to complete the PD plan

Smart Goals (60 day plan)	By January 15, 2017, we will begin establishing the guaranteed and viable curriculum.
Actions	Begin creating proficiency maps for Math with the support of a PLC coach Begin defining the essential learning standards for Math with the support of the PLC coach.
Expected Impact	Teachers have a better understanding of guaranteed and viable curriculum and the expectations of the essential standards for their grade level and the vertical connection to prior and future grade levels Once teachers have a clear picture of the essential learning standards, they can align their instruction, assessments and interventions

Evidence	Drafts of the proficiency maps Drafts of the articulated essential learning standards for K-8 ELA
End Date	January 15, 2017
Person(s) Responsible	Principal will support staff in development.

Smart Goals (90 day plan)	By the end of the 2016-17 school year, the staff at Bruce will have defined essential learning standards and will begin creating PLC structures around formative assessment, data, and intervention.
Actions	PL on formative assessment and DOK (provided by PLC coach) Create structures to gather formative and summative data tied to the essential learning standards
Level of Implementation	Focus on learning: Developing foundation Grade Level teams will create balanced assessment models which include feedback and action (for teachers and students)
Expected Impact	Teachers have a better understanding of formative assessment and how to use data to inform instruction Teams begin to create assessments aligned to the essential learning standards Once teachers have a clear picture of balanced and aligned assessments, they can use the data to inform intervention

Evidence	Completed formative assessments Assessments that are aligned to the essential standards to provide feedback to students and teachers Structures to capture formative assessment data
End Date	May, 2017
Person(s) Responsible	Principal with support from support teachers and PLC coach Grade-band teams