



Needs Assessment Summary

District: Bibb County Schools

School: Dr. MLK Jr. Elementary School

Principal: Dr. Shandra Yarbrough

Date: September 28, 2016

Solution Tree Coach: Jasmine Kullar

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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.

What is it we expect students to know and be able to do? How will we know when they have learned?	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. The teachers collaboratively create common formative
2. How will we know when they have learned:	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.
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	7
Interviews with Teachers, Administrators, and Students	7
Observations of Content and Grade Level Team Meetings	1
Observation of School Leadership Team Meeting	0
Document Review	

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

King Elementary School opened in August 2015 after the consolidation of Jones Elementary and King-Danforth Elementary. King has been designated as a priority school by the Georgia Department of Education. The school just implemented a new schedule created by the district that includes an intervention block every day for every grade level. The new schedule also provides planning time for every grade level every day. The school composition includes 100% of students receiving free and reduced lunch and is 98% African American.

Grades Served	PreK - 5
Enrollment	713
% of Students on Free and Reduced Lunch	100%
% of English Language Learners	0%
% of Students With Special Needs	3%
Student Attendance Rate	n/a
Teacher Attendance Rate	n/a

Leadership Interview Summary

Culture of Success

The principal, assistant principal, dean and academic coach were interviewed. The school has established partnerships with community stakeholders such as, Boys and Girls Club and United

Way. United Way volunteers to tutor students. There are several partnerships with the local churches which provide a variety of supplies and resources to students. Students elebrations are predominantly done through the recently implemented program, PBIS. Students earn tickets for good behavior which they can then spend to purchase various items. Students are also recognized monthly through PRIDE celebrations. P – Persevere through challenges, R – respect myself and others, I – invest in my learning, D – demonstrate strength of character, E – excel to the best of my ability. This PRIDE expectation is at the feeder middle and high school as well. The leadership team was consistent in sharing that most student celebrations are centered on behavior, and not academics.

A culture of high expectations was evidenced through the large number of teachers who stay after school to sponsor programs. Three clubs that had voluntary teacher sponsorship were discussed: student council, beta club, and cheerleading. Parent communication is considered strong as teachers frequently inform parents regarding what is happening with their child. However, it was stated that there are pockets of teachers who have low expectations of students.

The district just recently created a schedule for its' schools which this school is in year 1 of implementing. The schedule includes a daily planning period for teachers, in addition to an intervention block. As a result of planning periods each day, teachers meet in their collaborative teams on Tuesday and Thursday, they have RTI meetings on Wednesdays, and grade level meetings on Mondays.

There is room for growth in these meetings. Comments were made regarding some teachers meeting deadlines (eg. intervention block plans, minutes, lesson plans etc). It was also stated that some teachers did not come to meetings on time or were absent.

Data is looked at weekly at leadership team meetings. At every meeting, someone is in charge of presenting some form of data (eg. media specialist presenting on accelerated reader data, someone else on teacher attendance etc.) However, changes are not always made as a result of looking at the data. Discussions held about the data and the why's, sometimes just re-affirms what is already known and validates the negative view some have of the school.

The district has an online tool to solicit feedback from parents, students and/or teachers called "List Talk." The principal shares the comments that get posted which are typically negative. There doesn't appear to be much that changes from these comments, due to the isolation of the comments. Faculty meetings seem to be the forum for teachers to voice their concerns. An example was shared where the administration team invited teachers to stay after school to discuss cafeteria concerns – after concerns were shared, the participants offered solutions which will now be implemented to help with a smooth transition of the cafeteria. Most of the examples offered were related to the managerial/operational running of a school.

Engaging in the Right Work

The leadership team has just started meeting every week this year. Over the summer, the leadership identified SMART goals based on 4-5 areas but nobody was able to articulate the specific goals. The goals have not been referenced or monitored since pre-planning when they were shared with the staff.

This is the first year common assessments have been an expectation, however, grading is still left to each individual teacher. Not every teacher re-tests. In addition the pacing guide was brought up as a challenge because teachers feel the pressure to move on, even if there are students who did not master the standards.

Data is discussed frequently – however it is not necessarily broken up by teacher. This is done so teachers don't feel threatened. Data protocols are used to guide discussion on the various data points.

Students are not always necessarily able to articulate their learning targets. A recent survey conducted by the administration with the students showed that some students could state them while many could not.

Shifting From All To Each

This is the first year the intervention block has been implemented every day for each grade level. There are several inconsistencies with how the time is being used. Some grade levels group their students between each teacher so each teacher takes a high, low, medium group. While in other grade levels the teachers keep their students. They differentiated between the levels within their classroom

Teachers are to submit their plan every 6 weeks for what the upcoming 6 week intervention block will look like. The block has not been monitored yet to see what actually occurs. Some teachers view this time as break time and there is concern it may not be used effectively. The block is also only focused on reading. The block seems to be more centered on remediation and not enrichment – the focus of this time is primarily on re-teaching and remediation.

Leadership for Learning

Although data is shared every week at the leadership team meetings, it is not necessarily student achievement data for that particular week. Collaborative team meetings are beginning to analyze data, but that is not consistent as some teams do not give assessments every week while others do.

The admin team is involved in teacher evaluations, and is planning to use that data to determine professional learning for teachers. Other than that, classroom observations have not resulted in any changes to instructional expectations.

The admin team agreed on having more systematic procedures to celebrate staff and student improvement and success. At the moment, most of it is done through PTO (luncheons for instance) or verbally at the beginning of each faculty meeting through giving kudos.

Engaging Students in their Own Learning

There is no school-wide process or expectation for students to self-evaluate their work. PBIS has helped with motivating students and in reducing discipline infractions.

Teacher Focus Group Summary

Students are celebrated for behavior through PBIS and Class DoJo. Character kids is a monthly celebration where students are selected and they have a cookie with the counselor. Some teachers mentioned that they have their own classroom celebrations.

Staff celebrations are mainly limited to faculty meetings. These meetings always begin with kudos to each other. Teachers appreciate the little tokens of appreciation given by the academic coaches.

Teachers were confident that learning targets have been established for each content area and their lesson plans are based on those targets. Pacing guides are followed with fidelity which does not allow for time to re-teach. The re-teaching occurs during the intervention block, but that is not carried out with consistency. Each grade level approaches this block of time differently.

5th grade teachers are departmentalized so they is no one to create common assessments with or to compare data. They do meet monthly with others from the district and those meetings are helpful as they learn various teaching strategies – however, they still do not create common assessments or compare data during this time.

Grading practices are inconsistent as some teachers re-test, some do not. Some take certain points off for mistakes, while others take no points off etc.

PBIS received positive comments but there was still concern for the students who continuously receive discipline infractions.

Overall, teachers felt their input was taken and felt comfortable speaking up in faculty meetings and voicing their concerns. They also can talk to their grade level chairs who then bring up concerns at the leadership team meetings.

Collaborative time is dictated by the academic coaches – they are the facilitators and lead the work. Some teachers appreciate that, others do not. Some feel they are still planning on their own after those meetings because there is not enough time to go over the things they want to go over. For example, they are planning out units 9 weeks in advance together but may have to individually change daily plans that sometimes need to occur. In addition, teachers discussed having to do double work because in addition to the unit plans they do every week, they also have to write individual lesson plans. However, this is being addressed by the academic coach as she shared a consolidated template for both unit and lesson plans. A collaborative team session was observed. It was a "sit and get" where the teachers listened to a presentation by the academic coach and district person.

Student Focus Group Summary

The students have a strong sense of pride for their school – they love the name and feel an honor attending this school named "after their hero." Students all said they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. When asked about teachers, students felt they care about them but some expressed the "yelling" that can occur in classrooms. Specifically, they were asked how their teachers could make this a better school and the responses were "by not yelling at us" or "helping us out more."

Parent Focus Group Summary

No parents came.

Part 3

Comprehensive Needs Assessment Walkthrough Summary

Instructional Rounds

Date:

Grade/Subject:

draw, bus, con		
Stimulus Observed - What are students doing? (Engaged in dialogue, independent, worksheet, project based, manipulatives, writing, reading, etc.)		
Reading – 3 Writing – 2 Engaged in Dialogue - 2		

Cognitive Demand – Circle Thinking observed/facilitated

Observer:

Analysis/Interpret	Apply - 1	Cause/Effect
Compare/Classify/Categorize - 1	Create/Develop - 1	Draw Conclusions
Generalize	Infer	Justify/Evaluate
Make Connections Summarize	Predict/Estimate	Sequence/Order
Synthesize	Other (Copying) – 2	Reading - 1

Note Evidence observed.	
Teacher - 5	
Students - 2	

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

Note Evidence observed

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

The learning targets were clearly posted in every classrooms and all teachers referred back to the learning target. They referenced it frequently – and the activities in the classroom usually reflected the learning target.

Differentiated Instruction – What scaffolding/support for differentiated learning was observed?

(modeling, graphic organizers, visual supports, small group instruction, manipulatives, project based, extended time, etc.)

Differentiation was observed only in 1 classroom where each group received a book based on their reading level. In addition, the teacher in that classroom provided small group instruction. In all the other classrooms, all the students were doing the same work, the same math problems or the same reading text and it was predominantly whole group instruction.

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

All the classrooms had their desks arranged in groups. Several posters were up to support and/or prompt learning but they were never referenced. Student work was rarely seen posted. Behavior posters/expectations were only observed in one classroom.

Instructional Strategies Observed

Students working in groups.
Students copying from the board.
Students reading and filling out answers.
Students going to the board and solving questions.

I liked...

How all teachers were consistent in clearly displaying the learning target and also referring back to it. Teachers were also using "thumbs up/thumbs down" assessment strategy frequently.

I wonder...

If classrooms could display more student work and exemplars in the classroom and hallways, including classroom expectations. I wonder if teachers could maximize instructional time to ensure learning is bell to bell.

Classroom Observation Summary

Classroom observations showed learning targets are evident and are referenced in the classrooms. Students are always seated in groups and "thumbs up/thumbs down" is used frequently across classrooms to check for understanding.

Classroom management was more punitive in that teachers were heard making more negative comments, than positive. Comments included "If you don't stop talking, I'm throwing out your breakfast," "if you don't sit down, that's 2 points" etc. Class dojo was referenced frequently but to threaten or take points away – points were not given in any classroom. In addition, tickets for PBIS were not given to students. The negative consequences were more frequent used, than the positive reinforcements.

Time management could be strengthened. Many minutes were wasted as teachers either sharpened pencils or gave out books – during this time, students were sitting with nothing to do – which then resulted in behavioral issues coming up. Some classrooms were observed where the lesson was all auditory and the students were expected to sit and listen – with no active engagement – which also resulted in behavior issues.

Differentiation was minimal. Almost all the classrooms were whole group instruction where the students did all the same work. In many classes, there were several students who would finish the work quickly because they knew it, but then they had nothing to do – which then resulted in behavior issues.

Part 4

Performance Data

Student Learning Data*Attachments Can Be Used for All Student Learning Data

INDICATOR	CURRENT YEAR	PREVIOUS YEAR
% of Students Reading at Grade Level	% Proficient or Advanced n/a	% Proficient or Advanced n/a
State Test Results Reading/English/Writing (by grade level or course)	% Proficient or Advanced n/a	% Proficient or Advanced $3^{rd} - 4.8\%$ $4^{th} - 25.2\%$ $5^{th} - 8.9\%$
State Test Results Mathematics (by grade level or course)	% Proficient or Advanced n/a	% Proficient or Advanced $3^{rd}-6.9\%$ $4^{th}-0\%$ $5^{th}-10\%$
Gap Analysis State Assessment Results for Reading/English/Writing by Subgroups	% Proficient or Advanced n/a	% Proficient or Advanced n/a
Gap Analysis State Assessment Results for Mathematics by Subgroups	% Proficient or Advanced n/a	% Proficient or Advanced n/a
District/Benchmark/Interim Assessment Results	% Proficient or Advanced n/a	% Proficient or Advanced n/a
Literacy Data (Lexile Levels, Fluency, or Other Measures School Wide)	% Proficient or Advanced n/a	% Proficient or Advanced n/a
% of Student Failing Courses Reading/English/Writing by course or grade level	$\% \ \text{Course/grade failures} \\ 1^{\text{st}} - 20\% \\ 2^{\text{nd}} - 32\% \\ 3^{\text{rd}} - 7\% \\ 4^{\text{th}} - 39\% \\ 5^{\text{th}} - 31\%$	% Course/grade failures n/a
% of Student Failing Courses in Mathematics by course or grade level	$\% \ Course/grade \ failures \\ 1^{st} - 7\% \\ 2^{nd} - 22\% \\ 3^{rd} - 23\% \\ 4^{th} - 28\% \\ 5^{th} - 40\%$	% Course/grade failures

High School Graduation Rate	n/a	n/a
Other Achievement Indicators (ACT, SAT,	n/a	n/a
Work Keys, Course Recovery, Aspire, ELL		
Assessments, etc.)		

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
Collaborative team meeting agenda
Schedule

Part 5

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

Culture of Success

Celebrations need to occur systematically for both students and teachers. Celebrating small wins as well as big wins frequently would help build a culture of success. Redecorating the school (eg. there is not much up on the walls) would help reimage the school so students see all the great and positive things happening at the school.

Mission, vision and collective commitments are missing. This is an essential first step for the school. The establishment of these documents will promote everyone having a clear

understanding of the "why" and assist with making promises to each other to live out that "why" through their actions and behaviors.

Engaging in the Right Work

Professional Learning Communities

Focus on Learning

Practices should be analyzed to ensure the focus in on learning. Grading is one of those practices where teachers are inconsistent and they may not necessarily align with student learning.

Collaboration

The collaborative meetings need to be more interactive where teacher learning takes place. The agenda for the meetings typically go over items that are more informational that could be shared at faculty meetings (eg. what kind of a template to use for lesson plans/units as well as upcoming dates).

Results Oriented

The school reviews a lot of data frequently – perhaps too much. Select 2-3 big areas or needs to focus on and discuss data related to those areas, instead of every data point that exists for the school. The data should be meaningful and should bring about change – not just discussing it and then moving on.

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

Priority standards have not been established. Teachers are following the pacing guide and seem determined to stay on it regardless of whether or not students are getting the material.

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

Teachers have started creating common assessments but the grading has not been aligned. Teachers are not involved in creating SMART goals for each unit.

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

The school has created an intervention block during the schedule that occurs every day for every grade level, but each grade level arranges how that block will work. During this time, students receive reading interventions only. Math teachers are providing this intervention on their own time in their own classrooms. A school-wide multi-tiered system of interventions was not observed.

4. How will we respond when they do learn?

Enrichment is minimal. The intervention block seems primarily for re-teaching and remediating. There are no defined enrichment opportunities for students.

Shifting From All to Each

Interventions

Interventions are left to each teacher to decide as they work with students during the intervention block.

Remediation

The interventions are all primarily remediation as teachers re-teach certain concepts. This is based on the various data points. The plan is submitted to admin every 6 weeks so each plan lasts the duration of 6 weeks. At the end of a plan, students are re-evaluated and groups are formed again based on this new data.

Leadership for Learning

A leadership team exists and they just started meeting weekly. They feel they have input in the school, but the input seems to be all operational. Instructionally, data is shared every week but the data is from all areas – it is not tied to a focus or a theme. Instructional time isn't always protected as many announcements are made throughout the day while teachers are teaching.

Engaging Students in Owning Their Learning

Students are involved in their own learning as they are constantly asked what the learning targets are. However, there is not school-wide approach to engage students in their learning. In other words, some teachers do test talks, some do not.

Challenges and Creating First Steps

The following action items were derived in the closing meeting with the principal/Leadership Team and the Solution Tree Coach.

Challenges

- Classroom management
 - Even though PBIS has been implemented, most of the teacher behaviors remain punitive and reactive
- Instruction
 - Time management is a concern and students have several minutes (sometimes up to 15) where they are just sitting and waiting

- Differentiation was not observed which does not allow teachers to meet the individual needs of students
- Curriculum
 - o A guaranteed and viable curriculum has not been established
- Collaborative Time
 - The structure of these meetings are not focused on the 4 questions that drive the work of PLC's
- DRIP
 - o Too much data is looked at without a significant focus or purpose
- Celebrations
 - Students and teachers need to be celebrated more throughout the year
- Resource Management
 - There are several resources in the building, including an academic coach reevaluate their jobs and ensure resources are being maximized

Action Steps

- Create mission, vision and collective commitments
- Establish a guaranteed and viable curriculum
- Establish a structure for collaborative meetings (norms, roles etc.)
- Provide classroom management professional development
- Create a plan for systematic celebrations
- Focus on 2-3 big ideas (smart goals) and all data should then be related to those goals
- Re-examine grading practices
- Communicate expectations clearly (faculty handbook that staff signs off on)
- Evaluate the intervention block to ensure it is meeting the needs of each child
- Revisit and revise job descriptions for all support personnel

SMART Goals

Goal 1:

Create the mission and vision statements along with collective commitments by October 31, 2016.

Review SMART goals created over the summer and ensure staff knows them – identify data sources to be reviewed throughout the year on which to monitor progress of these goals by October 31, 2016.

Establish a structure for collaborative meetings (norms, roles etc.) by October 31, 2016.

Revise the intervention block to ensure each child's needs are being met by December 31, 2016.

Provide classroom management professional development throughout the year, at least once per semester.

Goal 2:

Create a plan for systematic celebrations for students and teachers by December 31, 2016.

Revisit and revise job descriptions for support personnel by December 31, 2016.

Goal 3:

Establish a guaranteed and viable curriculum for math and ELA by January 31, 2017.

Re-examine grading practices and create news policies that are aligned to student learning by May 1, 2017.

Create a faculty handbook that outlines all expectations by May 5, 2017.



30-60-90 Day Plan

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN FOR DR. MLK JR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

DATE: SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

PRINCIPAL: DR. SHANDRA YARBROUGH

SOLUTION TREE COACH: JASMINE KULLAR

PRIORITIES BASED UPON NEEDS ASSESSMENT

CULTURE/CLIMATE:

CREATE MISSION, VISION, COLLECTIVE COMMITMENTS AND GOALS

MATH AND LITERACY:

ESTABLISH STRUCTURE FOR COLLABAORATIVE TIME FOR MATH AND LITERACY

MATH AND LITERACY:

ESTABLISH STRUCTURE FOR INTERVENTION BLOCK FOR BOTH MATH AND LITERACY

Smart Goals (30 day plan)	Create a mission, vision, collective commitments and goals by October 31, 2016.
Actions	 Work collaboratively with a team of stakeholders to create the mission and vision Establish collective commitments as a staff Revisit goals created in the summer and ensure they are referred to weekly Identify the data needed to monitor progress on those goals
Level of Implementation	School-wide.
Expected Impact	Provides staff with a sense of belonging on a team – clarifies the purpose for everyone and holds each other accountable – gives a focus to the data being analyzed
Evidence	The creation of the mission, vision and collective commitments.

	 Posters throughout the school and on the website. Posted on all meeting agendas and referred to every time.
End Date	October 31, 2016
Person(s) Responsible	Principal

Smart Goals (60 day plan)	Establish a structure and expectations for collaborative time (held every Monday and Tuesday during planning) by December 1, 2016.
Actions	 Train staff on what an exemplary team looks like Establish expectations for what is discussed in team meetings Establish roles and norms and what happens when norms are violated Clearly define job expectations for each role
Level of Implementation	School-wide.
Expected Impact	Teachers meet in teams twice a week and that time should be spent focused on the right work in order to influence change. The work should be centered on instructional strategies and re-teaching strategies when data shows students did not master the learning target.
Evidence	 Observation of team meetings Agendas of team meetings Classroom observations – utilizing a variety of research based instructional strategies
End Date	December 1, 2016
Person(s) Responsible	Principal Solution Tree Coach

Smart Goals (90 day plan)	Establish a school wide multi-tiered support of interventions by January 15, 2017.
Actions	 Create a list of all interventions that can be provided by the school for both math and literacy Identify criteria for students to receive those interventions Identify what occurs in each of those interventions
Level of Implementation	School-wide.
Expected Impact	Students receive interventions that are tailored to their needs
Evidence	 School-wide pyramid of interventions Observations of the interventions Assessment results
End Date	January 15, 2017
Person(s) Responsible	Academic Coach