KANSAS CITY
GIRLS PREPARATORY ACADEMY

SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW

Introduction, Background, and Methodology

Introduction

Kansas City Girls Preparatory Academy (KCGPA) was granted a 5-year charter contract for enrollment beginning in Fall 2019. As part of the expectation and culture of continuous improvement, the school participated in a school quality review (SQR) process to identify strengths contributing to current success and opportunities for continued growth.

Background

KCGPA is an urban charter public school located in Kansas City, Missouri. The school currently serves approximately 147 5th-8th grade students in a single site campus. Founded in 2019 and having expanded one grade a year, the founding high school class will begin in Fall 2023. The district has endured the challenges of a founding year ending in a global pandemic.

The enrollment capacity for each grade is 100 students. The student population is 70 percent Black and 15 percent Hispanic compared to the state average of 15 and 7 percent respectively. Additionally, 100 percent of KCGPA's student population is eligible for free and reduced lunch compared to the state average of 45 percent. One hundred percent of students meet the 90 percent attendance rates.

School Quality Review Methodology for Assignment of Implementation Level

A team of observers was formed around the key areas of focus identified by school leadership and rooted in the SchoolWorks Quality Criteria (SQC). Stakeholder interviews and a review of state reported data and key documents were conducted prior to the onsite visit. Stakeholder focus groups were conducted during the onsite visit. Documents reviewed included curricula and related resources, educator evaluation and development protocol, school budget details, board meeting minutes, enrollment practice and policy and other key policy manuals. For the onsite visit, over the course of two days, the team observed instruction, student interactions and culture traditions.

In total, 30+ classrooms periods were observed inclusive of all grade levels 5-8, all subject levels 5-8, special subjects, intervention classrooms, honors courses, and English language learner classrooms. Most classrooms were observed at least twice given the smaller size of the school. Additionally, several onsite interviews were conducted with school leadership, counselors, intervention teachers, classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, student teachers and front office staff. Prior to the onsite visit, a meeting was held with the site visit lead and observation team for calibration and preparation. All observers were provided a schedule to ensure maximum coverage of classrooms and an onsite workbook to log feedback and assessment of implementation level. Observers were trained in correlation of evidence to indicators

and documentation of evidence to assign consistent assessment of levels. Using all sources of evidence, a total of 46 indicators organized under the focus areas of **Instruction, Students' Opportunities to Learn, Educator's Opportunities to Learn, Leadership and Governance, Financial Performance, and Organizational Performance** were observed and analyzed across the district and given an implementation rating against the following scale:

- **Development:** Basic topical knowledge is recognized. An understanding of the school design indicator and its need is evident but lacking any formal plan for implementation.
- **Awareness:** Leadership is informed and enlightened, but implementation is partial, in process, or significant planning is evident.
- **Experience:** Indicator exists in the early stages of implementation and/or practice is not yet effective. System integration is not yet evident, however some protocols are in place and well executed.
- **Expertise:** Indicator is developed and evidenced as successful. There is recognition of effective leadership, implementation, and practice. System integration is in place. Evidence is extensive and where applicable, measurable against established and referenced metrics.

Following the onsite observation, observers submitted assigned assessments of implementation levels and evidence using a consistent guiding form. The team lead compared all assessments to identify the average level for each indicator and summarized all evidence supporting each indicator. A post scoring review of the report was conducted by the observation team to find a common assignment reflecting the level of implementation for all indicators with significant deviation between observers or with limited evidence through a second review of evidence and collaborative dialogue, leading to a preliminary draft that was shared with school leadership through a virtual debrief meeting. The strength of the SQR process is in the quality of evidence provided and the buy-in of school leadership. To this end, all provided level assessments were reviewed with leadership bringing the most crucial lens to ensure evidence was observed appropriately and no evidence was missed in the process. No ratings were adjusted in the finalized report.

Domain 1: Instruction

Dimension 1.1: Classroom Climate

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Criterion 1.1.1 Behavioral expectations are clear and understood by students.

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Observation and Noticing of Strengths

Transitions are smooth. Hallways were observed to be orderly. Students were observed to enter the classroom and begin work quickly. Several teachers referenced the students as "scholars" as they entered the classroom. Little redirection was necessary to guide students into the classrooms. Interactions in the hallway were positive.

Teachers set expectations. In most classes, most students are on task. Several teachers were observed to use appropriate wait time to address off-task behavior. Students are noted to follow instructions such as raising hand when needing assistance, ensuring work is neat, and engaging in group activities. Teachers were observed noting positive behaviors such as "look at _____, she hasn't looked up from her paper".

Supportive Infrastructure. Teachers expressed feeling well supported by administration for students needing behavioral support. Protocols were in place for teachers to call administration to the room. Administration was flexible to be reactive to needs. A PRIDE curriculum is in place to address behavior management such as emotion management and recognizing bullying and harassment.

Use of merit and demerit system. A system was in place called "Joy Day". Students are awarded points for positive behaviors aligned to PRIDE and SEL curriculum. If they earn enough points they get to participate in "Joy Day" activities that include crafts, snacks, movies, etc. Also, if enough points are earned and students do not have referrals for detention, they may attend reward field trips. Points are tracked in an online system called On Compass for students and parents to see. Teachers were observed tracking behaviors such as engagement, participation, etc. on the board which will then be added to the online system.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity

Other classroom management approaches. When students were disengaged, often teachers did not acknowledge the behavior, nor did they solve for the challenges. In some classrooms, call-and-response protocols were used but with only 20 percent of the students responding. At times, students in classrooms were off task and groups of students gathered and whispering.

Teachers enforce accountability. In some classrooms there were expectations set but follow-up and accountability was observed to be lacking. In one class for example, a student filled a balloon with water, and it exploded on another student's desk with no

consequences. Students were noted to be out of their seats and talking during the "Do Now" activity in another classroom. In a third classroom a student called another student an offensive name without a response or consequence from the teacher. In some classrooms students were unresponsive to the teachers instructions, yelling out answer to questions and not responding to the teacher's content related questions.

Teacher preparation and classroom norms. While some teachers had noticeable routines of a "Do Now" or quiet work when starting class, norms and routines in several classrooms were not noticeable. While students did enter, sit down, and prepare for learning, it wasn't out of a shared culture of expectations, but rather out of student self-accountability.

Use of common language. There was limited common language acknowledged. Expressions such as "sizzle" were meaningful to all students and teachers. Students were referenced as "scholars" by most of the team. While PRIDE was a common reference used, various answers for what PRIDE represented was expressed.

Level: Experience

Criterion 1.1.2 The learning environment is highly structured, and learning time is maximized through effective planning and guidance.

Observation and Noticing of Strengths

Clear set of norms and expectations. In several classrooms, call and responses were used for volume expectations, such as "waterfall, waterfall" – "Sssh!". While there were some new transitions for the trimester, students appeared aware of expectations and followed norms and routines in place for each classroom. Teachers were observed noting positive reactions to the call-and-response method and other classroom norms. In one class the teacher modeled reading aloud and annotating.

Impact of structure on student empowerment. Group work was observed in several classrooms. In most, teachers were noted to be well positioned to scan the room effectively. Teachers were observed to pause students at regular intervals to make sure students are clear on next steps. Students were observed to use time productively and effectively and engage in student-to-student conversations. In one classroom, a teacher had materials prepared for use to practice triangles.

Planning and guidance of instruction. Pacing is observed to be effective. Teachers used time stamps, integrated independent work time, turn and talks and whole group debrief. Several teachers were noted to use various strategies to ensure positive transition between different portions of the lesson. Several teachers were moving at an adequate pacing to maximize learning time while providing instructional support to students.

Students were observed to have packets in both English and Spanish when necessary. Students describe teachers as prepared with lesson plans that try to engage

<u>Observation and Noticing of Opportunity</u>
Planning and guidance of instruction. Pacing is observed to be fast in most classrooms. At times, students are disengaged without acknowledgement from teacher. Teacher readiness was not always complete. In one classroom, the teacher anticipated words that may be tricky in the text but was not sure what page to begin on in the book. In another the teacher showed a picture of Mars on the screen but there was no explanation as to "why". In another classroom, computers were in the classroom but not enough for all students with no instructions or supplemental work for students while waiting for a computer. At times instruction plans seemed disconnected or space fillers were used that lacked rigor or purpose for extra work.

Level: Experience

Criterion 1.1.3 Classroom interactions are cooperative and conducive to learning.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Strengths</u>
Teachers are responsive to student needs. One teacher was observed to integrate student feedback into an exit survey with a question of what they liked and disliked about the interactive activity. Students were asked to give written feedback. In one classroom, a student advocated for a modified task and teacher responded swiftly. In another classroom, the teacher prompted "I have a proposition for you. My brain is done, your brain is done. If you work for 10 minutes, I'll give you a physical brain break". A different teacher asked the students if they needed a brain break. During an exam, one teacher was observed to circulate the room, gently touching the shoulder of a student and/or share encouraging words if they were exhibiting frustration.

Student collaboration. Students were observed to work well together. Dialogue was respectful when focused on learning. Turn and talks and small group work was used frequently with students engaging without hesitation. In one classroom, while reading aloud, students were observed to give each other compliments on their reading.

Student affirmation. Teachers generally acted with empathy. One teacher was observed to greet a student who was tardy with "Thank you for being here!" an acknowledgement of the challenges that are between home and school. In another classroom a teacher recognized the student's feeling of sadness. It was observed that students are affirmed in having bad days or bad moments and given space to work through challenges when needed. In a student partner talk, a teacher facilitated between students noting "It's okay. She has an idea. Let's give her a minute." to allow for adequate think time for the student presenting.

Positive classroom interactions. Teachers were observed to have positive and warm tones when interacting with students and leading instruction. Additionally, most teachers were notably passionate about the content being taught. The atmosphere was observed to be respectful between teacher and student and student to student with appropriate friendly banter and humor observed as a natural course of the day.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity

Student accountability in learning. At times, students were observed to be allowed to disengage from instruction. In these cases, a student having an off day was unintentionally given permission to disengage from instruction. Students were observed to be sleeping in class without teacher acknowledgement or redirection.

Positive classroom interactions. Students described some situations in which teachers reacted out of their own emotional space. One example was a teacher that frequently gets headaches and tells students to "shut up". Another teacher was described as "stressed out". Students also described feeling bullied in the classroom.

Level: Experience

Dimension 1.2: Purposeful Teaching

Criterion 1.2.1 Teachers provide students with clear learning goals and focused, purposeful instruction.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Clear learning objectives and focused instruction. Clear objectives were observed in many classrooms. One example is "I can use formulas to find volume" with all math problems driving toward the understanding of the objective. Additionally, teachers were observed to give clear instructions for work. In one classroom the teacher modeled reading aloud and reviewed annotation and the purpose of it. Students were asked to justify why they highlighted the areas they chose. Many teachers were observed to have students do work together, then individually, coming back together to check answers and approach.

High expectations for connected learning. Instruction is fast paced, yet in a few classroom teachers were observed to allow "think time" for students to find their own answer. In one class, students read a personal narrative book prior to writing their own towards the goal of using proper sentence structure versus writing as they talk (and then...and then...and then). Another example is a teacher giving students two minutes to read material and underline the most important points prior to watching a video that reinforced the concepts being taught. Students were instructed to find evidence to support their answers.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Opportunity</u>

Clear learning objectives. In one classroom, there was an observed tension between the posted objective of "I can identify key vocab using context clues" and the actual content focus of the lesson, which was on understanding figures in the abolition movements. The focus was on content, but it was misaligned to the objective. Some learning objectives were observed to tell students what they'll learn rather than letting students surface the key points through reading. For example, one observed objective was "I can explain the various reasons for exploration including adventure, profit, influence, power, escaping and figuring out geography", rather than "I can explain the various reasons for exploration". In another classroom, the learning target was written on the board but with no focus from the teacher.

Connecting purpose to instruction. Intentional connection of the objective with purpose was not observed. While students were engaged in what they were learning, most may not be able to explain "why" they learned it. Much of the instruction was worksheet or overhead focused with little hands-on learning or authentic learning observed.

Real-life, culturally relevant concepts. While culturally relevant content was intentional for courses such as ELA and humanities, the integration of real-life activities was not observed in most classrooms. The concepts were taught through direct instruction, but sample problems were not made relevant.

Level: Experience

Criterion 1.2.2 A variety of instructional strategies and materials support students' diverse needs.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Strengths</u>

Choice and opportunity for self-directed learning. In one classroom, students were able to choose where to work and how they wanted to write an assigned story (typed or handwritten). One teacher was observed asking students how much time they needed to solve a problem, while also acknowledging multiple ways to solve a problem and giving students choice in the method they chose.

Student access to content. Students were observed to access grade level content. For example, in a math classroom, seventh grade students were understanding algebraic equations with manipulatives. The teacher used scales to represent the balance in both sides of an equation. Small groups were observed in several classrooms with opportunities for student-to-student collaboration. In another class, the teacher broke down the word "multisensory" asking students what the word "multi" meant and what the word "sensory" meant. In a read aloud, a teacher assisted a student in pronouncing a word student had difficulty reading by starting the pronunciation and having the student

finish it. In a history lesson, the teacher offered strategies to help students remember certain historical events.

Use of organization tools. Teachers were observed to use worksheets, graphics, and videos to teach concepts within a lesson. Some teachers used a timer to keep instruction on track. Most classrooms were observed to have adequate materials to guide student learning. Overheads or whiteboards were used frequently for instructions and sample problems.

Varied strategies. In one classroom students were observed doing a word find activity. Teacher offered instructional games to keep students engaged. Teachers used techniques of practice, questioning, and checking to see if students understood the answer. A good mix of direct instruction and peer learning opportunities in small groups or turn-and-talks was observed. Generally, students engaged in a different approach to instruction in most classroom transitions, bringing diversity in learning to the day. One teacher drew a picture of a Spanish vocabulary word on the board when a student was hesitant to answer on a worksheet. The school day schedule also lends to varied strategies with the integration of PRIDE and WIN blocks.

Cultural Competency. In several classrooms, it is evident that text was selected for its cultural relevance. In one classroom, flags honoring student backgrounds were hung. In ELA and humanities classes, curriculum adaptation is evident in the books and content chosen.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Choice and opportunity for self-directed learning. It was unclear if students had a choice in group work – i.e. who they worked with, topics to be covered, etc. Additionally, very little rigor was observed in small group rotations, specifically learning opportunities for those students completing their work faster than others.

Application of instructional strategies. Instructional strategies were observed to be consistently used in every class, for every lesson. Strategies were implemented as a checklist of sorts, rather than intentional application to match the learning objective. Using all strategies within each lesson created instances of rushed instruction, reducing the opportunity for authentic student engagement. In one math class, students were focused on learning about 3D figures, yet only had chart paper representation. In a reading class, teacher used a read aloud but students were not reading along, minimizing the impact of hearing fluent reading. Teachers were not observed to necessarily adapt curriculum or the approach in the moment outside of integrating brain breaks if needed.

Utilization of varied grouping to address learning. While data was used to assign WIN groups, it was not evident that data was used in day-to-day instruction or as an input to building small groups. Most small groups appeared to be less intentional and a product

of location of seats. Additionally, small group rotations were not generally observed. It tended to be the same assignment assigned for small group collaboration.

Level: Awareness

Criterion 1.2.3 All students are cognitively engaged in learning.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Active engagement. Teachers were observed to use cold calling and call and response strategies. Teachers reference this technique as warm calling. Observed partner talks included a balance of "what" and "why" questions. Students were encouraged to voice thinking aloud with and amongst peers. One teacher was noted to be tracking the number of students engaging in a Q&A session with 30 percent participation over a 20-minute time period. In another class, students were setup well for group engagement through a reflective writing activity prior to the discussion.

Students on task. Students were observed to participate in individual, small group and whole group instruction. In several classrooms students were observed to work with each other to check answers and discuss discrepancies. In one class, students spent a large amount of time accessing websites and logging into their email. Despite some delay time waiting for teacher support, all were engaged and on task.

Students embrace growth mindset. Students were generally observed to have the courage to engage in growth mindset thinking when given the opportunity. In one class, the teacher and students worked through the question of "why would it be useful to have two ways of doing something?" with students observed to think out loud as a class. Another teacher asked, "what do you think so far?" during a new lesson. In one class, during a partner talk, students were asked to share what about the assignment was easy and what was hard.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity

Active engagement. Small group is not being facilitated consistently across all classrooms. In some classes, whole group debrief participation was a ping-pong between teacher and students rather than increasing participation ratios through student-student responses, building on one another's thinking. As an example, in one class, students were plotting fractions on a number line. The teacher directed students to draw a number line and practiced conversion through three problems as a whole group that were led by the teacher with no student interaction, creating a copy and paste practice activity. In another classroom, students were asked to think about driving questions from the Constitution and to re-read about slavery but with no required follow-up. There was no discussion or context around the topic and the lesson wrapped up with a below grade level video explaining the Bill of Rights. Again, followed by no classroom discussion. In another classroom, the teacher was observed to ask a question but then allowed little to for the

student to think prior to asking for an answer. In most classes, teachers were observed to use cold calling as a means of engaging students rather than allowing students to choose to join into the dialogue. In one classroom, a teacher appeared frustrated with the lack of student engagement so opted to give them a homework sheet to complete instead.

Students on task. In one class, only half of the students were engaged. In several classrooms, time was lost to inefficient transitions and the number of redirects for off-task behavior. While most students were doing the work, generally they were not able to articulate the purpose of an assignment. In one classroom, in table group work, one student had a whiteboard and other members of the group didn't engage to solve.

Students embrace growth mindset. There were recognized missed opportunities to give students the opportunity to embrace a growth mindset. For example, in one class, the teacher gave students three questions to discuss with a partner – "why do we take tests?", "what was challenging" and "what do you think you did your best on?" In this situation, a question related to what was difficult or where they will grow may help to drive a growth mindset. In other situations, often the rigor of the work and the questioning did not require the courage or vulnerability of pushing themselves outside of their comfort zones or the discussion. Students noted in focus groups that guessing at an answer to a question is not encouraged and that you should "just keep following along until you get it and then engage in discussion". Another student mentioned feeling embarrassed to engage in conversation in class if not sure of the right answer.

Level: Awareness

Criterion 1.2.4 Instruction requires all students to use and develop higher order thinking skills, including problem solving and critical thinking.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Justify thinking or reasoning. In several classes, students were asked how they solved a problem and why they used the chosen strategy. Also, students were asked to justify their answers to problems. In one classroom, the teacher posed the question of "what evidence is present to make this a credible website?" to push students to justify their answers.

Students look beyond what is explicitly stated. One teacher was observed to lead dialogue to get students to discover a term to describe equal sides. Another teacher instructed students to give reasons to support their answers using prompts of "why do you think…" when clarifying vocabulary words.

Students build on peer dialogue. In one WIN classroom, the teacher facilitated discussion around a book written 20 years ago asking students the question of "what do you think about current events and how it relates to the book and what the author wrote

back then?" and "what do you think about spending money to go to Mars?" Students were able to have discussion and build on ideas.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity

Application to new problems. Throughout the classroom observations, opportunities for students to apply their learning were not evident. In several cases, when asked, students expressed not knowing why they were doing an activity.

Challenging tasks. Observed quizzes did not include opportunities for students to justify thinking or show their work. One observed culminating activity included 10-12 questions, but all were lower-ordered thinking questions, without how or why questions. In most classrooms, opportunities to make meaning of the material as a group were not offered. Observed questions for written reflection were more rigorous than the questions the teacher reviewed in discussion, limited student dialogue.

Students look beyond what is explicitly stated. Teachers were observed telling students the big ideas of the text before they read it. Very little facilitated dialogue was observed. Interactive learning, labs or hands-on problem solving was not observed.

Students ask meaningful questions. Teachers were observed to be carrying the lift for higher-order thinking. Student exemplars were not always recognized, despite observed opportunities. In one class, prompts asked students to justify reasoning, but the prompts lacked rigor of evidence to support reasoning. Opportunity to move from "why" to "how do you know" was not integrated.

Students build on peer dialogue. Opportunities for students to build on peer dialogue were limited through some group activities. However, even within those opportunities, the rigor of discussion was low. Most classroom instruction was tightly managed and directed, with limited opportunity for student led discussion and engagement.

Level: Awareness

Dimension 1.3: In-class Assessment & Feedback

Criterion 1.3.1 In-class assessment strategies reveal students' thinking about learning goals.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Teachers use informal assessments. During instruction teachers were observed to offer several "at-bats" with practice problems embedded in work packets. One teacher was observed doing a quick lap to ensure all students are setup for success and then spends more time with students who need it. In some classrooms, teachers were observed to conduct checks for understanding individually and as a group. A phrase heard was

"thumbs up if you're with me". Students note the use of exit tickets and checks for understanding as ways teacher measure if students are understanding the concept. Students also described teachers looking at student work, noting that kids are open about whether they understand a concept.

Formative assessments. Quizzes and unit tests were observed and described consistently. In a few observed classrooms, unit testing just wrapped up. Teachers led discussion with students to review the test results, have students reflect on the content and to celebrate student success. It was evident teachers had reviewed the testing data and had a strong understanding of where students fell in mastery.

Interim assessments. NWEA is used for fall and spring interim assessment. A second reading assessment data was used to inform WIN groups. Teachers were observed to be well prepared for the assigned student group and students were observed to know their placement and the reason for it. One student noted "we are here because we are the highest reading level".

Students receive assessment accommodations as needed. A few classrooms were observed during test administration. Students were observed to be supported, even when visually frustrated. In one class, a teacher offered encouraging words to students struggling with the testing. Students expressed feeling comfortable to ask for accommodations and were observed advocating for their own needs. Teachers were observed to be in tune with student needs.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Teachers use informal assessments. Teachers and administration describe a priority focus on exit tickets; however, it is not evident as to how this data is used or the consistency in use. At times the prompt and directions do not set a quality bar for volume and quality. In one class, output of a small group prompt was engaging but no criteria for success was posted to help students reach the exemplar. Checks for understanding during instruction were limited. When implemented, often it was whole group rather than individual checks. While group instruction is used frequently, it wasn't observed that groups were established intentionally based on data.

Interim assessments. Teachers report the desire to use interim assessment data while also expressing frustration in the limitation of time. Data dives are intended to be part of coaching, yet there is never an opportunity. Professional development days include time for data dives, yet they never get that far. While reading data is used, math data has not been yet used in an intentional way. Teachers express concern related to the amount of testing with no system for intentional use of data. Students also express feeling pressured by "daily testing".

Level: Experience

Criterion 1.3.2 Timely, frequent, specific feedback is provided throughout the learning process to inform improvement efforts.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Strength</u>
Teachers gives clear, description feedback. One teacher observed to circulate and markup student work. One quiz was noted to be returned to students with written feedback on students desks. One teacher was observed to review student work on the computer and quickly clarified expectations for type and size of font. In another classroom, the teacher circulated the room to help clarify misunderstandings in problem solving and giving immediate feedback. Another teacher was observed to repeat the thinking students shared to ensure understanding. If the problem was incorrect, the teacher would direct the student to try again. In one classroom, everyone took turns giving each other feedback on their reading. The teacher assisted students if they had difficulty in pronouncing the word and had student repeat it until it was correct.

Students have opportunity to revise work. As part of the feedback process, students were giving opportunities to redo work if incorrect. In several classrooms, the class reviewed quizzes and tests to review most missed questions. Students described their favorite teachers as though that let them try as many times as it takes to get it right.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Opportunity</u>
Students demonstrate awareness of progress. It was not clear if students truly understand their academic position and goals. In focus groups, students note that "school is easy". Students also describe a supportive system when they struggle. This perception doesn't match with the reality of student grade level mastery. Teachers indicate a disconnect between the rigor of curriculum and grade reports, potentially communicating the wrong messages to students.

Teachers gives clear, description feedback. Teachers were observed to examine and give feedback on student work but, at times, teachers are "telling" vs "showing" and shifting the rigor from student to teacher. At times, teachers were in interview protocol and not utilizing opportunities to give students feedback during group work. A one-way feedback culture was observed in practice in most classrooms. While circulating and checking work, or using fluent reading practice, teachers missed opportunities to give students more actionable feedback.

Rubrics and/or clear goals are used. During the site visit, there were no observation of rubrics or exemplar goals. Student work with feedback was not found on walls. Students describe knowing what's expected of them but were unable to describe quality.

Level: Awareness

Domain 2: Students' Opportunities to Learn

Dimension 2.1: Students' Learning Supports

Criterion 2.1.1 The school has formalized procedures for identifying students needing additional support and systematically monitors student progress and program effectiveness.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Tracking and protocol is in place. On the academic side, several tests were described by teachers and students. Reading data is used to form WIN groups, rotating students with each test administration. Individualized student data is available. Teachers report doing data deep dives on their own time to better understand their students and plan for instruction. Student aides were observed for Tier III students. On the SEL side, strong protocols are in place, and it is well known across the team. The process was explained in the same way by students, teachers, and the administrative team. A system is used for tracking behavior referrals and for requesting timely support for behavioral challenges. This system is tracked in real-time. Students and parents can access the system to note the number of points a student has towards earning the opportunity to participate in Joy Day.

Teachers understand the system. For SEL protocol, teachers clearly articulate the process and note it as a valued asset of the school. Teachers report feeling well supported through the ability to request support at any point and the use of in-class aides to assist students needing more support. Most teachers can describe the process for tracking and reporting students points and understand the types of referrals that impact eligibility for Joy Day and field trips. Some teachers noting handling things within the classroom to ensure students do not lose the opportunity of something due to a bad day.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity

Tracking and protocol is in place. On the academic side, teachers report frustration with the lack of a system for tracking and using data. While data deep dives are often included on grade level and schoolwide meeting dates, it is never actually discussed due to a lack of time. A system that tracks all student testing data was not mentioned in discussions. Teachers report wishing they had more access to the data.

Teachers understand the system. Teachers describe a lack of plan or protocol in tracking and using student academic data. Data inputs from various tests are not fully understood and the connection between testing and classroom instruction is reported to be very minimal.

Level: Awareness

Criterion 2.1.2 The school's intervention system allows students to move along a continuum of services and change placements according to identified progress or needs.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Mix of pullout and push in. Several instances of push in support were observed. There appeared to be some intentionality in classroom placement to maximize the ratios of aides for students needing more support be it academically or behaviorally. The behavioral intervention system is well established and resourced. Pullout services are used primarily to support ELL students in small groups.

Lessons include adaptive curriculum where needed. Several teachers were observed using scaffolds to allow for student to engage in grade level curriculum. WIN groups (intervention blocks) were large group adaptive curriculum and instruction to close gaps. WIN groups are built into the daily schedule allowing for intervention daily. Student placement is based on interim testing data and changes each trimester. In our visit, the reading groups were just recently launched based on a new data set. Adaptive curriculum in the WIN blocks was noted for all subjects.

Tutoring and intervention exist. The WIN blocks provide all students with intervention opportunities. Tutoring and support programs are available as needed, including opportunities for morning connections with teachers. Teachers have three prep periods in a day, offering the ability to hold office hours if necessary.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity

Lessons include adaptive curriculum where needed. Adaptive curriculum was not observed as part of Tier I instruction. While some teachers did use scaffolds to help students access the curriculum, in most cases there was a clear divide in the students following and those that were not. Planned lessons were delivered as planned with no pivots based on formative assessment observed.

Tutoring and intervention exist. Outside of reading, it is not clear as to how intervention groups are using data. Intervention support often looks like typical classroom learning but is not noted to have individualized goals and protocols to engage students in the goals.

Level: Experience

Criterion 2.1.3 The school provides appropriate supports for students with special needs, particularly those students identified with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Intentional support practices are observed. In several classrooms aides were providing push in services to Tier III students needing special supports. Students appeared to be

well integrated into the classroom culture with the aide helping to interpret the lesson as needed. The ELL program is strong with small ratio support services provided to students learning English. Students needing special services appear to be quickly identified. School counselor reports support of all students, even those without a 504 Plan or IEP.

Identification protocols are in place. Several tests are used to determine student progress and need for intervention or enrichment services. The administrative team reports acting quickly to identify students and establish plans for support. Currently there is a very low caseload plan for social work and counselor work in preparation for more significant enrollment.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Non-ESL support is evident. While the ESL support is strong, it is not evident if a system with that strength is in place for non-ESL students or SPED students. While the school has a strong SEL support structure, academically it is unclear how students are identified and assigned resources.

Level: Expertise

Dimension 2.2: School Climate and Culture

Criterion 2.2.1 The school holds high expectations for academic learning.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Student desire to succeed. Students are observed to be highly engaged. Students report enjoying school. Observations in the classroom indicate a desire for learning. Students believe they are successful, expressing gratitude for the school that pushes them and encourages them.

Course offerings. Classes include core academics, PE and Humanities. There are no elective courses offered due to a limitation in resources – both human and physical.

Adherence to grade level rigor. Students were observed to access grade level content. For example, in a math classroom, seventh grade students were understanding algebraically and with manipulatives. The teacher used scales to represent the balance in both sides of an equation. Small groups were observed in several classrooms with opportunities for student-to-student collaboration.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Student desire to succeed. While students report feeling inspired to learn and succeed, it is unclear if students are aware of their pathway of success or where they are in terms of mastery. Regardless, students routinely discuss progress and success metrics, some even understanding the sharing of data with the authorizer.

Course offerings. Course offerings are very limited. Some teachers are dual certified allowing them to teach an elective course. Creative and varied outlet courses are not offered nor are career readiness coursework. As the school considers high school, a history of a wider array of courses may be valuable.

Level: Experience

Criterion 2.2.2 The school provides a safe and orderly learning environment that supports fulfillment of the educational goals.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Classrooms are clean, orderly, and welcoming. The facility is well maintained and welcoming. Most classrooms have adequate size for the number of students in the class.

Adequate supervision. Teachers were observed in the hallways managing transition and openly welcoming students into the classroom. Transitions were safe and orderly with positive dialogue and student interaction.

Recognition of root cause for behavioral challenges. The team was very responsive to student behavior challenges, quickly pulling in support to speak with the student to find the root cause for the behavior. Understanding root cause is a prioritized focus. Students report feeling well supported and understood by teachers.

Students feel safe. Students report feeling very safe in the environment, both physically and emotionally. Students report feeling that teachers know and respect them. Students report knowing that teachers want the best for them and describe an environment that is safe to express opinions and beliefs without judgement. Students describe an environment in which teachers acknowledge their roles as "in charge" but never make students feel that way and never forceful to make students do something they are uncomfortable with.

Students have positive relationships. Positive relations between student and teachers and peer groups were observed.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Classrooms are clean, orderly, and welcoming. Some classrooms were noted to be quite crowded. Student seating configurations created obstacles for classroom management due to proximity of students.

Students feel safe. Students report feeling as though the bullying continues to get worse and it's not changing. Some students report not engaging in discussion because it's embarrassing if they get the wrong answer.

Level: Expertise

Criterion 2.2.3 The school provides opportunities for students to form positive relationships with peers and adults in the schools.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Access options for SEL support. Students describe knowing there is always support available. Administration prioritizes SEL individualized student support and resources are abundant. PRIDE is an SEL activity building strong connection between students and teachers. Teachers have been trained to conduct circles bringing intentionality in honoring feelings and acknowledgement of one another. Students describe strong relationships with teachers and observation of classroom and hallway interactions support this.

Community service activities are integrated. Community service activities are built into the curriculum as well as field trips. Students work on understanding community in PRIDE related badge work.

Extracurricular clubs are open to all students. A variety of extracurricular activities are available. For the winter session, students can participate in cheer, art club, move more get more, sewing club, basketball club, pride and inclusion club and dance club.

Opportunities for peer support. On each Friday, circle time is held during PRIDE. During this time, peers can share and support one another in their feelings. Circle time offers the ability to share positive or challenging emotions and for students to feel "seen". When hard things are discussed, students and teachers share "sizzle" to appreciate the individual sharing. Peers take on various roles to learn more about peer emotions and situations, always respectful to only listen to what is comfortable to be shared.

Positive relationships between students and teachers. Students were observed to be collaborative with each other. In one classroom, students working on a word find were in friendly competition with one another and announcing to each other when they found a new word. Students describe feeling safe to be themselves in the school. Parents describe the culture being one that is fully inclusive and life changing for many students in that bullying and other harmful relationships are far less than in other schools. One parent noted that the focus is not on things that don't matter, but rather on who they are as a person. Positive interaction and mutual respect are modeled by leadership and teachers.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity

Opportunities for peer support. There are no peer led opportunities for support such as mentoring or peer buddies. There was discussion that it was part of the plan, particularly with the launch of high school.

Level: Expertise

Criterion 2.2.4 The school engages families in support of students' learning.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Teacher to parent communication. Parents describe frequent interaction with emails and texts. Messages are sent via SchoolRunner making it easy to find communication. Parents note the weekly newsletter being good. The newsletter is provided in both English and Spanish. One parent noted the value of WIN and the ongoing communication on how the parent can support her student in reading and math.

Opportunities for family engagement. The school hosts family functions including an evening family dinner each quarter. The family dinner allows an opportunity for parent voice to be heard and for sharing updates on the school. One parent noted that the involvement in the school is far greater than previous experience and that you "don't feel like a number". Another confirmed that it's clear you are a member of a community.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity

Teacher to parent communication. Parents describe some confusion in who does what. Parents know who the student's PRIDE teachers are but outside of that can feel lost on who does what and who to go to. Some parents described SEL situations that were handled really well within the school but the home connection wasn't made. The situations came to light later but parents describe wanting a headsup on things.

Opportunities for family engagement. While parents acknowledge timely responses to requests regarding curriculum, it was noted that proactive communication on academics, as they do with SEL, would be valuable. A parent group hasn't yet been established. One parent expressed frustration in not being able to find the board meeting links on the website to attend meetings, noting that the board meetings do a great job in addressing the pain points of growth and provides reassurance that the school will be great. Another parent confirmed the challenge in finding board information.

Level: Experience

Domain 3: Educators' Opportunities to Learn

Dimension 3.1: Educators' Learning Supports

Criterion 3.1.1 Professional development (PD) is designed to address school priorities, school improvement goals, and/or identified areas of need.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Access to schoolwide professional development. Teachers describe professional development as valuable. The focus has been on launching SEL strategies and building a

solid foundation. Professional development is described as relevant. One example of relevance is that the team has engaged in professional development around circle time and badge work to better model the process for students. Professional development full day in-service work is scheduled as well as early release on Friday. Investment in providers of professional development is significant.

Access to individualized coaching. Teachers describe an appreciation for coaching and feel supported, especially in comparison to previous experiences. Teachers were able to express school priorities for instruction and expressed feeling safe to ask for assistance.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Opportunity</u>
Access to whole school professional development. While it has been on the agenda for several meetings, teachers and administration noted that data analysis is always pushed. Teachers report that, at times, the early release PD time can be more updates than professional development.

Access to individualized professional development. There was no evidence of individualized professional development outside of the school led topics. Most coaching and development is provided within the expertise at the school. Teachers describe this as okay except for in situations when staff changes.

Access to individualized coaching. Teachers note strong coaching model IF you get the right coach. Staff turnover is noted as a challenge for consistency in coaching.

Bias and Cultural Competency Training. Evidence of the impact of bias is observable in classroom dynamics. While not observed directly between peers, bias is a necessary viewpoint when looking at retention trends based on race. Bias can impact classroom management strategies, coaching and development, and the adherence to high expectations. Both teachers and leadership touched upon the lack of priority on this training and the tough conversations that must take place around it.

Level: Awareness/Experience

Criterion 3.1.2 Professional development is active, intensive, and sustained.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Strength</u>
Teachers reflect on coaching. Teachers express and appreciation for coaching. Teachers were able to identify the priorities for classroom instruction and expressed buy-in to the priorities. Teachers expressed an appreciation for being empowered in their classroom to be themselves and appreciated the safety and openness of the coaching, allowing them to reflect and ask questions. Most teachers expressed a desire to continue growing in their professional and valued the opportunity to do so. Teachers have three prep periods

per day, allowing for time to reflect and adapt lessons and/or connect with a peer or coach as needed.

Progression of professional development is evident. School leadership described the progression of a focus plan with priority being placed on building a strong foundation in culture around SEL and then moving to academic focus in the classroom. Leadership expressed several goals to have in place in the classrooms by the end of the year, with a mapped-out progression plan for introduction of teaching practices.

Professional development is integrated. The school schedule has integrated full day in-services as well as early release Fridays to allow for ongoing professional development. Teachers express an appreciation for the consistent dialogue and ability to check-in and learn from each other. Coaching is integrated into the daily schedule as well to provide for timely and relevant feedback.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Progression of professional development is evident. While the agenda is set intentionally, there has been challenges in moving past early phases of the agenda to discuss new and/or revisit identified priority topics. In having the early release the only coordinated time for connection, it is described as more updates than learning, hence slowing down the progress. Teachers note that grade level connections have improved this year but content meetings for curriculum alignment are still hit or miss.

Professional development is integrated. While ongoing observation is part of the evaluation model and the ratio of admin to teachers is positive for ongoing coaching, the dual role of SEL support for all admin positions make it difficult to maintain consistency. The need for student support in any given day is unpredictable and often can force administration to forego classroom observations and/or coaching to meet with students.

Level: Experience

Criterion 3.1.3 Professional development is evaluated.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
School administration is strategic in the intended outcome for all professional development, even practicing activities themselves to grow as stronger leaders. Teachers describe a culture of feedback in that they feel as though they can provide feedback on the effectiveness of provided professional development.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
A formal method for evaluating the impact of professional development was not observed. While the vision for the culture they are building has been described, metrics

were not mentioned in any interviews or focus groups. Rather feedback was provided that there needs to be some metrics to know how things are going. With the focus on SEL, performance if more focused on culture as a foundation for pushing academics.

Level: Experience

Criterion 3.1.4 Educators collaborate regularly to learn about effective instruction and students' academic performance.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Colleague connections and sharing is evident. Informal connections between teachers are described to better understand students. Generally, teachers all identify the same priorities and describe a collaborative culture. Professionalism within the staff is evident. Early release days allow for planned collaboration and connection on a regular basis.

Short term data cycles are studied. Teachers report using exit tickets, quizzes and unit testing as inputs to a short-term data cycle. Classes were observed to review quizzes and tests as a group to identify and close gap areas.

Teachers respond to feedback. Teachers are observed to be open to feedback and respectful of the knowledge coaches bring. Many teachers expressed the desire for more feedback to continue growing.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Colleague connections and sharing is evident. Grade level connection has improved. Content teams are not scheduled to meet regularly, although the desire for this was expressed. While prep time provides ample opportunity, situations of peer observation and/or sharing of best practice were not described as regular activity.

Short term data cycles are studied. There is limited, if any, evidence that short term data cycle analysis impacts instruction. While teachers do have three prep periods and reporting the use of data, a learning gap appears to be present in applying the data to daily instruction. There is a strong focus on small group work, but that does not appear to be data driven.

Student academic performance review. Traditional PLCs or planned connection to cross reference student experiences and collaborative approaches to student support was not evident. While students and parents report that most teachers know them very well, including the way they learn, the way they are motivated, etc., it is not evident that teachers share that knowledge across classrooms. Some parents noted that students perform differently in classrooms based on the knowledge the teacher has discovered about them.

Level: Awareness

Criterion 3.1.5 Trained mentors provide beginning teachers with sustained, job-embedded induction.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Coaching is provided and shared by administration. Classroom observations are reported to be frequent with timely feedback. Administration describes some situations in which it's just a note to say "great job" while others it's a quick conversation. Teachers described feeling safe to have observations and do no express intimidation.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Given the age of the school and retention challenges, a formal mentor program is not yet in place. While leadership does provide reported strong coaching, the commitment is second priority to the committed to student SEL support. As the school grows with more students and staff, this model could become unsustainable.

Level: Awareness

Dimension 3.2: Professional Working Climate

Criterion 3.2.1 Educators' mindsets and beliefs reflect shared commitments to students' learning.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
The mindsets and beliefs of the staff were unwavering in being committed to the mission of the school and students' learning. Teachers recognize and express concern about how far some students are behind but maintain the responsibility and belief that the gap can be closed. Questions are around "how" not "if". Teachers are committed to building strong foundational relationships with students and committed to growing themselves as models.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
There is a significant focus on building culture. While the intention is to now transition to a focus on academics, the transition hasn't begun and yields risk in student learning and success outcomes being more culture focused rather than academically focused.

Level: Expertise

Criterion 3.2.2 The school reflects a safe, trustworthy and growth-oriented professional climate.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Positive culture among peers. A positive culture and professional relationships were observed throughout the school. In teacher focus groups, all spoke and shared feedback,

including sharing the feeling of safety to provide feedback. Administration also was observed to be highly supportive of one another – both personally and professionally. The administrative staff has embraced circle time to build stronger relationships as they start to formulate as a leadership team. Strong modeling to students was evident.

Mindset on reflection of data and feedback. All staff members express and demonstrate openness and appreciation for feedback. Staff members at all levels openly shared thoughts and ideas in the presence of "authority". Coaching is described as strong and valuable by the teachers. Leadership describes a desired culture of timely feedback. Teachers express feeling as though their feedback is heard. There is an observed since of confidence within the teaching staff to continue to learn and grow.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Opportunity</u>
Mindset on reflection of data and feedback. Teachers are eager to explore and dive into more data. While data is available, it's not widely used or studied. Structured systems for providing and responding to feedback were not observed. For example, observations take place, feedback is provided but it's not clear as to how teachers become accountable for implementing the coaching. Likewise, professional development is provided but it's unclear as to how much constructive feedback is being offered given the strong and friendly culture. Implementation of some culture wide practices is not at the highest level, therefore it's unclear as to if the feedback is being given or not received.

Level: Experience

Criterion 3.2.3 School leaders create conditions that support educators' learning culture.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Strength</u>
The priority of the school for this academic year has been on building a strong culture. The school leadership team is committed to supporting educators in their growth through coaching. The coaching expectations are rigorous in having weekly classroom observations, when possible, but never less than monthly. Leadership is committed to seeing educators as the professionals they are and building in a dynamic professional development protocol that supports them in their growth, but at doable intervals. Teachers report feeling safe to express concerns or areas of needed support and feel as though their "job is safe" in doing so.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Opportunity</u>
Teachers and administration report disconnects between described priorities within the building. Teachers describe feeling as though leadership is not on the same page as to what should be the focus and/or on the expectations. Administration reports not feeling entirely confident in what goals they are all working towards. In speaking with administration, there are different priorities stated focused on the balance between social

and emotional and academic needs. Some teachers were noticeably tired and overwhelmed. Mentor systems and/or grade or content level meetings are not yet established, eliminating a strong educator support system.

Level: Awareness

Domain 4: Leadership & Governance

Dimension 4.1: Instructional Leadership

Criterion 4.1.1 School leaders establish a vision aligned to students' long-term success and set clear goals to meet that vision.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
School leadership is committed to the vision of empowering students. The model of a single gender school is valued and celebrated with long-term student goals related to social skills, confidence and other soft skills being very clear. Leadership is committed to meeting the needs for each student and creating an inclusive culture for all to thrive and be their best selves. Data collection through testing is prioritized.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Clear outcomes for academic success are not yet articulated. While the natural goal of helping students reach grade level proficiency and beyond is understand, clarity in key metrics to measure impact towards that goal are not referenced. Much of the academic focus is described as "coming soon", recognizing that students did take a back slide due to the pandemic and everything will be building back up. Some teachers members of administration express concern in beginning a high school prior to creating the systems at the middle school level, fearful that things will be more overwhelming so time will be more limited to impact middle school but also fearing the readiness for high school while still trying to figure out middle school.

Level: Experience

Criterion 4.1.2 School leaders ensure that the school has a coherent, comprehensive, and aligned curriculum.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Grade level content is consistent across classrooms. There is established curriculum across all grades. While there wasn't much overlap in grade level teachers and subjects, when applicable, alignment was evident.

Rigor is evident across all grades. Curriculum was observed to be taught at grade level in most classrooms and a focus, particularly in ELA and humanities, was on bringing cultural relevancy to the curriculum.

Gaps are identified and addressed. Teachers demonstrate a sense of where the gaps in the curriculum exist between grades and an eagerness to use data to identify more opportunities to close gaps.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Opportunity</u>
Curriculum is well aligned. Teachers express frustration in the lack of a curriculum. While there are various programs indicated, in some cases the programs are less fleshed out than others, leaving teachers to fill in some gaps. Most notable is the lack of cultural relevancy and the extra responsibility placed on teachers to integrate it.

Rigor is evident across all classrooms. While curriculum is on grade level, the rigor in which students are studying it is observed to be low. Students are not being pushed through higher order thinking opportunities or student led dialogue and thinking. Teachers report having high expectations but a misaligned grading system. Expectations for student behavior and engagement is inconsistent across classrooms.

Gaps are identified and addressed. Teachers express identified gaps within the curriculum that have not been addressed. Teachers describe spending significant amounts of time building resources or finding culturally relevant content.

Level: Experience

Criterion 4.1.3 School leaders ensure that teachers deliver high-quality instruction.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Strength</u>
Teachers have a common understanding of the definition of instruction. Turn and talks, "warm calling" and small group work are common across classrooms and communicated as priorities by most teachers. Classroom transitions are typically met with a "do now" activity and some teachers describe exit tickets as a key priority. Some teachers were observed integrated scaffolds to allow students to access curriculum. Also, push-in support is consistent.

Observations are aligned to instructional rubrics. Administration reports prioritization of exit tickets and authentic student engagement in all observations. A plan is in place for the depth of instructional practices to expand across the school year.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Opportunity</u>
Teachers have a common understanding of the definition of instruction. While the prioritized actions can be observed, the practices are not always observed to be implemented to the full depth of the intended instructional practice. For example, while small groups are used, often it is just grouping of students without a plan for differentiated instruction within the groups. Also, in most observations it was not evident

of intentional grouping rather than grouping based on seat proximity. Teachers were observed asking questions to inspire student engagement, but often did not allow time for student response or peer to peer dialogue. Classroom management varies significantly between teachers. Students were observed to know the teachers that let more slide. Behaviors varied across classrooms, with a noted recognition of the impact of race on classroom management.

Teachers are held accountable to feedback and growth. Due to the focus on building a strong culture, plans for accountability were not evident in action or referenced by administration or staff. In recognition of the stress teachers endured in the past years, leadership has intentionally held back on teacher expectations. Some classrooms were observed in which there are significant challenges with basic classroom management. In one situation, classroom size and the seating arrangement played a role. It appears as though some direct coaching would be beneficial.

Level: Awareness

Criterion 4.1.4 School leaders provide conditions that support a school-wide data culture.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Teachers understand the value of assessments. Several teachers expressed appreciation for the data available through NWEA testing, noting the value of the charts illustrating clearly where students fall. Teachers were observed reviewing quiz and unit test data with students to find trends and review commonly missed standards.

Teachers accept accountability for growth. Generally, teachers acknowledge the responsibility to help students reach their greatest potential. Parents note the appreciation of open community from WIN teachers. Teachers report spending hours after school on looking at data to plan lessons. All conversations held expectations high. Teachers referenced the challenge in teaching grade level content but agreed with the importance and purpose.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Teachers understand the value of assessments. Teachers expressed concern with the number of assessments administered and the impact on time for lessons given there has been no active and intentional use of the testing data except for reading groups, despite being on several Friday agendas.

Level: Experience

Dimension 4.2: Organizational Leadership

Criterion 4.2.1 School leaders lead intentional, strategic efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the school's program and the sustainability of the organization.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Classrooms have adequate resources. Classrooms were observed to be well resourced. Leadership expressed a commitment to investment in resources necessary for instruction.

Empowerment is evident. Teachers express appreciation for the ability to teach authentically. Each teacher observed had their own style and method of presenting curriculum. The autonomy is noted as a reason for staying at KCGPA. Teachers express being treated with respect and professionalism.

Leadership development plans are in place. The leadership team has recently expanded. To become a cohesive team, a focus has been placed on building relational capacity. The team participates in leadership circle time and it the support for one another emotionally was evident. All members of the leadership team were open and appreciative of feedback and demonstrate a strong growth mindset. Professional development and team development plans are in place.

Root causes solutions are implemented. Leadership has been intentional is allowing time and space to build culture inside the school as a foundation for learning. Identifying the lack of safety, empowerment, and social and emotional support as a root cause to student academic challenges, KCPGA has taken the risk to place primary focus on culture the initial months of the school year, believing that academic outcomes will come later.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity

Classrooms have adequate resources. In some classrooms, additional manipulatives to illustrate instructional content may create more authentic student engagements. One classroom did not have enough computers for students. One teacher noted not having enough copies of books for each student to have one. Teachers also expressed frustration with the lack of curricular resources.

Leadership is aligned on strategic efforts. Each leader had observable knowledge and expertise in their areas of focus. Further, each offered great insight on the key priorities for the school to be successful. The challenge is that, at times, those priorities are not aligned. Teachers report being given varying direction from different members of leadership, noting a wide divide in vision amongst the team. It was frequent to hear "I just wish they would get on the same page". The only strategic goals in place were those initially written into the charter application, leaving a large gap in systemwide determination of strategic priorities to move the school forward, especially with the launch of the high school.

Root causes solutions are implemented. As a team, and without the schoolwide data discussions, root cause challenges have not been identified and prioritized, therefore, the team has not been engaged in root cause solutions.

Level: Awareness

Criterion 4.2.2 School leaders ensure effective communication and inclusive, transparent decision making across the organization.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Stakeholder voice drives change. Teachers describe an environment in which their voices are heard and respected. Parents describe feeling as though they are truly valued as members of the community. Family dinner evenings allow for families to engage in discussion and contribute to change. Students feel empowered to advocate for new ideas and changes they want.

Stakeholder voice is considered in decision making. Leadership is observed to truly value the voices of all stakeholders in decision-making processes. Stakeholder groups are created for key decisions. As an example, a High School Working Group was formed to allow stakeholders to contribute to the planning for the high school model, staffing model, schedule and extracurriculars. Parents and staff are encouraged to attend board meetings.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Stakeholder voice drives change. Despite a mutual respect and sharing and valuing of new ideas from stakeholder groups, it can appear as though ideas are not taken due to a lack of action and implementation. Leadership recognizes the lack of systems and implementation on new strategies and is working to build more cohesion to drive change.

Stakeholder voice is considered in decision making. It's unclear as to which voice has the greater weight and if there is a decision-making model to be followed, resulting in evidence-based decisions. For example, in the high school decision-making process, while parents are advocates for the high school, teachers prefer to wait a year. While many factors went into the decision, communication of the factors for the decision were not clearly communicated as communicated by leadership.

Level: Expertise

Criterion 4.2.3 School leaders create and implement systems to recruit and retain effective teachers and staff who can drive dramatic student gains.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Career pathway opportunities are evident. Career pathways are evident. At the front end of the pathway, student teachers or fellows are placed in the school for training, with many being hired after their fellowship. While these teachers are still novice teachers, they exude passion and have an opportunity to learn the culture while in training. Teachers also have the opportunity for promotion to leadership, with at least two being promoted recently to assistant principal positions.

Recruitment and retention practices are in place. Leadership is committed to building a strong and empowered culture for teachers. Recruitment efforts are strongly rooted in the mission of the school. Current staff members all contribute their commitment to the school based on the mission and model. Recruitment strategies are values based. Compensation is highly competitive, and quality professional development is provided. Teachers are given an active voice in decisions and express feeling part of the shaping of the school. The appeal of being in a growth pattern is exciting for teachers that see the possibilities of the school model. Teachers are truly supported in the way of student management and SEL. Administrative tasks are limited and teachers are provided a minimum of two protected planning periods.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Career pathway opportunities are evident. Based on the existing model, the pathway for teachers is a large jump from classroom to leadership. The coaching and evaluation model uses leadership in coaching roles, hence removing the opportunity for mentors and instructional coaches.

Recruitment and retention practices are in place. There is an evident gap in desired ethnic diversity among teachers with a goal of 75 percent educators of color in each stage of recruitment at all times versus the current rate of 45 percent. With the actual percentages going down each year, recruitment practices must find ways in which to bring in talent of all racial ethnicities to better align with the student population. A strategy for leveraging allowable temporary permits and innovative routes to certification for community pipeline building would be a pathway to a diverse talent pool.

Level: Experience

Criterion 4.2.4 School leaders evaluate all staff and dismiss those who do not meet professional standards and expectations.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Protocols are in place to assess teacher effectiveness. An observation and evaluation protocol is in place. Classroom observations are conducted at least biweekly by administration. Teachers are provided ongoing feedback and support. Teacher quality is observed to be strong, despite having several novice teachers, indicative of high professional standards and expectations.

Staff believes in the strength of the team. The team is highly supportive of one another and a culture of respect among the team exists at the teaching and administrative level. All staff sees the potential of the students and express a shared commitment to fulfilling KCGPA's mission.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Protocols are in place to assess teacher effectiveness. It was not reported that any teachers have been dismissed. While teachers have left, it was on their own accord. Given the age of the school, it is too early in the process to assess commitment to maintaining professional standards and expectations, especially in expanding to high school grades requiring recruitment and retention of more teachers. Ensuring protocols are in place for decision-making on positions proactively may avoid hesitation when faced with a tough decision, most specifically on a teacher than holds strong teaching methodology but does not embrace professional standards and values of KCGPA.

Level: Experience

Criterion 4.2.5 School leaders ensure that the school has established sound financial and operational systems and processes.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Leadership awareness of budget is evident. Leadership is highly aware of the budget and the factors impacting the budget. Leadership at all levels recognizes the investment being placed in teachers as an asset of the school. All members of leadership are aware of the impact of a declined enrollment on the budget. Investments are prudent but appropriate and gaps are well supported by fundraising efforts.

Building leadership understands the impact of enrollment on sustainability.
Leadership and teaching staff recognizes and understands the impact of enrollment on sustainability. Being a new school, facing a pandemic in the founding year, enrollment has not reached the anticipated growth. Looking ahead at a high school launch and understanding the expense with that, all staff are engaged in recruitment of new students and retention of current students. An investment in a Family Partnership Director position recently is an intentional strategy to focus on student recruitment and retention.

Adequate services are in place. Students are well supported. Staff positions include a guidance counselor, student aids and administrators prepared to support whole student needs. The focus on inclusiveness and student safety (mentally and physically) requires continued education and growth.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Opportunity</u>
Building staff are well resourced. Investment in essential resources such as computers, books, manipulatives, etc. would raise the rigor and quality of the educational program.

Building leadership understands the impact of enrollment on sustainability. Despite low enrollment, a plan for the high school opening is moving forward with a projected enrollment below that required for a breakeven. Much confidence is placed in a positive impact on enrollment caused by the closure of some local schools. However, KCGPA is not a traditional neighborhood school, hence requiring a more traditional marketing strategy.

Level: Experience

Dimension 4.3: Governance

Criterion 4.3.1 The Board provides strong oversight over the effectiveness of the academic program.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Strength</u>
Board describes priorities of the mission. The board is strongly committed to the mission of the Academy. The current board chair, also the founding board member, is aware of the success of the model KCGPA is replicated from and holds similar standards for KCGPA.

Board holds appropriate expertise. The board is comprised of individuals offering numerous years of experience and expertise. Areas of expertise include educational experience, finance, legal, special education, and community representatives. As part of the board structure, there exists several committees including board development, discipline, finance, governance and student success.

Board holds school leadership accountable. The board is presented with academic data and holds leadership accountable against comparative districts. The board understands the charter contract goals and measures success against those goals.

Board monitors academic performance. The board is provided academic reports with overviews of student success. As an example, in September 2022, the board was presented with a comparison of NWEA achievement percentile within the Charter School Growth Fund portfolio. The data presented is illustrative of the gaps in student academic performance faced by the school while also showing the success in student growth. The student success committee is charged with (1) defining what academic excellence means for KCPGA, (2) Setting measurable goals in relation to the definition and charter promises, and (3) monitoring progress towards established goals.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Board describes priorities of the mission. The board is operating in a founding board mode and will need to make the strategic shift in the coming years to allow for adaptation and stronger accountability protocol as the school grows.

Level: Expertise

Criterion 4.3.2 The Board provides strong financial oversight.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Board reviews annual budget and audit. The board reviews the budget at each meeting in detail, inclusive of deep diving into changes to the budget and changes in enrollment impacting revenue. Annual audits are reviewed.
Board ensures investment in mission aligned activity. The board reviews and approves all original and revised budgets. The board also reviews monthly expenditure reports providing details of investments. All line items are labeled for ease in assessing allocation.

Board holds strong financial policies. Financial policies are in place as is a finance committee. The finance committee holds members with expertise and does a review of all financials prior to the board meeting. The full board also receives financial reports and expenditure reports for approval. The board also provides oversight of the foundation, hence reviewing each budget separately to ensure separation of funds.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Board places sustainability as a priority. *With declining enrollment in the area and several threats to enrollment highlighted, the board has relied on fundraising to fill gaps. School leadership has reiterated goals to be sustainable through state-aid. Decisions related to the high school are acknowledged to further impact the deficit yet are still being moved forward. It is not clear as to what the threshold of risk is.*

Level: Experience

Criterion 4.3.3 The Board ensures legal compliance and public disclosure.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Board has appropriate focus on compliance. The board is engaged in all compliance related activities. Board meeting minutes reflect review and approval of appropriate reports and policies.

Board adheres to best practice representation. Board meeting dates are posted on the school website and in family newsletters. The public is invited to join via Zoom. Quarterly financial reports are posted on the school website.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Opportunity</u>
Board adheres to best practice representation. Board packet materials are not found on the website for public review nor are board meeting minutes. For those that attend board meetings, public disclosure is detailed. However, if the meeting is missed, information is not readily available.

Level: Experience

Criterion 4.3.4 The Board maintains effective governance practices (rather than management) to ensure organizational viability, including the systematic selection and oversight of the school leaders.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Strength</u>
The board systematically recruits, supports, and assesses school leadership. The board leads the evaluation process of the school superintendent. The current superintendent is the founding leader, therefore a selection process has not yet been implemented. Evaluation is driven by multiple inputs of data.

Roles between the board and school leadership are clear. The board has established multiple committees to lead various aspects of accountability, including a governance committee with focus on ensuring the board maintains the proper role in setting vision, accountability metrics and accountability protocol.

Strong communication protocols are in place. Board member meeting attendance is high. Committee agendas are detailed. Several PowerPoint presentations have been developed and shared with the board. All information shared is noted to be fully transparent, including challenges and successes.

Board is engaged in the community. The board members are well known and connected in the community. Members also serve as the members of the foundation and have successfully raised $20 million. Of this, $9 million supported the middle school startup and $11 million is towards the building of a new high school.

Board holds the necessary professional skills. The board members bring diverse backgrounds with key skillsets and expertise in key areas such as finance, talent, legal and academics.

<u>Observation and Noticing of Opportunity</u>

Board is engaged in the community. While the board is well connected and effective in fundraising, it is not evident of the board's role or potential impact on student recruitment and enrollment.

Strong communication protocols are in place. Communication regarding upcoming board meetings, packet information or meeting minute recaps to the public is limited.

Level: Experience

Domain 5: Financial Performance

Dimension 5.1: Financial Health and Sustainability

Criterion 5.1.1 The school demonstrates near-term financial health.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
The school has appropriate reserves. The school has appropriate reserves to support ongoing operations for at least three months. The school has opted to use reserves in this past year due to declining enrollment to maintain program integrity as enrollment grows. Fundraising efforts have built a $20 million fund to support building the high school facility. The school has clear expenditures that could be cut without significant impact should funding decrease. Additionally, the school has budgeted conservatively while expecting a significant boost in student state aid revenue due to an adjustment for equitable funding.

The school adheres to financial policies. The school adheres to all financial policies and conducts annual audits as required. The board holds a finance committee to oversee all large investments and review daily expenditures. All expenditures are fully transparent and quarterly reports are posted on the school website for public viewing.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
School has positive cashflow. In FY 21-22, the school had negative cashflow and used reserves to maintain the program integrity. FY 22-23 projected a positive net impact of $48K, however due to enrollment decreases, this may dip below a positive net impact. The school must set thresholds in which right-sizing decisions are made to meet the actual trends in enrollment, especially in light of the acknowledged changes and threats in the community.

Level: Experience

Criterion 5.1.2 The school demonstrates financial stability.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
School maintains a fund balance. The school does have a healthy fund balance.

The school has secured philanthropic resources. The school has been very successful at securing philanthropic resources, including $20 million to support the building of a high school.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
The school has appropriate reserves. It is unclear as to the limit on how long reserve funds will be accessible rather than a strategic model review to right size the budget based on actual enrollment. All projections in the area show significant risk, yet expansion plans continue. Key metrics for enrollment at various points throughout the year should be established to make key decisions regarding hiring and contract renewal given salaries equate to 65 percent of the budget. The CEO's salary is not included in the school budget and supported elsewhere.

Level: Awareness

Criterion 5.1.3 The school has sound financial management practices.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
The board regularly reviews financial performance. The board finance committee reviews detailed financials including an expenditure log. The full board also reviews the financial reports for final approval.

The school understands short- and long-term modeling. The school budget is highly detailed with an understanding of future expenditures, including planned new positions. The school is in a natural growth state with enrollment and in a growth stage with expenditures due to the building of a new high school. The board is carefully monitoring the timing of the build to ensure enrollment supports the additional expenditures.

The school upholds financial policies. The school closely adheres to financial policies being transparent with expenditures and following approval protocols.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
The school understands short- and long-term modeling. Given the risk factors involved in the upcoming years, various scenarios of long-term modeling may be beneficial.

Level: Expertise

Criterion 5.1.4 The school has implemented systems and procedures to ensure sound financial management practices.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

The school approves and monitors the annual budget. The board reviews and approves all budget approvals and revisions. The board monitors the annual budget with review of all financial expenditures and quarterly analysis of budget versus actual performance.

The board understands all key drivers for school growth. The board is well informed on all factors on school growth. School leadership provides transparent updates on enrollment and talent, two significant factors impacting growth opportunities.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
The board and leadership are aligned on sustainability goals. School leadership has outlined clear goals in building a sustainable model not reliant on philanthropic funding. The board is observed to be more comfortable with a lower ratio of per pupil funding to philanthropic funding.

Level: Expertise

Domain 6: Organizational Performance

Dimension 6.1: Operational Systems and Structures

Criterion 6.1.1 The school's operations support the smooth running of its programs, via strong systems for maintaining compliance.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Facilities are in good condition. School facilities are observed to be in good condition. The building is welcoming and safe.

Facility is adequate to serve student population. Space is adequate for the current grade configurations.

Compliance protocols are followed. All compliance protocols are in place. An operations manager is in place ensuring safety protocol within the building as well as within the transportation system.

Procurement agreements are monitored for performance. Leadership is charged with monitoring contract performance. The board is engaged in any necessary large contract procurement as aligned to financial policies.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Facility is adequate to serve student population. Space if fully enrolled will be tight. Classroom allocation will need to be carefully monitored as some classrooms are

significantly smaller than others and were observed to easily have overcrowding. In adding high school grades to this facility over the next two years, growth must be carefully managed.

Level: Experience

Criterion 6.1.2 The school has implemented plans and systems that ensure effective and efficient operations.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Quality of services is actively monitored. All services are actively monitored and the team embraces a solutions oriented approach to challenges. Transportation has been a significant challenge for the school and across the city. The operations manager has worked closely with the provider to continue to improve operations and plan for backup options as necessary. Food services are also closely monitored.

Staff model fits the needs of the organization. The staffing model is very robust and fits the vision for the academic program. The model includes instructional leadership, low teacher to student ratios, SEL support, nursing services, and student aids at the high level. The leadership team is expanding in preparation for meeting enrollment targets and for growing into high school.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Job descriptions are clearly articulated and well understood. The recent growth of the leadership team has created some gray area in roles and responsibilities. There are varying ideas within the leadership team and an unknown path as to how to reconcile them and/or who is the lead.

Staff model fits the needs of the organization. If enrollment trends continue, it will be necessary to do some right sizing of the staffing model.

Level: Experience

Criterion 6.1.3 The network provides valuable and effective operational support.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
A student information system (SIS) is in place. The school uses SchoolRunner as the student SIS. Parents and students have access to the system to review grades, assignments, parent communication, etc.

Technology is available and easily accessible. The school is wired for internet and adequately supports online testing as well as programming for student enrichment work.

Security protocols are in place. All access to the internet system is protected by security passcodes. All documents are maintained within a password protected system as well.

Level: Expertise

Criterion 6.1.4 The school successfully supports student recruitment efforts and effectively builds community relationships that marshal support for its work.

Observation and Noticing of Strength

Clear understanding of enrollment status. Reports are provided to the board related to enrollment status. One report provides an update on the number of applications received for the upcoming school year, comparatively against previous year benchmarks. For example, in August, approximately 10 applications more than the previous year were received whereas September represented the lowest number since the founding year. Reports are also provided for the tracking of the progression of each application from submission to full enrollment.

Staff is actively engaged in enrollment. Leadership and teaching staff reflected on enrollment, understanding the importance for sustainability but also driven by the excitement to engage more females in the school model. A Family Partnership Director has been hired to lead recruitment and retention efforts, but teachers are part of summer recruitment events as well.

School shows positive student retention rates. Retention rates have been inconsistent due to the pandemic but are trending positively. Parents report interest in continuing the education at least through 8th grade and are highly satisfied with the experience. Projected retention rates for high school next year is around 50 percent as several parents

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity

School shows positive student retention rates. Projected retention rates for making the transition from middle school to high school are projected to be lower. While students appear positive about the transition, some parents had concerns regarding the delivery of a true high school experience with emphasis on access to elective courses and college experiences. Students did share similar sentiments in describing opportunities such as homecoming, prom, athletics, extracurriculars, etc.

Level: Experience

Criterion 6.1.5 The facilities meet the needs of schools and are financially viable.

Observation and Noticing of Strength
Facilities are adequate for the projected enrollment. Space is adequate for the current grade configurations and enrollment numbers. Current building is viable, especially when enrollment targets are met. Future high school will be viable due to the fundraising efforts of the board.

Facilities are adequate for a school setting. The facility is well-suited for an academic setting. Classrooms are adequate, a library and gym is accessible, and there is a cafeteria.

Observation and Noticing of Opportunity
Facility is adequate to serve student population. Space if fully enrolled will be tight. Classroom allocation will need to be carefully monitored as some classrooms are significantly smaller than others and were observed to easily have overcrowding. In adding high school grades to this facility over the next two years, growth must be carefully managed.

Available outdoor space. Students and parents express a wish for some communal outdoor space. Students describe an outdoor space that "isn't safe" but indicate that some are able to use it but others are not. Students miss recess at the younger ages and others express desiring outdoor space for outdoor learning and/or lunch.

Level: Experience

Appendix A: Summary of Classroom Observation Data

Over the course of two days, the team emerged into the one building. In total, 30+ classroom observations were completed inclusive of all grade levels 5-8, all subject levels 5-8, special subjects, intervention classrooms, honors courses, and Spanish language classrooms. Given the smaller size of the campus, most classrooms were visited two times. The following table presents the compiled data from those observations.

	Indicator	Distribution of Scores (%)			
		Development	*Awareness*	*Experience*	*Expertise*
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Classroom Climate	**Behavioral Expectations** Clear expectations Consistent rewards and/or consequences Anticipation and redirection of misbehavior	8%	27%	38%	27%
	Structured Learning Environment Teacher preparation Learning time maximized	16%	20%	20%	44%
	Supportive Learning Environment Caring relationships Teacher responsiveness to students' non-academic needs	21%	17%	33%	29%
Purposeful Teaching	**Focused Instruction** Learning objectives that drive all lesson activities. Effective communication of academic content High expectations	30%	10%	20%	40%
	Instructional Strategies Multi-sensory modalities and materials Instructional format Student choice	32%	10%	32%	26%
	Participation and Engagement Active student participation Strategies to increase participation	27%	23%	27%	23%
	Higher-order Thinking Challenging tasks Application to new problems and situations Justify thinking or reasoning	31%	31%	31%	7%
In-Class Assessment & Feedback	**Assessment Strategies** Use of formative assessments Alignment to academic content Integration of all assessments	36%	28%	36%	0%
	Feedback Clear, specific, and actionable Clarifies misunderstanding or provides guidance	43%	22%	26%	8%

Appendix B: Summary of Key Strengths and Opportunities

Below is a summary of the key strengths and opportunities noted by observers and supported by evidence. This summary is not intended to serve as an official recommendation for action but rather as an outside reflection on key priorities with the greatest likelihood to have positive impact on the fulfillment of the school vision and mission.

Strengths

The following indicators were noted by observers to be strong practices with potential to be leveraged to support opportunities for improving stakeholder experience and student outcomes.

- o Criterion 2.1.2 The school's intervention system allows students to move along a continuum of services and change placements according to identified progress or needs.

- o Criterion 2.2.2 The school provides a safe and orderly learning environment that supports fulfillment of the educational goals.

- o Criterion 3.2.1 Educators' mindsets and beliefs reflect shared commitments to students' learning.

Opportunities

The following indicators were noted by observers to be areas of opportunities with potential to be high impact activities for improving stakeholder experience and student outcomes.

- o Criterion 1.2.2 A variety of instructional strategies and materials support students' diverse needs.

- o Criterion 3.1.4 Educators collaborate regularly to learn about effective instruction and students' academic performance.

- o Criterion 4.1.3 School leaders ensure that teachers deliver high-quality instruction.

Summary

KCGPA has created a unique culture built on a foundation of respect, acceptance, and empowerment. This foundation was built through the prioritization of student social and emotional needs in recognition of the positive impact of safety, confidence, and emotional health on academic success. In addition to this strong culture, the infrastructure for collaboration and individualized student support is in place with WIN blocks, early release Fridays and a committed team that believes in the potential of each student. Authentic student engagement is the next step for impact. Leadership must define effective instruction with clarity on how it looks and feels, coordinate meaningful professional development for modeling, and then hold teachers accountable to embracing new ideas. Strong culture will be strengthened through addressing bias and mindset. Academic performance will improve through facilitating the learning process that empowers students to lead and own their learning experiences.