

Aurora Public Schools School Readiness Assessment (SRA) Crawford Elementary

Mass Insight Education | 2015



Site Visit Dates
Report Submission Date
Principal
SRA Team

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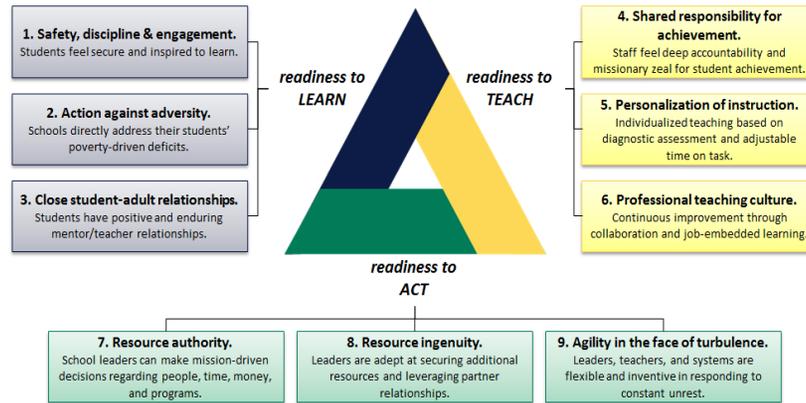
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Part I: School Readiness Assessment Overview

Framework

Mass Insight Education (MIE) conducted a School Readiness Assessment (SRA) for Crawford Elementary on September 1-2nd, 2015. The SRA examines a school’s overall performance and effectiveness according to the research-based criteria outlined in MIE’s framework for high-performing, high-poverty schools. The purpose of the SRA is to identify school strengths, opportunities, and areas for growth and improvement to inform planning and school design activities related to participation in Aurora Public School’s (APS’) ACTION Zone.



Findings are organized to align with the four conditions in the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) District and School Performance Unit’s framework for school turnaround. These conditions include:

- **Culture of Performance:** Foster a positive learning environment that supports a focused, mission-driven approach to excellence with high levels of shared accountability.
- **Academic Systems:** Design and implement a rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels.
- **Talent Management:** Employ dynamic leadership to develop, support, and evaluate educators in implementing mission driven instructional strategies.
- **Operations and District Support:** Create systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.

Culture of Performance	Academic Systems
Talent Management	Operations and District Support

For discussion purposes only
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As a part of the review process, SRA reviewers synthesize findings to identify school strengths and areas of need in relation to the four conditions. This report includes a brief explanation of the SRA process and a detailed description of findings gathered from the data and document review and stakeholder input.

Process

The SRA process involves three phases of data collection and review:

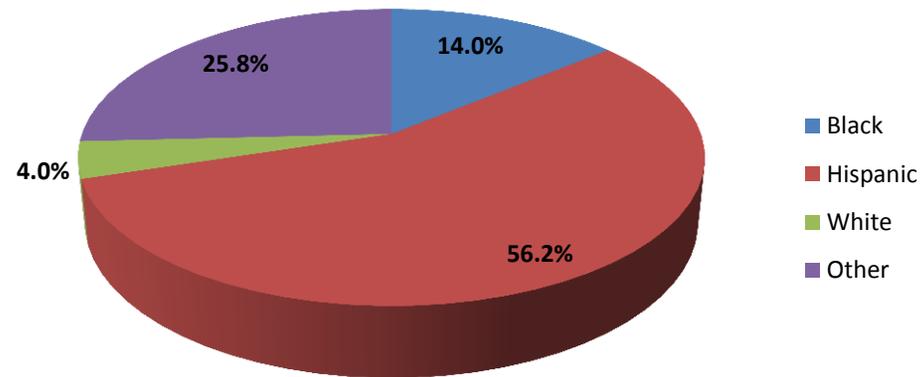
- **Pre-Site Visit:** Prior to the site visit, the MIE team reviews existing data and school audits and works with school leadership to collect any other relevant data and documents that may be helpful to understand school performance. The team reviews these materials prior to the site visit, allowing them to have a fuller understanding of the school and ask more targeted questions during the site visit.
- **Site Visit:** A team of reviewers conducts an on-site visit to meet with members of the school community. During the two-day school visit, the MIE team conducts multiple focus groups comprised of school administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members to ask targeted questions about school performance. Additionally, MIE administered an anonymous survey as an additional method to gather stakeholder input. Via focus groups, the SRA was able to talk to a representative sample of the Crawford Elementary community. Stakeholder focus groups included the principal, instructional coaches and teacher leaders, grade level teachers, guidance, special education staff, student representation, and a group of community staff members. **Thirty-eight staff members, or eighty-one percent of staff completed the online survey.**
- **Completion of SRA Report and Follow-up Support:** Following the on-site visit the MIE team reviews and synthesizes all available data to generate this SRA Final Report, identifying strengths and growth areas.

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Part II: Crawford Elementary Background Information

Student Enrollment and Demographic Data 2014-2015¹

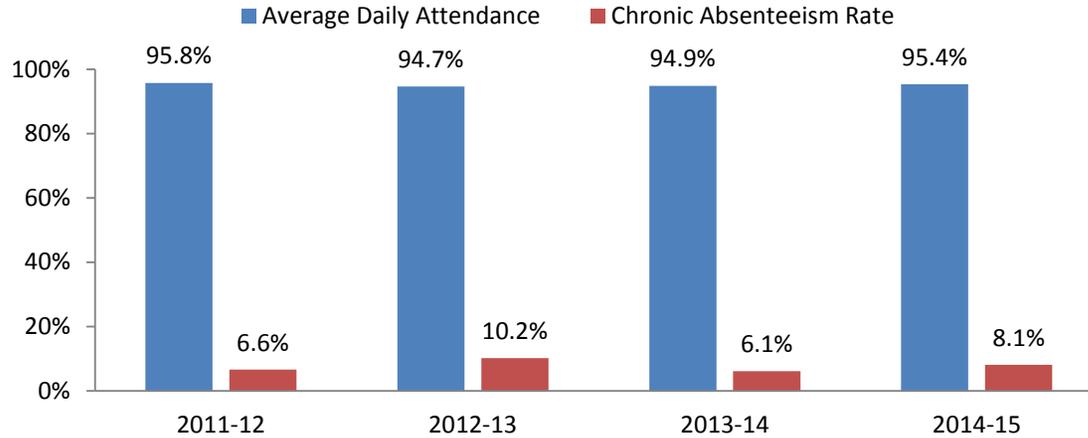
Grades	K-5	5 Year Enrollment Trend	Upward
Student Enrollment	710	Mobility Rate	25%
% Male	54.1%	% ELL	73.4%
% Female	45.9%	% ESS	8.9%
% Free and Reduced Lunch	96.1%	% Gifted/Talented	1.6%



¹ Source: Colorado Department of Education SchoolView Data Center <http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview>

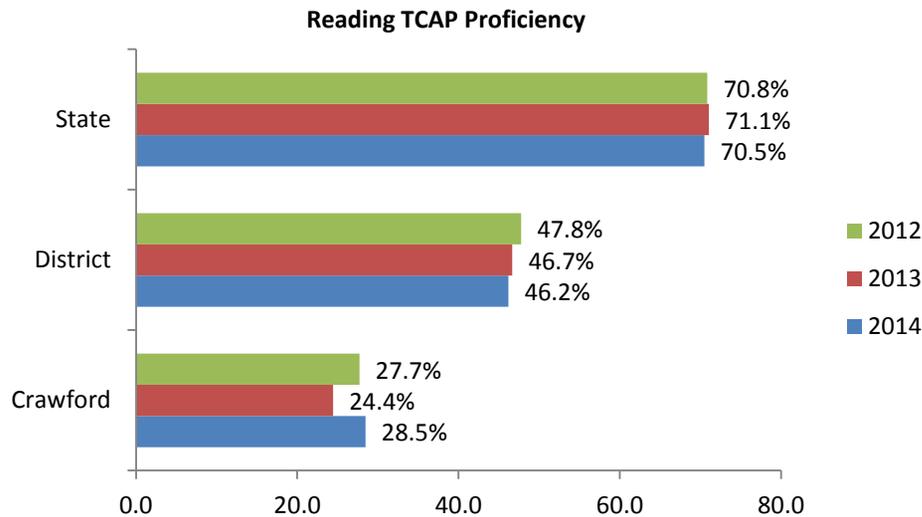
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School Climate Data Trends



Average daily attendance at Crawford Elementary has remained steady around 95%. The chronic absenteeism rate has fluctuated between 6% and 10% over the past four years but is trending upward.

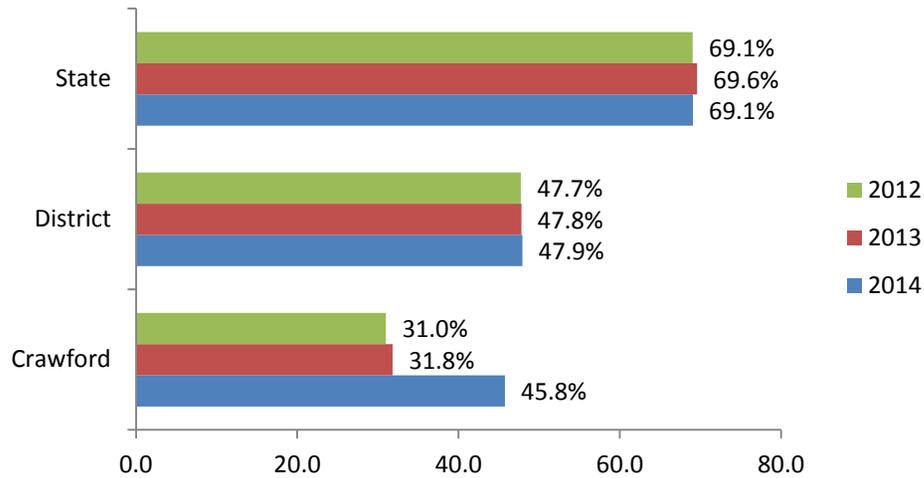
Student Achievement Data



Reading proficiency at Crawford Elementary has fluctuated by 3 to 4 percentage points each year from 2012 to 2014. Overall proficiency at the state level has remained steady between 70-71%. District-level proficiency has remained steady between 46-48%. Although proficiency at the school increased 4% from 2013 to 2014, **more than two-thirds of the student population is not proficient in reading.**

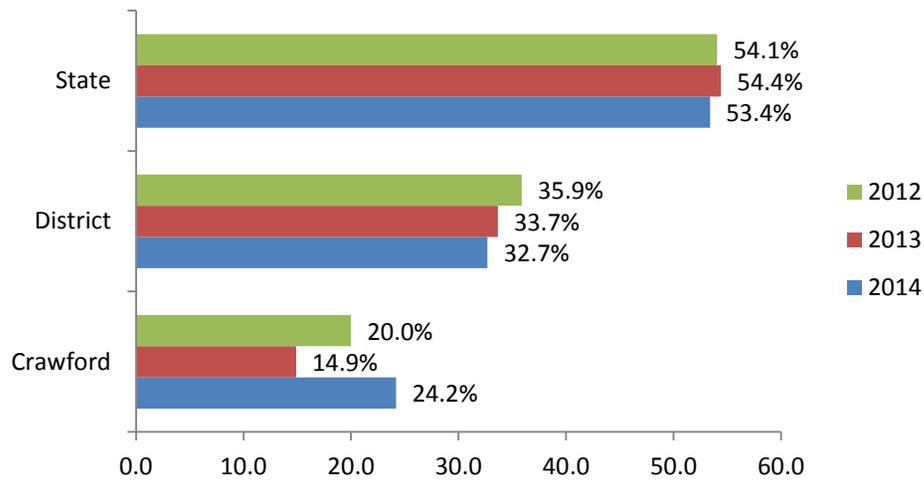
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Math TCAP Proficiency



State and district math proficiency levels have remained steady at 69% and 47%, respectively. Crawford Elementary **increased their math proficiency by 14 percentage points between 2013 and 2014**, and has nearly closed the gap between the school proficiency level and the district average.

Writing TCAP Proficiency



Writing proficiency at Crawford Elementary has also increased from 2013 to 2014, thus bringing the school closer to the district average, which has decreased slightly since 2012. State-level writing proficiency remains steady between 53-54%.

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Part III: Summary of Main Findings

Rating System

To provide detailed school level information, the MIE SRA team synthesized collected focus group and survey data and organized findings across the four conditions. Additionally, the SRA team utilizes a scale to help in the prioritization of areas of need and strength. The scale is explained below.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	Stakeholder feedback reveals there is little or no elements present across the school, or individuals may demonstrate application of indicators but it is not systematic.
<i>Developing</i>	Stakeholder feedback reveals that although there is some evidence related to the indicator, not all practices are consistently present across the school.
<i>Proficient</i>	Stakeholder feedback suggests that all indicators are present and implemented consistently across the school.
<i>Exemplary</i>	Stakeholder feedback reveals all indicators are consistently present across the school, and the school has a system to evaluate effectiveness and monitor and continuously improve each practice.

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1. Culture of Performance

1. Culture of Performance: Foster a positive learning environment that supports a focused, mission-driven approach to excellence with high levels of shared accountability.					
Indicators:		Needs Improvement	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
1.1.	Executive Leadership Systems			X	
1.2.	Performance Monitoring and Accountability		X		
1.3.	Communication		X		
1.4.	School Environment Systems		X		
1.5.	Culture of Success		X		
1.6.	Shared Responsibility for Success		X		

Strong Foundations on Which to Build:

- Strong sense of staff culture and connectedness
- Regular communication by leaders
- School-wide universal behavior plan with clear rewards and consequences

Areas of Need:

- Process/cycle for evaluating non-academic indicators and student subgroup data
- Formal school-wide efforts to strengthen student-adult relationships
- Clear and formal systems to identify students in need of supports
- Processes to regularly evaluate school performance and school improvement efforts against school goals – including a focus on academic and non-academic indicators

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Summary of Culture of Performance Findings:

Executive Leadership Systems

The school leaders at Crawford strive to establish and focus efforts on mission and goals. The majority of staff could reference the school's goals for the 2015-2016 school year and felt that there was strong alignment between the mission and school priorities or initiatives. ***Ninety-two percent of staff survey responses either "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "School leadership establishes and focus on school mission and strategic direction with staff, students, and families."*** While the school has some specific goals, they have not yet determined metrics for success for each goal. Leadership acknowledged this is a next step and has started the process of defining metrics to evaluate performance against school goals. For example, the leader is considering including metrics regarding parent participation at school events as a measure for the goal on family and community engagement.

Staff members at Crawford demonstrated an understanding of the division of roles/responsibilities between the administrative team as they pertain to observation and evaluation. However, not all staff communicated an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of other support staff in the building. For example, not all staff realized the school has additional staff devoted to supporting family and community engagement. Despite this fact, most feel that they know who to turn to when they have questions. Additionally, a school leadership team meets regularly and meetings are well publicized and open to the entire staff. The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) and leadership also distribute meeting notes for staff that are unable to attend. Staff perceives the ILT to be high functioning.

Performance Monitoring and Accountability

While the school has a cycle to review student and grade level math and reading data on a quarterly basis, there do not appear to be cycles of continuous improvement for non-academic indicators. Similarly, it is unclear to what extent student subgroup data is regularly analyzed for the purpose of program evaluation as well as to ensure that policies and practices are equitable and ensure success for all students.

Some systems do exist to collect academic, behavior and attendance data, and the data is presented to staff on a regular basis. Most staff, though, could not speak to school-wide trends or targets – especially for behavior and attendance data. Additionally, school stakeholders believe the school could do a better job of communicating school-wide progress with the community at large. ***Fifty percent of staff survey responses either "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "The school regularly communicates school-wide progress with the community at large via a variety of communication methods."***

Communication

Most staff reported that internal communication structures are sufficient to keep them in the loop on building activities, etc. ***Eighty-nine percent of staff survey responses either "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement "School leaders regularly communicate with staff though a variety of methods, including but not restricted to emails and meetings such as all-staff meetings, leadership meetings, data team meetings, committee meetings, recognition assemblies, and monitoring meetings."*** The school currently uses a shared PD calendar, weekly

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newsletter, announcements and email to communicate about school-wide topics. While it is not clear that there are any formalized and regular structures to collect feedback from staff and encourage a two-way dialogue, staff reported a high level of confidence in bringing ideas to school leadership as needed.

Aside from the school's website, we did not collect evidence of strategic communication plans to share school-wide progress with external stakeholders or encourage a two-way dialog with parents and other community members. School stakeholders acknowledge that communication efforts with parents and the community are hindered by the lack of resources to translate materials in all necessary languages.

School Environment Systems

Students and staff communicated feeling safe and supported in the school environment. ***Eighty-one percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “I feel safe and supported in the school environment.”*** For the most part it appears as though staff and students enjoy and look forward to coming to Crawford.

Crawford consistently implements a school-wide universal behavior plan. All students and teachers communicated consistent understanding of the behavior expectations. Rewards and consequences are clear and appropriate, and appear to be consistently applied across the school, with adequate room for adaptation based on classroom culture or age. ***Eighty-seven percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “There are clear school-wide expectations for student behavior, including routines to uphold those expectations, and a transparent discipline policy.”***

We did not find strong evidence of formal school-wide efforts to strengthen student-adult relationships, but some students did report having strong relationships with adults in the building.

While the school has a variety of socioemotional supports and resources available for students, such as the Family Liaison, Community Corps staff, social workers, behavior interventionists, school psychologists, and a partnership with Aurora Mental Health, the school does not yet have clear and formal processes to systematically identify students in need of support, connect them with resources aligned with their needs, and evaluate the effectiveness of efforts. Not all teachers realized these resources and staff were available to students. Other staff members noted that the support staff does not always appear to be available or willing to go above and beyond when needed. For example, staff noted that they can often be left feeling guilty for adding to support staffs' workload.

The Health Para monitors and shares attendance data, and there are school-wide incentives to encourage attendance. However, there does not seem to be shared accountability with teachers for increasing student attendance or addressing chronic attendance issues.

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Culture of Success

Crawford Elementary has an overall strong sense of staff culture. This is due in part by strong feelings of staff connectedness and shared focus. School leaders regularly communicate with all staff through regular, established method such as weekly bulletins. Additionally, school leadership regularly celebrates staff and student accomplishments. The school community acknowledged that more could be done to recognize individuals and teams that go above and beyond regular duties. ***Seventy-one percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “The School regularly celebrates staff and student achievements, contributing to a culture of success.”*** Currently, there are only isolated, mainly teacher-driven attempts to help students develop personal college and career goals.

Shared Responsibility for Success

While school stakeholders communicate pride and commitment to their work, staff members do not believe all staff members display shared accountability for school improvement efforts. ***Only sixty-eight percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “All staff members display commitment to, and hold each other accountable for achieving established goals.”***

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2. Academic Systems

2. Academic Systems: Design and implement a rigorous, aligned, and engaging academic program that allows all students to achieve at high levels.				
Indicators:	Needs Improvement	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
2.1. Curriculum and Standards		X		
2.2. Data Driven Instruction		X		
2.3. Academic Planning Structure and Systems		X		
2.4. Delivery of Instruction		X		
2.5. Intervention		X		

Strong Foundations on Which to Build:

- Standards-based curricula and scope and sequence maps at all grade levels and content areas
- 95 percent intervention period
- Common planning periods for academic teams

Areas of Need:

- Clear remediation and acceleration processes to increase student enrichment/advancement
- School-wide shared understanding and processes for ensuring grade-level aligned rigorous instruction
- Opportunities for teachers to engage in vertical curriculum articulation for consistency and to reduce gaps
- School-wide system for delivering culturally responsive instruction
- Increased supports for students with disabilities and English language learners

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Summary of Academic Systems Findings:

Curriculum and Standards

Staff focus group participants agree that standards-based curricula and scope and sequence maps exist for all grade levels and content areas, and teachers feel they have the flexibility to select from a sufficient set of resources that best align with instructional standards. While many grade levels work to ensure general alignment, course scope and sequences are not vertically aligned across grade levels so students are prepared for the next grade level. Additionally, a majority of staff members communicated a desire to increase focus on student's non-cognitive skill development and attention to the whole child.

Data Driven Instruction

The school implements an intervention period for reading where students are grouped based on 95 percent data and receive additional foundational support in phonics. The school plans to create similar intervention time for math. In addition to 95 percent, teachers in all grade levels administer a variety of assessments to collect data for analysis of student progress. According to teachers, these assessments vary in terms of their value, and several of those that are perceived to be less valuable are state or district-mandated. The school community acknowledges that there is more work to be done to tailor instruction to individual student needs beyond intervention period offerings.

Academic Planning Structure and Systems

All academic teams have common planning periods with identified focus topics (math once per week, literacy once per week, and English Language Development (ELD) once per week) and they are seldom interrupted by non-instructional tasks. Staff members communicated that this time is typically utilized to discuss instructional strategies, discuss student work, develop curricular resources, and use data to adjust instruction. It appears as though the school is just starting to set rhythm and routines to the use of common planning time for this school year. Despite agreeing that common planning time is seldom interrupted and is mainly used to focus on instruction, not all staff members feel there is a set protocol or routine for the time. ***Only fifty-four percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “The school has clear protocols to ensure that common planning time is used effectively.”*** The school has limited opportunities for teachers to engage in vertical curriculum articulation to ensure consistency of planning and practice minimizing gaps or unnecessary overlaps in curriculum.

Delivery of Instruction

As noted above, the majority of staff were able to identify clear instructional strategies expected to be observed in every classroom. Teachers also reported that compliance with those strategies is high and monitored through regular observations.

While the school community acknowledges that instructional rigor is a priority, staff members could not articulate a clear understanding of rigorous instruction aligned to grade level expectations. Though all staff conveyed respect and understanding of the cultural differences of the student population, it is unclear to what extent the school as a whole ensures culturally responsive instruction for all students. When asked

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about culturally relevant school activities, teachers mentioned things such as a family night. Strategies such as this are not sufficient to demonstrate true inclusiveness to students and their families.

Staff and leadership largely agree that the school could do more to support students with disabilities and English language learners. Teachers acknowledge that the special education team appears to be stretched thin. Students do not receive supports outside of core academic classes and pull out supports for remediation. The school does not appear have a formal system to ensure consistent collaboration between special education instructors and general education teachers. Teachers acknowledge they often seek each other out in passing, before and after to school to try to stay on the same page. **Only forty-four percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “This school adequately meets the needs of students receiving special education services.”** Similarly, only **fifty-two percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “This school adequately meets the needs of English Language Learners.”** The school schedule includes an English Language Development (ELD) block daily for all students. General education teachers prepare for this period and acknowledge they feel they need additional training to adequately support English Language Learners. Outside of the ELD period it is unclear how additional language development supports are embedded throughout the day.

Intervention

The school community acknowledges that the school’s Response to Intervention (RTI) process is unclear. Teachers are not aware that the school has a process and a point person who manages the process. Staff also communicated they do not have a clear understanding after a student is referred for RTI. Students in need of acceleration are lacking enrichment opportunities. There are limited school-wide opportunities to identify or provide support/interventions for accelerated students.

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3. Talent Management

3. Talent Management: Employ dynamic leadership to develop, support, and evaluate educators in implementing mission driven instructional strategies.				
Indicators:	Needs Improvement	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
3.1. Strategic Staff Placement and Allocation			X	
3.2. Distributed leadership		X		
3.3. Instructional leadership			X	
3.4. Professional Development		X		
3.5. Recruitment and Retention Strategy			X	
3.6. Evaluation Systems		X		

Strong Foundations on Which to Build:

- Transparent and consistent evaluation processes
- Regular teacher observation and debrief feedback
- Continued efforts to establish and communicate clear instructional expectations of staff

Areas of Need:

- Clear understanding of staff roles, responsibilities, and resources
- Strong alignment of coach and leader feedback

Summary of Talent Management Findings:

Strategic Staff Placement and Allocation

The school leader has the ability to think strategically about staff placements and can move staff between grade levels as necessary. In the event that another placement may be a better fit, she consults with staff and aims to place staff where they can be most successful as informed by teaching style, relationships with students, and data. Additionally, the school employs a variety of staff members dedicated to providing coaching and development support for teachers.

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Staff Roles and Responsibilities (Organizational Structure)

Crawford Elementary has a large staff comprised of teachers, classified staff, student support specialists, coaches, and more. Though the school benefits from multiple specialized staff members dedicated to meet academic and socio-emotional needs of students, as mentioned in previous sections not all roles and responsibilities are clear or understood. For example, classroom teachers do not always know who to contact regarding student socio-emotional supports nor do they know of all available resources.

Instructional Leadership

Crawford Elementary initiated a system to provide all teachers with regular observation and debrief cycles during the year. Teachers communicated that leaders hold staff accountable during follow-up observations. ***Seventy-four percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “I receive frequent and actionable instructional feedback delivered through a variety of means.”***

School leaders make efforts to establish and communicate clear instructional expectations of staff. Most staff could articulate a common understanding of the school-wide instructional expectations including gradual release (I do, We do, You do), engagement strategies, and the 95 percent intervention cycle. ***Ninety-five percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “School leadership sets and communicates a clear instructional vision aligned to the school improvement plan and predicated on the belief that all students can perform at rigorous academic levels.”*** Despite the strong acknowledgement that leadership establishes a clear vision for instruction, a significantly less majority of staff survey responses believe staff can articulate a common understanding of effective instruction (74% “agree” or “strongly agree”.)

The school also benefits from instructional coaching support for teachers. The school principal, assistant principal, and coaches collaborate to observe teachers and provide feedback for improvement. While there are some structures in place for coaches and leaders to stay on the same page regarding teacher observations, some teachers communicated that coach and leader feedback is not always aligned and can sometimes send conflicting messages. The school leader communicated they are in the process of implementing a system to increase feedback alignment.

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Professional Development

PD is offered twice per month for a total of approximately 3 hours each month. Topics are determined by the UIP, which is developed by the Leadership team. At this point in the school year PD has not been differentiated, but there are plans to do so as the school year progresses. Most teachers reported that PD was useful, especially in comparison to district-offered PD. In addition, focus group participants commented that PD topics are relevant, and implementation is monitored through the same structure. Despite strong endorsement for PD from focus group participants, only ***seventy-six percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “The school consistently offers rich and meaningful PD opportunities that are aligned to the school’s instructional priorities, student needs, and staff growth areas identified through observations.”***

Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Crawford has a solid strategy for recruiting and hiring of new staff. After posting on the district’s website, school leaders will screen resumes, conduct a phone interview, and then an in-person interview with a panel of school staff. The school does not receive any specialized supports from the district’s HR department. School leaders generally feel that the applicant pool for certified staff is large but not always high quality. The pool for classified staff is reportedly smaller and makes hiring for classified staff much more difficult. The school has one remaining classified staff vacancy this year.

Evaluation Systems

School leadership implements a transparent and consistent evaluation process in alignment with district expectations. Through the evaluation process, the leader provides feedback to evaluated staff members. When needed, the leader will also implement professional growth plans for low-performing educators. Teachers communicated a strong understanding of the evaluation process and acknowledge leadership’s consistency and transparency with its implementation. ***Ninety percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “The school implements a formal evaluation system for staff in compliance with state, district, and union rules and regulations.”***

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4. Operations and District Support

4. Operations and District Support: Create systems and processes that promote organizational efficiency and effectiveness, including through the use of time and financial resources.				
Indicators:	Needs Improvement	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
4.1. Use of Funds	X			
4.2. Use of Time		X		
4.3. Use of Facilities and Technology	X			
4.4. Stakeholder Support		X		
4.5. Use of Partnerships ²				

Strong Foundations on Which to Build:

- Family Liaison coordinates community partnerships and serves as a trusted point of contact in the school
- Community Corp staff see their role in fostering parent and family involvement to increase student achievement

Areas of Need:

- Teacher involvement in engaging parents and the community in school activities
- School-wide expectations for parent communication
- Increased budget-autonomy for school leadership

Summary of Operations and District Support Findings:

Use of Funds

Currently, the school leader has limited autonomy regarding budget decisions. School follows district budgetary guidance, but doesn't have the ability to make strategic decisions outside of those guidelines.

² Insufficient data to make a rating determination.

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Use of Time

The schedule at Crawford is focused and designed to maximize instructional time, within the current local and union parameters. Teachers appear to be willing to give up unassigned time to collaborate with peers for planning beyond the 25% time allocated per week. There are approximately 6 hours of instruction each day. As noted previously, teachers also have the opportunity to meet collaboratively each week to plan and that time is generally well-protected.

Use of Facilities and Technology

Much attention has been paid to ensuring that Crawford is a welcoming and inviting learning environment. The school is bright and clean, while hallways and classrooms are adorned with student work and recognition of their achievements. While students communicated they utilize technology in the classroom, staff feel that more can be done to increase use and availability. Staff noted that computers are often reserved for testing. ***Only twenty-four percent of staff survey responses either “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “Up-to-date technology is accessible and utilized by students and teachers on a daily basis, especially to personalize learning and drive further levels of student achievement.”***

Stakeholder Support

Crawford has a number of staff members dedicated to engaging families and the community in school activities. Two Community Corp staff work to increase student achievement by fostering parent and family involvement. They plan events, facilitate classroom volunteer opportunities, provide translation services, and facilitate coffee meetings and a parent organization that works on fundraising and special projects.

While these members of the Crawford team are dedicated to engaging parents and the community in school activities, teachers are not effectively utilized in this effort. Teachers report that there are no school-wide expectations for the frequency or content of their parent communication. Outside of parent conferences, most teachers don't have concrete plans or strategies to communicate with families about academics. Additionally, many struggle to communicate with parents because of language barriers – both in the sense that it can be difficult to secure translation services and in the sense that many appear uncomfortable bridging the language and cultural divide.

Use of Partnerships

A Family Liaison coordinates community partnerships that are reportedly very helpful in meeting the needs of students and families. She also serves as a trusted point of contact in the school, and refers families to other social service providers in the community. Unfortunately, we did not have a chance to meet with the Family Liaison to learn more about her work. Overall, staff and leadership seemed to highly value her contributions to the school, though most staff appeared to have only a vague notion of the services she is able to provide.

Part IV: Recommendations and Action Planning

Priority Area

- 1.** Revise the English Language Development (ELD) model and supports to ensure academic achievement for English Language Learners.
- 2.** Increase opportunities to identify students in need of academic and socio-emotional supports including revising the RTI system to increase whole staff awareness of the process, warning signals, and their role in the identification of students in need of supports.
- 3.** Establish a system to regularly assess school-wide performance and evaluate improvement strategies.
- 4.** Increase staff capacity to plan for rigorous instruction by increasing professional development time and developing a shared understanding of rigor and process for ensuring instruction meets grade level expectations.