

INSTRUCTIONAL AUDIT

CRAWFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PREPARED FOR:
AURORA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
15701 E. 1ST AVENUE
AURORA, CO 80011

PREPARED BY:
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OCTOBER 2013



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INTRODUCTION

An instructional audit was conducted at Crawford Elementary School on October 1-3, 2013 by four researchers from RMC Research Corporation, Denver. During those 3 days, staff observed 40 classrooms including all grade-level teachers, the refugee teacher, the music teacher, and special education teachers; interviewed every teacher in the building including special education teachers, the refugee teacher, and specials teachers; interviewed the principal, assistant principal, an instructional coach, and many classified staff including office staff, food service employees, custodians, and other adults working in the school. In addition, RMC Research staff conducted:

- two teacher focus groups, one with ten teachers and one with nine teachers;
- two student focus groups, one with eight 4th-grade students and one with five 5th-grade students;
- one focus group with five CST (para) staff; and
- one parent focus group with seven parents.

Evidence was collected and weighted to determine rubric ratings on a set of indicators that reflect research-based effective practices related to school achievement. The rubrics focus solely on instruction and support for instruction. Between three and six sources of evidence are collected for each rubric to ensure accuracy.

The evidence collected represents a snapshot in time and should not be considered as evaluation for any given teacher. Rather, the data serve to illuminate trends across the school and areas of strengths and challenges.

The following sections of this introduction describe the schools' overall strengths and challenges and provide some recommendations for improvement. This section is followed by an analysis of alignment to best practices using the rubrics developed by RMC Research and results of student surveys.

CONTEXT

Crawford Elementary School is a Title I school serving approximately 700 students. On the school's website, Crawford's vision is given as: *To develop a community of lifelong learners who excel as readers, writers, mathematicians, and scientists, succeeding in today's world and tomorrow's.* Staff recognize the mission as: *at Crawford our job is accelerating learning for every student every day.* The school's vision serves the Aurora Public Schools (APS) vision: *To graduate every student with the choice to attend college without remediation.* Further, APS notes that to meet the challenge of its vision, the APS mission is *to teach every student within a safe environment the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to enter college or a career and become a contributing member of society who flourishes in a diverse and dynamic world.*

The principal at Crawford, Ms. Jennifer Passchier, is new to the school this year. She oversees a staff of 36 teachers and approximately 40 other staff. Nearly 90% of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunch. The student body is 71.1% Hispanic; 9.9% African American/Black; 13.9% Asian; 2.7% White/European, and 0.2% Native American or Native Hawaiian. Approximately 15.2% of the students are refugees, an increase of 6.4% in the past 3 years. About 80% of students are limited English proficient; 6.7% qualify for special education services; and 1.4% are identified as gifted and talented.

Over the past several years, test scores at Crawford Elementary School have remained relatively low, with inadequate growth in reading, writing, and mathematics. Educators have been making efforts to improve student performance, but in the past few years morale was down and teachers did not feel supported in these efforts. For a variety of reasons, about a third of the teaching staff left the school in each of the last 3 years. This means that the school has a relatively novice instructional staff. The new teachers feel very welcome at the school and are eager to learn and contribute to working with a diverse population. With the support of a new administration and goals for accelerating learning for every student every day, they are quickly learning content standards, effective instructional strategies, and classroom management techniques. In response to new teachers' needs, the district has provided instructional coaches in mathematics and literacy and a behavior teacher on special assignment (TOSA). The school has made internal coaching available with teacher leaders, and there is abundant support from colleagues, administrative staff, a refugee teacher, and para-educators.

Academic improvement at Crawford Elementary School is a high priority, and the new administration has focused the instructional staff on instruction with clear learning targets. Three goals for 2013-2014 have given direction to professional development around understanding Core State standards, planning standards-based units and lessons, and using best practices such as formative assessments.

- We will plan effective standards-based lessons and monitor the learning around those standards.
- We will provide opportunities for students to write every day across all content areas.
- We will collaborate to support each other in accelerating the learning of all our students.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS: INSTRUCTION

Crawford Elementary School has several areas of instructional strength. The school day is organized to maximize instruction in reading and mathematics. Teachers use the *Mondo* reading series, *Investigations* mathematics curriculum, and *Lucy Calkins* for writing, and they make good use of district pacing guides. With a focus on mathematics, teachers in grade-level teams plan effective standards-based units and lessons, and they monitor student learning around standards. When the district curriculum materials are not fully aligned to Core State standards, teachers are creating or finding resources to support instruction. Aligned and

district-approved supplementary materials such as manipulatives, additional readers, educational computer games, and activities from other sources are provided to students.

Teachers appear to have strong content knowledge and are accurate in the way they present lessons to students. Lesson objectives or learning targets are conveyed to students to help them understand specific learning goals and expectations for demonstrating proficiency. Teachers communicate clearly and accurately in the learning environment, and they use language that is developmentally appropriate for students in their classrooms.

The instructional staff are highly collegial and share responsibility for student learning. Weekly professional learning time for the whole staff is collaborative and focuses on the schoolwide goals to accelerate learning for all students. Grade-level teams are especially cooperative, meeting several times a week to plan standards-based units and lessons, to identify and use formative assessments, to monitor and discuss student progress, and to coordinate the English Language Development (ELD)/Native block. Most grade-level teams engage in Collaborative Coaching and Learning (CCL) to conduct a type of lesson study on mathematics lessons. Although there is not now a strong emphasis on vertical articulation, the policy of looping at the school has made most instructional staff aware of learning expectations across the grades. Administrators and staff hope to have teachers from adjacent grade levels working together more in vertical teams, but at this time there are, if anything, too many meetings so adding ones for vertical teaming does not seem appropriate.

While most teachers are committed to students reaching proficiency, not all appeared to be implementing classroom practices that demonstrate high expectations for student learning. The level of cognitive demand reflected in the Core State standards was not evidenced in all classrooms. The degree to which teachers employed differentiation strategies, such as flexible grouping, varied by classroom. In addition, classroom pacing was not always adjusted based on the academic needs of students. Students were rarely asked to use higher-order thinking skills such as analysis or evaluation or given opportunities to extend their learning. Students were seldom asked to apply their learning to another content area or to real-world situations.

Culturally responsive instruction is infrequent, though most teachers seem to respect students from diverse cultures. The school has had celebrations for different cultures and staff often participate in community cultural festivities. There is recognition of where students come from on a hallway map, and an effort is made to assign a student ambassador to a new refugee student. Instructional staff are required by the district to be Linguistically Diverse Educator (LDE) certified. However, it does not appear that staff consistently demonstrate an understanding of cultural influences on students' academic performance and behaviors.

An agenda item for the school's Instructional Support Team (IST) is the Response to Intervention (RtI) process for academic interventions, and the school recently hired an RtI coordinator. Still this is an area of challenge, because students do not respond well to interventions. The identification component of RtI is not being implemented with fidelity, and

teachers are hoping with the new Rtl coordinator the process and support will improve. Few services are provided for students in need of academic enrichment.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS: SUPPORT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Crawford Elementary School's principal is new to the school this year and is working hard to improve student learning. Her mantra for the staff is "Imagine the great things we can do when we all work together!" She is focused on improving instruction in all areas, but especially this year in mathematics with an effective mathematics planning process. In part to remedy some unhealthy climate issues from previous years, she has initiated a social contract to communicate how the staff will treat each other and work effectively to support accelerating the learning for every student. The entire school staff is supportive and positive about leadership changes and the resulting culture in the school.

The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) meets twice a month to review and revise the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP), to plan and facilitate professional learning, and to monitor progress of the schoolwide goals (UIP goals) for improving instruction and learning of all students. All instructional staff are invited to provide input or feedback. The improvement plan has a strong emphasis on professional learning through one-on-one coaching and grade-level team collaboration (unwrapping standards, planning and studying lessons, and monitoring students' progress). A quarterly schedule with specific outcomes to be monitored for students and teachers will be included as part of the UIP.

Parent communication and engagement is a challenge, but the strategies being used or planned, particularly those connected with classes for parents to help them learn English, formation of a PTA, use of an effective language navigator, and a family liaison to help families acclimate to the school are hopeful. Most parents feel welcome at the school, are well informed, and have opportunities to become involved in the school and to help their children progress, though some parents commented that they seldom hear when their child is doing well. The new policies around student arrival and dismissal procedures have provided more opportunities for parents to see and talk to teachers.

The foundation for effectiveness is present. The school will be successful if it draws upon its talents and strengths and applies the considerable positive energy of leadership and educators to the task of academic success. The sections that follow provide rubric ratings, findings, and guidance for improvement from the qualitative research conducted, as well as from results of the student survey.

RUBRIC SUMMARY

CRAWFORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
OCTOBER 1-3, 2013

INSTRUCTION	MINIMALLY PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY
I-1. Instructional staff know and understand the content of the subject taught.			X	
I-2. Instructional staff communicate lesson objectives to students to help them understand specific learning goals and expectations for demonstrating proficiency.				Approaching
I-3. Instructional staff communicate clearly and accurately in the learning environment.				X
I-4. Instructional staff use effective classroom management strategies to make efficient use of instructional time and to promote students' active engagement in learning.			X	
I-5. Instructional staff create a culturally responsive learning community in the classroom.		X		
I-6. Instructional staff routinely implement elements of differentiated instruction to meet the learning needs of all students.				Approaching
I-7. Instructional staff have high academic expectations for all students and provide instruction that promotes individual student growth.		X		
I-8. Instructional staff provide instruction designed to help students apply their learning outside the classroom.				Approaching
I-9. Instructional staff supplement general classroom instruction with interventions and extensions to support the learning needs of all students.		X		
I-10. Instructional staff engage in horizontal articulation within grade/subject configurations.				X

INSTRUCTION	MINIMALLY PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY
I-11. Instructional staff engage in vertical articulation for adjacent grade levels or course sequences.			Approaching	
I-12. Instructional staff align instruction to the Common Core State Standards and use aligned materials.			X	
I-13. Instructional staff promote a school culture characterized by collegiality and shared responsibility for student learning.				Approaching
I-14. Instructional staff use interim, benchmark, and summative assessment results to plan and guide instruction.			X	
I-15. Instructional staff administer a variety of formative assessments aligned to district curriculum maps or content scope and sequence and use results to guide instruction.				Approaching
I-16. Instructional staff actively promote college- and career-readiness.			X	
I-17. Instructional staff provide specific and timely feedback to students on an ongoing basis and help students to use the feedback to improve their performance.			X	

SUPPORT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING		MINIMALLY PROFICIENT	PARTIALLY PROFICIENT	PROFICIENT	EXEMPLARY
S-1.	School leadership develops and communicates a clear, shared vision and mission.		X		
S-2.	School leadership focuses the entire school community on school improvement.				Approaching
S-3.	School leadership focuses on improving and supporting effective instruction.			X	
S-4.	School leadership systematically monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of instruction.				X
S-5.	School leadership allocates the resources necessary to increase student achievement.			X	
S-6.	School leadership ensures the effective use of instructional time.			X	
S-7.	School leadership ensures that all professional development is focused on improving student achievement.				Approaching
S-8.	The school leadership team, teachers, and other instructional staff actively engage families as partners in the school and classrooms.			Approaching	
S-9.	Administrators, teachers, and other instructional staff provide parents with easy and regular access to information about the school and their children's achievement and progress and provide suggestions for how to help their children increase their achievement.		X		
S-10.	Instructional staff actively promote safety and security in the school.			X	

RUBRIC RATINGS, EVIDENCE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

INSTRUCTION

I-1. Instructional staff know and understand the content of the subject taught.

Rating: Proficient

Content vocabulary. Observations revealed almost all teachers use vocabulary aligned to the content they are teaching and students are routinely expected to use the vocabulary. Most teachers explained the meaning of terms in words that students could understand and expected students to use the vocabulary. However, students are infrequently given opportunities to expand acquisition of new vocabulary on their own.

Accuracy. Almost all instructional staff accurately teach content. The exceptions were when terms were used incorrectly, a small mistake was inadvertently made but not corrected, or concepts were explained with some ambiguity. Observers noted few instructional staff showed students how to check and ensure accuracy through the use of additional instructional resources.

To increase ratings in this area, all instructional staff should ensure they are providing accurate content and vocabulary aligned to content. Students should be routinely asked to use vocabulary words in context and provided opportunities to expand their acquisition of new vocabulary on their own. In addition, instructional staff need to provide ways for students to check each other's understanding of new content through the use of additional instructional resources.

I-2. Instructional staff communicate lesson objectives to students to help them understand specific learning goals and expectations for demonstrating proficiency.

Rating: Approaching Exemplary

Lesson objective. Learning targets were stated and/or posted at the beginning of lessons in almost all classrooms. Most teachers refer to learning targets several times during instruction and summarize at the end of a lesson, checking with students on what they did to meet the learning target. Learning targets were typically posed as “I (or we) can (or will)” statements. For the most part, learning targets were specific to the day’s learning and used language appropriate to the students. In some cases, words used in learning objectives that were difficult for younger students or English language learners to understand (e.g., “syllables” or “characteristics”) were explained with visuals or actions.

Student understanding of expectations for demonstrating proficiency. Students reported that teachers tell them “all the time” how to demonstrate they have met requirements for doing good work in class by showing examples or by explaining what good work looks like. Some of these reports were more about paying attention, trying hard, and following rules in class than about meeting of learning expectations. Observations showed that almost all teachers provided information on how to demonstrate proficiency through the use of exemplars and success criteria. Some classrooms had student work displayed, but there were only a few cases where the work posted was exemplary so that the anchors and exemplars were clear to students, particularly those who need models or more visual representations.

To increase this rating to exemplary all instructional staff should revisit learning target(s) throughout the lesson and summarize at the end of the lesson. Teachers should check to ensure that all students understand how to demonstrate that they have met the requirements for proficiency, and teachers should post examples of exemplary student work in their classrooms.

I-3. Instructional staff communicate clearly and accurately in the learning environment.

Rating: Exemplary

Spoken communication. In observations, all instructional staff used spoken language that was grammatically correct and expressive. In addition, spoken language addressed the needs of diverse learners in the classroom.

Written communication. All instructional staff wrote clearly and legibly so that all students could see and understand the written communication. Observations revealed most teachers make use of Promethean boards so lesson communications were prepared for this medium, enhancing the ability of students to view the written communication for the lessons. Often teachers restated communications in multiple ways; for example, using a flipchart, handouts, or a worksheet.

Developmentally appropriate language. Observations showed that instructional staff used language that is developmentally appropriate for students in their classrooms. Across classrooms, teachers consistently checked for individual student comprehension.

I-4. Instructional staff use effective classroom management strategies to make efficient use of instructional time and to promote students’ active engagement in learning.

Rating: Proficient

Behavioral expectations. While rules are not always posted in classrooms, it is clear from student actions that instructional staff have established student behavioral expectations. In interviews, instructional staff reported beginning the year with establishing classroom

procedures and rules, practicing until they are well understood, and reteaching or modeling as needed. Almost all classrooms had the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) color chart that was explained to students at the beginning of the year, and it definitely was used in classrooms to monitor and adjust behavior. Some teachers incorporated other strategies such as gestures (e.g., a number of fingers) for requesting permissions, using a watch guard (real or imaginary), and “give me 5.” Schoolwide there are incentives for good behavior in the awarding of Cougar Paws and ROAR (**R**espect **O**utstanding effort **A**ceptance **R**esponsibility) recognition; individual teachers may give other incentives like stickers or special events. Observations showed that the majority of students abide by the rules and follow the behavioral expectations. Students also reported that their classes are not often disrupted by students’ bad behavior, but some did mention that there are those who do not follow rules.

Behavioral procedures. Observations, focus groups, and interviews revealed that most teachers have well-established behavioral procedures for activities such as sharpening pencils, putting away materials, and using the restroom. Most of the students consistently demonstrate expected behaviors, and many self-regulate.

Behavioral transitions. Most instructional staff have established and conduct efficient transition procedures such as having students rotate to centers or go from whole group instruction to independent work spaces, and students generally follow protocols. Physical transitions from one place to another during a lesson are generally smooth and efficient. However, there were several observations of too much time spent in transitions. Hallway transitions are conducted with the “hug and bubble” technique so students do not talk or touch each other during this time. Behavior in the hallways was generally good though there were a couple instances of misbehavior.

Cueing. Most teachers were observed using positive cues to redirect and maintain student behavior based on established expectations. Most often, teachers employed clapping, “1, 2, 3 eyes on me . . . 1, 2 eyes on you,” hand-raising, or countdown procedures. Most students responded to these cues, though in a few cases some did not. Quite a few teachers articulate positive modeling statements such as “I like the way X is ready to learn.” Several teachers use proximity as a way to manage student conduct. However, a few teachers do not walk around the room or check on students as frequently as they should.

Ratings for this indicator will increase when all students consistently follow behavioral expectations, and all teachers make efficient transitions from one task to another. In addition, teachers need to ensure that their cueing techniques are working for all students, and students need to help reinforce others’ positive behaviors.

I-5. Instructional staff create a culturally responsive learning community in the classroom.

Rating: Partially Proficient

Cultural understanding. According to school administrators, the school started a diversity team and they met to talk about the different cultures represented at the school and the need for teacher learning in this area. There have been communications about such things as the proper ways to address children, and the refugee teacher communicates with teachers about the needs of refugee students. In the past, the district has done some diversity/equity training at the school. The school has had in previous years monthly celebrations for different cultures, and staff often participate in community cultural festivities. The hallway has a large map with national flags indicating where students come from; this is especially a way to identify student ambassadors for new refugee students. In classrooms, teachers mention doing “about me” activities, and sometimes using the Cougar Den time to talk about cultural differences and similarities to help students transition between cultural groups. However, observations showed that few instructional staff consistently demonstrate understanding of cultural influences on students’ behaviors and successes, nor have they incorporated knowledge of students’ cultures into the design of classroom strategies. Administration suggests that considering how to better embed culture into instruction will be a role for the diversity team.

Multiple perspectives. Many classrooms have books representing different places and cultures, and teachers mention having conversations about “in my country” or about cultural perspectives. Observations, however, showed few instructional staff embedding multiple cultural and ethnic perspectives into the curriculum and engaging students in analyzing issues from multiple perspectives.

Strategies for English language learners. APS requires that teachers complete the LDE Certificate or the equivalent courses (assessment, linguistics, and teaching strategies) as a condition of continued employment. Some of the teachers have LDE endorsements; others are working on their endorsements.

The district also requires that there be a 40-minute ELD block using the EL Achieve curriculum. Observations showed that, where appropriate, about half of the teachers are using strategies for English language learners such as providing models and visual representations, acting out responses, and rephrasing.

Ratings in this area will increase when more teachers and other instructional staff consistently demonstrate understanding of cultural influences on students’ academic success, and embed multiple cultural and ethnic perspectives into the curriculum to help students analyze issues from multiple perspectives. In addition, all teachers should become skilled in using strategies for teaching English language learners.

I-6. *Instructional staff routinely implement elements of differentiated instruction to meet the learning needs of all students.*

Rating: *Approaching Proficient*

Flexible grouping. Observations showed that many teachers routinely group and regroup students by academic level, interest, or social need and vary groupings to meet student needs. In interviews, administrators and instructional staff reported that the degree to which flexible grouping occurs varies by classroom. When grouping does occur, it is often based on centers or stations with students working in groups on activities. In mathematics, some teachers group high and low students together or bring together groups who need more skill practice based on assessment results. Students reported that sometimes their teachers put them in different groups by level and give them different assignments. Administrators indicated that differentiating of instruction with supports for students was an area of need.

Content. More than half of instructional staff were observed adjusting content to academic need by varying the pace of instruction and/or complexity of the subject content. The pace during whole group instruction was not consistently adjusted to meet student needs. Further, the pace did not appear to be related to the complexity of the subject matter, but rather to teacher preference and the lesson plan. In interviews, teachers indicated daily observations and monitoring notes indicate adjustments to content and next steps for students. Also, teachers suggested that differentiation in mathematics is mostly by skill level whereas for reading and writing there is some differentiation by interest.

Differentiated assignments. In observations, some teachers adjusted student assignments to academic need. In interviews, teachers noted that stations provide differentiated tasks and that the formative assessment data allow them to both group students and use differentiated assignments, such as leveled books or more challenging mathematics problems. Some teachers described assignments as the same assignment but students are doing it at their level. Students said that sometimes they get different assignments, different papers or different mathematics problems.

While staff are on the pathway to differentiation, many teachers do not differentiate instruction by content, process, and product or through the use of flexible grouping and differentiated assignments. Ratings on these indicators will increase when teachers learn to use multiple prompts for assignments, different means for tracking the types of strategies that work best for particular students, and more flexible grouping during the regular classroom lesson.

I-7. *Instructional staff have high academic expectations for all students and provide instruction that promotes individual student growth.*

Rating: *Partially Proficient*

High academic expectations. Some instructional staff were observed implementing classroom practices that demonstrate high expectations for student learning. These included asking students to tackle complex problems, referring to students as “authors” or “mathematicians”, asking students to answer questions in a variety of formats, and providing students with exemplars based on learning targets. Interviews revealed that most staff are committed to students reaching proficiency, yet there were some who question whether students can achieve on grade level. Administrators noted this is an area for improvement. Some parent focus group participants reported that high expectations are not consistent across classrooms. Students’ perceptions of teacher expectations from the student survey indicated students agreed with all items and especially with *my teachers believe I can learn and be successful*.

Cognitive demand. Observations showed most instructional staff attempt to deliver instruction that reflects the cognitive demand indicated in the state or Common Core content standards. Interviews revealed that standards are embedded in unit planning and pacing guides, and the use of Marzano proficiency scales has helped push the thinking about the level at which a standard is written.

Extension of learning. Few teachers were observed providing opportunities for students to extend their learning. Students reported that when they finish their work before the allotted time, they can work on other unfinished work, read a book, or sometimes help other students. Few students get help or encouragement to extend their learning. Teachers indicated they sometimes placed students in stations with more challenging work, but that there was not much need for extension activities.

Ratings in this area will increase when all instructional staff implement classroom practices that demonstrate high expectations for all children, deliver instruction that reflects the cognitive demand indicated in the state standards, provide enrichment activities to students who have demonstrated proficiency on learning objectives, and routinely help students to extend their learning.

I-8. *Instructional staff provide instruction designed to help students apply their learning outside the classroom.*

Rating: *Approaching Proficient*

Relevance. During interviews, some teachers reported they explain why students are learning something by relating in-class activities to real-world experiences. Observations showed that most teachers routinely provide real-world problems and experiences in their content areas. Some teachers used examples from their own or students’ lives to illustrate concepts especially

in mathematics classes. In one mathematics class, students were asked to consider the what, why, and how of the learning target to make connections to their own lives.

Application. Observations revealed few teachers provide students with opportunities to apply what they learn in class outside the classroom. A few teachers indicated they offer application opportunities through assignments and class newsletters. From the student survey, we learned that students believe what they learn in school is useful to them.

To increase scores in this area, all instructional staff should routinely provide real-world problems and experiences for students in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. Also, all instructional staff should relate materials to the students' lives and routinely provide multiple opportunities to apply learning outside the classroom environment.

I-9. Instructional staff supplement general classroom instruction with interventions and extensions to support the learning needs of all students.

Rating: Partially Proficient

Identification for intervention. Identification for intervention, whether for struggling students or for students needing more of a challenge, starts with classroom teachers who monitor student progress with a variety of assessments and daily observations. The district Enrich system provides a formal documentation step for the three-tiered RtI model (Tier 1/Tier 1A, Tier 2, Tier 3). Crawford Elementary School has as an IST that meets bi-monthly to brainstorm ideas to help in the RtI process. As well, the school recently hired an RtI coordinator to provide support especially around Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. Interviews revealed that the identification component of RtI is not being implemented with fidelity, and teachers are hoping with the new RtI coordinator the process and support will improve. Students are rarely identified for enrichment, perhaps because there are no services. Administrators note that through grade-level planning, teachers have a way to talk about how to intervene and how to enrich as well.

Intervention for struggling students. Administrators and instructional staff reported there is not seamless provision of services once students are identified for assistance or intervention. Further, administrators are concerned that students do not respond well to intervention, especially in literacy. Again, the hope is that the new RtI coordinator, who is the one qualified as an interventionist, is going to help. The school is also hiring a literacy consultant to help teachers so they can better understand data and plan interventions. Grade-level teams will discuss strategies for assisting students. Paraprofessional staff reported that some students can receive tutoring after school.

Extension for accelerated students. Few services are provided for students in need of enrichment. In interviews, teachers mentioned giving some students more challenging tasks such as advanced writing assignments or mathematics challenge problems on Edmodo. No mention was made of a gifted/talented program.

To become proficient in this area, all instructional staff should ensure that students who need assistance or enrichment are identified and served. In addition, all instructional staff should ensure that students are responding well to the services provided.

I-10. *Instructional staff engage in horizontal articulation within grade/subject configurations.*

Rating: *Exemplary*

Coordination. Grade-level teams typically meet several times weekly to discuss standards from the district’s pacing guides; to do unit and lesson planning in mathematics, literacy, and ELD/Native; and to ensure consistency of coverage of the curriculum. Teams generally work with district instructional coaches and/or administrators. In interviews and focus groups, teachers noted that coordination within their grade-level teams was excellent.

Planning. As noted above, grade-level teams use their collaboration time to unpack standards and plan units/lessons based on the standards. All instructional staff use collaboration time to review current levels of achievement for students within a grade level and discuss how well students are progressing as revealed by benchmark and formative assessments. Especially when conducting a CCL, teachers reported bringing examples of student work to examine in team meetings. Administrators commented that grade-level teams may also plan for intervention and enrichment in their meetings.

Support for literacy and mathematics. All instructional staff within a grade level discuss and implement instructional strategies to support literacy and mathematics. Some teachers noted that a literacy framework exists for science. The school has music, art, physical education, technology, learning zone (a sixth special for Kindergarten and first grade), and library specials. Each of these areas implements strategies that support literacy and mathematics when appropriate.

I-11. *Instructional staff engage in vertical articulation for adjacent grade levels or course sequences.*

Rating: *Approaching Proficient*

Vertical articulation. Administrators and instructional staff noted that there is little formal vertical articulation in place yet as most of the focus has been on grade-level planning. However, most instructional staff could identify the learning expectations for adjacent grades because through looping they had experience teaching at those grade levels. There is also some informal communication among teachers about what students need to master to move on to the next grade level; for example, in the Wednesday night dialogues. Administrators noted that emphasis on vertical articulation is something they would like to institute since it is an expectation for teachers.

Planning. The schoolwide professional development and Wednesday night dialogues provide some opportunity for instructional staff to review student achievement or course sequences for instructional planning purposes. Otherwise, few instructional staff use collaboration time to review current levels of achievement for students in adjacent grade levels. For many teachers, looping has made them aware of individual student needs in adjacent grade levels.

Transitions within and between schools. Although special education staff may meet with a middle school teacher to identify special needs students, and fifth-grade students have an opportunity to tour the middle school and meet the middle school principal, there is little formal collaboration with the feeder network and discussion of additional supports to help students adjust more easily to middle school. Instructional staff reported that communication with the middle school is vague and recognized a need to make transitions easier, to prepare students for routines and processes of middle school, and to help parents with the transition. It was noted that for the school's population, there is not a middle school that most students attend so student files and the online data system are important. Administrators were not knowledgeable about transitions.

To increase ratings in this area, all teachers should be able to articulate the learning expectations for adjacent grades and should use at least some collaboration time for discussing adjacent grade-level expectations for instructional planning purposes. In addition, the school should engage in greater collaboration with feeder networks, and consider implementing a buddy system, discussion about expectations, and additional supports for fifth-grade students to better prepare them for transition into middle school, especially since their classes will be departmentalized, class sizes are likely to be much larger, and they will need to deal with many more distractions and other challenges.

I-12. Instructional staff align instruction to the Common Core Standards and use aligned materials.

Rating: Proficient

Alignment with standards. The weekly unit and lesson planning cycle for both mathematics and literacy includes unwrapping Core State standards and planning effective standards-based lessons. This schoolwide goal is focused on all instructional staff aligning their teaching to the Core State standards. Observations indicated that almost all instructional staff do consistently provide students with district-approved materials aligned to the standards. However, little was noted about providing opportunities for accelerated students to extend learning beyond the Core State standards.

Utilization of appropriate resources. The school uses the *Mondo* reading series, *Investigations* and *Kathy Richardson* for mathematics, and *Lucy Calkins* for writing. Still with the lesson planning and focus on standards, grade-level teachers are finding other resources and materials to better address the rigor and level of the core standards. Most instructional staff provided students with aligned and district-approved supplementary materials such as manipulatives,

“book bags,” and worksheets. The district pacing guides provide information on using supplementary materials, and teachers make good use of pacing guides. Staff said there is a good amount of supplementary materials available in the school.

To increase ratings, all instructional staff should make supplemental materials available to students in a variety of formats and learning modalities. The use of materials that address visual and kinesthetic learning styles is especially important. More effort should be made to have instructional materials that reflect a variety of cultures, ethnicities, and the backgrounds of the students. In addition, staff should investigate and make available supplemental enrichment materials.

I-13 *Instructional staff promote a school culture characterized by collegiality and shared responsibility for student learning.*

Rating: *Approaching Exemplary*

Collegiality. The staff at Crawford Elementary School are highly collegial and have a sense of respect and trust with each other. Interviews and focus groups revealed that almost all instructional staff engage in active listening and respond to each other and administrators in a positive, respectful manner during daily interactions and meetings. The instructional staff includes some who have been at Crawford Elementary School for many years, but more who are new to the school and even several new teachers. With the social contract that all staff stand by, it is unusual to have conflicts. Still, there is a building counsel to resolve issues with policy, so that a conflict does not affect the work of instruction. There is a strong sense of teamwork and an atmosphere of caring support among the staff as they work together to improve student achievement.

Shared responsibility. All staff at Crawford Elementary School support decisions that are made collectively and help each other improve student learning. Interviews and focus groups revealed that the social contract was taken to heart, and that includes the items about being part of a team and being accountable for the decisions made by the team. Instructional staff felt they did have input into the work of the ILT and shared in responsibility for implementing the UIP. There was a level of trust in each other as well as a genuine effort to implement decisions in order to improve student learning. It was a norm of the school to address disagreements overtly among the individuals, but disagreements rarely occurred.

Ratings in this area will move to exemplary as the staff puts aside completely the remnants of discontent left from previous years. All instructional staff need to work on strengthening an environment of collective decision making so that student learning can be improved.

I-14. *Instructional staff use interim, benchmark, and summative assessment results to plan and guide instruction.*

Rating: *Proficient*

Analysis. Acuity benchmark assessments are administered multiple times a year (fall, winter, and spring) in reading, writing, and mathematics. Daily Language Instruction (DLI) was also mentioned as an assessment. Developmental Reading Assessment 2 (DRA2) is used for reading and word analysis, Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) by Fountas and Pinnell assessments are used for running records in reading, and Kathy Richardson assessments are given for mathematics in the early grades. With quarterly student achievement meetings, all instructional staff engage in analysis of the Transitional Colorado Assessment Program (TCAP) and benchmark assessment results to determine patterns of proficiency for grade levels and content areas. Proficiency levels for subgroups, the classroom, and the school also are analyzed. There has not been a significant comparison of results with outcomes from previous years to determine trends at each grade level and for each subgroup. Data is reviewed in grade-level planning meetings; this serves to track individual students, work with students on specific skills, and group students for instruction, especially in reading.

Adjustment of instruction. Interviews and focus groups revealed that most instructional staff routinely and consistently use benchmark assessment results to reteach concepts that are not understood by students either through regular whole class or small group instruction, or with provision of instruction to specific students during after-school tutoring. Reteaching appeared to be somewhat inconsistent within and across grade levels.

Progress monitoring. Most instructional staff routinely and consistently monitor student progress to check for proficiency on learning targets. Assessment matrices and proficiency charts are required for progress monitoring. Some teachers have wall charts in their rooms for progress monitoring purposes; others keep files on their iPads for each student. Effective actions as a consequence of progress monitoring are planned during grade-level planning meetings and in other schoolwide professional development.

Ratings in this area will increase when all instructional staff analyze available summative and benchmark assessment results to determine overall and subgroup patterns of proficiency for the school, grade level, content area, and classroom. Results should be compared with previous years to surface the effectiveness of various strategies and curriculum choices and to determine trends over time.

I-15. *Instructional staff administer a variety of formative assessments aligned to district curriculum maps or content scope and sequence and use results to guide instruction.*

Rating: *Approaching Exemplary*

Required assessments. As part of the unit and lesson planning done weekly by grade-level teams, there is the creation of an assessment matrix and identification of formative assessments for the strand being taught. These standards-based formative assessments are developed by teachers and include proficiency scales. The weekly grade-level planning meetings for mathematics and literacy include analysis of formative assessment, so all teachers use the assessments. Acuity and DRA2 also are used as formative assessments and for progress monitoring purposes.

Instructional guidance. Results of weekly formative assessments are used to guide instruction based on patterns of proficiency on learning targets and especially in planning lessons, the content of stations, interventions, and enrichment. Planning for interventions and enrichment is new, so teachers are working on this with coaches and teacher leaders. Many teachers use the data to help them determine who needs additional support or to guide their reteaching. Some grade-level teams share student achievement data weekly and discuss implications for the use of various instructional strategies. It was not noted that groups analyze misconceptions though many examine common errors.

Aligned to curriculum map/scope and sequence. The assessments being used are directly aligned to the Core State standards. Teachers and administrators reported that the district curriculum in mathematics is not fully aligned with the Core State standards.

Variety of additional assessments. Many teachers use additional classroom assessments such as informal checks for understanding that address different learning modalities to assess learning. They use a number of informal formative assessments such as spot checks or exit tickets. It was not evident that instructional staff track the results of one type of assessment with others to determine the best way for specific students to demonstrate learning. Some teachers use clickers and reteach as needed.

Ratings in this area will improve to exemplary when data are consistently analyzed by all teachers for misconceptions and common errors and used to develop intervention and acceleration plans for students.

I-16. *Instructional staff actively promote college and career readiness.*

Rating: *Proficient*

Promotion of college and career aspirations. During observations only some teachers actively promoted aspirations for college and/or career and provided information about multiple career

pathways. This was to be expected since none of the observations were done during Cougar Den time, and teachers in early elementary grades are not likely to provide much information about career pathways. In interviews and focus groups, teachers did mention such things as posting college/university banners and referencing “when you go to college,” wearing college t-shirts or college colors on certain days, greeting students as “class of 2024” with an explanation of the significance, emphasizing skills students need for college (e.g., test-taking skills), sharing their own college experience, and holding students accountable for their learning and for books, papers, and so forth. Students in the focus group said teachers promoted going to college, and parents mentioned a fifth-grade field trip to the University of Colorado Boulder as motivation for students to plan for college.

Perseverance. Instructional staff described how every class uses the weekly Cougar Den to work on persistence and resiliency. In interviews, teachers mentioned working with students to believe in themselves and guiding students to be more independent.

Productivity and teamwork skills. In interviews, some instructional staff talked about helping students with time management, organization skills, and accountability skills. These, too, are part of the “work” in the Cougar Den.

To increase this rating, all instructional staff should help parents understand what they can do to promote aspirations for college and career. In addition, teachers should help students become resourceful and provide students with opportunities to develop leadership skills.

I-17. Instructional staff provide specific and timely feedback to students on an ongoing basis and help students to use the feedback to improve their performance.

Rating: Proficient

Specific and timely feedback. According to observations, almost all instructional staff provided specific, timely, and constructive feedback to students on their performance. In focus groups, students reported that feedback was sometimes given as tips, and sometimes more general such as “great job.” Students noted that sometimes feedback was timely, with homework and tests scored and returned within a few days, but other times it took longer to receive feedback.

Help students use feedback. Almost all instructional staff helped students use the feedback they are given to improve their performance. Observations showed instances of teachers talking individually with students about ways they could improve or writing notes on students’ assignments. Students reported that the feedback is useful to help them improve their performance.

Consistency of grading. All instructional staff use standards on which they base their grades, using common definitions of proficiency established for each grade level and content area. No checks have been completed to see if grades correlate with test scores.

To increase this rating, all instructional staff should provide specific, timely, and constructive feedback to all students, and check for understanding to ensure that students can use the feedback for improvement. In addition, instructional staff should encourage students to seek additional feedback when they are unclear about how to improve.

SUPPORT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

S-1. *School leadership develops and communicates a clear, shared vision and mission.*

Rating: *Partially Proficient*

Communication. Crawford Elementary School staff, teachers, and parents appreciate the principal's efforts to change the culture and focus of the school. Teachers and staff have no doubt they are to focus on accelerating student learning by focusing on standards. Discussions center on instructional improvement and student achievement with attention focused on improving mathematics proficiency, which aligns with the school's vision of having all students accelerate their learning. Some staff knew the school's vision statement as it is on the Crawford Elementary School website, and some knew the district's mission of accelerating student learning for every student every day, but not the school's formal mission or vision. There was mention of the school's vision statement being on the website and in staff newsletters.

Implementation. Although staff are not clear about a written mission and vision for the school, they believe most academic decisions are focused on a central idea of improved instruction and student achievement. The focal point of grade-level meetings is student achievement through the dissection of standards, intensive lesson plan design based on the standards, and examination of assessment data collected.

Revision. The school's mission and vision statements have not been revised since the new principal started in the fall of 2013. The principal noted that the school was still using the mission and vision statement created by the previous leadership. The school's 2012-2013 UIP was developed by the school's ILT and is intended to operationalize the mission and vision, although it is not clear that this is being done with fidelity. The leadership team is committed to working with staff to refine the UIP for the 2013-2014 school year. They have started the process of revising the plan at the technical level.

The school will improve its ratings in this area when school leadership, with input from all staff and stakeholders, formally revises the school mission and vision. The mission statement should include a focus on student achievement. This revision should be communicated to the entire school community in a variety of ways to ensure all constituents can articulate the mission and vision and understand the impact on decisions.

S-2. School leadership focuses the entire school community on school improvement.

Rating: *Approaching Exemplary*

Leadership. According to most respondents, the principal provides visible leadership throughout the school improvement process in a systemic way. The School Improvement Team (SIT) serves as an instructional leadership and school improvement planning team and includes grade-level team leaders, special education teachers, specials and English Language Acquisition (ELA) representatives, and the principal and assistant principal. All instructional staff are invited to contribute when the SIT discusses issues, and to provide additional input or feedback. The school improvements have a strong emphasis on professional learning through a one-on-one coaching model, grade-level team collaboration and instructional support, and shared leadership to move students to improve grade-level proficiency. Instruction is based on grade level or higher standards and expectations. Staff are expected to develop expertise in unwrapping standards, intentional planning based on standards, precise standards-based instruction, appropriate summative and formative assessments, and data analysis and evaluation.

Planning. School improvement planning stems from using varied assessments with a schoolwide focus on student learning. Crawford Elementary School's UIP is currently being revised. School data analysis is being conducted by sub-committee members. Goals are set using a variety of data sources with the emphasis on increasing student academic growth. The school relies on benchmark and formative assessments. School leadership clearly believes in data-based decision making, and coaches are working with instructional staff to operationalize data in their instruction.

Implementation and monitoring. School leadership informs all staff of the improvement plan and monitors implementation with the assistance of instructional coaches and instructional leaders. All staff are aware that the focus of the schools improvement plan is to improve instruction and learning with Core State standards. Teachers are monitored closely through team and schoolwide planning. Teachers who are focusing and implementing standards-based instruction well are recognized with an award and "traveling" trophy.

Sustained support. School leadership places a high priority on the improvement process. The school has some of the necessary resources such as collaboration time, instructional leaders, and instructional coaches in both mathematics and literacy. The school also has a refugee coordinator who helps teachers and staff understand the educational and social needs of the refugee population. However, school leadership and instructional staff noted a need for additional resources to reach school improvement goals for many of its refugee students. Instructional staff and leadership also noted the vast array of instructional resources that are available for teachers.

Recognition. The entire school community publicly celebrate both student academic and behavioral successes throughout the year. Academic achievement and growth is rewarded on a

quarterly basis as Roaring Cougars at an all-school assembly and frequently in classrooms. There are academic (TCAP proficiency) and behavior honor rolls posted in the school's main entrance. Individual students or a class are rewarded Cougar Paws when teachers catch them demonstrating good behavior. All individual Cougar Paws are entered into a weekly drawing for prizes. There was little evidence of teacher success being celebrated as a Crawford Elementary School community. Internally, some teachers are recognized weekly for demonstrating characteristics of the school's vision.

Ratings in this area will move to exemplary as school leadership discusses needed revisions to the school improvement plan on a regular basis with all stakeholders, including parents and non-instructional staff. School leadership should provide additional guidance on using the available resources to aid teachers in the school improvement process. Teacher and staff successes should be widely recognized and celebrated.

S-3. School leadership focuses on improving and supporting effective instruction.

Rating: Proficient

Expectations. School leadership routinely communicates expectations that all instructional staff will provide effective standards-based instruction. Professional development and grade-level planning are designed to help staff improve instructional strategies. Crawford Elementary School's instructional staff are required to improve individual instruction as well as work collaboratively with their grade-level team to provide and reinforce effective standards-based instruction. Teachers reported they have had a number of formal and informal monitoring visits.

Policies and procedures. School policies and procedures emphasize the importance of effective instruction, and interviews and focus groups revealed that school leadership consistently follows the policies and procedures. Some staff reported being very clear as to when they were to be observed by coaches or team leaders. School leaders used a standard observation evaluation form for all teachers.

Assignment. School leadership seem to assign all teachers to classes for which they are highly qualified. Last spring, the principal met with teachers individually to assess their strengths and weaknesses and asked for their preferences for assignments. Teachers provided their grade preference. Teachers were also asked if they preferred to loop to the following grade with their class. New teaching staff applied to Crawford Elementary School through the APS website. Potential teachers were asked to provide a number of items including their philosophies of teaching and on closing the achievement gap. They also participated in a rigorous interview process with teachers, school leadership, parents, and students. The previous administration made the final hiring decisions.

To improve ratings in this area, administrators should ensure all staff are appraised of the research on effective instruction. In addition, policies and procedures should be reviewed and

revised routinely to strengthen emphasis and clarify expectations. School leadership should continue to ensure assignments reflect a match between demonstrated abilities, effectiveness, and student needs.

S-4. *School leadership systematically monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of instruction.*

Rating: Exemplary

Monitoring standards-based instruction. Interviews and focus groups revealed that school leadership provides extensive monitoring of the implementation of standards-based instruction. Administrators conduct up to seven formal observations annually using standardized rubrics. Informal observations are supposed to be conducted regularly. Administrators also are part of the weekly, grade-level mathematics planning meetings. Mathematics matrices based on grade-level Core State standards are given to administration two times a month, and proficiency charts are provided to the school leadership quarterly.

Feedback. School leadership regularly provides some constructive feedback to instructional staff about their instructional effectiveness. The principal reported that feedback is provided through observation forms, written notes, e-mails, personal conversations, and grade-level meeting discussions. Following the observations, teachers were sent a copy of the completed observation form. Teachers had up to 48 hours to respond to any suggestions and/or comments from their observation. Assistance is provided to teachers requiring additional help. Teachers have access to the district/school mathematics and literacy coaches who co-teach, co-plan, and model lessons for teachers.

S-5. *School leadership allocates the resources necessary to increase student achievement.*

Rating: Proficient

Budget development. Previous school leadership appeared to have had a comprehensive budgeting process, but the current leadership has little knowledge of the previous administration's budgeting process. Instructional staff reported that while they know the amount of money their grade levels will receive, they are not involved in the budgeting process or allocation of resources. Parents do not appear to be involved in budgeting decisions.

Resource allocation. Interviews and focus groups revealed that school leadership periodically refers to student achievement data in making some resource decisions. The school leadership prioritizes resources that will potentially impact instructional improvement. Instructional staff and leadership noted that there are plenty of instructional and resource materials available in classrooms and the resource room. Teachers felt they were in a resource rich building.

Resource acquisition. School leadership provides limited support for staff in acquiring resources from external sources. Teachers did say there was the possibility of getting materials on loan from another APS school, if needed. Most teachers did not know what mechanisms exist at the school for obtaining outside funding for materials and supplies.

Ratings in this area will improve when administrators have a comprehensive budgeting process that involves staff and parents. All budgetary and resource allocation decisions should be based on analysis of student data and student achievement goals. School leadership should actively assist staff in identifying and acquiring resources from external sources.

S-6. School leadership ensures the effective use of instructional time.

Rating: Proficient

Time allocation. The school's master schedule shows that school leadership consistently allocates a concentrated block of time for each core content area. The amount of time varies slightly by content area. Literacy blocks are 135 minutes (including skills, reading, and writing) and mathematics blocks are generally 85 minutes. Science and social studies instruction ranges from 30 to 45 minutes. Social studies is frequently integrated with literacy. There is a 45-minute block for specials. An additional 45 minute block is allocated to ELD vocabulary and English language. Students also receive 40 minutes for lunch and recess.

Protection of instructional time. Interviews and focus groups revealed that school leadership systematically protects instructional time. Leadership limits the announcements during the day and schedules a minimal number of assemblies. The only noted interruptions were announcements for early pickup of students. The school district requires interruptions such as fire drills that the school has no control over.

Monitoring. School leadership occasionally monitors the use of instructional time through classroom visits. Administrators noted that instructional staff stick closely to the required instructional blocks, and stated that they rarely walk into a classroom where a teacher is teaching anything other than what is scheduled for that content block.

Ratings in this area will improve when school leadership allows no interruptions to instructional time. School leadership should conduct more frequent informal classroom observations to ensure that teachers are continuing to use instructional blocks in an appropriate fashion.

S-7. School leadership ensures that all professional development is focused on improving student achievement.

Rating: Approaching Exemplary

Focus. The school provides professional development based on analysis of student achievement data and on needs identified for the school goals. Some professional

development is suggested or required by the school district. Schoolwide professional development occurs weekly in the professional learning team; grade-level professional development occurs weekly in the professional learning communities and CCLs which are focusing primarily on mathematics development, planning, and instruction. Teachers bring data from their classrooms to their professional learning community meetings and discuss instructional practices with grade-level teams. Many instructional staff indicated that professional development has focused primarily on mathematics this year. Little time is devoted to other areas such as literacy. Exit tickets are used for teachers when they leave professional development.

Differentiated. Differentiated professional development is provided through grade-level teams as well as one-on-one instructional discussions with coaches or the principal/assistant principal based on data from observations. Crawford Elementary School teachers can choose to receive additional professional development assistance from the school's coaches or teacher leaders in areas requiring support. There is limited vertical teaming and professional development in all content areas. Specialists have their own professional development opportunities.

Varied opportunities. School leadership and teachers noted there are few opportunities for outside professional development because of the district budget. The district provides teachers with elementary professional release days to pursue professional development of their own choosing. Few opportunities outside of the district are available to teachers.

Additional supports. School leadership sometimes provides individualized support to instructional staff with specific needs. The instructional coaches are assigned to lower (K-2) elementary and upper (3-5) elementary grade-level teams. Crawford Elementary School's behavior interventionist is also available for support. The interventionist observes classrooms and provides suggestions and feedback around behavior improvement. The refugee coordinator also provides support related to understanding refugees' cultures, traditions, and challenges.

Ratings in this area will improve to exemplary when professional development is expanded in other content areas, such as literacy. In addition, administrators should check to see that additional individualized support is effectively being implemented in the classroom.

S-8. *The school leadership team, teachers, and other instructional staff actively engage families as partners in the school and classrooms.*

Rating: *Approaching Proficient*

Removal of barriers. One of the strengths of the school leadership is commitment to removing barriers to active family involvement at Crawford Elementary School. The school hopes to start a new Parent Teacher Association (PTA) with a membership that represents the school's diversity. The school provides grade-level activities and whole-school activities throughout the school year, some in the morning and some in the evening to accommodate various schedules

of parents. Resources such as babysitting and interpreters are provided for parent-teacher conferences, parent teas, and curriculum nights. Through the community center, there are literacy classes and wrap-around services like the clinic. School newsletters are translated into Spanish regularly and into other languages upon request. Staff reported that parent involvement has been minimal, but they hope to develop strategies for improving involvement.

Parent volunteers. Very few instructional staff have parents who volunteer in their classrooms, help at home with classroom tasks, or accompany classes on field trips. Teachers send out notices to parents about volunteer opportunities, but many parents work more than one job and find it difficult to find time to help at the school. Some parents help with the school's traffic committee and help with the cross-walks before and after school. Also, language differences make it difficult for families and teachers to communicate during volunteer opportunities. Some teachers noted that they were much more likely to get parent volunteers for field trips but noted that parents tended to remain quiet.

Parents feel welcome. Staff and parents reported that most parents feel welcome at the school due to the outstanding efforts of the school leadership. This is a sharp contrast to how parents felt a year ago under former school administrators. The school also provides a number of resources to help native and refugee families. Teachers and the front office staff communicate with parents on a regular basis.

Ratings in this area will improve when all parents feel welcome at the school and the level of parent involvement increases. The school should continue to offer parent activities at different times of the day to accommodate the schedules of working parents. Volunteer activities that parents can do at home should be provided in addition to opportunities to assist at the school. The school should consider recruiting several parent volunteers, including those who speak Spanish and other languages represented at the school, to serve as liaisons to other parents.

S-9. Administrators, teachers, and other instructional staff provide parents with easy and regular access to information about the school and their children's achievement and progress, and provide suggestions for how to help their children increase achievement.

Rating: Partially Proficient

Access to information. The school provides parents with handbooks on district and school policies, sends home monthly newsletters, and includes information for parents on the school website. Materials are available in English and Spanish. Parents also receive telephone calls and e-mails about school activities. Parents commented they can informally stop by the front office for information about the school or their child/children. The school leadership has changed the student arrival and dismissal procedures, so parents have more opportunities to see and talk to teachers. Teachers and parents reported that parents feel welcome to communicate directly with teachers as they are bringing or picking up students at school, as

long as the language barrier is not an issue. Parents appreciate the opportunity to attend teas where they can learn how to help their children be successful in school.

Reports. In general, families receive relatively little information on their children's academic performance. Most instructional staff provide reports on student achievement to parents in the form of regular report cards. Some teachers mentioned sending home a report card supplement that explained the report so parents were better able to understand the information. Parent-teacher conferences are held four times during the school year and most teachers send class folders or newsletters home weekly. Some parents mentioned that their child's teacher informed them that they were not required to meet for a conference if their child was doing well. Teachers also sent home TCAP scores, although the reports are only available in English and can be very difficult to understand. Some parents commented that they only hear from their child's teacher when report cards are distributed, when their child is doing poorly, or when their child is misbehaving. Parents commented that they rarely hear from their child's teacher about enrichment or when their child is doing well.

Ratings in this area will improve when all instructional staff implement policies and procedures that maximize access to information by all parents. Having a common day when weekly folders are sent home is one example of how this could be accomplished. Sharing targeted academic suggestions with parents on how to help their child succeed should help to improve student achievement. All parents should be required to participate in a conference regardless of their child's academic performance to discuss remediation or enrichment.

S-10. Instructional staff actively promote safety and security in the school.

Rating: Proficient

Social-emotional supports. The school has a variety of support staff and programs to assist students and families. Within the school, Crawford Elementary School has PBIS support staff, a behavioral TOSA, a school social worker, and a school psychologist. The social worker and psychologist oversee different school groups that help students develop social skills and empathy. The school also has a family liaison who helps families acclimate to the school.

Anti-bullying. Many staff and parents believe bullying has been a significant problem at Crawford Elementary School. The school has a bullying prevention system which is supervised by the behavior interventionist. When an incidence of bullying takes place, the bully is counseled, required to watch an online video about bullying, and asked to reflect on the behavior. Parents are also called. Some parents and staff have found it to be effective, and many agree that the anti-bullying procedure is much better now than in previous years.

Abide by safety procedures and rules. Crawford has a variety of school practices and procedures to encourage a safe environment. The school uses PBIS which has significantly cut down on incidence of behavior issues and bullying. Individual classrooms use the PBIS color chart behavior system to encourage and monitor student behavior in the classroom. Staff

reward Cougar Paws when they observe students demonstrating good behavior individually or as a class. All individual Cougar Paws are entered into a weekly drawing for prizes. Students routinely use the hug and bubble technique which requires students to cross their arms in a hug formation and make bubbles with their cheeks while walking through the school. The process encourages students to keep their hands to themselves and avoid talking while in the halls. The school regularly practices fire and tornado drills and plans to practice lock down drills in the future. Though they have not practiced it this year, older students are aware of the urgency coding system (red, orange, and yellow). The school has a number of video cameras to monitor all halls and the school's exterior.

Ratings in this area will improve when all instructional staff implement policies and procedures that maximize procedures for creating a safe environment for all student and adults. As a rule, all students should model positive behaviors for their peers. School staff should follow all behavior procedures uniformly. Parents should also play a role in remediation for bullying.

SURVEY DATA

In September 2013, 329 Crawford Elementary School third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade students completed an RMC Research survey that measured student motivation and engagement, school climate and culture, teacher expectations, school safety, and supports for academic achievement. The sample included 104 third graders, 123 fourth graders, and 102 fifth graders. There were 152 girls, 171 boys, and six students who did indicate gender. Students responded to survey items using a scale where 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; and 4 = strongly agree. Students were also able to choose “Don’t Know.”

Exhibit 1 presents students’ ratings of their motivation to learn and engagement in school. Students strongly believe that school is important, that they can do well in school if they want to, and that they like being at school. Most believe that they do well in school; however, they are less inclined to agree that time passes quickly when they are doing schoolwork.

EXHIBIT 1. STUDENTS’ RATINGS OF MOTIVATION TO LEARN AND ENGAGEMENT (N = 329)

	<i>M</i> ¹	<i>SD</i> ²	Percentage of Responses					
			Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Don’t Know	No Answer
I like being at school.	3.40	.74	2.1	6.1	31.6	43.8	7.9	8.5
I am interested in the work at school.	3.26	.82	4.9	5.2	36.7	36.2	9.1	7.9
I do well in school.	3.26	.80	3.0	8.2	31.3	34.7	14.3	8.5
I pay attention in class.	3.18	.81	3.0	11.2	34.1	32.3	9.7	9.7
I think school is important.	3.58	.70	2.4	4.0	22.8	62.0	1.8	7.0
I can do well in school if I want to.	3.24	.98	7.6	9.7	22.2	45.0	7.0	8.5
Time seems to pass quickly when I am doing schoolwork.	2.96	.96	8.2	13.7	31.0	27.1	9.7	10.3
I like schoolwork best when it is hard.	2.93	1.01	10.3	14.6	29.2	29.5	7.0	9.4
I am pretty smart in school.	3.12	.92	5.8	11.2	28.9	31.9	12.8	9.4
What I learn in school is useful for me.	3.41	.80	4.0	5.2	29.5	48.2	4.3	8.8
I am a good student.	3.29	.87	4.3	8.2	26.1	38.9	15.5	7.0

¹ The mean or average value is a measure of central tendency computed by adding a set of values and dividing the sum by the total number of values.

² The standard deviation (*SD*) is a measure of how spread out a set of values is. Higher standard deviations indicate greater variability in data across respondents.

Exhibit 2 presents students’ perceptions about school climate and culture. The majority of students strongly agreed that teachers and the principal care about them and make an effort to get to know them. The majority of students agree to strongly agree with all other school climate and culture items.

EXHIBIT 2. STUDENTS’ RATINGS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE (N = 329)

	Percentage of Responses							
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Don’t Know	No Answer
I feel like I belong at school.	3.36	.87	5.5	5.8	26.7	47.1	7.0	7.9
My school is clean and has an inviting appearance.	3.19	.95	8.2	7.9	29.8	40.4	6.7	7.0
My school has a positive atmosphere.	3.18	.94	6.7	10.3	26.7	39.0	9.1	8.2
The principal cares about the students.	3.57	.74	3.6	2.4	22.5	59.9	6.1	5.5
My teacher cares about the students.	3.60	.73	3.3	3.0	19.5	63.3	3.3	7.6
My teachers make an effort to know me and my interests.	3.47	.80	4.6	2.4	25.5	51.4	8.8	7.3

Students’ perceptions of teacher expectations for learning are presented in Exhibit 3. Students were in agreement with all four expectation items with the highest level of agreement for *my teachers believe that I can learn and be successful* and *my teachers are willing to help me if I need help*.

EXHIBIT 3. STUDENTS' RATINGS OF TEACHER EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS (N = 329)

	Percentage of Responses							
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Don't Know	No Answer
My teachers believe that I can learn and be successful.	3.58	.74	3.3	3.0	20.7	61.4	5.2	6.4
My teachers push us to think hard about things we read	3.37	.90	6.4	5.5	23.4	49.2	8.8	6.7
My teachers are willing to help me if I need help.	3.53	.74	3.0	4.0	25.2	58.0	4.0	5.8
My teachers accept nothing else than our full effort.	3.46	.82	4.6	4.6	23.4	53.4	7.6	6.4

Students also rated items measuring their perceptions of feeling safe and respected. As shown in Exhibit 4, 76.5% of students reported that classroom rules must be followed and 72.3% feel safe at their school. However, 35.3% of the students believe school rules are not actually followed and 34.1% say students do not treat each other nicely. These responses demonstrate that safety and behavior are a concern that should be addressed.

EXHIBIT 4. STUDENTS' RATINGS OF FEELING SAFE AND RESPECTED (N = 329)

	Percentage of Responses							
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Don't Know	No Answer
I feel safe at my school.	3.33	.90	6.4	6.1	25.8	46.5	7.0	8.2
I feel safe on the school playground.	3.00	.97	9.4	10.9	33.2	29.5	8.2	8.8
The students in my class treat each other nicely.	2.70	1.04	12.8	21.3	24.3	22.5	9.7	9.4
The students in my class show respect to other students who are different.	2.96	1.03	10.0	14.9	25.2	31.7	10.0	8.2
I am happy with the way the students in my class treat me.	3.02	1.00	8.8	13.4	27.4	32.8	9.4	8.2
Students at my school follow the school rules.	2.58	.99	13.1	22.2	26.7	15.5	12.5	10.0
The students in my class behave the way my teachers want them to behave.	2.72	1.04	12.2	17.0	25.5	20.4	14.0	10.9
Rules in my class must always be followed.	3.46	.84	4.9	4.9	22.2	54.3	4.6	9.1

When asked about supports for academic achievement, the majority of students agreed with all statements, as shown in Exhibit 5. Responses demonstrate that teachers use small group instruction, teacher help is readily available, students understand what to do to receive a rating of proficient, feedback is often provided, teachers get students excited about learning, and teachers are able to maintain student interest in assignments. However, 31.9% of students reported a lack of computers in the classroom and 28.3% of students do not receive differentiated instruction.

EXHIBIT 5. STUDENTS' RATINGS OF SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT (N = 329)

	Percentage of Responses							
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	Don't Know	No Answer
There are computers in my classroom that I can use for school work.	2.85	1.14	16.7	15.2	21.6	34.9	5.2	6.4
My teacher sometimes places us in small groups to work together on an assignment.	3.31	.89	6.7	5.8	29.8	47.0	4.3	6.4
My teacher gives the students in my class different assignments.	2.88	1.09	13.1	15.2	23.7	31.6	9.7	6.7
I know what I am going to learn at school on any given day.	3.10	.98	8.2	10.0	27.4	34.7	10.9	8.8
My teacher and school provide help to students when we need the help.	3.50	.79	4.3	3.0	23.1	53.2	6.4	10.0
My teacher gives the students who finish the task quickly extra work.	2.95	1.06	12.8	8.8	28.0	30.4	10.9	9.1
My teacher gives me feedback on assignments that helps me understand what I need to change.	3.48	.79	4.0	3.3	24.6	50.8	8.8	8.5
I know what I need to do on an assignment to get a rating of proficient.	3.45	.80	4.3	4.0	25.5	50.7	7.0	8.5
My teacher gets me excited about learning.	3.36	.92	7.0	4.9	23.7	49.8	6.7	7.9
My teacher keeps all of the students in my class interested in the assignment.	3.31	.86	5.8	4.3	32.2	41.3	7.9	8.5
My teacher gives assignments that connect to my interests and life outside school.	3.26	.96	7.6	5.8	24.0	41.3	14.9	6.4