The Learning Collective

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www.thelearningcollective.net

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OVERVIEW

The Learning Collective (TLC) proposes to conduct a review of TEACH Preparatory Elementary Mildred S. Cunningham & Edith H. Morris Elementary School (Teach PS) as required by the Public Charter Schools Grant Program.

WHY THE LEARNING COLLECTIVE

TLC is the right organization to lead the external review. TLC has conducted over 60 PCSGP external reviews. Adam Aberman would likely conduct the review though Dr. Hillary Johnson may conduct the review based on the scheduled dates. Adam Aberman and Dr. Hillary Johnson have led many PCSGP external reviews.

Adam is the CEO and Founder of The Learning Collective. Adam has profound content expertise in technology-based innovation and a 20-year track record educating young people in numerous venues from traditional public schools to school district administration trainings. Over the past 15 years, Adam has assessed over 200 current, and 50 proposed, charter schools nationally (California, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York and Washington), including lead writer for charter renewal inspection visits, charged with evaluating the school and writing the report that is submitted to authorizers. Many of the charter schools with which Adam works are new schools. During every school visit, Adam evaluates the effectiveness of charter schools on a wide range of issues. The range of issues includes schools' use of assessment data, curricular development and alignment with the Common Core, instructional leadership and staff evaluations, classroom instruction, professional development, board governance, parental involvement and school finances. Other TLC clients have included Alliance College-Ready Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, Citizen of the World Charter Schools, College Board, Inglewood Unified School District, KIPP, Tiger Woods Foundation and UCLA.

Previously, Adam was the Director of Global Digital Strategy for Ashoka's Youth Venture, which helps teams of youth and their mentors in 20 countries launch socially responsible businesses and organizations. Prior to Ashoka, Adam was the Executive Director and Founder of www.icouldbe.org, the non-profit Internet-based career mentoring program that has served over 20,000 students and volunteers nationwide AND partnered with approximately 200 schools and classroom teachers. Prior to icouldbe.org and beginning in 1999, Adam was Regional Coordinator at the New York City Board of Education, where he designed and implemented over thirty workshops, trainings and school reviews for teachers, principals and superintendents while playing an integral role in developing the citywide school self-assessment guide and five-day internal school review process. Adam began his career in education as a public school teacher in Los Angeles. Adam received a B.A. from

Vassar College and Master in Public Policy, with an emphasis on Education, from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

DR. HILLARY JOHNSON

Dr. Johnson is a committed educator who began her career in education over 20 years ago via Teach For America as a Spanish-bilingual and Reading Recovery teacher. Most recently, Dr. Johnson served as the Chief Academic Officer/Chief Learning Officer for Citizens of the World Charter Schools, a national network of intentionally diverse charter schools. As the founding CAO, she crafted a compelling and inspiring academic vision while strengthening the network's capacity for organizational learning. Following the start-up phase, she founded the Chief Learning Officer role, with a focus on teaching for understanding, social emotional learning and cultivation of a learning organization. Dr. Johnson has assessed over 40 current and proposed schools nationally (in California, Louisiana, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania), including participating on many SUNY school visit renewal teams. She has evaluated the effectiveness of schools on issues including schools' use of assessment data, curricular development and alignment, instructional leadership, classroom instruction, professional development, governance and parental involvement. Dr. Johnson earned her doctorate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education as a member of its Urban Superintendents Program.

EXTERNAL REVIEW

In order to meet the external requirement for California Department of Education's Public Charter Schools Grant Program, TLC will:

1. Conduct a 2.5-day review of the school. The first two days include classroom observations conducted with the school's instructional leader, school stakeholder interviews and document reviews. On the third morning, TLC facilitates a prioritization session in which key school staff members, based on the findings of the visit, identify priority areas and action steps. (See Appendix II for examples of two prioritization sessions)
2. Within one week after the end of the review, TLC sends a brief report on the visit findings, prioritization session and other important considerations to Teach PS.

PRICE: $4,675

TESTIMONIALS & REFERENCES

From 2015–2020, TLC conducted PCSGP external reviews of the following schools:

- Allegiance STEAM (Chino)
- Arts in Action (L.A.)
- Aspen (Fresno)
- Beacon (National City)
- Bright Star (L.A. – 4 schools)
- California Collegiate (L.A.)
- Castlemont (Oakland)
- CCCS (Homeschool – 5 schools)
- City Language Immersion (L.A.)
- Clarion (L.A.)
- Community Montessori (Escondido)
- CPMX-LMSV (La Mesa)
- Crete Academy (L.A.)
- Elevate (San Diego)
- Empowering Possibilities International (Sacramento)
- Excelencia (L.A.)
- Francophone (San Francisco)
- Gabriella 2 (L.A.)
- Gateway International (Sacramento)
- GOALS (Anaheim)
- Golden Valley (Folsom)
- Growth Public Schools (Sacramento)
- Hayward Collegiate (Hayward)
- Highland Academy (Beaumont)
- JLPAA (Lake Elsinore)
- John Adams (Lincoln)
- John Adams (El Dorado Hills)
- Kairos (Vacaville)
- Kepler Neighborhood (Fresno)
- L.A. Promise (L.A. – 2 schools)
- LBDS (L.A.)
- Libertas College Prep (L.A.)
- Los Feliz Middle Arts (L.A.)
- Metro Charter (L.A.)
- New School (San Francisco)
- One Purpose (San Francisco)
- Palm Lane (Anaheim)
- PCA (Redding)
- Perseverance Prep (San Jose)
- Prepa Tec (L.A.)
- PUC (L.A. – 2 schools)
- Rising Sun (El Dorado Hills)
- Roses in Concrete (Oakland)
- Scholarship Prep (Oceanside)
- Scholarship Prep (Santa Ana)
- Sherman Thomas (Madera)
- Soleil (Lynwood)
- Summit Prep (L.A.)
- Sycamore (Chino Hills)
- Temecula International (Temecula)
- U Prep (L.A.)
- Vista Condor (Santa Ana)
- Vista Horizon (L.A.)
- Voices (San Jose – 2 schools)
- WISH (L.A. – 2 schools)
- Wonderful (Delano)

Here is a link to video testimonials from principals at those schools: http://bit.ly/1LGvkwy

Also, please feel free to contact these references regarding Adam's national work with charter schools:

Jeff Wasbes
Executive Deputy Director for Accountability
Charter Schools Institute, State University of New York
518-445-4250
Jeffrey.Wasbes@SUNY.edu

Note: Jeff, as a statewide authorizer of charter schools, oversees the evaluations of charter schools across the state of New York. Over the past sixteen years, Adam has conducted dozens of charter school reviews with Jeff and his colleagues.

Heather Wendling
Director of Learning & Knowledge Management
National Association of Charter School Authorizers
518.598.5043
HeatherW@QualityCharters.org
Note: Heather works with charter school authorizers across the country to improve their practices. Adam has collaborated with Heather on several authorizer and external review improvement projects.

CONTACT

Adam Aberman
CEO
The Learning Collective
323.806.9378
adam@thelearningcollective.net

Thank you for considering partnering with The Learning Collective!

Adam Aberman
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adam@thelearningcollective.net

qualifications   Entrepreneur in civic and for-profit sectors. Deep content expertise in charter schools and technology-based innovation. Twenty-year track record educating young people in numerous venues from after-school programs to school district administrations. Extensive experience managing staff, volunteers and board members in dispersed physical locations nationally and globally.

experience   **The Learning Collective Inc.**
CEO & Founder, 2003-present
Education consulting company focused on strategic planning and evaluation solutions. Visit
www.thelearningcollective.net

- Charter School Evaluation – Over the past fifteen years, evaluated over two hundred current, and one hundred proposed, brick-and-mortar and blended charter schools for Chicago Public Schools' Office of New Schools, Denver Public Schools, Education Achievement Authority – State of Michigan, Indiana Charter School Board, Nevada Public Charter School Authority, New Jersey Department of Education Charter School Office, State University of New York's Charter School Institute, Washington State Commission on Charter Schools and local authorizers in California, Louisiana and Minnesota. Includes team lead for: charter renewal inspection visits, charged with evaluating the school and writing the report that is ultimately submitted to authorizers' trustees; evaluating new school applications and running capacity interviews; and evaluating charter school authorizers in Minnesota and Ohio. Assess the effectiveness of charter schools on issues including schools' use of assessment data, curricular development and alignment, instructional leadership, classroom instruction, professional development, board governance, financial health and parent & community involvement.
- Parent Trigger Consulting – Served as primary education expert for Parent Revolution, the organization behind the groundbreaking parent trigger work. Advised the first two groups of parents in the country to enact trigger school reform in which the majority of parents at a failing school sign a petition to demand significant change at their school.
- Blended Learning Planning – Developed new school models to meet the needs of the most at-risk students citywide through the auspices of Chicago Public Schools' Office of Innovation and Incubation. Created and implemented first of its kind tool, funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, for E.L. Haynes Charter School and other leading charter schools, to evaluate eight blended learning programs. Also funded by Carnegie Corporation, designed process for schools to decide when and how to implement blended learning as well as a rubric for vetting commercial online learning products. Determined whether blended learning is an instructional direction independent school Berkeley Hall should pursue.
- Non-Profit E-Learning Strategy – Conceived online game for Girl Scouts of the USA. Developed online national PD model for College Board. Consulted Ketchum on online education trends. Oversaw digital strategies at Break the Cycle, teen domestic violence prevention organization. Designed e-learning system for CNYD, a youth intermediary organization.
- Fundraising & Marketing – Developed and presented professional development workshops to charter school leaders thru New Leaders for New Schools Bay Area.
- Educational Program Design – Developed an educational framework and evaluated educational vendors for the Tiger Woods Learning Center.
- Global Leadership – Manage a team of consultants in four cities and two continents.
- Results – Deliver value added digital and analogue learning direction to local, national and international efforts.

El Segundo Education Foundation
Executive Director, 2010-2011
Organization focused on providing financial support, drawing from large corporate base, to El Segundo public schools.

- Change Driver – Hired as foundation's first chief executive officer to lead the organization's strategy and growth.
- Community Building – Significantly improved relations with local residents and corporate partners. Ultimately recruited to be Chamber of Commerce Board Member in city with second highest concentration of Fortune 500 Companies in California.
- Rebranding – Developed and implemented new and increased branding campaign including new logo, digital efforts and physical presence.
- Board Development – Leading restructuring and streamlining of inherited Board of Directors of 30 Members.
- Results – In first ten months increased gross income by 20%. When left, was on track in second year to increase gross income another 75% to $1.5MM, including unprecedented $250K corporate grant, enabling $750K grant support to reach all students in school district.

Ashoka's Youth Venture
Director of Global Digital Strategy, 2006-2009
NGO grantmaker building a global movement of young social entrepreneurs by inspiring and investing in teams of young people to design and launch their own sustainable community-minded ventures in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and South America.

- Change Driver – Expanded organization's digital footprint from simple, single country website to include a multi-lingual online community, international texting campaign, virtual world project, online game and e-learning experience. In the process doubled the budget for digital initiatives and raised $750K in 2008.
- Global Leadership – Managed staff in three cities. Spearheaded effort among colleagues in twelve countries to coalesce offline and online programs.
- Niche Social Networking – Created and directed multi-lingual site that empowers youth to launch socially responsible organizations and businesses. Recruited over 8,000 members from 100 countries.
- Marketing – Developed and oversaw text messaging campaigns in five countries. Generated 150,000 online and text votes for Best Buy funded campaign.
- Virtual World Expertise – Led experimental projects in virtual worlds Teen Second Life and Whyville. Objective was to examine whether youth-led social change can be effected thru avatar-based virtual environments. Raised over $400K for 18-month endeavor.
- Digital Game & E-Learning Development – Designed Facebook game and robust e-learning experience to engage large numbers of youth and university students globally in social entrepreneurship themes. Secured $500K federal e-learning grant.
- Results – Championed Youth Venture's and Ashoka's embrace of digital efforts.

icouldbe.org inc.
Board Member Emeritus; Executive Director & Founder, 2000-2006
Mentors the next generation through the Internet. Award-winning 501(c)3 blended learning non-profit that steers underserved teens toward careers they never imagined and toward their futures by linking teens electronically to mentors in a range of careers.

- Change Driver – With no external support or seed funding, created the dot-org e-mentoring community and blended learning platform at a time when commercial and mission-based online communities and nonprofits were rare. Trail blazed low-cost e-volunteer programs at multinational corporations.
- National Reach – Organization has served over 25,000 youths and e-volunteers in fifty states and two countries. See www.icouldbe.org
- Partnership Experience – Led and executed large-scale partnerships with E*Trade Bank, Goldman Sachs, Office Depot, Tiger Woods Learning Center, MTV and 100 schools. E*Trade Bank alone has sponsored hundreds of students in over a dozen cities and renewed its annual partnership with icouldbe.org since 2004.
- Earned Income – Since organization's inception schools and after-school programs pay per student fee to access the program.
- E-Learning – Developed unique online learning platform including training & curriculum. Youth and e-mentors engage in asynchronous project-based learning with multiple participants.
- Board Development – Recruited and managed twelve top corporate, academic and non-profit professionals from Accenture, CBS News, JPMorgan Chase, Harvard and others.
- Leadership – Managed six staff and oversaw management of thousands of volunteers.
- Fundraising – Raised over $1.25M and left chosen successor with $500K annual budget.
- Results – Despite substantial resistance from mentoring and educational communities played a key role in gaining acceptance for the field of e-mentoring and blended learning.

New York City Board of Education
Regional Coordinator, Office of School Planning & Accountability (OSPA), 1999-2000
Country's largest school district serving over 1.1 million students.

- Professional Development – Designed and implemented over thirty workshops, trainings and school reviews for teachers, principals and superintendents.
- Assessment – Played integral role in developing citywide school self-assessment guide and five-day internal school review process.
- Results – Helped school and district leaders throughout Brooklyn, serving thousands of students, use quantitative and qualitative methods to better inform instruction.

Los Angeles Unified School District
Bilingual Spanish Teacher, Cahuenga Elementary, 1995-1997
School district's largest primary school in the country's second largest school district.

- Teaching – Instructed sixty inner-city children in a fully Spanish-immersed classroom; taught all core academic subjects in Spanish.
- Leadership – Appointed to school leadership team.
- Results – Directly impacted the lives of students and their families.

education

Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government
Master of Public Policy with a focus on Education, Graduated 1999
Included coursework at Harvard's Schools of Business, Education and Law, 1997-1999

Vassar College
Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology, Minor in International Economics, Graduated 1994

selected non-profit and government consulting

- **Massachusetts House of Representatives, Committee on Education**, 1998-1999. Helped research & draft bills.
- **Roxbury Preparatory Charter School** (Boston), 1998-1999. Co-created long-term strategic plan and helped Director navigate the planning year prior to school opening.
- **Harvard Business School**, 1998. Through Volunteer Management Consulting program, created marketing plan for a women's center.
- **Los Angeles Educational Partnership**, 1998. Supported community relations, marketing and development of five-year business plan.
- **College Kids, Inc.** (San Francisco), 1994-1995. Helped develop curriculum, family resource guide and fundraising events.
- **Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute** (Visiting Researcher, Panamá), 1993. Created economic feasibility model to sell medicinal plants to sustain Native American forests and populations. Apprenticed medicine men and resided in forest villages.

partnership and deal experience

- Parsons New School provided one dozen consultants to develop digital game
- Selected above 92% of university applicants for multi-year federal social media funding
- Persuaded Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to fund Teen Second Life initiative
- E*trade employees (300) e-mentor E*Trade-sponsored teens in 15 U.S. cities; 10% of E*Trade workforce volunteers through icouldbe.org (double industry standard)
- Partnered with Goldman Sachs and Office Depot to e-mentor teens
- Tiger Woods Learning Center relied on icouldbe.org for career education
- thinkMTV.com featured e-mentoring opportunities through icouldbe.org
- Support of one of East Coast's most prominent philanthropists
- Canadian company donated $10,000's of technology services to launch icouldbe.org

conferences and presentations

- Panel Moderator, Independent Charter School Symposium, 2017
- Invitational Speaker, California Charter School Conference, 2013, 2014 & 2016
- Invitational Speaker, Online Ed Symposium of Independent Schools, 2013 & 2014
- Invitational Speaker, TechEd Conference, 2010
- Panelist, Volunteer Manager Conference, 2009
- Invitational Speaker, YPulse Youth Marketing Mashup, 2009
- Keynote Speaker, Volunteer Manager Conference, 2008
- Invitational Speaker, Virtual Worlds and Health Conference, 2008
- Invitational Speaker, Pepperdine Social Entrepreneurism Conference, 2007
- Panelist, Second Life Convention, 2007
- Featured Speaker, Vassar College Convocation, 2005
- Panelist, Tiger Woods Learning Center Educational Symposium, 2005
- Invitational Speaker, California Partnership Academy Conferences, 2004 & 2005
- Participated in National Mentoring Partnership invitational committees: Public Policy Council, Training Advisory Council & E-Mentoring Steering Committee, 2001-2006
- Invitational Speaker, National Academy Foundation Conference, 2002
- Invitational Speaker, National Mentor Summit, 2001
- Invitational Speaker, 4th World Academic Conference on Human Ecology, 1993

awards, honors and publications

- Cause Marketing Silver Halo Award for Best Use of Social Media, 2009
- International Computerworld Magazine Honors Finalist Award, 2002
- National media attention including articles in Reader's Digest, Business Week, etc.
- Vassar Honors in Anthropology ('94) and Graduate Study Fellowship ('97-'98)

hobbies   Travel throughout Africa, Europe, Latin America and Asia, including six-week solo mountain-biking trek across Thailand and an around-the-world crossing
Completed 1996 and 1997 City of Los Angeles Marathons
Speaking Spanish (highly proficient), basketball and quality time with wife and two kids

TLC The Learning Collective

APPENDIX II: SAMPLE TLC REPORT

The following is an example of a school report, written by Adam Aberman of The Learning Collective, in which there was an end-of-visit prioritization session. The school's name and other identifying information have been stricken from the report. Also included is an additional example of a prioritization session with another school. The PCSGP report will differ somewhat from this sample.

Teaching and Learning

Strengths

The school's curricula are aligned to state standards and across grade levels.

- The school's curricula are aligned to state standards. Teachers reported that SCHOOL Y examines all of the performance indicators of all state standards, and the frequency with which those performance indicators are included in state standardized assessments. Teachers stated the school develops the scope and sequence to address standards and skills based on that frequency analysis. Through document review the site visit team noted that the school's scope and sequence documents reference state standards and when the various performance indicators are to be taught. The academic dean reported that she collaborates with teachers to ensure the curricula are tied to state standards.

- Curricula are aligned across grade levels. The academic dean reported that she examines teachers' scope and sequence to, in part, ensure alignment across grades. Relatedly, ELA and math teachers reported feeling sufficiently supported by the academic dean, as well as by the math and ELA specialists, in their curricular development. Teachers stated that expectations for writing are scaffolded across grade levels to ensure increasingly higher levels of student independence with writing. In fact, teachers reported, and school documents indicated, that all teachers at all grade levels are collaborating this year to enhance students' vocabulary. However, teachers asserted there is no formal vehicle to holistically review and evaluate the curricula.

The school's staff demonstrates high levels of alignment around planning, lesson materials and lesson structure.

- Instructional planning and lesson materials are consistent across classrooms. Document review demonstrated use of a common scope and sequence format including daily objectives connected to state standards. A common instructional planning format is also reflected in the uniform structure in which all teachers formulate classroom packets. The structure for each daily packet, as detailed in documentation provided to teachers, follows this order: an introductory "Do Now" activity to ensure students are working upon entering the classroom; a "Mini Lesson" with guided practice from the teacher; student independent practice; an "Objective Based Activity" designed to be rooted in and supportive of the lesson's objective; and a culminating "Exit Ticket," which teachers collect to determine the level of students' mastery of the lesson's objective. Notably, in focus groups students were able to articulate all elements of a classroom packet. Classroom

packets are in lieu of lesson plans; the school has made a decision not to utilize traditional lesson or unit plans to guide instruction

- The implemented lesson structure is consistent across classrooms. The site visit team observed that teachers, when conducting a lesson, faithfully followed the structure, and relied on the materials, detailed in the classroom packet. For example, observed lessons consistently began with Do Now activities and ended with an Exit Ticket. Also, teachers clearly posted the lesson's objective in 78% of the observed classrooms (n=23). Additionally, teachers posted an agenda in 74% of observed lessons. Additionally, the site visit team observed a consistent approach to transitions across classrooms; namely, teachers in multiple classrooms utilized timers and countdowns to inform students of the time-bound nature of activities. In fact, in 78% of observed classrooms, teachers spent 10% or less of their instructional time on transitions.

The school has a clear plan, consistently implemented in classrooms, to manage and promote positive student behavior.

- The school's behavioral expectations are clearly communicated and the discipline policy is understood by staff and students. The site visit team observed that student rules, expectations, hand signals, and explanations of SLANT (sit up straight, listen, ask and answer questions, nod if you understand, and track the teacher) were all prominently posted in classrooms. School documents indicated a clear and thorough student code of conduct. Teachers and school leaders reported that the school's Paycheck system is clearly understood by students.

- There is a positive and effective incentive program in place. As aforementioned, SCHOOL Y is marked by a culture of earning in which students understand and know that their positive actions and good choices will be rewarded with opportunities to acquire "Ganas" dollars and participate in some of the activities on the "fun calendar." Ganas dollars refer to the award of additional Paycheck "dollars" (which function like points) resulting from positive behaviors such as "going above and beyond" and performing weekly jobs at the school. Additionally, students reported feeling overwhelmingly safe at SCHOOL Y.

Areas for Growth	Recommendations
Instruction is not consistently rigorous, engaging, or responsive to student needs. - Instruction is not consistently rigorous. Reflecting the school leaders' assertion that few teachers are providing outstanding instruction to their students, teachers' questioning and activities generally did not promote development of students' higher-order thinking skills. In observed lessons where questions were posed to students, the majority involved recall and comprehension of factual material, such as "What [events] caused the war?" and "Is the character [of a	**Provide more opportunities for teachers to deliver rigorous, engaging and differentiated instruction.** - Consider developing higher-order thinking skills as a professional development focus for an entire year, with monthly themes focused on sub-themes such as teacher questioning techniques, expository writing, collaborative grouping, etc.

story] up to something bad?" Higher-order questions could lead to dialogue between students and the teacher regarding deeper meaning of the material. However, in practice, such rich dialogue or critical thinking was present in few observed classrooms. In just 30% of observed classrooms teachers' questions or activities required students to apply their learning to new situations. Solid evidence of students' being asked to compare, contrast or deconstruct was present in just 17% of observed classrooms., and teachers in just 17% of observed classrooms required students to synthesize, defend or critique the material Students were not observed conducting extended writing assignments; even eighth graders were observed primarily involved in worksheet-based activities. Notably, teachers reported essay-writing is an area in which the school could improve its practices. The lack of rigor is reflected in the low percentage of students achieving at the highest level (4) on state assessments. Specifically, on the 2010–11 state assessments, no grade level had greater than 2.1% of its students score Level 4 on the ELA test (5th grade = 1.6%; 6th = 2.1%; 7th = 0%; 8th = 0%) and only one grade level had significantly more than 10% of its students score Level 4 or higher in math (5th grade = 3.1%; 6th = 7.4%; 7th = 27.9%; 8th = 7.7%). On the 2009–2010 state assessments, the percentage of 5th through 8th graders that scored a Level 4 on ELA was 3.6% and on math 15.7%.

- Instruction is not consistently engaging. Despite school documents indicating that the professional development focus in March was to increase student dialogue in the classroom, in only 26% of observed classrooms students engaged in providing feedback that was academically focused to their peers while student small group or paired learning was observed in just 17% of classrooms. Classrooms were generally characterized by one-way, teacher-dominated dialogue, led from the front of the classroom. Additionally, when teachers circulated throughout the classroom during independent student work, the majority of the interactions were of a brief nature and directed from the teacher to the student. Finally, in 48% of observed classrooms, 20% or more of students were not complying with the lesson's directions

Examine Jon Saphier's *Skillful Teacher* for pedagogical training ideas.

- Develop school-wide criteria for rigor, with clear targets thereof, and tie student, teacher and school evaluations to those measurable targets.

- Encourage teachers to reduce their reliance on worksheet materials for class work.

- Establish peer-to-peer classroom observation protocols to focus exclusively on rigor and promotion of higher order thinking.

- Consider supplementing current planning practices with a document, perhaps based on Achievement First's teacher rubric norming sessions, that intentionally structures teacher actions in addition to student actions. This could include asking teachers to plan out higher order thinking questions or other checks for understanding.

- Utilize Network resources. Specifically, attend a Caleb Dolan session regarding questioning. Also, consider Jason Singer, from King Collegiate, conducting some professional development regarding critical thinking.

or working on intended activities; instead, those non-compliant students were observed conducting non-academic activities such as reading a comic book, sleeping or socializing.

- Instruction is not consistently responsive to student needs. There was little to no evidence that classroom packets were differentiated or modified to meet specific and varied student needs. In fact, when teachers were asked in focus groups how they and the school meet the needs of high achieving students, teachers reported that those students were expected to glean greater learning from the same material that was presented to all students. Teachers acknowledged that there are few ways to support enrichment activities for advanced students at SCHOOL Y. Further, in none of the observed classrooms was the learning objective differentiated for all student groups. In just 17% of the observed classrooms did teachers differentiate instructional strategies such as students in a math class engaged in kinesthetic learning through physically modeling angles. In just one classroom, of the twenty-three observed classrooms (just 4% of observed classrooms), were students observed participating in tiered activities based on their academic needs or expected to produce differentiated classroom products (as was observed in a science class in which students were asked to conduct a combination of writing, labeling and illustrating to demonstrate their understanding of cell organelles). In the majority of classes, all students conducted the same learning processes, activities and assessments.

Leadership

Strengths
Stakeholders share an understanding of, and commitment to, the mission, vision and values of the school. • Stakeholders can articulate the mission, vision and core values. As described in school documents, School Y's (SCHOOL Y) mission statement is: "Every SCHOOL Y student will acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and character habits necessary to succeed in high school, college and beyond." Across teacher, parent and student interviews, stakeholders referenced the school's mission and its focus on students' acceptance to, and success in and through, college.

In interviews teachers also accurately enumerated the school's "Cornerstone Values" of "Choose" (make good choices), "Improve" (improve academically and personally), "Respect" (speak and act respectfully) and "Support" (students support each other) and the focus on a particular value at a specific grade level. In focus groups, students highlighted that SCHOOL Y is a college preparatory school.

- Stakeholders believe in the mission, vision and values. Teachers reported that one of the school's greatest strengths is its alignment with, and commitment to, the mission. The school leader demonstrates a passion for the school's mission and values through his consistent reference to "everything being about the kids" and his significant efforts and long work hours (which at times includes sleeping at the office due to long work days) to provide a high quality education. Notably, teachers and board members believe in the school's mission, and execution thereof, to such a great degree that some have opted to send their own children to SCHOOL Y.

School leadership sets clear expectations for all stakeholders and mobilizes staff to work toward school success.

- School leadership has established clear expectations for the school and its stakeholders. Teachers reported that all stakeholders are clearly aware of the school's academic standards , as described in the school's academic handbooks. Namely, students must score 70% or higher in core subjects (ELA, math, social studies and science) to pass each of the five Intervals (marking periods). According to school leaders and review of school documents, the school steadfastly incorporates a "logic model" for performance management, which provides stakeholders with a clearly delineated path to student success. This path to success is represented by a sequence of events that includes resources and inputs (both academic and cultural) that, when combined with clearly articulated and specified activities, will result in intended outputs and outcomes (i.e. high student achievement). The school's consistent practice of utilizing objective outputs and outcomes to measure success is reflected throughout the school, including teacher evaluations. Teachers and school leaders reported , and school documents confirmed, that teachers are evaluated exclusively on their students' performance on three types of assessments: interim assessments, NYS standardized tests and Terra Nova exams. These same outcomes are also used to determine student readiness for promotion, and school leaders and teachers confirmed the school's stated policy of using internal assessment scores, New York State (NYS) standardized assessment results, and Terra Noval exams to determine whether a student is ready to advance to the next grade level. Families are kept informed of student performance in these and other areas, and school leaders reported that the school's focus on collecting and disseminating data, including numbers of days missed by students and number of incomplete homework assignments, clearly and objectively informs conversations with parents around student expectations. Finally, every Friday the school publishes a "Dashboard" with academic performance, Paycheck averages (Paychecks represent the school's system to track the accumulation of individual students' behavioral infractions and positive actions), attendance rates and other data for each homeroom.

- School leadership has established a culture of trust and openness at the school. Teachers reported their greatest assets are their colleagues and that they can, and often do, depend on their colleagues for support. Additionally, teachers in focus groups reported that the school

The Learning Collective

leader provides transparent, direct feedback to teachers. Teachers stated that the school leader's feedback is professional and that they appreciate his directness.

The school leader prioritizes teaching, learning and student success.

- School leadership shifts resources to center on teaching and learning. Teachers reported that leadership is effective at minimizing teachers' non-instructional responsibilities. For example, in an effort to reduce teachers' data entry responsibilities, the school leader created a new staff position responsible for most of the school's data entry, including the task of entering students' grades into gradebooks. In fact, the school leader reported one of his primary responsibilities is to "keep external things out of the way of teachers so they can focus on teaching." Additionally, the school leader supports academic needs identified by teachers, such as purchasing eInstruction Mobi™ mobile interactive whiteboards.

- At SCHOOL Y, there is shared language regarding the importance of student success. In several conversations with the site visit team, the school leader reiterated that his decisions and actions are consistently based on students' needs. In teacher focus groups, a common refrain was that it is a teacher's responsibility to "do whatever it takes" to help ensure student success. As noted above, teachers and school leaders consistently articulated a philosophy of everything being about the students and what was best for them, with this as the primary focus of all school initiatives and decisions.

Data informs instructional decision-making and directs staff evaluation.

- School staff use student achievement data to inform student academic interventions. In focus groups, teachers reported that analysis of student achievement data, including exit tickets and internal assessments, inform a wide array of instructional remediations such as tutoring and lesson re-teaching. A review of student work packets collected as samples during site visit team observations indicated the presence of such exit tickets. School leaders reported the school's data analyst disaggregates data for teachers so that teachers can focus their efforts on analysis, rather than generation, of data.

- School staff use data to set goals and evaluate progress towards goals. Counselors reported that an analysis of students' Paycheck performance is used to determine which twenty students will meet intensively with the counselor. In turn, the counselor's performance is evaluated based on the Paycheck average of those twenty students and on whether the number of students in the "homework club" has declined. The parent & community liaison reported her evaluation is based on enrollment and attendance data. The Through College (KTC Coordinator) reported that she is evaluated, in part, based on the number of high school acceptances and on the amount of total scholarship funds received by outgoing SCHOOL Y students (as compared with previous years). As described above, classroom teachers' evaluations, as reported by teachers and confirmed in the documents, are entirely data-driven, resting solely on student performance as measured by internal assessments, NYS tests, and Terra Nova exam results. Additionally, the school leader reported the board of directors evaluates him based on student achievement, including performance on interim assessments.

School leadership and staff maintain clear, effective communications with stakeholders.

- The school regularly and clearly shares information about school goals and performance with stakeholders. As reported by school leaders and as evidenced in board meeting agendas, the school leader provides the board of directors with monthly, detailed reports on progress toward goals. School leaders also reported that parents regularly receive data on student performance, particularly attendance, completed homework, and assessments scores. Notably, teachers reported knowing which school leader to approach for which matter. Specifically, teachers stated approaching: the academic dean for academic matters; the principal primarily regarding Paychecks; and the school director for all other matters such as compensation, technology needs and disciplinary issues (especially for seventh and eighth graders).

- Communications with families are frequent and relevant. Parents reported that staff are accessible and responsive. Parents reported receiving Paycheck reports every Friday. Staff also reported that, in addition to frequently disseminating Paychecks and progress reports, staff regularly call parents and that on Wednesdays staff allocate time to make calls of a positive nature to parents. Relatedly, teachers reported that they share their cellular phone numbers with students and that students call teachers often and for appropriate academic and behavioral matters.

Areas for Growth	Recommendations
Though the school is effective at executing against its current plan for teaching and learning, SCHOOL Y does not have goals or criteria defining success beyond achievement on the state assessment program.	**Develop a living, long-term plan for the school focused on successful college graduation.**
• The school's current student objectives do not ensure that all elements of the mission, namely success in and beyond high school, are met. Though SCHOOL Y collects and analyzes assessment data regarding student achievement, SCHOOL Y has not established metrics for school-wide academic goals to backwards-plan from a vision of college readiness. School leaders and teachers acknowledged that, though NYS standardized test results do not sufficiently indicate whether students are prepared for success in college, high state test scores remain a primary objective of the school. Specifically, school staff acknowledged that state tests do not sufficiently assess rigor and other college ready skills. However, the school has not supplemented state and other assessment results with additional external metrics (such as high school grade point averages, SAT	• Plan backwards, from the goal of college graduation, for all alumni. Create clear targets and supports necessary for success in each of the following stages: college graduation, college matriculation, high school tenure, high school transition and admission. Visualize all traits of a successful student at each stage. • Conduct frequent (e.g. quarterly or bi-annual) surveys of alumni, especially recent graduates of the school, that focus on high school readiness and progress. From those results, the school could develop performance goals that would inform the SCHOOL Y curriculum. Incentivize alumni participation in surveys. The survey could include questions on the following: high school GPA;

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scores, ACT scores, etc.) by which to gauge student performance or readiness for college. Further, staff reported that information about alumni high school progress is not used to inform the school's curriculum or structure of instructional delivery. Even on state assessments, the school has not set goals around the number of students reaching advanced proficiency (level 4).

- SCHOOL Y does not systematically collect data regarding high school success and college readiness. As aforementioned, SCHOOL Y does not collect or report data on alumni HS outcomes (grade point averages, persistent attendance and enrollment at high schools, etc.). Teachers and staff used anecdotal evidence (alumni take Algebra Regents exam, high schools welcome admission applications from KTCVS students, students are "bored" during some high school courses because those courses are not as challenging as those at SCHOOL Y, etc.) to claim that SCHOOL Y alumni are achieving at a high level. But stakeholders were unable to cite clear and compelling data to support the claim of high achieving SCHOOL Y alumni. Importantly, the school acknowledged the need to improve its alumni program and has hired a staff member, scheduled to begin in April 2012, to focus on communications with, and the needs of, SCHOOL Y alumni.

While the school leader has begun to identify areas in which to create greater school sustainability, the current plans are insufficient given the context of the school's planned expansion.

- The school leader has taken steps to distribute leadership at SCHOOL Y. The school leader reported that he has cultivated the principal and academic dean to assume greater roles at the school and, along with the school leader, comprise what is now considered the school's senior leadership team. Rather than relying primarily on the school leader to administer the school's finances, the school leader reported that he has established a new staff position focused on the school's finances. This increased emphasis on distributed leadership was precipitated, in part, by a

percentage of alumni agreeing that SCHOOL Y prepared them for 9th grade ELA; percentage of alumni agreeing that they have effective high school study habits; percentage of alumni reporting that they know how to ask for help when struggling with high school class work; etc.

- Connect with instructional leaders at local high schools to ensure SCHOOL Y alumni are properly prepared now, and in the future, for high school.

- Set goals around student performance on the EXPLORE assessment that are tied to high school readiness indicators.

personal injury that kept the school leader off site for an extended period, during which, according to the school leader, the school's cash reserves decreased by $300,000.

- However, despite the steps described above, the school leader maintains significant control over many of the school's decision-making and operations. Teachers and school leaders reported that there are no formalized shared decision-making processes, structures, or systems by which teacher teams are empowered. In addition to administering many of the finances, the school leader reported that he personally interviews every staff candidate, fixes every computer and prints all report cards. Given the school leader's central and far-reaching role at the school, the school's board of directors expressed concern about the sustainability of the current school leader's role, especially because SCHOOL Y is considering expanding to include an elementary school. This has been cited a a concern by numerous school reviews and external visitors, as documented in authorizer reports and described by the school leader.

Leverage the strengths of current school staff.

- Identify all staff positions necessary, to ensure a high quality education, as SCHOOL Y plans its expansion to additional schools and grades.

- Develop detailed job descriptions for each position.

- To the extent possible, match current staff members with those positions. Yet also be, and remain, amenable to recruit staff from outside of the school that best fit the position's criteria (in particular for leadership positions).

- Develop expanded leadership teams, cultivating veteran teachers with particular strengths to lead their grade levels and make meaningful decisions alongside the senior leadership team.

Strengths

Staff professional development provides opportunities for growth and learning.

- Feedback is provided through systematic processes (both formal and informal) to ensure oversight of instruction and classroom practices. Teachers and school leaders reported that teachers submit classroom packets, which are detailed materials for students to complete in each class, to the academic dean for review on a weekly basis. Teachers and the academic dean reported that the academic dean utilizes a rubric to analyze and that the rubric includes analysis of the alignment of objectives and activities, the academic rigor and the "J-Factor" (joy factor). Teachers reported they receive frequent feedback on their classroom packets, and that this feedback was helpful to them in developing higher-quality materials and lessons,. Additionally, the academic dean reported that teachers submit to her their scope and sequences for review at the start of each school year. Teachers and school leaders also reported that the academic dean meets with grade level teams every three weeks. In addition to a minimum of two formal observations by school leaders, teachers reported school leaders frequently observe instruction in their classrooms. Further, videotaped lessons and instructional feedback plays a central role at SCHOOL Y; teachers are videotaped three to four times per year and meet individually with the academic dean to watch the video and discuss instructional techniques. Teachers stated they regularly conduct peer observations and report their observations to their peers.

- Professional development considers staff strengths as well as development needs. Before the beginning of the academic year, SCHOOL Y establishes a professional development calendar with monthly themes. A review of documents indicated that the 2011-12 professional development program began with a focus on instructional planning, including discussions on scope and sequence, packet design and spiraled content. As the academic year progressed, school documents demonstrated that professional development focused increasingly on: instructional delivery, including incorporating the "J-Factor" and higher order thinking skills into lessons; commanding participation of all students; and increasing the amount of "student talk" in the classroom. Moreover, differentiated professional development and teacher support is a hallmark of SCHOOL Y. School leaders reported some teachers new to the school are hired as interns, to spend several months at the school prior to their first year of teachers, to orient them to the school's academic and behavioral systems and expectations. Additionally, SCHOOL Y provides intensive summer training for teachers new to the school, and school leaders reported they plan to continue that practice in the upcoming summer while sending returning teachers to the   Summer Institute. During the academic year, school leaders provide differentiated support to teachers; for example, school leaders reported that a particular teacher's students had a 12% passing rate on interim assessments thus school leaders visited the teacher's classroom daily and provided frequent feedback ultimately resulting in a 85%-90% passing rate. In focus groups, new and relatively veteran teachers also reported that teachers new to the school receive significant support and informal feedback. Staff reported that relatively veteran teachers are encouraged to seek out professional development they need and want, including   Summits as well as local conferences and workshops. Importantly, in focus groups teachers reported they feel sufficiently supported at SCHOOL Y.

Areas for Growth	Recommendations
The site visit team did not find significant areas of growth related to Human Capital that rise to the level of a finding.	

Strengths

The school culture reflects many values, expectations and high standards.

- Stakeholders believe that with hard work, all SCHOOL Y students are capable of success. Teachers reported that SCHOOL Y is marked by a "culture of earning," in which students must put forth significant effort to merit high marks in their Paychecks. Additionally, in a focus group, parents reported that the school impels students to succeed and that the school teaches students, and families, that success is earned. Importantly, staff reported and school document review demonstrated that fifth graders, and sixth graders new to KTCVS, participate in a three-week summer program to acculturate students to SCHOOL Y' philosophy, culture, common language, standard operating procedures and emphasis on hard work. Additionally, a significant positive reinforcement mechanism of the Paychecks system is "Ganas Dollars." Ganas is a Spanish word that means "you earn."

- The school staff and leadership model and promote teamwork. Teachers reported that teamwork is one of SCHOOL Y' strengths. Teachers elaborated that examples of teachers effectively helping each other include assisting peers' transitions between classrooms and aiding in the development of peers' classroom packets. Also, the site visit team observed teachers and school leaders using language such as "team and family" and "one band, one sound" when referring to members of the school community.

The school celebrates student accomplishments and achievements.

- Students are provided informal and formal recognition for accomplishments. The site visit team observed that the recognition of formal accomplishments, such as lists of honor roll students, high-scoring tests and high school acceptance letters, are posted throughout the school. The site visit team also observed other accomplishments, such as exemplary student classroom work products, posted in most classrooms.

- Student celebrations are linked to the mission, vision and values. In focus groups, staff asserted that the "fun calendar," and participation in the forty-two events listed therein, are important factors in reinforcing the school's culture of earning. Further, document review demonstrated that the fun calendar clearly states the criteria for participation in each fun event. For example, students who earned an 80% or higher on all tests in a particular week were eligible to participate in an "I Love the 80's party" and students who had a $35 or higher Paycheck earned a ticket to participate in a movie night. As a student in a focus group reported: "You get rewarded for what you do good … doing good will become part of you."

Staff, families, and current students are committed to and satisfied with the school.

- There is a united belief that the school is excellent. In focus groups, all stakeholders – students, parents, teachers, staff, school leaders and board members – conveyed their belief that SCHOOL Y provides an excellent education for its students. School leaders consistently referenced the superior education, especially in comparison with local schools, provided at SCHOOL Y. In fact, when asked to identify areas in need of growth at the school, stakeholders often struggled to identify any area of suggested growth.

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- There is pride in the school and the education provided – even on the most difficult days. In focus groups, staff reported that SCHOOL Y students demonstrate pride in numerous ways, including through exemplary behavior on field trips and wearing SCHOOL Y-branded clothing with honor in city neighborhoods. Teachers stated that, even when a particular event or day is challenging, the school's commitment to the mission, and the passion staff share for the students, motivates teachers to persevere.

- The school engages families. SCHOOL Y has a parent & community liaison, a position focused exclusively on family and student relations. Staff reported that at a parent night prior to the beginning of the school year, and through other mediums, SCHOOL Y disseminates a calendar of school events (for the entire school year) to which parents are encouraged to participate. Also, staff reported that parents are encouraged to observe their children's classrooms and that many parents take advantage of that open door policy. In fact, staff stated that parents are impressed by the numerous and frequent modes of communications SCHOOL Y utilizes to communicate with parents including teachers' mobile phones, emails, parents volunteering to call other parents and administrators calling parents. Staff asserted that SCHOOL Y is a school in which students feel comfortable calling teachers to discuss the student's academics or classroom behavior. As a result of these multi-pronged efforts, parents reported they feel connected with, and part of, the school community.

The school is clean, safe, well-maintained and inviting.

- The school is clean and safe. The site visit team observed that hallways are clean and classrooms are well lit and bright. In focus groups, students reported that SCHOOL Y is a safe place in which bullying is not tolerated.

- The physical environment supports 's mission and values. College artifacts and collateral displayed school-wide reflect college aspirations and values. College banners and posters are present throughout the building. Student work is prominently displayed and celebrated in hallways. Also, the SCHOOL Y Commitments to Excellence is posted on walls in classrooms throughout the school.

Areas for Growth	Recommendations

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The site visit team did not find significant areas of growth related to Culture and Climate that rise to the level of a finding.

Prioritization School Y

SCHOOL Y school leaders (Chair of the Board of Directors, Executive Director, Principal and Academic Dean) and local educational leaders, together with representatives of the site visit team, conducted an analysis of the strengths and areas for growth identified during the site visit. While the school has numerous strengths to acknowledge and celebrate, the following specific areas of strength were highlighted by meeting participants: the clear expectations for all stakeholders, the systems in place that mobilize staff to work toward success and the school's data-driven decision making. The group characterized these strengths as emblematic of a highly successful "SCHOOL Y Version 1.0."

Challenges relating to student attrition, enrollment, measuring and ensuring high school and college success, and the small number of support staff were discussed as areas of growth. SCHOOL Y representatives requested that the group center its discussion on improving instruction. Of note, the group described the need to overcome all of these challenges as the required steps to attain "SCHOOL Y Version 2.0."

The participants then discussed methods to improve student engagement, instructional rigor and further differentiate instruction. The team then developed the following next steps for attempting to improve instruction:

Next Steps:

1. Student engagement:
   a. Visit other charter schools that engage their students well. Several charter schools were suggested.

2. Instructional rigor:
   a. Visit other charter schools that promote higher order thinking skills. Several charter schools were suggested, including   King Collegiate High School.
   b. Visit, and further cultivate relationships with, local private schools.
   c. Strengthen ties with local ninth grade teachers to better understand the skills needed for success in ninth grade and throughout high school.
   d. Conduct a school wide effort in which teachers identify specific questions they plan to ask in the classroom to promote students' critical thinking, incorporate those questions in lessons, then discuss with the school leader and colleagues regarding the questions' effectiveness and strategies for further growth.

3. Differentiated Instruction:
   a. Visit other charter schools that concentrate resources on differentiated instruction. Several charter schools were suggested, including Comienza Community Prep and Empower Academy.

4. General:
   a. When planning and evaluating instruction, focus on whether it is fun and challenging.
   b. Leverage video to share teachers' best practices.
   c. Define SCHOOL Y instructional success to be more than success on state assessments.
   d. Have SCHOOL Y school leaders participate in a school quality review of another school.

The site visit team met with fourteen members of School Z's Instructional Leadership Team to review its findings, discuss the school's areas of strengths and areas for improvement, prioritize areas for improvement, and discuss ways to address the identified areas for improvement.

School leaders and the site visit team were in agreement that there are strengths present in the school. Areas of strength the team discussed included: the school regularly administers assessments to capture information on student learning and progress; the school relies upon commercial curricular resources, for ELA and math, that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards; and school leaders have the ability to provide further beneficial educational support. The site visit team also noted the following areas for growth: high quality instruction is not evident throughout the school; all students are not engaged in classroom activities; school leaders are not holding teachers accountable to a high standard of teaching and student learning; and the school is not fully meeting the needs of at-risk students.

The group identified high quality instruction is not evident throughout the school as the area for growth to prioritize. The group identified one priority within this as having the most potential impact on the success of the school as a whole:

1. **High quality instruction occurs throughout the school.**

The team then discussed assets relative to the goal and brainstormed next steps. Assets include: commercial curricula; learning specialists; student data; cooperating teachers; common planning time; thoughtful, non-threatening feedback to teachers from learning specialists; professional development; teacher leaders at various grade levels and subject areas; the teacher evaluation instrument; administrators; technology-based learning programs; instructional leadership team, constituted by all the participants in this prioritization process; materials and equipment, including computers and digital tablets; the School Quality Review report; and parent support.

The following goal and action steps were developed for instruction:

Goal	Action	Completion/ Target Dates	Champion/ Support	Resources Needed
By December 24th, 100% of teachers will demonstrate high quality instruction as measured by classroom observations using a common rubric or class observation tool.	**Identify specific teacher needs, provide targeted professional development (PD) for teachers, AND provide PD for the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) on how to have effective conversations and establish trust with teachers.**	**July, 2020**	**Superintendent**	**Developer/s and facilitator/s of PD for ILT**
	Hold regular	**July, 2020**	**Superintendent**	**Calendar first**

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	meetings of ILT			meeting
	Incorporate Cooperating Teachers (CTs) into planning process, including PD for CTs on instructional expectations for CTs in classroom	**August, 2020**	**Math Specialist**	**Subgroup of ILT to discuss further**
	Ensure what is learned in PD is indeed implemented in the classroom AND utilize communication tools to enable a cycle of instruction and related PD	**October, 2020 (follow up meeting)**	**Literacy Specialist**	**Subgroup of ILT to discuss further**

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