



# **Reform Redesign Report**

Nichols Elementary-Middle School

Detroit City School District

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## **Introduction**

As a school identified by the Michigan Department of Education as a Priority school, you are required to select one of the four federal models for your reform/redesign plan. If your school is selecting the closure or restart models, you should contact the School Reform Office to discuss the next steps for implementing and documenting this effort. If selecting either the Transformation or Turnaround model, you should review and respond to all individual requirements of the selected model. These plans are reviewed and need to be approved by the School Reform Officer.

# Executive Summary

## **Introduction**

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## **Description of the School**

**Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?**

Nichols School was built in 1910; it is located in Historical Indian Village. Nichols is a Detroit Public School offering full day Kindergarten, Special Education and grades 1-8. The entire staff is fully certified by the State of Michigan and considered highly qualified. We have a full-time nurse, counselor, and social worker. We currently have a part-time speech and language teacher, psychologist, occupational therapist, and a well-rounded support staff. Nichols has undergone a principal change three times within the past two years due to retirement and illness.

The student population is 98% African American with 94% of the students eligible for free and reduced lunch. We are located in Historical Indian Village, with our students coming from the surrounding neighborhood, which is described as a depressed area. Many of the residents fall below the federal poverty level.

## School's Purpose

**Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

Nichols' purpose is to ensure that all of our students receive the highest quality education to prepare each of them to be an active, productive member of society. Ensuring they are prepared for the career demands of the twenty-first century.

Our vision for John F. Nichols Elementary/Middle School is to become a stimulating, world-class, student-centered learning environment. Nichols School will lead the district in achievement and innovation in learning with a staff that is highly qualified and committed to student excellence.

The mission of Nichols is to guarantee that all of our students receive the highest quality education by involving parents, a highly qualified staff, employing state-of-the-art technology, and inspiring a passion for learning that will prepare them to be successful high school students who will ultimately become contributing members of society.

### Belief Statements

1. Children are the first priority at Nichols Elementary/Middle School
2. All children deserve an education of the highest quality
3. There is no limit to the capacity of the human mind
4. Each person has the power to create his/her own future and to reach their potential
5. Each individual is responsible for his/her own decisions and actions
6. The family is one of the most important factors in our lives
7. Cultural diversity enriches life for the individual and the community
8. Discovery of purpose gives meaning to life
9. Each individual internally possesses what they need to be successful
10. Each person deserves respect as a human being
11. Each person deserves to have the basic necessities of life
12. High expectations can produce high results

Nichols staff maintains high expectations for our students academically and socially. All staff members must believe in the mission and belief statements in order for the students to believe them. Instilling in students the very essence of these statements will help empower them to reach their fullest potential. Through our counseling resources and teacher support, students become motivated and strive for higher academic achievement.

## **Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement**

**Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

Within the last three years our Academic Games team has received top honors as one of the leading teams throughout the district and state levels. Our Coach, Sara Ginger has also received the high honor of being the Coach of the Year. Within the past three years the areas of improvement have been identified as reading comprehension and an increase in math scores as related to MEAP. Nichols students have outpaced the district in Reading and Math for the last five years according to the MEAP History School report. We will continue to focus on an increase in student performance in the areas of Reading and Math until all students are proficient. This year Nichols is using Success for All as our reading program. This program will be used for five years. This time frame will allow our school and the district time to monitor the data to track student progress. Nichols will also utilize Accelerated Math to increase fluency in basic math skills and overall math achievement.

## **Additional Information**

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

There is a need for our students to receive additional reinforcement and enrichment activities here at Nichols. Many staff members are volunteering to provide these services after school weekly. Students will receive additional reading and math instruction through the use of technology related applications provided by the district. We also have a long-standing, twenty-five year partnership with a local church organization to provide tutoring services for our students one day each week throughout the school year. This organization has supported the students and staff of Nichols School for many years and has proven to be a tremendous asset.

# Transformation Redesign Diagnostic

## **Introduction**

The Transformation Model addresses four specific areas: 1) developing teacher and school leader effectiveness, which includes replacing the principal who led the school prior to commencement of the transformational model; 2) implementing comprehensive instructional reform strategies; 3) extending learning and teacher planning time and creating community-oriented schools; and 4) providing operating flexibility and sustained support.

## **PART A: REFORM TEAM PERSONNEL**

**Please list the individuals involved in the development of this reform/redesign plan. Use a separate line to list each individual, and include name, title or role, and email contact information.**

Linda Whitaker, principal	<a href="mailto:linda.whitaker@detroitk12.org">linda.whitaker@detroitk12.org</a>
Kim Walker, Academic Engagement Officer	<a href="mailto:kim.walker@detroitk12.org">kim.walker@detroitk12.org</a>
Tiwanya Robinson, Instructional Specialist	<a href="mailto:tiwanya.robinson@detroitk12.org">tiwanya.robinson@detroitk12.org</a>
Elizabeth Cassar, Success for All facilitator	<a href="mailto:elizabeth.cassar@detroitk12.org">elizabeth.cassar@detroitk12.org</a>
Robin Partmon, Title 1 teacher	<a href="mailto:robin.partmon@detroitk12.org">robin.partmon@detroitk12.org</a>

## **PART B: TEACHING AND LEARNING PRIORITIES**

**State 2-3 big ideas for your reform/redesign plan that are intended to change teaching and learning in your school. At least one of these should be instructional in nature. (These should come from the data dialogue that initiates your planning efforts.)**

The two "big Ideas" that Nichols will focus on as a result of data dialogue with the leadership team are Cooperative learning and Professional Learning Communities (PLC's). The Leadership Team at Nichols consists of Linda Whitaker, Principal, Kim Walker, AEO, Tiwanya Robinson, Instructional Specialist, Robin Partmon, Title One Teacher, and Lisa Cassar Success For All Facilitator. The Leadership team met in August before the school year started to review data and discuss our focus points for the school year.

Our school was chosen to implement the Success For All Program in the summer of 2012. This program is a whole school reform model which focuses on cooperative learning and a rapid pace of instruction. Since 58% of our students scored partially and not proficient in Reading and 90% partially and not proficient in Math on the State Assessment we felt this program was a good fit for our school. Teachers will receive training in cooperative learning which refers to a set of instructional methods in which students work in small learning teams that are mixed based on their past assessment. The students in each team will be responsible not only for learning the material taught in class but also for helping their teammates learn. This reform model will help students and teachers focus on reading goals, encourage interdependence while engaging all learners.

Professional Learning Communities are part of the second "big idea" within our Success for All reform model. Staff will be part of the Schoolwide Solutions Teams that focus on Attendance, Parent Family Involvement, Cooperative Culture, and Intervention. Teachers will also be part of an Instructional component team that corresponds with the reading level they are teaching. Team members will receive professional development in the teams they are a part of and will meet bi-monthly for an hour to work on specific goals and action plans that will improve student achievement. Sign in sheets, agendas, and action plans will be evidence that PLC's are implemented.

**State what data were used to identify these ideas.**

A staff survey was given in the spring of 2012 to see if staff wanted to be a part of the new reform model Success For All. The program required a 75% buy in, and the surveys showed that a 100% of the staff wanted to be part of Success For All. Review of MEAP data showed that the school's performance was at the bottom 5% of the State based on student achievement and in need of a reform model with a rapid pace of instruction to get performing at grade level.

PLC's were chosen based on review of several types of data. Our attendance data showed a rate of 85% attendance below our goal of 90%. Parent-teacher Conference sign in sheets and Parent Meeting sign in sheets showed low parent involvement. Suspension data and special education referrals were also analyzed. PLC's were determined base on this data.

## **PART C: DEVELOP/INCREASE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS**

**Describe how the building principal was replaced or how the existing principal meets the 2 year rule. Please include the leader's name and discuss how the leader meets the criteria for a turnaround principal.**

The District will align the principal selection process for Priority Schools to the "two-year rule." The current principal, Linda Whitaker, was assigned to Nichols at the beginning of the 2012 school year. She has a wealth of leadership experience and has been a principal for over ten years. Her last placement was at Chrysler Elementary School, which was named a reward school by the State of Michigan. Chrysler was also named one of the 25 Coolest Schools in America for 2012. Linda has a wide range of experience throughout her years with the district, she has been a classroom teacher, staff coordinator, Instructional Specialist, Curriculum Supervisor, and principal. She is known for being an innovator and doing whatever it takes to achieve excellence. All of this knowledge and experience will be used to increase student achievement at Nichols. (Linda Whitaker's resume is attached as with the Teacher and Leader Evaluation Process in the Assurances.)

**Detail the collaborative (teacher and principal) process used to create a teacher and leadership evaluation plan and explain how the evaluation includes student growth as a significant factor.**

At the beginning of the school year the teachers and the principal will complete a self evaluation tool to help them plan effectively for the school year. This information will be used as the year progresses to help both teachers and administrators meet the goals that were set at the beginning of the school year. The teachers and the administrators will take data into consideration when making their plan for the year. Student achievement will be a significant factor. Throughout the year teachers will be observed periodically and the principal will offer feedback and assistance to ensure quality teaching is happening in every classroom.

Teacher Evaluation is a yearlong opportunity for teachers to develop, refine, rejuvenate and reflect upon their teaching practice in: pedagogical skills, student growth, classroom management, relevant special training, and educator responsibilities. The following information will help the evaluator and the teacher successfully implement the Teacher Evaluation process.

Principals in-service their teachers on the evaluation process which includes a breakdown of the Detroit Educator Evaluation Process Manual. Each teacher is requested to complete a Professional Learning Plan or input documentation into My Portfolio utilizing PD360. Teachers are able to access the teacher evaluation rubric, manual, and all forms via Learning Village. Between September and November, all teachers receive an initial observation conducted by the principal or their designee (DFT members are not able to conduct observations). All administrators participate in inter-rater reliability training and coaching. The observer can use the Observation360 electronic template, which will allow them to send their feedback via email and PD360 through the focus tab.

Observers should conduct an initial meeting (post-observation) with the teacher to complete the following:

Review your observation with the teacher

Review the teacher's PLP and make recommendations

Administrator and/or designee and the teacher sign the PLP

Provide the teacher access to the evaluation materials: rubric, observation form, etc.

Help review the list of possible assessments to use as measures of tracking student growth.

Teachers should select a minimum of two data sources.

During the months of November through April, teachers are provided with support and assistance. Administrators and teachers can

recommend struggling teachers for additional support by submitting the Request for Assistance and Support form to their Assistant Superintendent. Administrators can also recommend PD360 videos to support professional growth and conduct additional walkthroughs and/or observations as needed/desired. A formal mid-year observation must be conducted for struggling teachers and new teachers. All teachers should be encouraged to continue implementing their PLPs, collecting artifacts and documentation to support each core element. Beginning in April, observers should begin conducting their end-of-year observations utilizing the End of Year Teacher Evaluation form. Each administrator must conduct a conference with their teachers to determine an element summary score based on the artifacts, data, and documentation collected or provided by the teacher as evidence for each core element. The administrator then completes the annual rating form to determine and record effectiveness Label per rating scale, record attendance and discipline information and list contributions and accomplishments for each teacher.

**Specify how the school will identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff members who have increased student achievement. Additionally, describe how the school will remove leaders and staff members who have been given multiple opportunities to improve professional practice and have not increased student achievement outcomes.**

The Plan to identify and reward school leaders, teachers and other staff was thought out by a team of five. The team members are: Linda Whitaker (principal), Kim Walker (AEO), Tiwanya Robinson (instructional specialist) Lisa Cassar (SFA Coordinator) and Robin Partmon (Title One Math).

Our school has selected Success for All (SFA). Success for All was chosen as a vehicle to increase student achievement. The SFA program requires students to be tested first to determine their placement in the program. The students are scored using the Star Test. The result of the star test decides the students' placement in their cooperative learning groups. There are three groups that our students placed, they are: Roots, Wings and Edge. Each group has several levels of progression. The students are tested every eight weeks to determine their growth. After the test, the data is looked at and it will show whether the students have made an increase. The students' test score determines which group they will place next.

The administration, Mrs. Whitaker (principal), and Mrs. Walker (AEO) perform walkthroughs daily to support and assist instruction. Teachers are given positive feedback to help increase achievement. The observer and teacher meet to determine if additional support in any area is needed. If additional support is needed, the principal or AEO will recommend/assign videos from PD360. The staff member depending on the need will obtain assistance from Ms. Robinson (Instructional Specialist), Ms. Cassar (SFA Coordinator) or Ms. Partmon (Title One Math Teacher).

The staff will be rewarded quarterly (every report card period) with positive praise and open acknowledgement on PA system about the increased achievement in their classroom. There are two semesters in the year. Each semester the students, teachers, paraprofessionals will be acknowledged at an honor's assembly to praise their achievement. The first semester will be in January. The students will receive honors for: academics, citizenship and attendance. The teachers will receive accolades for their hard work, attendance and support to their students.

The second semester will be in June. The teachers, staff, students, parents and our partners will be rewarded with a formal ceremony honoring all who have supported our students during the year. Each person will receive praise and certificates for all hard work during the year. All students will receive some recognition of their gains/improvements.

All Staff members have developed Professional Learning Plans (PLP). All staff members are observed. Teachers are monitored by walkthroughs that can be daily. Teachers are given two formal observations and one end of the year evaluation. Each walk through no matter how brief; there is feedback given. There are plenty of opportunities to receive individual assistance through PD360, administration and or colleagues. Demonstration lessons will be offered. Teachers are given the opportunity to shadow a coworker or go outside the building to observe another teacher's best practices. Teachers are given current literature at every staff meeting pertaining to new strategies and or best practices. Teachers are given assistance and given the opportunity to practice before another walkthrough. At the end of the

year, the principal will make a decision as to whether each teacher has increased student achievement. If the teacher has not met an effective status, the teacher will not be rated effective and will not be recommended to be part of Nichols Elementary/Middle School.

**Describe plans and timelines for ongoing, high quality, job embedded professional learning (subject specific pedagogy, differentiated instruction or a deeper understanding of the community served). Show how professional learning is aligned and designed to ensure that staff can facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement the school reform strategies.**

During the 2012-2013 school year, the professional development will include ongoing, systematic, and job-embedded experiences to enrich and enhance the skills sets of teachers in the areas of planning and preparing, engaging students in learning through high quality instruction, as well as utilizing assessment appropriately in instruction. All of the professional development will focus on helping teachers and administrators pay close attention to the classroom environment and improve student learning. Administrators will receive professional development to broaden their leadership skills and provide more instructional leadership for their staff to help themselves and their staffs become more reflective, maintain accurate records, grow and develop professionally, and show professionalism. As we move to increase student achievement on our standardized tests for the State and at the National level, we have adopted a city-wide common assessment (NWEA-MAP) that will enable staff to diagnose, monitor, and increase student achievement through the utilization of data to modify and enhance instruction. Decisions for the professional development were based upon the needs of the building-level staff members and the analysis of the data collected from the standardized assessments. District Professional Development activities are aligned to the State Professional Development Standards.

Nichols has a professional development calendar set for the school year to keep us on track with offering multiple opportunities for our staff to grow professionally in areas designated in the School Improvement Plan. This calendar includes topics related to our school reform model which we are implementing this year. We also have the flexibility of using common weekly collaboration time to meet the additional professional development needs of the staff as the year progresses. These PDs are all based on the 2011 MEAP scores. 58% of our students are partially and not proficient in Reading. 90% of our students are partially and not proficient in Math. Also, our attendance last year was 85%.

Since our school has a reform model of cooperative learning, much of our professional development will be focused on this. At the beginning of the school year our staff met as a whole to learn new strategies related to cooperative learning. After that, for two full days our staff split into smaller groups to explore these concepts in further detail. This was a way to disseminate all of the same information to everyone and make it relevant for the grades in which they teach. As the school year continues, the Leadership Team will meet with individual teachers to be sure they received adequate training and to provide additional training with implementing cooperative learning in the classroom throughout the content areas. Multiple dates for professional development related to cooperative learning have been assigned. These professional development sessions will be facilitated by outside consultants in conjunction with Nichols staff. A data log will be kept to document the cooperative learning meetings amongst the staff members.

Another way professional development will be implemented is through the use of a web based video collection of professional development videos on various topics. Monthly the staff will be engaged in watching videos and discussing the implications of the videos on their day to day teaching practice. Videos have been carefully selected to support the needs of the staff. All teachers have been given access to this video collection and are encouraged to view videos of their choice on their own time and share what they found with their colleagues. Time is given at weekly team meetings to share ideas and collaborate with others. Each staff member will document the videos that he/she viewed over the course of the school year.

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Professional Learning Communities(PLCs) will be implemented, with teams such as Attendance Team, Cooperative Culture Team, Intervention Team, and the Family Involvement Team. All instructional staff will participate. Each of these teams will analyze data together and make curricular decisions and organizational decisions based on the findings in the data. Attendance has been a problem at our school so the Attendance Team will collaborate on ways to improve attendance by increasing student engagement in their core academic classes. The Cooperative Culture Team will look at behavior issues being displayed and collaborate on ways to build a sense of community to decrease undesirable behaviors. The Intervention Team will look at specific students or specific recurring academic issues that need to be addressed. They will serve as a think tank and brainstorm ideas and ways to help in this area. Finally, the Family Involvement Team will research ways to increase parental involvement in order to create a community of learners (teachers, parents, administrators, and students). All of these teams will report to the staff and the parent group throughout the school year to give strategies to help in each of these areas. The strategies will be implemented and the data will be reviewed by the teams in order to make further recommendations. There will be sign in sheets and minutes kept on file from each of the PLC meetings.

All instructional staff will also receive professional development throughout the school year related to two web based programs we are using to differentiate instruction. We have used these programs in previous years, but we want to make more precise decisions based on the data and this is what these professional development sessions will consist of. These programs focus on the areas of literacy and math.

### **Detail how the school will implement strategies, such as increased opportunities for promotion and career growth, and/or flexible working conditions, designed to recruit and retain staff to meet the needs of students in a transformational school.**

The District in collaboration with the Detroit Federation of Teachers negotiated new contractual language allowing for operational flexibility that will support school transformation/turnaround efforts. This operational flexibility includes flexibility with staffing, school calendars, school times, budgeting, professional development activities, and other operational duties that will support the comprehensive approach to substantially increase student achievement and increase graduation rates.

Nichols School has different incentives and strategies in place to facilitate increased opportunities for promotion and career growth. The incentive and encouragement programs are instrumental in helping us to maintain and recruit staff. Attendance incentives include movie passes, certificates, and gift cards to local restaurants for staff members achieving perfect attendance within each quarter. Encouragement from the administration in the form of awards including letters of accommodation and plaques helps staff members to feel appreciated and a part of the team. This helps staff members to be more motivated and engaged and is impactful in meeting the needs of the students academically.

Staff members are encouraged to pursue career growth. As a result we currently have the honor of having three Nationally Board Certified Teachers on staff.

#### Teacher Certification

Tiwanya Robinson Early Childhood Generalist

Elizabeth Cassar Early Childhood Generalist

Kim White Early Childhood Generalist

Other staff members have achieved the individual honor of presenting information on the district and state levels in the areas of Mathematics (Ms. Sara Ginger) and the Safe Routes to School initiative (Ms. Robin Partmon). Teachers are also encouraged to pursue grants to help with the purchase of special materials needed to meet the needs of the students. Many staff members have received materials from Donor's Choose. Along with receiving Skillman Foundation grants, we have also received Safe Routes to School Grants, and Generation With Promise. Each of these grants help facilitate in the educational experience being more positive for students.

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Highly effective teachers will be identified using various methods. The evidence of student growth and data obtained by district and state assessments will be some of the tools utilized. The use of the evaluation process implemented by the district will also be utilized in identifying highly effective teachers. When staff members are encouraged to pursue career growth, and when opportunities are available for increased professional development the staff remains highly motivated. Many staff members attend local and out of state professional development conferences to keep updated on best practices in education.

International Reading Assoc. Conf. (IRA) National Conf. of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)

Tiwanya Robinson Sara Ginger

Elizabeth Cassar Robin Partmon

Rita Morris

Robin Partmon

Kim White

Monica Tyson

With a motivated staff teachers are more creative with education, having a direct impact on student achievement. With continued individual growth of staff members we will increase student achievement on the MEAP 2012-13 at least 10% overall in the areas of Reading and Math for students achieving non-proficient and a continued growth of 10% each year over the coming years.

## PART D: COMPREHENSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL REFORM STRATEGIES

**Specify how the school will use data to identify and implement an instructional program that is research-based and aligned from one grade to the next, as well as with state standards.**

The school will gather student data from state, district, and teacher assessments. This data will be analyzed and reflected on at the beginning and end each year as well as every eight weeks for each grade level and for each student at staff meetings and during component team meetings (PLC's). The state assessment was used to find gaps in instruction and to identify and implement an instructional program that is researched based and aligned with state standards. Review of our school's MEAP data showed that 58% of our students did not meet state standards in reading and 90% did not meet state standards in math.

Prior to the start of the 2012-2013 school year all instructional staff viewed two videos to assess their readiness for transition to the Common Core Standards. "Exploring the Common Core", and "Common Core in the Classroom" videos were viewed on P.D 360 during a staff meeting. The staff also attended a Professional Development session at the Wayne RESA School Achievement Conference in November on Common Core expectations at different grade levels in reading and math. Teacher's lessons plans and instruction now reflect alignment with the Common Core Standards as does our reform model, evidenced by the Success For All scope and sequence. Further reading and videos will be assigned by the principal on P.D 360 to deepen the understanding of Common Core Standards in all subject areas.

The reform model we are implementing utilizes a cooperative learning process called The Cycle of Effective Instruction. The cycle includes active instruction, teamwork, assessment, reflection, celebration and adjustments. This model was chosen because the research of Dr. Robert Slavin at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools shows that when students organize their thoughts to explain ideas to teammates they in engage in cognitive elaboration, or an extension of their thinking with enhances their own understanding. These results were found to be consistent for all grade levels, in all major subject areas, and in urban, suburban, and rural settings for high, average, and low achievers. All strategies use in the program are aligned with the States Grade Level Content Expectations and aligned from one grade to the next as evidenced by pacing guides. A baseline test will be used to assess students at the beginning of the year and progressed monitored every eight weeks. This assessment which is web-based and provided by the district identifies the reading and math level of each student. Students are then regrouped by reading level across age lines and receive 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading in the elementary and 50 minutes in the middle school. The program's rapid pace of instruction requires the students to be reassessed every eight weeks to monitor development and adjust instruction.

Slavin, Robert E. (1995). Cooperative Learning: Theory, research, and Practice (2nd ed.) Boston: Allyn & Bacon. ISBN 0-205-15630-4

**Describe how the school promotes the continuous use of individual student data (such as formative, interim and summative) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet individual student needs.**

Nichols school promotes the continuous use of individual data throughout the year. The data obtained throughout the year guides the teacher to change and monitor instruction. At the beginning of the year, during the first days of professional development, the teachers will use the tool called Data Director. This tool allows each teacher to look at the previous results of all standardized test results taken by the students. The teachers get together within and across grade levels and look at the information. This tool helps the teachers to see and plan differentiated instruction for their students. Looking at the standardized results across the grade levels will help the school plan for daily instruction, their enrichment and afterschool programs.

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Nichols is now an SFA school(Success for All). As an SFA school, collaboration is a must. Cooperative learning and Professional learning Communities are important to the success of the program. We have two sets of teams that meet to evaluate student achievement data. The first team is instructional. This team is made up of the principal, the AEO, the instructional specialist, the SFA facilitator and the title one teacher. We will meet twice a month; the first and last Friday of each month. We will look at the data from the program (weekly test scores from each class), making instructional modifications when necessary, so that we meet the academic needs of every student. The goal is for every student to continue to progress consistently toward the next higher reading level. It is the responsibility of each leadership team member to discuss with their selected teachers our findings. We will provide positive feedback. We will offer suggestions, and additional support. If necessary, we will seek help from our SFA Point Coach (Ebony Jones) and District Coach(Lisa Enoch and Ralph Carreathers).

The second set of teams is known as the school wide solutions teams. This group focuses on issues that go beyond instruction but still stand in the way of student success. The groups and member are: Attendance Team (Ms. Link, Mr. Genthner, Mrs. Chapman, Mrs. King, Mrs. Lamar and Ms. Morrison. Parent/Community Involvement Teammembers are(Ms. Dearing, Ms. Brown, Ms. Moore, Ms. Tolbert and Ms. Beauford. Intervention Team members are: (Ms. White, Ms. McDonald, Ms. Tyson, Ms. Warner, Ms. Berry-Leaks, Ms. Ginger and Ms. Robinson) Cooperative Culture Team (Ms. Partmon, Ms. Foster, Ms. Rizzo, Ms. Cassar and Ms. Morris) These groups meet once a month ( the second Wednesday of each month). Each team will meet and assess the scope and nature of issues and their impact on student achievement. Plans will be created to support students in a proactive and positive way. Each team will submit a copy of the plans to the administration. The next staff meeting, each group will present and we will begin to put the plans in action.

At the end of every grading period, generally every quarter, there is a school wide meeting. The dates are: December 14, 2012, February 15, 2013, and April 26, 2013. Each of the success teams (instructional and solutions teams) presents its progress report. Members share the initiatives that they have put into place over the last quarter; along with the impact they have had to increase student achievement. At the end of the meeting, everyone will have a clear picture of how the school is performing and how everyone is contributing to student achievement. This is also a time to revamp if the progress is not what we hoped.

## PART E: INCREASED LEARNING TIME AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Explain how the school will establish schedules and strategies that provide for increased time for all students to learn core academic content by expanding the school day, week or year (specify the amount of time added). Include enrichment activities for students and increased collaboration time for teachers.**

The district has increased time for core subjects during the school day. The new time allotment will remain in effect until further notice from the district. The Reading/English Language Arts instruction time for elementary students has increased to 120 minutes each day and 90 minutes for middle school. Math has increased to 90 minutes. The 60 minute (ELA) and 45 minute (Math) increase is possible due to the elimination of the common prep each Friday and the elimination of three preparation periods each week for elementary teachers. There is a need to increase effective instruction time for the core subjects as evidenced by the

### % Not/Partially Proficient

#### Grade Reading Math

¢ 3	69%	93%
¢ 4	48%	79%
¢ 5	60%	96%
¢ 6	48%	92%
¢ 7	82%	98%
¢ 8	48%	85%

Number of students scoring not proficient in Reading/Math on the state Assessment. All lessons to be taught are aligned with state grade level content expectations (GLCE) and provided to teachers through the use of pacing guides and other curriculum materials. All homeroom/middle school Teachers will maximize instruction time by providing small group instruction and cooperative group learning during the day for core subjects. Through the use of cooperative learning groups, students are not only responsible for learning the material but they are instrumental in helping their teammates learn. By allowing students more time to work as groups per our big idea, it provides teachers with additional time to support other students needing one on one, assistance. Students identified as needing additional help in the core subjects will also be assisted by our Special Education Resource teachers, Mrs. Rita Morris and Mrs. Ricardia Berry-Leaks. We also have a Title 1 elementary math teacher for further assistance, Ms. Robin Partmon. Along with the regular weekly assessments for Reading and Math, we have formal assessments to assess student progress and achievement. Teachers will be able to utilize data generated weekly from classroom assessments and the formal assessments to monitor student achievement and progress.

Teachers collaborate biweekly during the component team meetings for one hour to provide updates on student achievement, review data, engage in professional development including information on best practices, and discuss strategies for student success. With the implementation of this format, we will increase student achievement on the MEAP 2012-13 at least 10% overall in the areas of Reading and Math for students achieving non-proficient and a continued growth of 10% each year over the coming years.

All students at Nichols will engage in Project Based Learning activities as enrichment activities, and designed to foster teamwork as well as the development of social skills. Research states that Schools where PBL is practiced find a decline in absenteeism, an increase in cooperative learning skills, and improvement in student achievement. The projects include a variety of activities as listed:

## Reform Redesign Report

Nichols Elementary-Middle School

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Sign Language 3 Mrs. Chapman  
Ladies Club/Dance 4-8 Mrs. Whitaker  
Chess 4-8 Officer Booker  
Basketball 5-8 Ms. Moore  
Worm Farm 4 Ms. Lothery  
Step Team 5 Mrs. Tyson  
Library Club 4-8 Ms. Partmon  
Team Alphie 1-2 Ms. Cassar

### **Describe strategies for continuous engagement of families and community. Detail how the school will provide for the ongoing family and community engagement.**

There are many strategies that we are using to continuously engage families and community at Nichols that will help with our rapid turnaround plan. On the local level our Local School and Community Organization (LSCO) has implemented many programs. Through the LSCO we have forged a partnership with Homes for Black Children and they have decided to offer meaningful workshops at our school to help parents. Workshops related to effective communication are also being offered to families and our community. Upon reviewing data related to parent concerns, we realized that effective communication is necessary for everyone involved in our school. Lillie Thomas will facilitate these workshops. These workshops will touch on parts of our big idea related to cooperative learning. We will use this model with not only our students, but also our parents and community.

There are also programs being implemented at the district-level that our families and community will benefit from. One of which is the Detroit Parent Network can be used as a liaison between home and school. They offer many services to the parents, one of which is the Parent Resources Centers. This is a place where parents can go to attend workshops and become more active in their child's education. When our parents take advantage of these services they will be equipped with tools to work in conjunction with teachers in improving the academic success of our students. 58% of our students were either partially proficient or not proficient in Reading according to MEAP 2011 data. 90% of our students were either partially proficient or not proficient in Math according to MEAP 2011 data.

At the community level, Nichols is teaming up with area churches as a way to engage families and community. The district has paired our school with Greater Christ Church. This partnership is in the developmental stage, but it promised continuous positive interactions with families and community. We also have a partnership with Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church, which has lasted over 25 years. They provide programs for our parents and students outside of school, such as tutoring, workshops and summer camp.

## **PART F: PROVIDING OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY AND SUSTAINED SUPPORT**

**Describe how the district will provide the school with operational flexibility (staffing, calendars, time, budgeting) to implement a comprehensive approach to substantially increase student achievement and increase graduation rate.**

The Title 1 funds are utilized and budgeted for the enhancement of school operations in the following ways:

1. Staffing - Nichols staffing such as instructional specialist, literacy or math instructors, and school nurse are determined and funded based on current data and data trends. These trends indicated that attendance has been steadily declining in our school and the school nurse is one way to combat this problem. The students are sick and they can come to school and get health care.
2. Calendar - Nichols has a site based calendar based on the needs of our school. It is aligned with Parent Advisory Council for Student Achievement and the district calendar.  
Parent and discretionary funds are allotted to sponsor activities that enhance parent and student knowledge based on achievement data.
3. Time - Site based administration had some flexibility in the formation of the schedules to maximize instructional time for high priority areas.
4. Budgeting - School Improvement and component teams in designated areas for growth have been established. Staffing, materials, and technology are all purchased based on school needs and are planned for to stimulate student growth,

The District in collaboration with the Detroit Federation of Teachers negotiated new contractual language allowing for operational flexibility that will support school transformation/turnaround efforts. This operational flexibility includes flexibility with staffing, school calendars, school times, budgeting, professional development activities, and other operational duties that will support the comprehensive approach to substantially increase student achievement and increase graduation rates.

**Describe how the district will ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive Technical Assistance and related support from the district ISD, Michigan Department of Education, or other designated external partners or organizations.**

The District has created an Office of School Turnaround which includes the following staff:

(2) Assistant Superintendent for Priority Schools - The Assistant Superintendents are responsible for the coordination of all Priority School support (external supports, such as WRESA Coach support, SEA support, partner providers and others), monitoring, and evaluation required to fully implement the selected reform model. In addition, the Assistant Superintendents will be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the level and type of support provided by external supports.

Priority School Coaches - Priority School Coaches are responsible for providing on-site professional development and support for principals and teachers around the work required to implement the reform model and change the trajectory of student achievement. Coaches are also responsible for collecting data and evidence that will be shared with the Assistant Superintendents for Priority Schools and the Office of Professional Development to inform the professional development and support program for each school.

Grant Compliance Officer - The Grant Compliance Officer will support the District in determining how to effectively utilize the District set-aside to meet the individual needs of all Priority Schools.

# Assurances Report

## Michigan Department of Education Assurances

### Priority Assurances

Assurance	Certified	Comment/Attachment
Our school has implemented an evaluation process, which includes a significant connection with student growth, to assess the effectiveness of teachers and leaders working in our school. (Attach a copy of the evaluation tool below.)	Yes	Attacher is the Teacher and Leader Evaluation Processes. It also contains the principal, Linda Whitaker's resume. <a href="#">Teacher_Leader_Eval_WhitakerResume.pdf</a>
Our school has a Professional Development calendar that supports the reform effort selected for our school. (Attach a copy of the professional development calendar below.)	Yes	Attached is the Professional Development Calendar. <a href="#">PD_Calendar_Assurance.pdf</a>
Our school has implemented an extended learning time model to increase instructional time as evidenced by our daily school schedule, teacher collaboration schedule and student schedule. (Attach a copy of the schedule(s) below.)	Yes	Attached is more information related to this assurance. <a href="#">Increased_Learning_Time_Assurance.pdf</a>
Our school provides additional time to improve student learning and engagement through enrichment activities for students.	Yes	Attached is more information related to increased enrichment. <a href="#">Increased_Enrichment_Assurance.pdf</a>
Our school provides time for teachers to collaborate, plan and engage in professional development within and across grades and subjects.	Yes	This information is included in the Professional Development Calendar. This takes place during the Professional Learning Communities.
Our school District has a Memorandum of Understanding or Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Local Education Association regarding the measures required to implement the reform/redesign plan. Alternately, Public School Academies without a Local Education Association can provide documentation of board approval of the submitted reform plan.	Yes	Current language is not available at this time. This will be addressed by the District.

## Evaluation Process/Tools

The District has developed new evaluation processes for teachers and school leaders that is based on the following:

- 1) a set of professional standards that define effective teaching and leadership
- 2) student achievement outcomes
- 3) continuous improvement and accountability

These evaluation processes reflect the interdependence of evaluation, professional development, and accountability, and are grounded in the belief that the assessment of teachers and instructional leaders must be based on a set of clearly defined performance standards that are connected to student performance outcomes. Professional development and support must be directly linked to performance standards; and teachers and leaders must be held accountable for meeting these expectations. These understandings represent the foundation from which the teacher and principal evaluation process was designed.

## Teacher Evaluation Tool/Process

The Detroit Public Schools Academic Plan puts the needs of children front-and-center, but also specifically lists teacher effectiveness and accountability systems, including evaluation tools, as necessary to get the job done. Excellent teaching must be at the center of any successful school district. Excellent teachers, however, are not simply “found” and left to work magic in classrooms. They must be supported and developed over time to achieve greater results with their students year after year. Individuals at all levels of the district play a crucial role in this process – from district administration to principals, from coaches to teachers – everyone must work to uphold rigorous standards for teaching and support teachers to attain it. Ensuring that our students have the best teachers from their first day in Detroit Public Schools until they graduate is the most critical responsibility we share.

Our belief that all students in Detroit Public Schools can achieve at a high level drives every action that we take as the adults responsible for their success. We recognize that in order to make Detroit Public Schools excellent, we must all understand our common goal, continuously and objectively assess our progress as individuals and teams and then take strategic steps to improve. Our new Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development System put Detroit on a path to accomplish the ambitious goals we have set for the district, its employees, and most importantly our students.

The rubric upon which all evaluations are based sets clear, rigorous expectations across multiple levels, and contains recommendations for professional development in cases where teachers might demonstrate needed growth in a particular competency. All teachers will receive regular feedback, and teachers who demonstrate below average development will receive feedback more often and have the opportunity to engage in meaningful one-on-one and small group professional development.

In Detroit, we value our teachers immensely and are keenly focused on teacher development. Success within our system requires partnerships at and across levels;

between teachers as peer evaluators, between principals as collaborators and thought-partners, and between principals and teachers. Only by creating a culture built around a common understanding of what good teaching is can we expect our teachers to flourish and our students to achieve the high standards we hold for them.

#### The Teacher Development and Evaluation Rubric

To ensure that we are assessing quality teaching in the classroom with most rigorous standards, Detroit Public Schools will weight a teacher's evaluation as 60% of the total teacher evaluation score. The Teacher Development and Evaluation rubric is designed to comprehensively define "excellent teaching" for the Detroit Public Schools and provide a common language through which we can discuss, evaluate, and professionally develop our school-based staff to improve year after year.

In order to evaluate teachers as objectively as possible, Detroit Public Schools will weight appropriate standardized assessments (MEAP, MME, district quarterly benchmark assessments) as 25% of a teacher's evaluation score. MEAP scores will be tracked for each student each year and for teachers in MEAP-assessed subjects, the district will analyze trends in students' scores and assess improvement over previous years. Those teachers whose students consistently improve in standardized assessments will be rated favorably; those teachers whose students consistently do not improve will be rated unfavorably.

#### Principal Evaluation Tool/Process

Effective school leaders are also critical to the work required to improve teaching and learning. Building a community of instructional leaders who are able to support teachers in improving instructional practice and create the necessary structures and systems required to effectuate this work is an essential element of comprehensive reform.

Developing the capacity of school leaders to support improvements in teaching and learning, requires that principals have access to meaningful professional learning opportunities that are aligned to core competencies that define effective leadership and at the same time, meet each principal's individual learning needs. The creation of a comprehensive principal evaluation system is a core element of leadership professional development and continuous improvement. To that end, in January 2013 the District will begin the work of improving our existing principal evaluation system, in collaboration with a focus group of school principals that is based on a continuous improvement model and shared accountability for student learning and achievement. The primary purpose of the evaluation system is to improve the capacity of the principal to improve teaching and learning by:

Creating a shared vision of effective leadership

Providing meaningful feedback to principals that support the refinement of their work

Providing qualitative and quantitative data that drive the design/adjustments of the comprehensive principal professional development plan

Creating a system of accountability

In addition, effective August 9, 2010, the District revamped principals' employment agreements and compensation structure to base each principal's tenure and compensation upon certain specified performance indicators, particularly student achievement. Article VIII of the District's Administrative Employment Agreement with principals provides that salary step advancements and annual performance reviews will include, but not be limited to, the following:

Achieving prescribed student performance targets  
Management of budget – general purpose, school-based and federal;  
Student attendance goals;  
Suspension/expulsion goals;  
Graduation goals;  
Thoughtful implementation of program recommendations as a result of school diagnostic reviews;  
Satisfactory completion and implementation of SIP academic plans;  
Participation and engagement in prescribed professional development opportunities;  
and  
Establish a school leadership team focused on strategies to dramatically increase student achievement as measured by national, state and District assessments.  
Decisions regarding each principal's salary step advancement (i.e., compensation) and contract renewal will be based upon his/her performance with respect to the above indicators.

## **LINDA WHITAKER**

**3940 Audubon Detroit, Michigan 48224 (313) 885-8881**

### **OBJECTIVE**

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**To promote excellence by emphasizing and capitalizing on the abilities of all stakeholders in a school/community to enhance student achievement**

### **EDUCATION**

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Wayne State University  
Detroit, MI  
*Educational Specialist*  
Major in Education Administration

Wayne State University  
Detroit, MI  
*Masters of Education*  
Major in Parent Education and Pre-Kindergarten

Wayne State University  
Detroit, MI

## Nichols Professional Development Calendar

### August

8/27/12 - 8/29/12 Success For All Training - SFA Point Coach  
8/30/12 Setting Accelerated Reader Goals

### September

9/9/12 Accelerated Reader Review Ms. Robinson  
9/19/12 Success For All Tutoring Training Ms. Cassar  
9/23/12 Common Core Video Ms. Robinson  
9/26/12 Success For All Grouping Ms. Cassar

### October

10/3/12 Professional Learning Communities  
10/17/12 Professional Learning Communities  
10/28/12 Common Core Video #2 Ms. Robinson  
10/31/12 Accelerated Math Ms. Partmon

### November

11/4/12 Professional Learning Communities  
11/8/12 Priority School Training  
10/18/12 Professional Learning Communities

### December

12/2/12 Cooperative Learning Training Ms. Cassar  
12/9/12 Professional Learning Communities

### January

1/20/13 Professional Learning Communities

### February

2/10/13 Professional Learning Communities

### March

3/6/12 Professional Learning Communities  
3/19/13 District PD  
3/20/13 District PD

### April

4/20/13 Professional Learning Communities

### May

5/11/13 Professional Learning Communities

Increased Learning Time - School Calendar: Show how you are utilizing the additional time available due to the decrease in the number of preparation periods. Also, you can note that the school year will be extended 4 additional weeks.

**The district has increased time for core subjects during the school day. The new time allotment will remain in effect until further notice from the district. The Reading/English Language Arts instruction time for elementary students has increased to 120 minutes each day and 90 minutes for middle school. Math has increased to 90 minutes. The 60 minute (ELA) and 45 minute (Math) increase is possible due to the elimination of the common prep each Friday and the elimination of three preparation periods each week for elementary teachers. There is a need to increase effective instruction time for the core subjects as evidenced by the number of students scoring not/partially proficient in Reading/Math on the state Assessment. All lessons to be taught are aligned with state grade level content expectations (GLCE) and provided to teachers through the use of pacing guides and other curriculum materials. All homeroom/middle school Teachers will maximize instruction time by providing small group instruction and cooperative group learning during the day for core subjects. Through the use of cooperative learning groups, students are not only responsible for learning the material but they are instrumental in helping their teammates learn. By allowing students more time to work as groups per our big idea, it provides teachers with additional time to support other students needing one on one, assistance.**

**Also, the school year will be extended by 4 weeks.**