



Washoe County School District **2013-2014 Acceleration Zone of Schools**

Area Superintendent: Debra Biersdorff

Zone Principals: Jenni Anderson, Veterans ES; Don Angotti, Warner ES; Kevin Carroll, Sparks HS; Dina Ciaramella, Loder ES; Sara Cunningham, Booth ES; Denise DuFrene, Corbett ES; Joe Ernst, Anderson ES; Yuen Fong, Stead ES; Heidi Gavrilles, Mathews ES; Susan Kehoe, Duncan ES; Prim Walters, Sun Valley ES

Overview: We are a team of eleven schools in the Washoe County School District undertaking an accelerated reform initiative. This initiative represents a major strategic effort by the Washoe County School District to turn around and improve its lowest-performing schools. Our goal will be reached by fully committing ourselves to improving student achievement by fostering a rich learning environment for all. We will develop unique school performance plans that establish high expectations for learning and teaching and we will commit to using our resources wisely to ensure that the needs of our school communities are met. We will not tolerate excuses and we will not waver in our mission to ensure that each and every child is successful.

CORE VALUES

The WCSD Board of Trustees has guided the implementation of a local accountability system through the development of its Strategic Plan including the adoption of a Managed Performance Empowerment (MPE) Theory of Action. The MPE model supports lower performing schools with increased levels of management including the identification of an Acceleration Zone of schools. Each of the schools in the Acceleration Zone will become a model school for the entire district providing professional development opportunities around successful practices and student outcomes. While each school in the Acceleration Zone is unique, there are expectations that all schools will adhere to:

Expectation	Description
Shared Core Values	<p>We believe...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students have the ability to achieve academic success • All students should attend a school that is safe and welcoming • All students should have a meaningful relationship with an adult at the school • The school community must conduct itself in a respectful and fair manner; all members of the community must treat each other with respect and caring • All members of the school community have the right to feel valued and connected to their school • Families are valued members of the school community and will always be welcome in our school • All staff members must believe all students can learn and have the right to a high quality education • All members of the school community will set and achieve high expectations for student performance • It is our responsibility to ensure our students are learning the necessary skills to become college and career ready • All staff members deserve high quality, differentiated professional development focusing on Tier One instruction and learning

Acceleration Zone Guide

EXHIBIT U-1 - EDUCATION
Document consists of 5 pages.
Entire exhibit provided.
Meeting Date: 02-25-14

GUIDING ELEMENTS OF ZONE DESIGNATION

Every teacher, staff member, and administrator in the Acceleration Zone is an instructional leader. Each school's faculty and staff are instrumental to the school's success. Each school will be governed in such a way that staff members most affected by decisions will be most involved in helping to make those decisions. Each principal joining the Acceleration Zone commits to working closely with zone colleagues and district support personnel to ensure each school is supported in its mission to improve student outcomes. The area superintendent of the Acceleration Zone commits to ensuring the district supports each school for successful and sustainable turnaround.

Expectation	Description
Selection into the Zone	Schools that are identified as Priority or Focus by the state of Nevada, schools receiving one or two stars based on the district accountability framework, and schools designated by the Superintendent are eligible for the Acceleration Zone. In addition to accountability findings, an assessment of a school's progress, that includes a multitude of factors, will also be used to place schools in the Acceleration Zone. A historical analysis will be conducted, before final selection, to identify systems-level factors that may prove to be barriers to school improvement. Principal tenure will also be a key consideration; if the same principal has been in place for three or more years, this may lend weight to school selection and the use of a transformation model. It should be noted that all eligible schools will not necessarily be placed in the Acceleration Zone.
Exiting the Zone	It is anticipated that once placed in the Acceleration Zone, schools will remain in the zone for a three-year period. During the first year of placement, significant effort will be put into the planning and implementation of successful practices including decisions about curriculum, resources, personnel, school climate, and monitoring. Additionally, specific student achievement targets will be established for each school. If significant gains have been made after the second year of placement in the zone and there are no other extraneous factors raising concern with respect to sustainability, a plan will be made to exit the school after the third year of placement. However, if after the second year of placement significant performance gains have not been realized, the decision can be made to keep the school in the zone for a fourth year. If after the fourth year of placement the school is unable to exit due to its inability to meet performance expectations, the school will be re-classified as an Acceleration Zone school and the three year 'clock' will restart.
Incentives	Acceleration Zone principals will be provided with a yearly stipend of \$1,500.00 upon the completion of each school year. At the end of Year One, the stipend will be predicated on successful implementation of the turnaround plan; at the end of Year Two, the stipend will be predicated on meeting student performance expectations; and at the end of Year Three, the stipend will be predicated on sustained change and successful departure from the zone.
Negotiables and Non-Negotiables	The Office of School Performance (OSP) will work with other district departments to provide clear articulation of non-negotiable expectations in areas where action/activity may be negotiable. This will include attention to personnel matters, curriculum and instruction, assessment, professional development, student support services, budget, etc. The zone area superintendent will work as the liaison between zone schools and OSP.
Professional Development	<p>As noted, due to the focused reform plans implemented by zone schools, there must be a clear articulation of district activities and initiatives these schools will be implementing. For example, any centralized professional development efforts must be filtered through the Acceleration Zone lens to determine appropriate school participation; this may be true for current structures such as monthly principal meetings, leveled principal meetings, vertical principal meetings, and district-led teacher professional development activities. It is expected that all Acceleration Zone schools will use early release time on Wednesdays for teacher collaboration and site-based professional development activities.</p> <p>It is expected that all administrators working in the Acceleration Zone will participate in the Analyzing Teaching for Student Results (formerly known as OAT) training during the first year. It is anticipated that all principals assigned to the zone will participate in the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL) training beginning in the second year.</p>

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

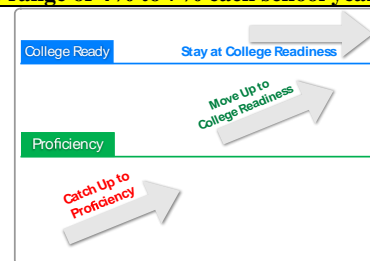
Every district school has years of school improvement plans on site. While these plans may be able to provide some insight as to the direction of a school, the intent of the Acceleration Zone is not to mildly revise what is currently in place. What must occur is an intense and honest look at performance outcomes and the creation of a focused improvement plan that addresses specific performance expectations including the social and emotional well-being and growth of each child. Therefore, each school will develop a unique School Performance Plan (SPP). Explicit in the SPP, will be goals for teaching, learning, and family and community engagement. The following elements will be present in each plan:

Element	Description
Tier One Instruction	Each school will develop a clear and focused curriculum plan that addresses individual student needs. Each school will implement Common Core State Standards with fidelity ensuring rigorous and robust learning for all students. Each school will ensure teachers receive relevant professional development around the teaching, learning and assessment of core standards.
Support Plan for All Students	Each school will develop academic support plans that are unique to the needs of individual learners. Intervention supports will be clearly outlined, developed, and implemented in consultation with the zone's area superintendent. Relevant assessment data will be used to quickly target students who need extra support and academic interventions. Collaboration with district support personnel specializing in Special Education services, ELL services, and tiered-support services will be used to guarantee viability of interventions. Additionally, academic enrichment supports for those students achieving at high levels will be implemented in consultation with the zone's area superintendent.
Interim Assessments and Data Dialogue	There are multiple sources of information that should be used to fuel teacher conversations regarding student learning. Although academic test data is not the only source of information that should be used, it is a centerpiece. Each school will employ a balanced assessment system to address student needs. This should include, but is not limited to, year-end accountability measures designed to provide evaluation of annual performance, universal screeners such as MAP and DRA at the elementary level, and weekly and bi-weekly progress monitoring assessments such as curriculum based measures that monitor core instructional practice and student response to intervention. CRT data as well as HSPE data will be analyzed for item level analysis. Acceleration Zone teachers and administrators will regularly engage in activities designed to strengthen skills around the use of data to drive instructional decisions for each student
Professional Development and PLC Work	Each school will devise a schedule that allows for regular, data-driven teacher collaboration time. It is understood that a focus on Tier One instruction will drive each school's targeted professional development needs. It is also understood that the analysis of student performance data and resulting improvements to classroom instruction will drive each school's PLC work. Additionally, there will be clear articulation between district professional development activities and the needs of each school within the Acceleration Zone.
Evaluation of Teaching Performance	Each principal will adhere to district guidelines regarding the evaluation of teacher performance. Acceleration Zone principals will foster professional and productive relationships with each teacher on staff in order to build trust for a meaningful evaluation process based on continuous feedback for improvement. As previously noted, each zone principal will participate in the district's Analyzing Teaching for Student Results training during the 2013-14 school year and will implement strategies learned for observation and analysis of teaching. Learning walks, conducted by zone leadership as well as teacher peers, will serve to strengthen the learning and teaching goals of each school's performance plan.
Family and Community Engagement	Each school will develop a family and community engagement plan that truly seeks to empower parents and guardians to become involved in the success of their child as well as the success of the school. The Acceleration Zone schools understand that productive and positive family engagement activities are key to supporting the success of each student; opportunities that invite parents to be an important partner in the governance of a school help to create a support network for the entire community.
School Climate	Each school will develop a plan to ensure that a safe, caring and engaging school climate is in place that supports students in reaching their academic potential. Teacher expectations and support of students, as well as high expectations for positive and respectful relationships that value diversity, are integral to school success. Research shows that attendance, learning, test performance and graduation rates are higher in schools where students feel valued, challenged and supported.

PERFORMANCE TARGETS & EXPECTATIONS

The district's expectation is that every child will graduate college and highly-skilled career ready. To achieve this goal, persistent gaps in achievement between student groups must be closed. This work can only be accomplished through a central focus on our core business, teaching and learning. Therefore, state and local accountability frameworks have been developed that strongly and persistently support teaching and learning; their purpose is to provide all stakeholders with the ability to account for areas of strength and areas where improvement and support are needed. Additionally, the local district framework guides schools in the development and achievement of performance targets aligned to the district's Strategic Plan. In collaboration with the zone's area superintendent, the Office of School Performance, the Office of Accountability, and other district support personnel, school performance targets will be established that align and guide primary focus areas. The following performance framework targets will be addressed in each school's performance plan:

Proficiency	Proficiency is a strong indicator of being on the pathway to graduation, even as early as 3 rd grade. Each school will set proficiency improvement targets in the range of 4% to 7% each school year.
Growth AGHL & SGP	<p>Adequate Growth to Higher Level (AGHL): In Elementary and Middle School, a pillar of the performance framework is getting students who are not yet proficient to grow on a trajectory to meet proficiency within 3 years, and getting those who are proficient to advanced levels within three years; this will help to ensure our students reach high school ready to access the curriculum in order to graduate college and highly-skilled career ready. In high school, the performance framework helps to ensure all students are on track to graduate after their first two years and well prepared to begin taking advanced courses. AGHL measures the percent of students growing adequately to meet these targets. Since AGHL is rooted in academic growth and proficiency, focusing on improvements in AGHL targets will have the impact of improving proficiency rates and median SGP. Each school will set AGHL improvement targets in the range of 4% to 7% each school year.</p> <p>Student Growth Percentile (SGP): SGP is a longitudinal way of understanding a student's current CRT scale score based on his/her prior scores and relative to other students with similar prior scores. The student growth percentile provides a measure of academic growth where students who have similar academic score histories provide a baseline for understanding each student's progress. For example, a growth percentile of 60 in mathematics means the student's growth exceeded that of 60 percent of his/her academic peers. In other words, the student's latest score was somewhat higher than we would have expected based on past score history. Each school will set SGP improvement targets in the range of 4% to 7% each school year.</p>
Achievement Gap	Each school in the Acceleration Zone will reduce student achievement gaps. Each School Performance Plan (SPP) will set specific targets for the reduction of achievement gaps aligned to district expectations. In the Elementary Schools, achievement gap targets should include growth and proficiency. Targeting growth (both SGP and AGHL) for your student populations in 4 th – 6 th grade is likely to lead to gap narrowing.
Engagement Student and Family	A focus on student and family engagement ensures our students are successfully moving along the Pathway to Graduation. Student engagement is measured on the local performance framework via the district's climate survey with questions like "I think a lot about what I learn in my classes even when I'm out of school" and "I look forward to coming to school every day." Family engagement is also measured, in part, on the local performance framework via the district's climate survey. School climate goals should not only focus on climate survey indicators, but also on the overall engagement of students and their families in the school. This overall approach will lead to a stronger school climate as well as increased student performance.
Graduation Rate "On Pathway to Graduation"	Each high school in the Acceleration Zone is expected to increase the overall graduation rate by 4% to 7% yearly and as measured by the four-year cohort graduation rate. Each SPP will set specific targets for this increased graduation rate as well as complementary targets for all subgroups. Additional targets will be set around the areas of "On Pathway to Graduation" including success on 9 th and 10 th grade credit attainment and HSPE status; focusing on these targets will lead to sustained incremental improvements in the school's graduation rate as well as achievement gap indicators. For example, "The percentage of 9 th and 10 th graders earning sufficient credits to be on track to graduate



	will increase by 3% overall and by 5% for our achievement gap populations each year.” Or “The percentage of students who finish 11 th grade having passed all of their HSPE sections will increase by 5% overall and by 7% for our achievement gap populations each year.”
College Readiness	College Readiness indicators include the percent of students accessing and successfully completing challenging high school and college-level courses and attaining advanced and honors diplomas. To ensure sustainability in this area, consider action steps that build a strong Advanced Placement pathway leading to the number of students passing AP exams. Reasonable increases in AP course access will lead to increases in the number of students passing AP Exams and achieving college readiness. Additionally, consider action steps around building an AP pathway including advanced/honors courses with your feeder middle school and your 9th and 10th grade academic departments. Advanced Diplomas are awarded for students who earn 24 credits (including all requirements for a Standard Diploma) plus one additional credit of science and one additional credit of math. Students must also have a minimum unweighted 3.25 GPA, weighted or unweighted. Leading indicators/action steps for Advanced and Honors Diploma attainment can include ensuring all students are placed in appropriate numbers of science and math courses, and GPA monitoring.

The district’s accountability framework, as a complement to the state’s framework, measures each school’s progress in meeting and exceeding the above targets. **During the first year of inclusion within the Acceleration Zone, it is expected that each school will achieve an 8-10 point overall gain on the local framework.** While each school is unique and framework performance varies, the expectation of an overall 8-10 point gain on the local framework holds all schools accountable for broader success while allowing individual schools to focus on specific areas for improvement. Specific expectations for each school’s future performance as a member of the Acceleration Zone will be reevaluated at the end of each school year.