

# **SUPERINTENDENT'S EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE:**

## **FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

**MARCH 10, 2010**



Keep your eye on the **CAP.**

**SUPERINTENDENT’S EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE: FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Superintendent’s Charge:**

*Suggest strategies for improving student achievement at persistently underachieving elementary schools.*

- *Strategies must be possible within available resources.*
- *Strategies must be applicable to all schools.*

**Summary of Recommended Strategies:**

1. Staff Quality and Development
(1-A) Designate a district-wide cabinet-level officer for persistently underachieving schools. The unit should operate autonomously, is directly accountable to the superintendent, and should utilize continued community stakeholder involvement. <i>Related Recommendations: (1) Create a pilot “turnaround zone” of persistently underachieving schools that includes Prime 6 schools; (2) Develop a specific plan to address the historic issues of underachieving schools in the Prime 6 area.</i>
(1-B) Enhance professional development programs in persistently underachieving schools through increased time set aside for this activity (e.g., use lesson study as applied at Jeffers ES; establish common prep times for all grade levels and departments; ensure structured teacher planning time; add a professional development time slot to every teacher’s day, in addition to prep time). Training should be high quality, collaborative, site-based, data-driven, and available to teachers <u>and</u> administrators.
(1-C) Institute an improved program for selecting and evaluating principals who will be effective leaders of their learning environment, demonstrate ability as transformational leaders, instill a culture within the teaching staff of “no excuses,” and create effective teaching teams, with a three-year timeframe for success or dismissal. <i>Related Recommendation: Renegotiate current administrator contracts.</i>
(1-D) Partner with Teach for America (TFA) to provide 30 new teachers for two or three of the lowest-performing schools for two years, and concentrate on 3 <sup>rd</sup> to 5 <sup>th</sup> grades. <i>Related Recommendation: If TFA achieves its student performance goals, continue and expand the relationship.</i>
(1-E) Provide mentorship program for new teachers and teachers who may be struggling. <i>Related Recommendations: (1) Place emphasis on the eligibility requirements of high quality mentors and the relationship “match” between mentor and mentee; (2) Develop an evaluation rubric for effectiveness of the mentor/mentee relationship and program outcomes (e.g., “inspect what you expect”); (3) Identify and encourage students to pursue careers in teaching (e.g., STEP and STEP-UP programs).</i>
(1-F) Re-establish the principal mentor program to replace what the District has lost; including but not limited to recruiting retired administrators with a demonstrated record of success as volunteer mentors of the school principals in the underachieving schools. <i>Related Recommendations: (1) Approach the Clark County Public Education Foundation for assistance; (2) Each persistently underachieving school principal must have a mentor; (3) The District must do a better job of asking retirees for their assistance.</i>
(1-G) Require diversity and cultural awareness training for staff at persistently underachieving schools.
(1-H) Review and strengthen superintendents’ (e.g., deputy, associate and academic manager level) supervision, accountability, and evaluation protocols, connecting outcomes to student, principal, and school performance. Set “no excuses” as the standard. <i>Related Recommendations: (1) Establish accountability metrics for how long turnaround efforts are allowed prior to sanctions; (2) Establish standards for what to do with failing supervisors.</i>

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<b>2. Parent Engagement</b>
(2-A) Invest in District-level parent engagement efforts that support students and families at persistently underachieving schools, and ensure there is at least one qualified family advocate at each of those schools. <i>Related Recommendations: (1) Prioritize Title I funds for these programs; (2) Improve district-wide monitoring of parent engagement and coordination with Parent Services Office.</i>
<b>3. Collaboration and Partnerships</b>
(3-A) Conduct an in-depth analysis of the services necessary for and available to FRL and ELL populations at persistently underachieving schools, using this information to target Focus School Partnerships and other programs to provide wrap-around services and a community/school model at those schools. <i>Related Recommendations: (1) Coordinate this effort with the recommended parent engagement strategy; (2) Hold school principals accountable for implementation of this strategy by coordinating efforts with the recommended accountability strategies; (3) Pursue related grant opportunities with Lincy and others.</i>
(3-B) Explore additional partnerships with higher education institutions (Harvard, NSHE, Toro, others) to create field education programs in and for persistently underachieving schools. <i>Related Strategy: Include this strategy in the conversation with the Lincy Foundation (see below).</i>
(3-C) Form a partnership with UNLV-Lincy Foundation-Brookings Institute to develop further research and SIMULTANEOUS “on the ground” strategies that will further develop sound research-based strategies for the 100 or more schools that are facing this NCLB classification. <i>Related Recommendations: (1) Clark County is doing a lot of things right, and those best practices could be expanded through research and shared with District and school leadership; (2) Position these best practices as pilot programs for grant funding and other opportunities for community involvement with Lincy and others.</i>
(3-D) Maintain some form of community advisory committee, appointed by and accountable to the Superintendent, to ensure ongoing focus and advocacy for persistently underachieving schools.
<b>4. Quality Learning Environment</b>
(4-A) Direct school district and Title I funds to ensure that every persistently underachieving school will have a high quality 3- and 4-year-old program and full-day kindergarten. <i>Related Recommendation: Lobby the state legislature for set-aside funding for this strategy, as well as other uses that support the Title I and FRL student populations.</i>
(4-B) Encourage the use of looping strategies in persistently underachieving schools to ensure grade-level skill attainment without the negative consequences of retention.
(4-C) Enhance data coordinator training and analysis at persistently underachieving schools to ensure schools are making intensive and frequent use of individual student performance data for instructional decision-making and inside-the-building resource allocation.
(4-D) Enhance literacy and reading programs at persistently underachieving schools.
(4-E) Expand the use of dual language programs, bilingual schools, and language immersion programs for special populations (primarily Spanish speakers). <i>Related Recommendation: Lobby the state legislature for set-aside funds for ELL programs.</i>

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<b>Strategy 1-A:</b> Designate a district-wide cabinet-level officer for persistently underachieving schools. The unit should operate autonomously, is directly accountable to the superintendent, and should utilize continued community stakeholder involvement.		
	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates the superintendent's commitment to persistently underachieving schools.</li><li>• Places a single individual in charge of persistently underachieving schools.</li><li>• Allows scientifically controlled comparisons of like populations using different reform approaches.</li><li>• Allows foundation support and policy studies of very specific set of schools.</li><li>• The czar can run interference when other agencies attempt to exercise their authority and in the case of reconstitution, can manage that process.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires realignment of resources to support the czar.</li><li>• Without including similarly situated schools that are succeeding, there is a chance of repeating unsuccessful programs.</li><li>• Number of schools may grow too large.</li></ul>
<i>External</i>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concentrates external support on targeted schools instead of diluting support across the district.</li><li>• Acknowledges to policy makers (e.g., legislators, community member) that someone is in charge and can be contacted for answers.</li><li>• Communities and neighborhoods have an individual representing their particular interests and therefore can coordinate their support and policy pressure through that office.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signals to the public that these schools are substandard, suggests that they can't be trusted</li><li>• The czar becomes the fall-guy, diverting attention from those really responsible.</li><li>• The czar is seen as the solution instead of what the czar does.</li><li>• Suggests the czar is the single solution when the solution is complex and will take time.</li></ul>
<b>Related Recommendations:</b> (1) Create a pilot “turnaround zone” of persistently underachieving schools that includes Prime 6 schools; (2) Develop a specific plan to address the historic issues of underachieving schools in the Prime 6 area.		

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<b>Strategy 1-B:</b> Enhance professional development programs in persistently underachieving schools through increased time set aside for this activity (e.g., use lesson study as applied at Jeffers ES; establish common prep times for all grade levels and departments; ensure structured teacher planning time; add a professional development time slot to every teacher’s day, in addition to prep time). Training should be high quality, collaborative, site-based, data-driven, and available to teachers <u>and</u> administrators.		
	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research demonstrates that quality staff development is essential to reform efforts and improved student achievement.</li><li>• Ongoing data-driven staff development is linked to improved student achievement.</li><li>• School-based staff development builds pride and ownership among staff on the essential elements for improved instruction at that school.</li><li>• Teachers involved with the student affected are best situated to know what development the staff needs to meet the needs of the students.</li><li>• Common planning time and other such use of time enhances the continuity of instruction.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Locally developed staff development assumes all enlightenment is contained at the school and assumes there is little of merit available outside the building.</li><li>• Assumes that staff development and collaboration between staff is the driving force behind reform when reinforcement of weak practices may be institutionalized.</li><li>• Without close supervision, common planning time can lose the desired intent (human nature prevails).</li><li>• Common planning time implies “no cost” while the scheduling challenges likely include some increased cost.</li></ul>
<i>External</i>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partners are likely to fund staff development at a school while funding it at the district level promises dilution.</li><li>• The outside observer, including parents, received evidence that the school is an effective self contained operational unit.</li><li>• Staff development driven by the school communicates that the school is customizing its work to the particular needs of that community.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggests that the school district is disjointed with a series of silos without a common mission.</li><li>• Diminishes central leadership and the sharing of successful program between schools.</li></ul>

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<b>Strategy 1-C:</b> Institute an improved program for selecting and evaluating principals who will be effective leaders of their learning environment, demonstrate ability as transformational leaders, instill a culture within the teaching staff of “no excuses,” and create effective teaching teams, with a three-year timeframe for success or dismissal.		
	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Purposefully designed to develop a succession plan for leadership in persistently underachieving schools.</li><li>• Invests in school leadership team as alternative to single-leader model.</li><li>• Adds continuity during inevitable transition.</li><li>• Allows principal to allocate staff to meet needs of students. In particular, data management, behavior management, and parent involvement are encouraged.</li><li>• Focuses on student success and effective teaching instead of administrative roles concentrating on management duties.</li><li>• Clearly empowers school staff to make decisions while de-emphasizing centralized decision making.</li><li>• Gives parents a sense of who is clearly in charge and gives them immediate access.</li><li>• Suggests team building that will help retain staff and reduce loss of staff development investment produced by high turnover rates.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective training and mentoring may not be readily available.</li><li>• Without differential pay or merit, all efforts may be short-circuited.</li></ul>
<i>External</i>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community support is increased by promoting from within so that familiar faces are retained</li><li>• Encourages a reputation that encourages parents to exercise choice.</li><li>• The culture of investment in the success of the student body may spread to other adjacent social service providers.</li><li>• Reputation for consistency of staff and performance of school in low SES schools serves as an incentive for partners to invest in the school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School becomes recognized for the individuals leading it instead of for the mission of the school; when those individuals leave, the school may have difficulty identifying its role.</li></ul>
<b>Related Recommendation:</b> Renegotiate current administrator contracts.		

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Strategy 1-D: Partner with Teach for America (TFA) to provide 30 new teachers for two or three of the lowest-performing schools for two years, and concentrate on 3 <sup>rd</sup> to 5 <sup>th</sup> grades.		
	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>TFA provides monthly support for first-year teachers, and every two months for second-year teachers; this is on top of what CCSD offers.</li><li>Program directors have data-based meetings with teachers to review benchmarks and performance.</li><li>Grouping of teachers in fewer schools means more intense monitoring.</li><li>Builds on District’s Alternative Route to Licensure efforts.</li><li>TFA provides funding.</li><li>Student achievement in demonstrably higher (15-20%)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Turnover of teachers can be bad for school climate.</li><li>Teachers are less experienced.</li></ul>
External	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Enhances ability to recruit quality teachers for schools that have the toughest time with recruitment.</li><li>Clustering of young teacher in similar situations will allow for concentrated training efforts and, hopefully, lead to higher retention rates for the teachers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Community may perceive their schools to have teachers of a lesser quality than others.</li><li>TFA funding could be lost.</li></ul>
Related Recommendation: If TFA achieves its student performance goals, continue and expand the relationship.		

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<b>Strategy 1-E:</b> Provide mentorship program for new teachers and teachers who may be struggling.		
	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies that new teachers need help from day one and doesn't wait until they are in failure mode.</li> <li>Communicates that collaboration is the essential component to successful classroom teaching.</li> <li>Uses the research already available on the nature of successful mentoring programs.</li> <li>Provides a vehicle for ongoing ethnic and cultural awareness for the uninitiated.</li> <li>Reassures parents that the new teacher is getting the help they need to be effective.</li> <li>Helps reduce teacher isolation.</li> <li>Promote sharing and model teaching.</li> <li>Demonstrates compliance with the statutory requirement to assist teachers in their development.</li> <li>Reduces turnover and cements the teacher in that school community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentoring is only as good as its participants.</li> <li>Doesn't hold the universities responsible for the quality of their graduates -- fixes problems for them.</li> <li>Costs money.</li> <li>Assumes that the district has the infrastructure to implement the mentoring program.</li> <li>Delays the process of documenting ineffective teachers for dismissal.</li> <li>Assumes new teachers can improve -- a belief that might not be true in all cases.</li> </ul>
<i>External</i>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcomes new teachers to the school community and reassures parents that they are being supported.</li> <li>Provides the opportunity to pair mentor, new teacher, and community member into mentoring team to assist the new teacher in getting started - community advocate.</li> <li>Could be a “grant eligible” program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labels new teachers as less than qualified when they may end up being superstars.</li> <li>Funding may not be available to either launch or sustain such a program.</li> </ul>
<b>Related Recommendations:</b> (1) Place emphasis on the eligibility requirements of high quality mentors and the relationship “match” between mentor and mentee; (2) Develop an evaluation rubric for effectiveness of the mentor/mentee relationship and program outcomes (e.g., “inspect what you expect”); (3) Identify and encourage students to pursue careers in teaching (e.g., STEP and STEP-UP programs).		



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<b>Strategy 1-F:</b> Re-establish the principal mentor program to replace what the District has lost; including but not limited to recruiting retired administrators with a demonstrated record of success as volunteer mentors of the school principals in the underachieving schools.		
	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cements the importance of leadership development as an essential element for reform.</li><li>• Accepts the reality that principals don't have all the answers and the importance of mentoring to meet challenges facing the school.</li><li>• Reduces principal isolation.</li><li>• Serves to also develop assistant principals.</li><li>• Structured mentoring research provides ample evidence of how to effectively structure mentoring/coaching programs.</li><li>• Recaptures the investment the district has made in now-retired staff.</li><li>• Allows the principal to have another set of eyes to analyze the data and related information.</li><li>• Encourages "safe" exchange that is not judgmental.</li><li>• Reassures staff that the principal is using a mentor to help him/her think through important decisions prior to instituting those decisions - greater sense of collaborative decision making.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires money to support the program.</li><li>• Assumes retired administrators are the best mentors; maybe we should look outside of education for mentoring assistance.</li><li>• Assumes principals will be candid about the challenges they face; i.e., admitting weakness.</li><li>• Muddies the role of the principal's supervisor from that of the principal's mentor.</li><li>• May send a message to staff that the principal isn't the individual in charge; i.e., puts a shadow principal in place.</li><li>• Assumes that veteran administrators, even those with a strong record of success, are qualified to be mentors.</li></ul>
<i>External</i>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates to the public that the principal is looking outside his/her own experiences and skills to find solutions.</li><li>• Mentoring/coaching is a business model and is likely to garner private sector support, including the use of non-traditional mentors.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggests to the public that the mentor is in control instead of the principal (shadow principal).</li><li>• Diminishes the perception of the principal as the true instructional leader.</li></ul>
<b>Related Recommendations:</b> (1) Approach the Clark County Public Education Foundation for assistance; (2) Each persistently underachieving school principal must have a mentor; (3) The District must do a better job of asking retirees for their assistance.		

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Strategy 1-G: Require diversity and cultural awareness training for staff at persistently underachieving schools.		
	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The requirement of diversity and cultural training acknowledges the fact that achievement at the persistently underachieving schools can benefit from that training.</li><li>• Diversity and cultural training programs are readily available.</li><li>• District experts are readily accessible.</li><li>• Training presents the opportunity to adjust to the changing demography of the school.</li><li>• Training might also present the opportunity to expand to language training.</li><li>• The training honors diversity and cultural awareness - an important goal for any school.</li><li>• Reminds staff of the extraordinary contribution a diverse student population makes to the school culture.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Money is involved.</li><li>• The requirement assumes that diversity training/sensitivity does not already exist in the staff at the persistently underachieving schools.</li><li>• Requiring such training could produce some pushback.</li><li>• It is assumed that this training will offset training time from that devoted to instructional improvement (although diversity and cultural awareness can be important to improving instruction).</li></ul>
External	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge that the school staff is committed to the diversity and cultural awareness reflective of the demographics of the community served by the school.</li><li>• Training can include agencies and organization outside of those presently available to the district thus garnering community support.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community understanding of what exactly is diversity and cultural is inexact and open to broad interpretation and misunderstanding.</li></ul>

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<b>Strategy 1-H:</b> Review and strengthen superintendents’ (e.g., deputy, associate, and academic manager level) supervision, accountability, and evaluation protocols, connecting outcomes to student, principal, and school performance. Set “no excuses” as the standard.		
	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sends clear message to principals and their supervisors that their accountability is based on student growth in academic performance and other critical factors.</li> <li>Reassures parents that instructional leadership is the focus of the principal's efforts.</li> <li>Reassures parents and the public that supervisory leadership is the focus of the superintendents’ efforts to mentor, train, and motivate principals.</li> <li>Recognizes those who can deliver on promises.</li> <li>Encourages the use of formative assessment to monitor progress toward goal.</li> <li>“Inspect what you expect.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability of resources for training.</li> <li>Possibility of court action by those dismissed.</li> </ul>
<i>External</i>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal and state policy appears to be moving in this direction.</li> <li>Encourages parents to better understand performance data because accountability assessments are applied to the principal.</li> <li>Gives communities with persistently underachieving schools an accountability measure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of funding to provide adequate resources and support.</li> <li>May run afoul of state law and/or negotiated contracts.</li> </ul>
<b>Related Recommendations:</b> (1) Establish accountability metrics for how long turnaround efforts are allowed prior to sanctions; (2) Establish standards for what to do with failing supervisors.		

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<b>Strategy 2-A:</b> Invest in District-level parent engagement efforts that support students and families at persistently underachieving schools, and ensure there is at least one qualified family advocate at each of those schools.		
	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrable results from parent involvement.</li> <li>• Engages parents in their child’s education as well as their own development.</li> <li>• Allowable for use of Title 1 funds.</li> <li>• Suggests that school operations and staff extend to the neighborhood and home and are not confined to the school grounds.</li> <li>• Encourages wrap-around services (e.g., health and dental).</li> <li>• Reduces language barrier some non-English speaking parent experience.</li> <li>• Adult/ parental education facilitated.</li> <li>• Parental engagement plans can also create an ombudsmen role designed to manage conflict between the home and school.</li> <li>• Promotes volunteerism.</li> <li>• Provides direct responsibility to staff for assisting parents to understand the choice options available to them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents come with the baggage of a bad school experience and will resist.</li> <li>• "Parent involvement" is a generality and may not be well defined; unified plan for parent involvement may be absent.</li> <li>• Often parent involvement programs fall apart when a key staff member leaves, suggesting that many of them are built around staff rather than a specific program design.</li> <li>• If parent service centers are also operational, duplication of services can occur.</li> <li>• One more thing for the principal to manage when focus is to be on instruction.</li> <li>• They often require space when space is at a premium.</li> <li>• Training of staff for such programs is not well defined.</li> </ul>
<i>External</i>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad community support for wrap around services.</li> <li>• Builds confidence in parents that the school is a welcome place for them.</li> <li>• Potentially enhances the role of traditional organizations like PTA and PTSA.</li> <li>• Offers opportunities for community service agencies to augment instruction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Resources” may be impossible to find.</li> <li>• Creates equity issue when one school has resources to support the parental involvement plan and the other doesn't.</li> </ul>
<b>Related Recommendations:</b> (1) Prioritize Title I funds for these programs; (2) Improve district-wide monitoring of parent engagement and coordination with Parent Services Office.		

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<b>Strategy 3-A:</b> Conduct an in-depth analysis of the services necessary for and available to FRL and ELL populations at persistently underachieving schools, using this information to target Focus School Partnerships and other programs to provide wrap-around services and a community/school model at those schools.		
	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides greater contextual information about these students and assists in designing high quality programs for their specific needs.</li> <li>Communicates to the community a commitment for the betterment of these students.</li> <li>Provides customized staff development plan using the data developed.</li> <li>Allows more strategic needs assessment for Focus School services.</li> <li>Allows for better use of Title 1 funds and opens door with needs assessment data for other foundation and federal funding.</li> <li>Provides an accurate assessment for wrap-around service delivery.</li> <li>Needs assessment may be used by other social service providers to enhance programs for these children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires money to conduct assessment.</li> <li>Suggests accessing data that is non-traditional and unique to these populations; CCSD has little experience is getting such data.</li> <li>Requires FERPA compliance that may be new territory requiring legal intervention.</li> <li>Once data is developed, it suggests that the district will have the resources to resolve the challenges.</li> <li>Absence of wrap-around services becomes an excuse to justify low student achievement.</li> </ul>
<i>External</i>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicates to the community that the district is digging deeply to understand the challenges these students face and connecting wraparound services.</li> <li>Clearly indicates to the community the expansive needs of these children.</li> <li>Provide opportunity for new kinds of partnerships and more effective use of existing ones.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assumes other community services want to cooperate.</li> <li>Presents potential labeling of the schools that can be detrimental.</li> <li>Labels kids as too difficult to fix or invest in.</li> </ul>
<b>Related Recommendations:</b> (1) Coordinate this effort with the recommended parent engagement strategy; (2) Hold school principals accountable for implementation of this strategy by coordinating efforts with the recommended accountability strategies; (3) Pursue related grant opportunities with Lincy and others.		

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Strategy 3-B: Explore additional partnerships with higher education institutions (Harvard, NSHE, Toro, others) to create field education programs in and for persistently underachieving schools.		
	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bring new ideas and funding opportunities to bear on District issues.</li><li>Builds on existing relationship with UNLV.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Partnerships come and go depending on available funding.</li><li>Fails to build capacity within other District departments and schools no involved in the partnership.</li></ul>
External	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continues to draw upon the expertise of Dr. Bob Peterkin and the program he has created at Harvard.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Legislature may see no need to provide state funding if partnerships cover all bases.</li></ul>
Related Strategy: Include this strategy in the conversation with the Lincy Foundation.		

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<b>Strategy 3-C:</b> Form a partnership with UNLV-Lincy Foundation-Brookings Institute to develop further research and SIMULTANEOUS “on the ground” strategies that will further develop sound research-based strategies for the 100 or more schools that are facing this NCLB classification.		
	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops funded partnerships with think tanks with high quality staff and extensive resources.</li> <li>Acknowledges that improving achievement is collaborative and requires complex solutions.</li> <li>Reduces the “island mentality” of CCSD.</li> <li>Encourages solutions based on sound research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assumes that the Lincy Foundation can marshal the expertise necessary.</li> <li>Uses external forces to produce reform when most literature suggests that internal energy must be exerted to produce sustainable long-term reform.</li> <li>Undercuts the authority of the board and superintendent.</li> <li>Requires implementation strategy which is often missing from the process of recommending reform.</li> </ul>
<i>External</i>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds difficult challenges.</li> <li>Reassures the public that smart people are working on complex solutions.</li> <li>Broadens the UNLV relationship and offers opportunities in other areas of reform and school needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing funding not assured.</li> <li>Affirms opinion that the district can’t produce reform on its own.</li> <li>Transfers some accountability to the foundation, thus relieving CCSD of the responsibility.</li> </ul>
<b>Related Recommendations:</b> (1) Clark County is doing a lot of things right, and those best practices could be expanded through research and shared with District and school leadership; (2) Position these best practices as pilot programs for grant funding and other opportunities for community involvement with Lincy and others.		

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Strategy 3-D: Maintain some form of community advisory committee, appointed by and accountable to the Superintendent, to ensure ongoing focus and advocacy for persistently underachieving schools.		
	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Creates community buy-in for decisions and program needs.</li><li>Builds on the substantial amount of work by this Advisory Committee.</li><li>Has the time to focus on best practices.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Committee fatigue sets in; lack of immediate results may drive off some participants.</li></ul>
External	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Brings new ideas to the District.</li><li>Gives staff and parents a place to go where they will feel heard.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Community, other advocates, may be critical of “closed” process by committee not accountable to the Board and state open meeting law.</li></ul>



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<b>Strategy 4-A:</b> Direct school district and Title I funds to ensure that every persistently underachieving school will have a high quality 3- and 4-year-old program and full-day kindergarten.		
	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
<i>Internal</i>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrable academic results in the long term</li><li>• Overwhelming research evidence of program merits.</li><li>• Reduces retentions and other social impacts (see Perry School Study).</li><li>• Increases health care and nutrition of low SES students early in life.</li><li>• Contributes to wrap-around-service delivery model.</li><li>• Instructional strategies are well-established and known.</li><li>• Eases language acquisition for ELL students.</li><li>• Allows for early identification of disabilities.</li><li>• Encourages training of young parents.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outside the core curriculum of K-12; requires additional/ differently trained staff.</li><li>• Some parents resist early schooling programs.</li><li>• Diverts limited Title 1 monies from other programs.</li><li>• Some suggest the early childhood programs have limited return if they are not accompanied by high quality infant and toddler programs.</li><li>• Programs are sometimes directed by paraprofessional staff instead of teachers with specific training in early childhood education - cost savings.</li><li>• Requires specialized facilities; lack of available space.</li></ul>
<i>External</i>	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Revenue-neutral for CCSD general fund; federal dollars involved.</li><li>• Could produce some interagency/ private collaboration on the delivery of programs.</li><li>• Encourages the legislature to see early childhood education as an entitlement.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Competitive with private sector day care centers.</li><li>• Subject to federal funding reductions.</li><li>• Tends to divide community when services are only provided in Title 1 schools, thus raising issue of equity.</li><li>• Finding teachers who are qualified.</li></ul>
<b>Related Recommendation:</b> Lobby the state legislature for set-aside funding for this strategy, as well as other uses that support the Title I and FRL student populations.		

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Strategy 4-B: Encourage the use of looping strategies in persistently underachieving schools to ensure grade-level skill attainment without the negative consequences of retention.		
	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Teachers and principals can implement a more coherent instructional plan with greater continuity appropriate to the individual child’s progress.</li><li>Student and parent fears are allayed.</li><li>Costs are minimal; it’s easy to implement.</li><li>Teacher knowledge increases.</li><li>Improved relationships with students and parents contribute to the development of a stronger school community.</li><li>The stigma of retention is removed.</li><li>Students receive consistent feedback from one individual teacher over the period of more than one year.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increased workload for teacher preparation due to the range of student achievement in the classroom.</li><li>Not all teachers are willing or able to participate.</li><li>While staff development on looping is available, it may not have been tested for efficacy.</li><li>While some research is available on this approach, additional longitudinal tracking needs to be done to establish merit.</li><li>It is unclear if there needs to be a parent training component to complement the in-classroom approach.</li><li>May result in over-representation in these classrooms (e.g., ELL, SES, male) thus intensifying the challenge to the teacher.</li></ul>
External	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CCSD schools already use this strategy so it can be modeled easily.</li><li>Parents see this approach as prescriptive rather than a punishment for underachievement.</li><li>Parents get to know the teacher in a much more in-depth manner.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Parents who are dissatisfied with a teacher one year will demand reassignment; promotes fault-finding rather than focusing on continuous improvement of child.</li><li>Recruitment of teachers to schools using looping may be difficult.</li><li>If looping is done to reduce retention stigma, other children will figure it out and may ostracize the child.</li></ul>

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Strategy 4-C: Enhance data coordinator training and analysis at persistently underachieving schools to ensure schools are making intensive and frequent use of individual student performance data for instructional decision-making and inside-the-building resource allocation.		
	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Drives internal instructional decisions with data.</li><li>• Reduces “on the fly” decision-making and requires data to justify important decisions.</li><li>• Presents one additional method for aligning instruction with state standards.</li><li>• Suggests that teams of teachers coordinate instruction across all students.</li><li>• Builds faith in the community that instructional decisions are soundly based on empirical data.</li><li>• Serves as logical method for designing staff development.</li><li>• Presents another tool for showing parents exactly where the child is achieving or failing.</li><li>• Provides for use of a growth model to track trends in student achievement – anticipated to be included in new reauthorization of ESEA.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assumes the data is accurate.</li><li>• Reduces the judgment placed on teachers to adjust instruction to meet the needs of students and replaces it with a system that suggests use of data alone.</li><li>• Assumes/requires a robust system of formative data that can be used throughout the year rather than one point in time test score.</li><li>• Assumes that there is a data specialist at each school.</li><li>• Assumes that the data trends identified have the instructional support needed to resolve inequities.</li><li>• Diverts valuable direct instructional time to planning meetings between teachers.</li><li>• Data becomes a “crutch” that diminishes the art of teaching.</li></ul>
External	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates that schools are businesslike in their operation in the use of data to drive decisions.</li><li>• Presents the potential of identifying district-wide strengths/weaknesses.</li><li>• Provides real evidence that the school is concerned with accountability.</li><li>• Can allow for strong data supporting the impact of themed programs.</li><li>• Suggests where parents should be involved with monitoring their child’s learning.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confirms for naysayers that the school is underachieving thus reducing public support.</li><li>• Promotes labeling of teachers and schools by isolated data sets that might not provide for fair treatment.</li><li>• Promotes calls for premature reconstitution of school.</li></ul>

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Strategy 4-D: Enhance literacy and reading programs at persistently underachieving schools.		
	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focuses instructional improvement on the greatest at-risk populations.</li><li>• Fits nicely into the Title 1 definitions and allows funding.</li><li>• Produces opportunity for parallel programs for parents.</li><li>• Engages other community resources in literacy responsibilities (churches, recreational programs, etc.)</li><li>• Some schools already have literacy specialists in place.</li><li>• Makes the school directly accountable for the literacy development of their students.</li><li>• Gives parents metrics for the literacy development of their child.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires money.</li><li>• Literacy may be an inexact term with many nuanced meanings.</li><li>• Assumes FRL and ELL students need the same kind of literacy instruction.</li><li>• The instructional strategy designed to address certain aspects of literacy (whole language versus phonetic awareness) produces the potential for a disjointed program.</li><li>• Assumes CCSD has a cadre of qualified literacy specialists.</li><li>• Concentration on literacy might offset other instructional program time.</li></ul>
External	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicates to the ELL and FRL communities that they are important.</li><li>• Community partnerships exist around literacy and can be leveraged.</li><li>• Issue is easily understood by the public and outside funders.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reinforces stereotyping labels that all FRL and ELL require training in literacy.</li><li>• Funding may not be available over time.</li></ul>

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Strategy 4-E: Expand the use of dual language programs, bilingual schools, and language immersion programs for special populations (primarily Spanish speakers).		
	Helpful	Harmful
Internal	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targets English acquisition as goal of school while maintaining a commitment to home language.</li> <li>Lets English-only students develop a world-marketable skill.</li> <li>Tailored to a magnet school theme.</li> <li>Gives parents another choice program.</li> <li>Encourages non-English speaking parents to develop English proficiency.</li> <li>Reduces dropout rate among non-English speakers.</li> <li>Encourages consistent program operation between schools for this sometimes-highly transient population.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The second language community is not always unified on the approach to be taken and may produce disruption.</li> <li>Assumes an available resource of qualified teachers exists.</li> <li>Assumes that a sophisticated data tracking system for accountability exists for language acquisition.</li> <li>Fails to address the late-arrival student who is a teenager and runs out of time.</li> <li>Requires compliance with Lau Remedies (U.S. Office of Civil Rights guidelines).</li> <li>Assumes all language groups can be treated similarly, but small representation language students may get left out.</li> </ul>
External	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proves to the community that there is real commitment to language acquisition and the achievement of these students.</li> <li>Promises to unite community opinion on commonly accepted path to English acquisition.</li> <li>Provides a multi-lingual workforce for local business that helps them promote the international nature of the community thus encouraging support of district programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinforces efforts for “English only.”</li> <li>Divides the community by language groups on the best approach to be taken thus producing tension between ethnic and cultural groups within the community.</li> <li>Funding and staff may not be available.</li> </ul>
Related Recommendation: Lobby the state legislature for set-aside funds for ELL programs.		

# SUPERINTENDENT’S EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE: FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

## Additional Strategies for Consideration

<b>Staff Quality and Development</b>
Conduct a survey and focus groups among teachers to determine key reasons why they leave (and remain at) persistently underachieving schools.
<b>Parent Engagement</b>
Conduct a survey among parents to determine why they do or do not take advantage of current “choice” options; make the results a public document.
Ensure every school with a high ELL student population has on at least one bilingual employee on staff, offers English language instruction for parents, and has access to electronic translation.
Increase frequency of report card review with parents and heighten requirements of student learning contracts.
Mandate certain levels and standards for staff contact/communication with parents in persistently underachieving schools tools (e.g., Gray ES).
Provide training and resources that help “assigned” or choice schools to make students and parents feel welcome; create partnerships with zoned schools so parents have a place to visit that is closer to home (e.g., Gray/Hoggard model).
<b>Collaboration and Partnerships</b>
Ensure schools have “thank you” and celebration events for staff, parents, and partners.
<b>Quality Learning Environment</b>
Convert additional schools from the “persistently underachieving” roster (e.g., Carson and Kelly) to magnet status, adding at least one additional elementary to the district’s program.
Establish weighted student formulas for funding persistently underachieving schools.
Increase instructional time and guard it from interruption; if minutes have already been added through agreements with the teaching staff conduct audits to ensure the time is used efficiently and effectively.
Place students at persistently underachieving schools who are not at grade level at the end of the school year in multi-grade classrooms for the next year.
Provide enhanced staff development on how to use <i>Response to Intervention</i> (RTI) instructional strategies.

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**Committee Members:**

Dr. Robert McCord, Facilitator	Steve Linder
Richard Boulware*	Dwayne McIntyre
Kay Carl	Jose Melendrez
Teresa Cooper	Bea Soares
Frank Hawkins*	Javier Trujillo
Dr. Sonya Horsford	Wendell Williams*
Sylvia Lazos	Yvette Williams
Susie Lee	Dale Erquiaga, Staff
Lily Lin	

\*These members rotated their attendance.

**Meeting Dates and Topics:**

January 5, 2010	Introduction and Orientation
January 14, 2010	Staff Quality and Development
January 27, 2010	Parent Engagement
February 1, 2010	Collaboration and Partnerships
February 17, 2010	Quality Learning Environment
February 26, 2010	Work Session
March 5, 2010	Work Session
March 10, 2010	Report to the Superintendent

**Additional Information:**

Agendas, meeting summaries, speaker presentations, and information requested by the Advisory Committee are on file with the Clark County School District, Community & Government Relations Department.

Presentation and discussion regarding recommendations made to the superintendent by the Superintendent’s Education Opportunities Advisory Committee concerning strategies for the improvement of student achievement at persistently underachieving elementary schools.