SchoolWorks

School Quality Review Report

Legacy Prep

May 20-21, 2021

About the SchoolWorks School Quality Review

The SchoolWorks School Quality Review (SQR) is a process that educators can use to understand and explain how well schools are working to educate students. The SQR places a team of experienced educators from SchoolWorks and, in some cases, team members from the Commission in a school (virtually) to collect and analyze data about school performance. The length of the SQR is two days. The SQR is based on a transparent, research-based set of standards – the SchoolWorks Quality Criteria (SQC) – that serve as the framework to understand the effectiveness of school practices. The SQC are used to promote understanding and dialogue between the school and the site visit team through both verbal and written feedback.

Purpose

SchoolWorks has partnered with the Alabama Public Charter School Commission (APCSC) to lead the spring site visits. The purpose of the SQR is for regular monitoring of the charter school contract. The results from the SQR are used as one of the multiple pieces of evidence used in the eventual renewal decision. As outlined in the APCSC Comprehensive Performance Framework (p. 4), "Qualitative measures, most often inputs like observations of classroom instruction, may provide context for the outcomes that authorizers analyze; however, inputs do not measure the academic performance of the students in the school and so are not included in the Academic Performance Framework."

Process

The SQR process places a team of reviewers from SchoolWorks and in some cases, team members from the Commission, into a school to collect and analyze data about school programs and practices. The SQR utilizes multiple sources of evidence to understand how well a school is working. It extends beyond standardized measures of student achievement to collect evidence in relation to the protocol's criteria and indicators. Evidence collection begins with the review of the key documents that describe the school and its students. Key documents reviewed by the site visit team prior to the site visit include curricula and related teaching documents, professional development records, and student assessment results. This provides the team with initial information about the school's programs and the students it serves. During the visit, evidence collection continues through additional document reviews, classroom visits, and interviews with key school stakeholders. After collecting evidence, the team meets daily to confirm, refute, and modify its hypotheses about school performance, and then communicates its progress to the school's leadership. The team listens to the school's responses and makes every effort to follow up on evidence that the school indicates the team should collect.

The site visit team uses evidence collected through these events to develop findings in relation to the protocol's criteria and indicators. These findings identify strengths and areas for growth. At the end of the visit, the team provides a brief oral report to school leadership about its findings. This verbal feedback is followed by a written report, detailing the evidence that led the team to reach its findings. The length and depth of both verbal feedback and written report depend on the type of review being conducted.

The SQR places a high value on engaging the school in understanding its own performance. The process may be described as an open, frank, professional dialog between the school and the site visit team. The professionalism of the school and team is essential in the process. Both the school and the team have clear roles and responsibilities that are designed to promote good rapport and clear communication. All team members are governed by a code of conduct. Honesty, integrity, objectivity, and a focus on the best interests of students and staff are essential to the success and positive impact of the site visit process. **The SQR to Legacy Prep was conducted virtually per the school's request.**

Domains and Key Questions

DOMAIN 1: STUDENT ATTAINMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Does the school show a record of academic achievement and do students demonstrate growth over time?

DOMAIN 2: INSTRUCTION

2. Do classroom interactions and organization ensure a classroom climate conducive to learning for all students?

3. Is instruction intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students?

4. Do teachers regularly assess students' progress toward mastery of key skills and concepts and utilize assessment data to provide feedback to students during the lesson?

DOMAIN 3: STUDENTS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

5. Does the school identify and support its diverse learners?

6. Does the school foster a strong culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion and ensure a safe, supportive environment for all students?

DOMAIN 4: EDUCATORS' OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

7. Does the school design professional development and collaborative structures to sustain focus on instructional improvement?

8. Does the school's culture indicate high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy?

DOMAIN 5: LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

9. Do school leaders guide and participate with instructional staff in the improvement of teaching and learning?

10. Do school leaders guide facilitate intentional, strategic efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the school's program and the sustainability of the organization?

11. Does the Board provide competent stewardship and oversight of the school?

Domain 1: Student Attainment and Development

Does the school show a record of academic achievement and do students demonstrate growth over time?
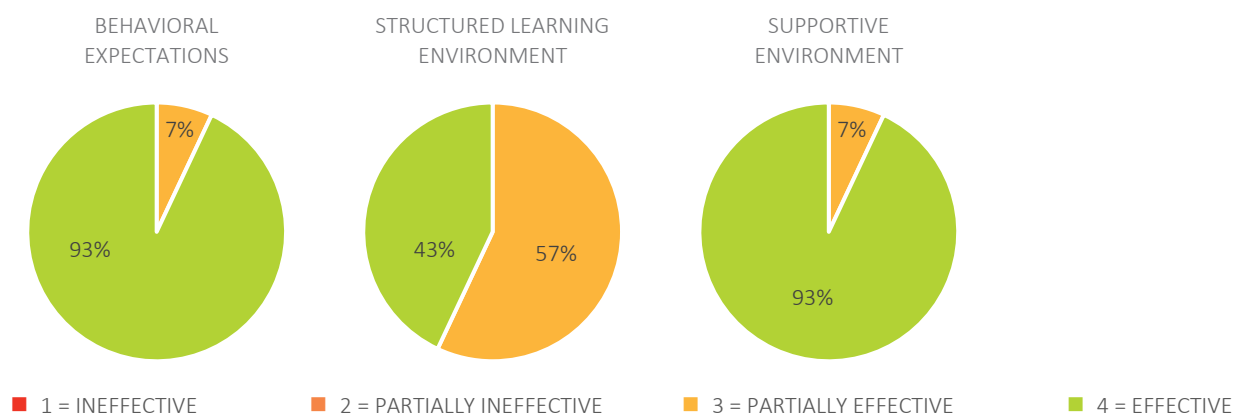
Students demonstrate growth on external assessments. Leaders, teachers, and Board members reported that the school administers external assessments including Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) and Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) to measure and monitor student performance. Leaders noted that SY2019-20 was the school's first operational year, and there is limited academic data due to the pandemic. Review of Legacy Prep's SY2019-20 Annual Report found that 94% of students met their growth projections in reading, and 89% of students met their growth projections in math, as measured by NWEA MAP. In the report, the school adds that these data are based on NWEA MAP beginning-of-the-year and mid-year assessments, noting that, due to the pandemic, end-of-year assessments were not administered. In addition, leaders reported that NWEA MAP was conducted remotely during the current school year, and because students took the tests at home, the testing environment was not controlled; therefore, they have questions about the validity of the results. Legacy Prep's SY2019-20 Annual Report also showed that 61% of students met or exceeded their reading growth goal as measured by the STEP assessment. Leaders stated that the progress demonstrated in Legacy Prep's SY2019-20 Annual Report is on track with the school's student success goal that 80% of students will show reading and math gains (at least 1.25 years). They added that they are looking ahead to the next school year when they can resume in-person testing for all students and accurately assess achievement levels.

Domain 2: Instruction

Do classroom interactions and organization ensure a classroom climate conducive to learning for all students?

Classroom Climate

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS	STRUCTURED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT	SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT
7% / 93%	43% / 57%	7% / 93%

■ 1 = INEFFECTIVE   ■ 2 = PARTIALLY INEFFECTIVE   ■ 3 = PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE   ■ 4 = EFFECTIVE

Behavioral expectations are clear and understood by students. Leaders and teachers reported (and review of the school's SY2020-21 culture plan verified) that the school has established classroom norms, routines, and school-wide attention getters (e.g., "Sit up straight; Raise hands."). They added that the school does not take a punitive approach to behavior and, instead, takes a "love" approach in order to address students' behavior in a positive, supportive manner. Review of the school's SY2020-21 culture plan also found discussion of the school's behavior management system which they define as a love policy rather than a discipline policy, and implement through restorative practices, Responsive Classroom, and Love and Logic. During classroom observations, the site visit team observed the effective implementation of behavioral expectations in 93% of classrooms (n=14). In these classrooms, the site visit team observed clear expectations such as countdowns and clap-to-attention. Students in these classrooms consistently behaved throughout the lesson and, in a few instances, teachers effectively redirected minor misbehavior (e.g., not tracking) without disruption to other students' learning. Additionally, teachers were observed giving clear directions and verbal cues (e.g., "All eyes on me; Hands on your head."). The majority of students in these classrooms also appeared to understand the behavioral expectations and behave according to classroom norms and routines. For example, students raised their hands to ask questions and followed directions given by teachers.
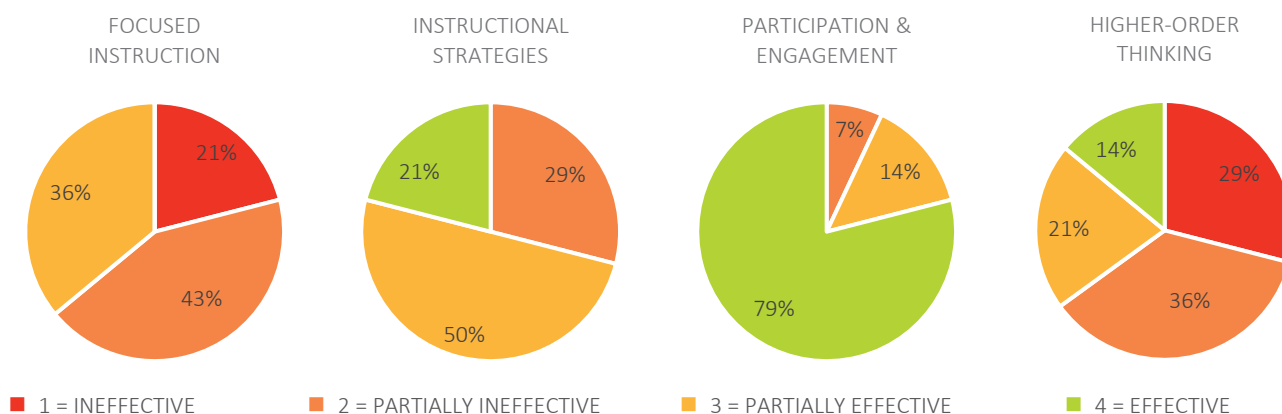
Classroom interactions are cooperative and conducive to learning. Leaders and teachers reported that the school is built on the core values of love, excellence, bold, perseverance, and wonder, and students are the core of everything they do. All stakeholders stated that the school is a family, and students noted that their teachers care about them; they feel comfortable going to teachers with questions and concerns. The site visit team observed the establishment of effective classroom interactions in 93% of classrooms

observed. These classrooms were characterized by teachers and students being respectful, caring, and supportive of one another. For example, teachers and students used respectful and supportive language (e.g., "Thank you."), and teachers spoke in warm tones and responded to students' questions. Additionally, teachers checked in with students, both individually and collectively, and some teachers engaged in conversations with students while circulating, demonstrating established relationships and rapport with their students. Teachers in these classrooms also used positive narration and positive reinforcement during the lessons. For instance, in one classroom, the teacher verbally recognized and called out students demonstrating positive behaviors and actions (e.g., "I like how she used that word."). Further, students were observed being supportive of their peers in these classrooms (e.g., working collaboratively in pairs, clapping for students who performed well on STEP).

KEY QUESTION 3

Is instruction intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students?

Purposeful Teaching

FOCUSED INSTRUCTION: 21%, 43%, 36%

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: 29%, 50%, 21%

PARTICIPATION & ENGAGEMENT: 7%, 14%, 79%

HIGHER-ORDER THINKING: 29%, 36%, 21%, 14%

■ 1 = INEFFECTIVE   ■ 2 = PARTIALLY INEFFECTIVE   ■ 3 = PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE   ■ 4 = EFFECTIVE

Teachers inconsistently provide students with clear learning goals and focused instruction. Leaders and teachers reported that the school employs a lesson internalization protocol in order to support teachers' understanding of the key components of learning goals and prepare for their lessons. Review of the lesson internalization protocol showed that it includes actions such as determining the daily learning goal and creating an exit ticket that is rigorous and aligned to the daily learning goal. In 36% of classrooms observed, the site visit team observed the partially-effective implementation of clear learning goals and focused, purposeful instruction. In these classrooms, content was presented clearly, and learning goals that drove lessons were provided. Additionally, teachers demonstrated high expectations for some, but not all, students. For example, teachers used strategies such as cold call and no opt-out for most students, and most, but not all, students were required to respond in complete sentences and use academic language. Additionally, the site visit team observed the partially ineffective implementation of clear learning goals and focused, purposeful instruction in 43% of classrooms. These classrooms were characterized by the clear delivery of academic content, but teachers did not have the learning goals posted or referenced, or the learning goal did not drive the whole lesson. Teachers in these classrooms were also observed having
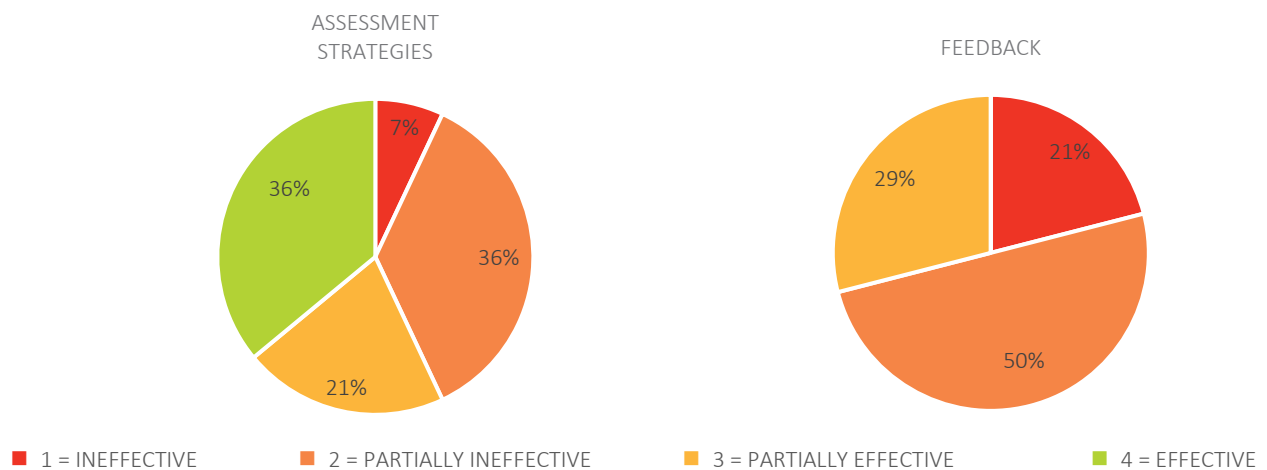
high expectations for only some students. For example, some students were able to opt out of responding to questions. Finally, in 21% of classrooms, the site visit team observed the ineffective implementation of clear learning goals and focused, purposeful instruction. In these classrooms, content was either not delivered or was presented unclearly; learning goals were not verbalized or posted; and teachers did not hold high expectations for students. For example, teachers only called on students who had their hands raised and allowed students to opt out of responding to questions or accepted partial responses.

Instruction inconsistently requires all students to use and develop higher-order thinking skills. During the site visit, the effective promotion of higher-order thinking was observed in 14% of classrooms. In these classrooms, all students verbally responded to challenging questions related to the lesson content and were required to justify their thinking or reasoning (e.g., refer to text-based evidence or concepts). In 21% of classrooms, the site visit team observed the partially effective promotion of higher-order thinking. These classrooms were characterized by most, but not all, students having an opportunity to engage in tasks involving critical thinking skills. For instance, most students responded to questions and were required to justify their thinking or reasoning and use academic vocabulary; however, some students did not respond to questioning. Additionally, the partially ineffective promotion of higher-order thinking was observed in 36% of classrooms. In these classrooms, a few students were observed explaining their responses and applying reasoning or providing evidence to justify their responses; however, most students did not have an opportunity to respond. Most students in these classrooms were also not encouraged to ask or answer challenging questions. In 29% of classrooms observed, the site visit team observed the ineffective promotion of higher-order thinking. These classrooms had an emphasis on summary and recall rather than engaging students in more rigorous tasks. For example, students were asked to recall or summarize what they had learned in previous lessons. Students in these classrooms were also not asked to explain or justify their thinking, or to build on their thoughts when responding to a question.

Do teachers regularly assess students' progress toward mastery of key skills and concepts and utilize assessment data to provide feedback to students during the lesson?

In-Class Assessment & Feedback

ASSESSMENT
STRATEGIES

FEEDBACK

- 1 = INEFFECTIVE
- 2 = PARTIALLY INEFFECTIVE
- 3 = PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE
- 4 = EFFECTIVE

In-class assessment strategies reveal some, but not all, students' thinking. Leaders reported that teachers are encouraged and coached to regularly check for students' understanding during their lessons through mechanisms such as exit tickets, questioning, circulation, assessments, among other techniques. During classroom observations, the site visit team observed effective use of in-class assessment strategies in 36% of classrooms. In these classrooms, teachers were observed circulating and monitoring the accuracy of students' work and using checks for understanding such as cold calls and questioning to gauge students' understanding, with all students being assessed at least once. The site visit team observed partially effective use of in-class assessment strategies in 21% of classrooms. These classrooms were characterized by the use of assessment strategies for most, but not all, students. For example, teachers circulated to most students to check for understanding, but did not assess all students. In 36% of classrooms, the site visit team observed partially ineffective use of in-class assessment strategies. These classrooms were characterized by teachers circulating to some students and asking probing questions to check for understanding, but they only checked about half of students' understanding. Also, in some classrooms, teachers asked a question and had the whole class respond chorally with no further probing to determine if everyone understood the content.

Timely, frequent, specific feedback is inconsistently provided throughout the learning process to inform improvement efforts. The site visit team observed the partially effective delivery of timely, frequent, specific feedback in 29% of classrooms. These classrooms were characterized by feedback given to some students that prompted students to think about their work and provided specific guidance regarding improvement (e.g., "Remember to do ___"). However, other students did not receive feedback in these classrooms. In 50% of classrooms observed, the site visit team observed the partially ineffective delivery of timely, frequent, specific feedback. In these classrooms, teachers gave actionable feedback to a few

students, but most students did not receive feedback. For instance, teachers were observed asking follow-up questions and further probing a few students' thinking and reasoning or asking students to think about a different approach to solving a problem. For example, teachers asked questions such as, "Can you explain this more?" and "How did you solve this?" In other classrooms, some students were told that their response was incorrect, but they did not receive any further guidance or feedback. In 21% of classrooms observed, the site visit team observed the ineffective delivery of timely, frequent, specific feedback. These classrooms were characterized by teachers providing no observable or actionable feedback to students, or general feedback such as, "Great job," or "You've got it," and moving on without any additional guidance.

Domain 3: Students' Opportunities to Learn

Does the school identify and support its diverse learners?

The school has a process for identifying struggling and at-risk students and systematically monitors student progress. Leaders and teachers reported that the school uses the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process to identify struggling and at-risk students (both academic and behavior), and they were able to define the process in detail. More specifically, for academics, they indicated that the school initially identifies struggling and at-risk students by reviewing results from the initial NWEA MAP assessment administered at the beginning of the year. For behavior, they noted that the school uses Dean's List to track and review student behavioral data, with the culture leadership team (CLT) leading that area. Additionally, leaders and teachers added that during the year, teachers identify potential struggling and at-risk students through the collection of data (e.g., assessments, exit tickets, behavioral concerns), and use data to inform additional in-class strategies and interventions for those students. They noted that if these additional strategies and interventions are not successful, teachers then submit a referral form (verified through document review) to the scholar success team (SST), which includes the Director of Scholar Success, two learning specialists (K-1, 2-3), and the Personalized Learning Facilitator. Review of the referral form found that it requests information such as identification of the concern(s), previous classroom interventions, and student behavior. Leaders and teachers also stated that the SST reviews referrals and holds meetings with all relevant stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, nominating teachers) to discuss next steps. They added that the SST and teachers then work together to ensure that interventions are implemented and continuously review data (e.g., STEP) to monitor student progress.

The school implements supports for students who are struggling and at-risk. Leaders and teachers reported that the school implements a personalized learning approach and uses personalized learning programs that have built-in intervention support for struggling and at-risk students (e.g., Orton-Gillingham, IXL, DreamBox). Leaders and teachers added that the school also provides supports for struggling and at-risk students such as small group instruction, one-on-one support, and push-in and pull-out support. They noted that these supports are primarily provided by the two learning specialists – one serving grades K-1, and one serving grades 2-3. Teachers also reported that specific, targeted academic and behavioral supports or interventions (e.g., Tier II and Tier III) are implemented for students who are identified as struggling and at-risk in order to ensure academic growth, positive behavior, and equitable treatment of all learners. For example, leaders indicated that student reading improvement plans are created for students struggling with reading, and students with significant reading gaps receive daily pull-out instruction for 30-to-45 minutes using the SPIRE reading intervention program. Additionally, leaders and teachers reported that the CLT creates and monitors behavioral plans for students who have been identified as having behavioral concerns and ensures that appropriate interventions are implemented.

Does the school foster a strong culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion and ensure a safe, supportive environment for all students?

The school's leadership and staff are engaged in a culture of diversity and equity; however, inclusion is not yet consistently embedded in the culture. Leaders and teachers stated that the school promotes strong equity and social justice beliefs. Also, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is embedded in all aspects of the school, beginning with its mission, which is "Educate and empower our scholars to embrace their identity, lead lives of choice and opportunity, and impact their communities as the next generation of socially-conscious leaders." Leaders added that there have been opportunities for staff to contribute to the school's commitment to DEI. For example, they noted that a subcommittee of founding staff members collaborated to create a schoolwide DEI-focused mantra that incorporated committee members' words and beliefs. Leaders noted that they also plan to form an equity team in SY2021-22 who will further advance their DEI efforts and develop additional DEI opportunities for leadership and staff (e.g., affinity groups). Additionally, leaders reported that DEI is also embedded within their hiring and recruitment practices, noting that they include DEI-focused interview questions (e.g., "What do you believe are contributors to the opportunity gap?") in order to assess prospective candidates' mindsets as they relate to DEI. Further, leaders and teachers reported that they regularly engage in professional learning opportunities focused on DEI, including areas such as anti-racism, micro-aggressions, unconscious bias, identity maps, and culturally-responsive pedagogy. Teachers relayed that these opportunities have been helpful in furthering their knowledge and thinking about DEI. Also, they believe that the school values teacher and student diversity, differences, and multiple perspectives. Finally, some teachers stated that the school is inclusive, noting that teachers can volunteer to participate on school committees (e.g., schedule planning), and leaders strive to make everyone feel as though they belong and are supported. However, some teachers indicated that they do not always feel included at the school. For example, teachers indicated that virtual teachers and in-person teachers have different schedules, so virtual teachers are not always able to attend grade-level team (GLT) meetings. Other teachers identified a separation between general education teachers and exploratory arts (EA) teachers, noting that despite a desire by EA teachers to collaborate with general education teachers to ensure alignment and gain an understanding of what other classes are doing, this type of collaboration is not happening.

Students encounter, and are involved in, a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. All stakeholders reported that students are provided with regular opportunities to think critically, consider diverse perspectives, and develop leadership skills. For example, students stated (and teachers and parents affirmed) that cultural texts are provided in classes that reflect the students themselves, as well as other identities. Leaders and teachers noted that curriculum provided by the Lavinia Group incorporates cultural responsiveness, such as exposing students to different cultures and backgrounds, which is verified by a Lavinia Group kindergarten unit overview that covers the topic, "Who Am I? Understanding Myself and My Community." Additionally, all stakeholders affirmed that all students are provided access to high-quality and rigorous learning opportunities at the school. Leaders and parents stated that the school's personalized learning approach allows them to expose all students to grade-level content and support each student at their level so that the content is accessible. Students stated that the school is a family,

and they feel a sense of belonging and pride at the school. They added that they believe all adults in the building care about them because they are understanding, caring, and always try to help. Further, all stakeholders reported that the school works to ensure that all students feel as though they are a part of the school through recognitions and celebrations such as JoyFest, Panther of the Week, and Royal Mondays, as well as through opportunities such as King's Club, Queen's Club, and the Empower block. All stakeholders added that the school also embraces and celebrates students' identities and backgrounds through cultural celebrations (e.g., Asian-American Pacific Islander month, Black History Month) and by addressing current events through action (e.g., hosting a school-sanctioned Black Lives Matter march). Leaders and teachers also reported that the school effectively and regularly communicates with families, parents, and students about student progress, differentiation, and academic and behavioral interventions. For example, teachers explained that they provide parents with data cards during conferences, which breaks down student progress and helps parents understand the data. Further, as previously mentioned, review of the school's SY2020-21 culture plan finds discussion of the school's behavior management system which they define as a love policy rather than a discipline policy, and implement through restorative practices, Responsive Classroom, and Love and Logic. When asked, all stakeholders stated that the school has implemented a restorative approach to behavior that is implemented equitably and aims to build community and nurture a positive school culture.

Domain 4: Educators' Opportunities to Learn

Does the school design professional development and collaborative structures to sustain focus on instructional improvement?

Professional development (PD) is ongoing; however, it is inconsistently aligned to daily work. Leaders and teachers reported that there is a weekly three-hour PD session on Fridays for teachers. Leaders stated that weekly PD sessions are responsive to teachers' needs based on instructional trends and areas for growth that they observe across the school. Teachers identified PD topics (and review of PD materials confirmed) as Guided Reading, reading comprehension, and differentiation, among others. Additionally, leaders and teachers reported that all teachers participate in a five-week Summer Learning Institute (SLI), during which they internalize and practice expectations for instruction and student culture. Review of the 2020 SLI schedule finds that it covered topics such as DEI, radical candor, Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), and STEP assessment training. Leaders added that in addition to SLI, teachers who are new to the school participate in an additional three days of onboarding. However, teachers indicated that PD is not always aligned to daily work. For example, teachers noted that PD sessions are heavily focused on literacy-related areas, and they do not receive as much PD around math outside of CGI. They added that the school has implemented the Zearn math curriculum, but they have received little-to-no PD related to it, and they do not feel supported in its implementation. Some teachers also reported that PD is not differentiated and feel that some sessions are not relevant to them. Further, when asked, teachers indicated that there is follow-up for some, but not all, PD sessions. For instance, teachers reported that they have had multiple PD sessions on areas such as CGI and Guided Reading. However, teachers noted that there is no consistent, ongoing support after PD sessions to assess whether topics are being implemented, or to support teachers in the implementation of what they have learned.

Educators collaborate regularly to learn about effective instruction and students' progress. Leaders and teachers reported that teachers collaborate multiple times per week to discuss data during scheduled, uninterrupted times such as school leadership team (SLT) meetings, instructional leadership team (ILT) meetings, grade-level team (GLT) meetings, and data meetings. Leaders stated that the school's instructional culture is built around responsiveness to student data to drive instruction, and they are continuously striving to improve instruction. Teachers noted that these collaborative meetings always have a focus on improving student learning and achievement, and they work together to analyze data to inform instructional needs (e.g., re-teach). Leaders and teachers stated that meetings are structured, which is evidenced by documents such as the weekly data meeting protocol and sample SLT meeting agendas that outline the structure and timing of these meetings. Leaders and teachers added that in addition to weekly data meetings, the school also has data days after each trimester, during which leaders and teachers review all available assessment data (e.g., STEP) and have the opportunity to set new student goals and plan for personalized learning time. Additionally, teachers reported that they regularly share knowledge and expertise with other teachers (both formally and informally) and most teachers actively pursue and accept feedback from other teachers. Leaders and teachers also indicated that during lesson planning clinics, teachers have an opportunity to practice teaching an upcoming lesson and receive

feedback from their colleagues so that they can adjust instruction. Further, teachers relayed feeling overwhelmed by the number of required meetings at the beginning of the year and not having enough time to plan. They noted that while leaders responded to their concerns by reducing the number of required meetings, they still have ample time to collaborate both formally and informally.

KEY QUESTION 8

Does the school's culture indicate high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy?

Educators' mindsets and beliefs reflect shared commitments to students' learning. All leaders and teachers conveyed a shared vision and shared values about teaching and learning, stating that students have diverse backgrounds and need different levels of support. Leaders and teachers reported that all teachers are fully committed to working with all students in the school and believe that all students can succeed if provided with the appropriate supports. They stated that students are at the core of everything they do, adding that it is their collective responsibility to ensure that all students are successful. Leaders noted that the school implements a personalized learning approach because they believe all students can and will learn, and they believe that all students should be exposed to grade-level curriculum and be held to high expectations regardless of their achievement level. All stakeholders also noted that teacher relationships with students continue even after those students advance grades. For example, students noted that they can go to any teacher (current or past) with issues or concerns, and leaders and teachers noted that they follow a "whole-school teacher" approach, in which they see all students as their students. Additionally, teachers stated that it is important not to give up on any students, while also encouraging students to productively struggle through problems before asking for help. Students also noted that teachers push them to think about problems by themselves before asking for help, stating that their teachers want to encourage a growth mindset in students while also supporting their learning.

The school reflects a growth-oriented professional climate that is mostly trustworthy and safe. School leaders and teachers stated that they see the school as family, and they all work collectively as a team to focus on students' learning and well-being. They added that the school strongly promotes a growth mindset not only for students, but also for leaders and teachers. Review of the school's SY2020-21 culture plan found that growth mindset is one of their culture pillars, stating that "The more you demonstrate a growth mindset, the more likely your kids are to develop a growth mindset." Additionally, school leaders and teachers added that teachers demonstrate a willingness and desire to share and discuss their own instructional practice and are interested in continuous improvement. For example, they explained that teachers ask questions or seek out feedback from leaders and other teachers. Further, most teachers described leaders and teachers as being open, honest, well-intentioned, caring, and reliable, indicating that they feel comfortable approaching leaders and teachers with questions. For example, teachers stated that they feel comfortable going to their colleagues for help (e.g., suggestions for instructional strategies), and their colleagues are open and willing to provide suggestions and support. However, a few teachers reported that while they have trusting relationships with other teachers, they do not feel comfortable going to leaders. For example, they indicated there was a disconnect between teachers and leaders, and they felt that teachers were at the bottom of the hierarchy and micromanaged.

Domain 5: Leadership & Governance

KEY QUESTION 9

Do school leaders guide and participate with instructional staff in the improvement of teaching and learning?

School leaders are working to ensure that teachers deliver high-quality instruction. Leaders and teachers reported that there are clear expectations around lesson planning, which was further evidenced through review of the lesson plan internalization protocol and sample lesson plans. However, these expectations have not yet resulted in the consistent delivery of high-quality instruction, as seen during classroom observations. Leaders and teachers stated that teachers have opportunities to practice teaching upcoming lessons in front of their colleagues during lesson planning clinics and receive feedback prior to delivering the lesson to students. Leaders and teachers also noted that all teachers (regardless of experience and expertise) are involved in coaching cycles, and coaches are supposed to conduct observations on a weekly basis using an instructional evaluation rubric and then discuss feedback during one-on-one coaching sessions. Review of the instructional evaluation rubric template found that it includes evaluation of multiple areas such as intellectual preparation, assessment of student learning, effective lesson delivery, and classroom management. However, teachers indicated that observations and coaching sessions occur sporadically and infrequently, and they do not receive regular, meaningful, and timely feedback that helps them improve their instructional practice. Additionally, some teachers stated that they had a coach whose expertise aligned with their respective content areas, which allowed the coach to provide useful content-specific feedback. However, other teachers noted that they have received little-to-no feedback and/or that the feedback is not useful to their instructional practice. Teachers also had varying perspectives about whether they are held accountable for applying feedback to their practice. Some teachers indicated that they are not held accountable and/or do not receive actionable feedback, while other teachers noted there are times when they receive specific and actionable feedback, and the coach evaluates whether they implemented the feedback during the next observation.

School leaders provide conditions that support a schoolwide data culture. All stakeholders reported that teachers administer a regular cycle of interim assessments such as NWEA MAP, STEP, exit tickets, and unit assessments to gather data on student performance. They added that NWEA MAP is administered three times per year, STEP is regularly administered throughout the year, exit tickets are administered daily, and unit assessments are administered at the end of each unit. Teachers indicated that they have adequate time to collect, enter, query, analyze, and represent student data, and they review data both individually and collectively during GLT meetings, weekly data meetings, and data days (each trimester). More specifically, teachers discussed using data to determine and identify instructional supports (e.g., small groupings, additional supports, and/or interventions for individual students) and assess students' level of understanding of the content to inform the pace of instruction and the need for reteaching. Additionally, leaders and teachers stated that at the beginning of the year, Guided Reading small groups are determined based on initial STEP assessment data, but teachers have the ability to adjust the groupings as they continue to monitor progress through STEP. Further, leaders and teachers reported that the CLT tracks behavioral data through Dean's List to identify students in need of supports, and teachers

indicated that access to this data, along with academic data, allows them to have a comprehensive perspective of students' performance.

Do school leaders guide facilitate intentional, strategic efforts to ensure the effectiveness of the school's program and the sustainability of the organization?

School leaders facilitate efforts to ensure effective school operations; however, continuous changes hinder improvements. Leaders and teachers stated that the school distributes leadership responsibilities to appropriate individuals and teams through role and structures. For example, leaders and teachers identified leadership teams such as the ILT (instructional leaders), CLT (culture leaders), and OLT (operations leaders). They also identified the SLT that includes representatives from each of the leadership teams. Leaders and teachers reported that roles and responsibilities are clear and review of the 2020 SLI schedule shows that there was a session discussing the organizational chart and staff roles and responsibilities. Additionally, leaders reported that there is ongoing leadership development, noting that instructional leaders participate in summer and year-long leadership programs through Relay Graduate School of Education. Further, leaders and teachers reported having systems, structures, and procedures that guide daily routines and school programs. For example, teachers noted that there are clear expectations around lesson planning (e.g., structure, content), and the SY2020-21 staff handbook outlined operational systems, structures, and procedures (e.g., requesting personal days, expense reimbursements). Leaders stated that they strive to remove the operational lift off of teachers in order to empower and allow them to focus on students and ensure that students are successful. Leaders added that they operate with a continuous improvement lens and are always looking for ways to hone and improve their systems. However, teachers expressed feeling overwhelmed by constant changes to systems and procedures, noting that they generally believed changes were immediately implemented, and they did not have time to process the changes. For example, some teachers relayed that Guided Reading processes had changed more than once, and they felt that when they were still getting a handle on one change, the process would change again, thus evoking a feeling of instability and anxiousness.

School leaders have yet to fully establish the conditions for open communication and inclusive, transparent decision making across the organization. According to leaders and teachers, the school has established multiple means of communication between leaders and teachers such as the Panther Express (weekly newsletter), emails, and GroupMe. Students, parents, and most teachers reported having open lines of communication with leaders, adding that communication is constructive, supportive, and respectful. However, some teachers stated that they felt a disconnect between teachers and leaders in terms of communication and did not believe there were open lines of communication. In terms of decision making, leaders reported that the SLT is the main decision-making body and includes the school leader, Director of School Operations, Director of Innovation and Culture, Director of Teaching and Learning, and Director of Scholar Success. They added (and some teachers affirmed) that they provide opportunities for teachers to provide input through mechanisms such as surveys, voluntary participation on committees (e.g., culture, schedule planning), and a virtual suggestion box that is included in the Panther Express. Leaders noted (and some teachers confirmed) that in the Panther Express, there is a section that acknowledges issues or concerns that were raised and notes how they are, or will be, addressed. Further,

some teachers stated that they believe the school solicits input and feedback from teachers, and that teacher voice helps inform some decisions. For example, teachers explained that at the beginning of the year, they were required to be in several meetings each week, which limited the amount of planning time they had during the day. They noted that multiple teachers voiced their concerns to leaders and, as a result, meetings have been streamlined and the overall number of required meetings per week have been reduced. However, some teachers reported that they are not asked for input, and they are not always aware of why the decisions or changes were made. These teachers added that when they have voiced concerns to leaders, they were not well-received, and they felt their voices were not heard or considered.

KEY QUESTION 11

Does the Board provide competent stewardship and oversight of the school?

The Board is working to provide oversight of the effectiveness of the academic program. The Board reported that it currently has eight members with the goal of expanding to eleven members. They added that they have established multiple small committees that focus on specific areas in order to provide effective oversight, including a Finance Committee, a Governance Committee, a Facilities Committee, a Development Committee, and a School Performance Committee. The Board stated that the School Performance Committee, which focuses on academic performance, recently developed an internal dashboard to track key metrics and progress toward goals (e.g., assessments, retention, attrition, culture) based on resources they received from BoardOnTrack. When asked, the Board indicated that academic data included on the dashboard includes NWEA MAP and STEP results, so that they can track student achievement and growth. They added that the internal dashboard will also be incorporated within the school leader's performance evaluation; she will be held accountable for progress toward established goals. The Board indicated that end-of-year assessment data will not be available by the time of this year's performance evaluation, but the school leader will still have an opportunity to present and explain interim data. The Board acknowledged that there is not currently a Board member with charter school and/or academic expertise, and they are actively recruiting to fill the gap, so that they have a strong academic representative on the Board.

The Board provides financial oversight. As previously mentioned, the Board has established multiple small committees to provide oversight over the academic, financial, and operational performance of the school. The Board reported that the Finance Committee that includes members with financial expertise (e.g., accounting, business operations) currently meets bi-weekly to review and discuss the school's financial health and presents financial updates at Board meetings (verified by Board meeting agendas and minutes). Review of Board meeting agendas and minutes found that financial updates include discussion of financial statements and the budget. They added that the Finance Committee also periodically meets with other committees (e.g., facilities, development) to discuss proposed and/or planned activities and projects to ensure they are aware of, and can discuss, any financial implications (e.g., cost of lease). When asked, the Board indicated that the Finance Committee reviews and monitors the budget and financial statements and looks ahead at five-to-ten-year projections (rather than year-by-year) in order to assess the school's long-term viability. The Board stated that the Finance Committee creates the budget each year with input from the school leader to ensure alignment to the school model and presents it to the full

Board for approval. As previously mentioned, the Board reported they are seeking a Board member with academic expertise, noting that having that expertise will further support them in ensuring the budget appropriately considers and meets the needs of the school model (e.g., staffing, programs).

Appendix A
Site Visit Team Members

The virtual site visit to Legacy Prep in Birmingham, Alabama took place on May 20- 21, 2021. The following Team Members conducted the visit:

- Lourdes Laguna, Team Leader, SchoolWorks
- Michelle Doane, Team Writer, SchoolWorks
- Peggy Haveard, Observer, APCSC
- Kristen Sousa, Observer, APCSC

Appendix B

Summary of Classroom Observation Data

During the site visit, the team conducted 14 observations, representing a range of grade levels and subject areas. The following table presents the compiled data from those observations.

SUMMARY OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA
Total Number of Teachers Within Each Rating Category by Indicator