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Effect of Implementing a Guaranteed and Viable ELA Curriculum

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EFFECT OF IMPLEMENTING A GUARANTEED AND VIABLE ELA CURRICULUM

by

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EFFECT OF IMPLEMENTING A GUARANTEED AND VIABLE ELA CURRICULUM

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A guaranteed and viable curriculum (GVC) outlines what standards are taught and when; ultimately providing all students with the opportunity to learn identified content over the course of a school year. This paper reviews the impact of implementing a guaranteed and viable English Language Arts curriculum and specific adult practices on ELA proficiency in Battle Creek Public Schools.

This project largely seeks to identify how Battle Creek Public Schools is implementing their English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum in 3rd through 5th grade classes, the adult practice data that contributed to the implementation, and to what degree it is having an impact in individual schools ELA proficiency. My research finds that school leader and teacher turnover, as well as the level in which identified schools are implementing very targeted adult practices are important contributing variables to the impact of a GVC on student achievement. It is hoped that this study brings awareness to the positive impact of implementing research based adult practices, and a guaranteed and viable ELA curriculum on student achievement proficiency levels.

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INTRODUCTION

Accountability in American public-school systems today are largely based on the transparency of the school district. Proficiency of standards is measured by a state assessment each year to gauge how school districts are doing at educating students. With the number and rigor of Michigan State Standards that teachers are required teach, it then becomes the responsibility of the school district to make sure that what is required of teachers is attainable, and at the same time allows our teachers to focus on student learning.

The city of Battle Creek (BC) sits in Southwest Michigan. This city, with a population of 51,286 is home to four school systems. Battle Creek Public Schools (BCPS) is a small urban district located within Battle Creek and serves a high-poverty population. In this district, there is a total of 3,976 students and 312 instructional staff. Situated within the district are three K-2 school buildings, two 3-5 school buildings, one K-5 building, two middle schools, one high school, and an alternative high school. Tables 1 and 2 shows a breakdown of the student and instructional staff population. This data is particularly noteworthy because it shows the Battle Creek Public Schools percentage of economically disadvantaged students is 34% higher than the state percentage.

Table 1
Battle Creek Public Schools Demographic Breakdown

Students	Male	Female	Students / Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged	State of MI Economically Disadvantaged
3,976	52%	48%	17%	84%	50%

Table 2

Battle Creek Public Schools Demographic Breakdown

White	African American	Hispanic	2 or more races	Asian	Other
34%	37%	11%	11%	<10%	<10%

Marzano (2003) defines a curriculum as "viable when stated curriculum can be adequately taught in the instructional time available to teachers" (p. 83). It is at this point that it can be guaranteed. Prior to 2017, Battle Creek Public Schools had not defined a guaranteed and viable curriculum (GVC) for ELA in the district. With an ELA M-STEP proficiency level in 2017 of 16.7%, a change needed to be made. The school district embarked on defining a guaranteed and viable vertically aligned ELA and Math curriculum for all grades over the summer of 2017. This curriculum was rolled out for teacher implementation in the 2017-2018 school year. As a result of this, the district defined:

- Learner Expectations (statements about what students should know and be able to do);
- Pacing (the order in which skills and concepts are sequenced along a continuum of development);
- Teaching Strategies (the plan for and the actions by the teacher to engage students in learning the content);
- Learning Activities (cognitive experiences that help learners perceive, process, rehearse, store, and transfer new knowledge or skills);
- Assessments (the ways to measure and monitor a learner's progress and guide instructional decisions);
- Resources (materials that support learning).

By the end of summer 2017, the District had a fully developed curriculum for grades K-5 in ELA, and fully developed curriculum for 6-8 Math and ELA, and a partially developed curriculum for 9-12 ELA and Math, with plans of completion throughout the school year. The curriculum was rolled out to staff for year-one implementation during the 2017-2018 school year.

The main focus for year-one implementation was for teachers to teach the curriculum and assess the students using the aligned unit assessments created with the curriculum. Assessment data by teachers was to be entered and housed in DNA Illuminate, which is the BCPS data warehouse system. Year two implementation focused on refining the implementation of our curriculum, its use during Professional Learning Communities (PLC), and the data analysis process schools are using around the unit assessment data.

Background

As an employee of Battle Creek Public Schools of 4 years, I have held two distinct roles in which I directly impact supporting the implementation of curriculum and best instructional practices within buildings. As a District Transformation Coach, I coached and supported building principals to implement researched based systems and structures to ensure high quality education for children. In my current position as Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction I directly oversee the implementation of the district's instructional framework as well as curriculum. It is within my role that I work to ensure that all grades and contents have curriculum to implement within their classrooms. I am in a unique position to view and analyze individual building practices against student achievement data at the district level.

As previously mentioned, the focus for year-one implementation was on teaching the curriculum with fidelity and entering the data into DNA Illuminate. This platform also allows the teachers to run reports to support data analysis. In year one, the District monitored unit assessment data entry by building. In addition to unit assessment data, the District monitored student proficiency on local assessment NWEA MAP and the state assessment. Table 3 below shows each school building, and the entry rate for each unit assessment for the 2017-2018 school year. Table 4 shows the 2016-2017 ELA proficiency rate by building for the local District

assessment NWEA MAP, and the state assessment M-STEP. Table 5 shows the 2017-2018 ELA proficiency rate by building for the local District assessment NWEA MAP, and the state assessment M-STEP.

Table 3

Year 1 Implementation: Unit Assessment Data by Building

ELA Unit	Ann J Kellogg	Verona	Valley View
1	56%	5%	90%
2	67%	76%	94%
3	75%	55%	97%
4	57%	48%	79%
5	86%	64%	91%
6	NA	NA	NA

Table 4

ELA Assessment Proficiency by Building Spring 2017

Assessment	Ann J Kellogg	Verona	Valley View
M-STEP	12%	15%	28%
NWEA-MAP	22%	25%	46%

Table 5

Year 1 Implementation: ELA Assessment Proficiency Spring 2018

Assessment	Ann J Kellogg	Verona	Valley View
M-STEP	14%	9%	27%
NWEA-MAP	27%	14%	44%

Teachers were surveyed throughout the 2017-2018 school year. The survey asked questions to understand the ease of use of the curriculum. The survey had teachers address things such as whether they were able to easily follow the written curriculum, if they knew how to access the curriculum digitally, and if the assessments were appropriate for their grade level. BCPS surveyed all K-12 staff for the first four units. Out of 312 teaching staff, on each survey there was a steady decrease in the response rate. There was a 15% response rate for unit one, 10% response rate for unit two, 8% response rate for unit three, and a 7% response rate for unit

four. Of the total responses on all surveys, the majority of responses came from elementary teachers. Elementary teachers made up 55% of the unit one survey, 56% of the unit two survey, 69% of the unit three survey, and 70% of the unit four survey.

The first question teachers responded to was a "yes" or "no" question inquiring whether teachers were able to find their curriculum documents in Google Drive. On all four surveys, 70% of teachers indicated they were able to find their curriculum documents. The next three question responses were on the Likert scale in which they had to respond, "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree." The remaining four questions were optional open-ended for teachers to give more detail. The teachers responded to or answered the following when completing the survey:

1. I can find my curriculum documents in Google Drive
2. The curriculum guide for the unit was easy to follow
3. The assessment for the unit was appropriate for my grade level
4. I was able to enter my data into DNA and I received valuable information from that data
5. How are you using the curriculum guides during PLCs?
6. What adjustments or shifts have you noticed that may need to be addressed?
7. Are there any specific resources that you would like us to consider during revisions?
8. What else do we need to know?

Table 6 details the questions in which teachers had to use the Likert scale to respond to.

Table 6

Curriculum Feedback Responses

Unit 1 Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Two	7%	56%	31%	6%
Three	8%	44%	37%	11%
Four	3%	53%	27%	17%

Unit 2 Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Two	15%	62%	15%	8%
Three	9%	37%	40%	14%
Four	0%	59%	28%	13%

Unit 3 Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Two	23%	54%	15%	8%
Three	8%	58%	27%	7%
Four	5%	58%	30%	7%

Unit 4 Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Two	17%	62%	21%	0%
Three	5%	58%	37%	0%
Four	0%	71%	29%	0%

The school district has a process for monitoring adult practice. This process is called the School Team Accountability Review (STAR).

> The STAR process is conducted using a qualitative assessment method, which is also an "action research" model of involving participants in understanding their own renewal or improvement process. The STAR process is designed to develop a clear picture of the quality of education provided in a school. It assists the school in establishing a clear view of its strengths, areas for development, challenges and successes (Transformation Guidebook, 2015, p. 19).

This process directly monitors the District's instructional framework. School Team Accountability Reviews (STAR) are scheduled in advance two to three times a year and building leadership is part of the process.

The data collections for this visit are done in multiple ways. There is a principal interview, teacher and student survey, and classroom observations. During the classroom observations, a central office team of at least three, the building principal, and instructional coach walk through a minimum of ten classrooms. Teams spend up to ten minutes in classrooms observing specific practices as identified on the STAR observation form. The practices identified on the STAR form are grounded in research. A calibration document has been developed to define each practice and what is required to have obtained full implementation of each practice. Key practices on the STAR document that have direct correlation with monitoring the implementation of the District GVC are: three-part learning target posted in students friendly language, lesson plans available, learning targets evident in co-constructed/anchor charts, objective is reviewed and evident to students, and appropriate practice. In Table 7, you will see the calibration definition of each of these components.

Table 7

STAR Calibration Items

Practice	Calibration
3 Part Learning target in Student Friendly Language	Objective is posted in student friendly language using the 3-Part Learning Framework (ex. Today I will...So that I can...I'll know I have it when...), is tied to the grade level standards and clearly articulates what students are expected to "learn" as opposed to "do." **Objective is tied to observed instruction** and reflects what students are currently learning.
Lesson plans match instruction	Lesson plans are visible in the classroom during the visit
Learning targets evident in co-constructed charts	There are **4 or more** charts posted throughout the room that tell the story of what students are learning (charts must be up to date and reference current unit learning). To that end, the charts demonstrate that they are the result of a collaborative effort between teacher and this year's students, include student thinking and not just teacher verbiage, **and the majority (75%) of charts are tied to grade level content and standard**
Objective is reviewed and evident to students	The teacher introduces and/or reference the learning target during the lesson. 2 out of 3 students are able to describe what they are learning.
Appropriate practice	Student work includes accountability and is aligned to grade level standards and expectations. The success rate in station work is reliably high.

Problem of Practice

According to Battle Creek Public Schools strategic plan entitled "6 Goals for Greatness," it is a goal of the district to engage students in rigorous and relevant work. The key strategy to support this district goal is to "adopt and refine an aligned, spiraling and rigorous college and career preparatory curriculum that meets the needs of Battle Creek Public Schools" (BCPS 6

Goals for Greatness, 2016, p. 2). The curriculum development was an effort to achieve this goal. District administration had more oversight of the K-5 curriculum writing team than all other teams that engaged the in the process. To inspect the fidelity of implementation of the curriculum, I will take a closer look at 3rd-5th grade ELA curriculum and its impact, or lack thereof, on student achievement. In total, there are 36 3rd-5th grade classrooms in the district. Tables 8-11 show the demographics of the three schools that hold 3rd-5th grade students: Ann J. Kellogg, Verona, and Valley View Elementary.

Table 8

Ann J. Kellogg School Demographic Breakdown (2019)

Grade	Students	Male	Female	Students / Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged
	n=318	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
3	94	53%	46%	24%	89%
4	106	43%	56%	16%	94%
5	118	60%	40%	20%	95%
Total	318	52%	47%	19%	93%

Table 9

Verona School Demographic Breakdown (2019)

Grade	Students	Male	Female	Students / Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged
	n=328	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
3	92	50%	50%	20%	92%
4	115	58%	42%	23%	87%
5	121	62%	38%	23%	91%
Total	328	57%	43%	22%	87%

Table 10

Valley View School Demographic Breakdown (2019)

Grade	Students	Male	Female	Students / Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged
	n=560	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
3	97	45%	55%	<10%	83%
4	79	54%	46%	13%	83%
5	109	43%	57%	<10%	87%
Total	560	49%	51%	10%	87%

Table 11

3-5 School Racial Demographic Breakdown (2019)

School	White	African American	Hispanic	Asian	2 or more races
Ann J Kellogg	30%	47%	10%	0%	11%
Verona	30%	38%	16%	2%	12%
Valley View	45%	21%	8%	13%	2%

The curriculum was developed by teacher teams who were guided through the work by a curriculum representative from International Center for Leadership in Education (ICLE). This is a division of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt that specializes in supporting district leaders and teachers in developing guaranteed and viable curriculum. Although the goal was to have teacher representation from all schools engaged in the curriculum work, that did not happen. There were two elementary schools in which no teachers were represented in the work. Now that the curriculum is in its second year of implementation, there is clear, uneven implementation among our schools. There are schools in which planning and preparations utilizing the district guaranteed and viable curriculum is not a focus. There is also lack of evidence that the curriculum is being utilized when central office administrators conduct School Team Accountability Reviews (STAR). As a result, there is not consistency and alignment in the instruction students are receiving across the district in grades 3-5.

In response to the problem, this project will investigate specific actions by schools, their level of implementation, and the actions that promote positive student achievement results as identified by the state test (M-STEP), and the District's local benchmark assessment (NWEA MAP). I will then compare and analyze spring 2017, spring 2018 & spring 2019 M-STEP data for all 3rd-5th grade students, and compare and analyze spring to spring 2017, 2018, and 2019

NWEA MAP data for all 3rd-5th grade students, to identify trends where implementation of the GVC and achievement have shown the most growth.

Along with the collection of local and state assessment data, I will consider the level of implementation of the BCPS curriculum, specifically in our 3rd through 5th grade classrooms across the district by utilizing the District's School Team Accountability Review (STAR) process. The research for this project will focus specifically on those research-based practices on the STAR form to monitor the fidelity of whether teachers are planning for and utilizing instructional practices aligned to the District curriculum. The practices that will be monitored are three-part learning targets posted in students' friendly language, lesson plans available, learning targets evident in co-constructed/anchor charts, objective is reviewed and evident to students, and appropriate practice.

STATE AND LOCAL ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

The State of Michigan has required that all schools administer the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress or M-STEP assessment as the state accountability assessment. The M-STEP is administered online and is designed to monitor how students are doing towards mastering state standards. In addition to this, Battle Creek Public Schools utilizes the Northwest Evaluation Association Measure of Academic Progress assessment or NWEA-MAP as their local district assessment. NWEA-MAP is a norm-referenced assessment that is administered online. This is an adaptive assessment, meaning the assessment adjusts in difficulty as students respond to questions. To analyze the performance of schools in comparison to teacher knowledge and implementation of the curriculum, I will look at a three-year history of the achievement data.

BCPS embarked upon developing and implementing the district ELA curriculum during the summer of 2017 and the 2017-2018 school year. With an overall district ELA proficiency level on M-STEP of 16.7% in Spring of 2017 and an overall score of 31% proficiency on NWEA-MAP, it was critical for the district to change outcomes for students. The first line of defense for student achievement is teachers. They provide the on the ground learning and support for students on a daily basis. "Teacher quality, the what and how of instruction is the most important factor that affects student learning" (Schmoker, 2018, p. 54). An analysis of each school's student achievement data will allow us to identify positive and negative trends in order to create a data driven response.

With 2017-2018 being the first year of implementation of the Districts' ELA curriculum, Spring 2017 (of the 2016-2017 school year) NWEA-MAP and M-STEP data will serve as baseline data for each school. Tables 12 and 13 show a three-year comparison of M-STEP and NWEA-MAP data with the baseline year included.

Table 12

Three Year Comparison M-STEP ELA Data

School	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
Ann J Kellogg	12%	14%	14%
Verona	15%	9%	13%
Valley View	28%	27%	18%

Table 13

Three Year Comparison NWEA-MAP ELA Data

School	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
Ann J Kellogg	22%	27%	38%
Verona	25%	14%	25%
Valley View	46%	44%	43%

The three-year comparison data illuminates interesting information between schools and their assessment data. The first easily noticeable trend is the NWEA-MAP data. Ann J Kellogg

shows a steady increase of student scores on the ELA assessment for NWEA-MAP, with over 10% increase since spring of 2017. Valley View has shown a 3% decrease in the NWEA-MAP scores. The next noticeable data trend is the M-STEP three-year comparison data. It is in this area that Ann J. Kellogg showed a 2% increase from 12% to 14% in the first-year implementation of the ELA curriculum with steady scores from the spring of 2018 to 2019. Valley View continues to trend negatively in proficiency on M-STEP. Valley View data showed proficiency dropping from 28% in spring 2017 to 18% proficiency spring 2019. Below you will find tables 14-19, which highlight assessment by grade by building over three years.

Table 14

Ann J. Kellogg M-STEP Proficiency Data by Grade

School	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
3rd Grade	15%	12%	16%
4th Grade	6%	13%	9%
5th Grade	14%	15%	16%
School	12%	14%	14%

Table 15

Ann J. Kellogg NWEA-MAP Proficiency data by Grade

School	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
3rd Grade	37%	27%	43%
4th Grade	16%	27%	33%
5th Grade	17%	27%	35%
School	22%	27%	38%

Table 16

Verona M-STEP Proficiency Data by Grade

School	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
3rd Grade	14%	6%	13%
4th Grade	6%	8%	5%
5th Grade	22%	7%	12%
School	15%	9%	13%

Table 17

Verona NWEA-MAP Proficiency Data by Grade

School	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
3rd Grade	27%	9%	25%
4th Grade	17%	16%	18%
5th Grade	27%	16%	30%
School	25%	14%	25%

Table 18

Valley View M-STEP Proficiency Data by Grade

School	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
3rd Grade	10%	31%	20%
4th Grade	32%	18%	20%
5th Grade	36%	30%	13%
School	28%	27%	18%

Table 19

Valley View NWEA-MAP Proficiency Data by Grade

School	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
3rd Grade	32%	52%	38%
4th Grade	50%	28%	32%
5th Grade	46%	45%	28%
School	46%	44%	43%

Verona Elementary stands out with the most inconsistent results in both assessments over a 3-year period. The results for the NWEA-MAP and M-STEP assessment both decreased from Spring 2017 to Spring 2018 and an increase from Spring 2018 to Spring 2019 at very different rates. Something significant happened in the 2017-2018 school year that resulted in such a drastic dip in achievement data. NWEA-MAP went from 25% proficient in the Spring of 2017 to 14% proficient in the Spring of 2018. On M-STEP the buildings proficiency went from 15% in Spring of 2017 to 9% in Spring of 2018.

The trend in the data breakdown by building and grade are consistent with the three-year comparison data. This data shows Ann J Kellogg's trend in increasing its NWEA-MAP scores,

and it also illuminates possible explanations to why the M-STEP data stayed stagnant. Third and fifth grade M-STEP data at Ann J Kellogg show a 1% or 2% increase from spring 2017 to spring 2019, whereas the 4th grade proficiency data has stayed low over the course of three years, which could explain why the schoolwide data did not increase. The M-STEP data shows 4th grade being an area of improvement. The 4th grade data at Ann J Kellogg took a large dip compared to the other grade levels. Valley Views data holds to a decline in proficiency from spring of 2017 to spring of 2019 in all grades on both assessments except third grade.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

There are many possible situations or factors that play into the success, or lack of success for each building. One can look at teacher buy-in, teacher knowledge of content, principal knowledge of curriculum and instruction, use of curriculum guides, focused instruction, teacher comfort level, principal and teacher turnover, and so forth. For this study we will look at principal turnover, teacher turnover, and adult practices that support the implementation of the ELA curriculum.

Each school in this study has had to overcome their own set of challenges. I will look at consistent challenges that each building has had to face. One consistent challenge for all three buildings has been leadership and teacher turnover. Schmoker (2003) states, "the best explanation for why our schools aren't far more successful, intellectually engaging places is fairly simple: *the most important people within and outside schools know very little about what actually goes on inside them*" (p. 13). Schools are unable to sustain systems and processes with such regular turnover. Because of this fact, internal staff is often unaware of what is going on within their own building. Verona Elementary has had a different school leader in three consecutive school years (2017-2019), while Valley View and Ann J. Kellogg have had the same

administrator since the 2017-2018 school year. Each time a building changes a leader, teachers and students alike have to adjust to the leader's style, and the leader has to become acclimated to the school, culture, and community. With constant shift in leadership, it sets the precedence that monitoring instruction is not the priority. Systems and structures become the focus when a school has experienced such turnover. Schmoker (2006) refers to this as "the buffer or the barrier that discourages even punishes close, constructive scrutiny of instruction and supervision of instruction" (p. 13). With constant turn over in leadership, principals who enter BCPS lack the time necessary to appropriately adjust to a building because the need for putting systems and structures in place are so high.

Similarly, each school has experienced a similar trend in teacher turnover. To analyze impact, we will look at the teaching population in the 2017-2018, and 2018-2019 school year by building. The data will indicate how many long-term subs (LTS) or teachers new to the building (NTB) there are. NTB will indicate multiple things. NTB will include brand new teachers to the profession, teachers new to the building, or a transfer. A transfer means within district or within building. Table 20 below shows a comparison of the percent of teachers that are LTS or NTB in the 17-18 and 18-19 school year.

Table 20

NTB and LTS for 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 School Year

School	17-18 LTS	17-18 NTB	18-19 LTS	18-19 NTB
Ann J Kellogg	0%	21%	16%	16%
Verona	0%	62%	25%	0%
Valley View	0%	25%	0%	16%

The data indicated in this table is very telling. The table shows that in the 2017-2018 school year no school had long-term subs, but they all experience teachers who are new to the their 3rd-5th grade classrooms. Verona experience the largest increase to teachers who are new to

their building. Sixty-two percent of the teaching staff at Verona was new to the building in the 2017-2018 school year. A breakdown of the 62% shows that to be 8 out of 13 teachers. Verona did not have any teachers NTB in the 2018-2019 school year, but 25% of their teaching staff was LTS. While Valley View and Ann J. Kellogg experienced turning over at least two to three teachers each year, Valley View has not experience LTS in any teaching position. Ann J. Kellogg went from having no LTS to having two. Having LTS indicates that schools have lost a number of teachers from the previous year and were unable to fill those positions with a certified full-time teacher, so students are experiencing inconsistency in the instructor and their skill level in teaching on a daily basis.

With the shift in leaders and teachers on a regular basis, it is important to look at building-wide student achievement data across both assessments. This will illustrate the overall effect of unstable staffing on student achievement. Table 21 and 22 shows three-year comparison data of each school and each assessment.

Table 21

Three Year Comparison M-STEP ELA Proficiency Data

School	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
Ann J Kellogg	12%	14%	14%
Verona	15%	9%	13%
Valley View	28%	27%	18%

Table 22

Three Year Comparison NWEA-MAP ELA Proficiency Data

School	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
Ann J Kellogg	22%	27%	38%
Verona	25%	14%	25%
Valley View	46%	44%	43%

Ann J Kellogg is the only school that has been able to either maintain or shown a consistent increase in data over the last three years. Valley View shows a consistent decrease in data over the last three years, and Verona shows no consistency in data at all. Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) found in their meta-analysis of "69 studies, involving 2,802 schools, approximately 1.4 million students, and 14,000 teachers, we computed the correlation between leadership behavior of the principal in the school and the average academic achievement of the students in the school to be .25" (p. 10). This correlation is broken down to mean, that if a principal enters into a building scoring at the 50th percentile, and the leader performs at the 50th percentile in terms of leadership ability, the school is likely to continue to perform at the 50th percentile. Likewise, if the leader's capacity is above or below the performance of the school building, they can either have a positive or negative affect on the achievement of the school building. We currently have to infer based on the schools 3-year trend data in table 19 and 20, and adult practice data in table 23 that the leadership ability at Ann J. Kellogg and Valley View is the most important variable in the school's achievement data. When looking at staffing in Table 20, Ann J. Kellogg has experience turnover, and long-term subs but have still been able to show improvement in student achievement. While Valley View has experienced a year with no LTS and a very low percentage of NTB teachers, and they have had a consistent decrease in student achievement data. This information lends to the thought of what the data of these buildings would look like behind a consistent leader in the building a minimum of 5 years who has strong leadership ability.

Along with the data presented and correlation with the building principal, we can also draw a few conclusions about the impact of teacher turnover. Verona is still an outlier in the LTS and NTB data, experiencing the highest percentage of either category each year. The 2017-

2018 school year was a year that Verona experienced 62% teacher turnover. This is also the year that Verona's student achievement data show a very large decrease in NWEA-MAP and M-STEP in the spring 2018 data. Ann J. Kellogg and Valley View were both consistent in that they experienced two to three teachers being new to their building in the 17-18 and 18-19 school year. Valley View is the only building who did not experience having long term subs in either the 17-18 or 19-18 school year.

Many factors go into play when a building deals with massive turnover. "Although no national analysis of principal turnover has been conducted, studies of states and districts have found that turnover rates for principals range from 15 percent to 30 percent each year, with especially high rates of turnover in schools serving more low-income, minority, and low achieving students" (Goodwin, 2013, p.71). In addition to high turnover rates with building principals in low-income, minority, and low achieving students, there is also negative impact on students when there is a large teacher turnover rate. Teachers are the direct line of student education; they are who students see and experience on a day to day basis. "Chronic teacher and staff turnover can negatively affect professional development, class size, scheduling, curriculum planning, collegiality, and a variety of other factors, adding a significant degree of chaos and complexity to schoolwide operations and potentially harming student learning across classrooms and teachers" (Guin, 2004, p. 1). The constant turnover of teachers not only effect student achievement, but staff morale, professional development needs, and contribute to teacher burn-out in buildings where students need teacher consistency, strength and knowledge the most.

Seeking highly qualified and experienced teachers for low income districts is a challenging task. Garcia and Weiss (2019) state:

> While we don't have specific estimates of the shortage in low- and high-poverty schools analogous to the national shortage estimates of Sutcher, Darling, Hammond and Carver-Thomas (2016), we can infer the greater shortage of highly qualified teachers in high-poverty schools from the following premises and from our own data analysis. First, highly qualified teachers are in higher demand and therefore tend to have more options with respect to where they want to teach. They are more likely to be recruited by higher-income school districts and to join the staffs of schools that provide them with better support and working conditions and more choices of grades and subjects to teach (p. 5).

With this knowledge, recruitment and retention of high-quality leaders and educators has to be a focus for districts. Focusing on recruitment and retention has budgeting implications. When urban low achieving districts are struggling with low achievement and declining enrollment, focusing on recruitment and retention becomes a challenge. The loss of students has a direct impact on funding schools receive from the state. Battle Creek Public Schools has a human capital strategy as part of their strategic plan to "Recruit, retain, develop and support a diverse high-quality staff that is fully committed to Battle Creek Public Schools, its students and families" (BCPS Strategic Plan, 2016). Included in the human capital goal are eight identified strategies to be implemented. Table 23 shows Battle Creek Public Schools recruitment and retention goal and eight key strategies as identified on their strategic plan.

Table 23

BCPS Strategic Plan (2016-2021)

Goal	Key Strategies
Recruit, retain, develop and support a diverse high-quality staff that is fully committed to Battle Creek Public Schools, its students and families.	Develop and implement a long-term recruitment and staffing strategy to include current, innovative practices to attract and retain a diverse, high-performing workforce
	Recognize and reward our staff for outstanding work
	Provide effective and differentiated professional development for all staff
	Create innovative leadership pathways for teachers and aspiring administrators
	Formally adopt and implement a coaching framework for all staff
	Create and implement new pay scales that are regionally competitive
	Utilize community partnerships to create tangible and meaningful incentives for new and consistently high-performing staff
	Create and adopt explicit goals for the continuous improvement of pedagogical skills among teachers and leaders

The District shows strategies to recruit and retain teachers and leaders. To understand if their efforts are having the desired effects, a deeper analysis of each strategy and outcomes year-to-year are necessary.

Key Adult Practices

In order to provide focus and direction for the entire District each year, Battle Creek Public Schools developed a District Theory of Action (TOA). "A theory of action is a guide to the actions that an organization believes will produce its desired results. A theory of action is a hypothesis that outlines the aligned actions necessary to achieve a specific goal" (BCPS Transformation Guidebook, 2016, p. 6). This document outlines the District's focus for improvement in regard to attendance, behavior, and course work. There are identified,

measurable outcomes for each of these areas. According to the 2019-2020 BCPS Theory of Action, the academic goal is to "Engage all students in rigorous, culturally responsive learning environments that are defined by the implementation of active learning strategies and an uncompromising focus on literacy across content areas" (BCPS TOA, 2019). Branching off of the District TOA, individual principals develop their building TOA in collaboration with their instructional leadership team. In order to appropriately support individual schools to success, district level administrators need to know and understand what is happening in the classroom.

Battle Creek Public Schools conduct building level walkthroughs at every school in the district. These walkthroughs are called School Team Accountability Review (STAR) visits. "The STAR process is designed to develop a clear picture of the quality of education provided in a school. The purpose is to improve teaching and learning through peer review and reflection" (BCPS Transformation Guidebook, 2016, p. 12). During the visit, the District is seeking to develop an understanding of the instructional practices within each building, and the trends they find. As stated by Marzano, Waters, & McNulty (2005) "the school leaders' ability to select the right work is a critical aspect of effective leadership" (p. 97). The BCPS STAR visit process monitors the components of the District TOA reflected in the building TOA, and how it is being implement. It is during these visits that a central office team monitors the implementation of research-based instructional components that positively impact student achievement. It is with the STAR visit that the District is looking to disrupt the buffer that ensures that no one is knowledgeable about what is happening within the school walls. As Schmoker (2006) stated, "the district is looking for the pattern of the general quality of instruction and student's attentiveness to learning" (p. 15).

As a part of the STAR visits, there are specific practices that contribute to successful implementation of the District ELA curriculum. “The most effective teaching methods are mundane, unremarkable, and even disappointing to those who expect them to be complex or innovative. And they are usually old: we’ve known about these practices for decades” (Schmoker, 2018, p. 55). Those practices in BCPS are three-part learning targets posted in classrooms in student-friendly language aligned to curriculum pacing, teacher lesson plans that match instruction and curriculum pacing, learning targets being evident in co-constructed/anchor charts as a part of direct explicit instruction, the objective being reviewed and is evident to students, and students appropriately practicing their learning.

In Battle Creek Public school there are 36 3rd-5th grade classrooms. Data was collected in 25 of 36 classrooms. Of the data collected, five of the classrooms were from Ann J Kellogg, twelve from Valley View, and eight from Verona. Although during the STAR visit, data is collected in all subjects, for the purpose of this study and direct correlation to reading proficiency, only data during the reading block was monitored.

The pacing of the curriculum is important to note when conducting the visit. Each grade level has curriculum guides and pacing guides that indicate the standards to be taught by week in the school year. Before conducting the walkthrough, the standards that should be the focus from the pacing guide were indicated in a two-week time period. Table 24 below shows the standards of focus by grade level during the period of data collection.

Table 24

Power Standards Based on Pacing

Grade	Week	Standard
3rd	Week 4	RL.3.2 RL.3.5, RI.3.9, W.3.3, W.3.6
	Week 5	RI.3.3, RI 3.9, W.3.3, W.3.6
4th	Week 4	RL.4.2, RI.4.2, RI.4.9, W.4.2, W.4.3, W.4.1
	Week 5	RL.4.2, RL.4.6, RI.4.9, W.4.3, SL.4.1, L.4.6
5th	Week 4	RI.5.1, W.5.3, L.5.6
	Week 5	RL.5.2, W.5.3

The English Language Arts state standards are broken out by Reading Literature (RL), Reading Informational (RI), Speaking and Listening (SL), Language (L), and Writing (W). To better understand the power standards shown in this table, please see Appendix A. Table 25 shows the result of the data collection process at each building. The data shows the percentage that a practice was observed in each building as well as district wide. To better understand the walkthrough tool please see Appendix B. It is important to remember that each building did not have the same number of classroom visits.

Table 25

Adult Practice Data

Adult Practice	Ann J Kellogg	Verona	Valley View	District
3 Part Learning target in Student Friendly Language	80%	50%	100%	80%
Lesson plans match instruction & pacing	80%	50%	50%	52%
Learning targets evident in co-constructed charts	80%	37%	50%	48%
Objective is reviewed and evident to students	80%	25%	41%	36%
Appropriate practice	40%	12%	50%	16%
Nothing Aligned	20%	37%	0%	16%

As stated by Schmoker (2018) "Evidence has compelled us to acknowledge that instructional quality is indisputably the most important school factor in how much students learn" (p. 54). The adult practice data collected shows interesting trends across the buildings. The ELA curriculum very clearly states the three-part learning targets, and identifies instructional strategies, which in turn can make planning for instruction easier. A clear trend when walking through classrooms is that teachers are unsure how to implement the standard and have students effectively engage with the standards to insure transfer of learning. "Transfer is both a goal of learning and a mechanism for propelling learning. We want students to take the reins of their own learning as they deepen their own knowledge" (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016, p. 107). This is indicated by the district 16% (or four out of twenty-five classes) appropriate practice being observed.

Fisher, Frey, & Hattie (2016) mention when speaking of best practices that teacher clarity if very important. "Establishing and communicating a learning intention is an important way that teachers share their expectations with students. When these learning intentions are compared with grade level expectations educators can get a sense of their appropriateness" (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016, p. 16). Two very high leverage practices BCPS has identified to promote clarity for students are three-part learning targets in student friendly language, and the objective being reviewed and evident to students. These practices are expectations for teachers in the District. In implementing these two practices, teachers are providing clarity for students in knowing and understanding what it is they are supposed to learn. "Every lesson, irrespective of whether it focuses on surface, deep, or transfer, needs to have clearly articulated learning intentions and success criteria. The effect size is 0.75" (Fisher, Frey, & Hattie, 2016, p. 27). While observing adult implementation, it was clear these were stronger practices at Ann J Kellogg than both Valley View and Verona. The District as a whole is compliant with posting the learning objective with implementation in 80% of classrooms observed across all three buildings. The data also showed that the 3rd-5th grade classes across the district as a whole lack in providing clarity for students to articulate for themselves what they are learning and why, as well as supporting students to engage in meaningful appropriate practice connected to their learning as indicated by objective being reviewed and evident in 36% of classrooms observed, and appropriate practice being observed in 16% of classrooms observed.

Investigation

This project is investigating the effects of implementing a guaranteed and viable ELA curriculum on student achievement. In the data collection, there have been noticeable trends by school building in both student achievement data and adult practices. Ann J Kellogg's student

and adult practice data is most consistent, and their student achievement data has shown an upward trend. This is true in both NWEA-MAP and M-STEP. Valley View shows a 50% trend in teachers implementing in the identified adult practices. With Valley View being our largest elementary school with twelve 3rd-5th grade teachers, with a trend of 50% implementation of instructional practices aligned to the curriculum make the decline in data less surprising. 37% of the teachers observed at Verona Elementary were not alignment to the curriculum. The data collected confirms how the use of a GVC with best practices implemented can possibly or negatively impact student achieving data.

One adjustment that needs to be taken into consideration is the elementary master schedules, and how literacy blocks are implemented and monitored. During the STAR process collecting adult practice data, there was an alarming number of times in which teacher practice did not align with daily instructional schedule in the classroom. Any lag in the daily schedule, or the district mandated instructional minutes will ultimately add up and result in missed instruction for students. "Start 20 minutes late or stop 20 minutes early and do that every day and your students lose one-third of an hour of daily direct reading instruction. Do that during first, second, and third grade and they lose the equivalent of a year" (Fielding, Kerr, Rosier, 2007, p. 24). When thinking about the number of instructional minutes lost, it is very troubling when you consider the number of students not at grade level. In low performing districts, it is important to consider catch-up growth versus annual growth.

> "Creating annual growth for all students and catch-up growth for those who are behind requires multiple technologies. Creating annual growth for more students usually means better execution in the traditional areas of excellent leadership, excellent initial instruction, and excellent data systems. Creating catch-up growth means adding the new

> layers of targeted accelerated growth. Layers of processes, some of which may not even currently exist in your district, must be carefully added and must work together" (Fielding, Kerr, & Rosier, 2007, p. 20).

The District as a whole need to look at both the current instructional expectations, as well as what needs to be added for students far behind. BCPS instructional framework identifies that all elementary literacy blocks are to be 120 minutes long. This is in effort for all students to make annual or one year's growth. "120-minute block assures that students achieve a year of reading growth during the school year. Catch-up growth happens beyond the 120-minute block when retesting pinpoints weak skill areas and when teachers focus additional instruction on those areas" (Fielding, Kerr, Rosier, 2007, p. 27). This alone is not enough to move students who are two or more years behind. Additional time needs to be included in the master schedule in order to receive the catch-up growth necessary. Each elementary school needs to develop a response to intervention (RTI) time in which targeted supports are provided for all students. Most schools do an additional 30 to 45 minutes per day of RTI. If you consider that 120-minute literacy blocks allow a student who are two or more years behind to receive annual growth, critical changes need to be made in order to move students at a more rapid pace. For more information on Battle Creek Public Schools instructional minutes please see Appendix C.

While the data collection for each school aligns with instructional practice, the District will need to take a look at the students performing far below proficiency and consider what schools need in order to adequately address student needs. NWEA-MAP breaks data down into quintiles. The first quintile is students performing in the 0-20th percentile, the second quintile is students performing from the 21st-40th percentile, the third quintile is students who are performing from the 41st-60th percentile, the fourth quintile is students who are performing form

the 61st-80th percentile, and the fifth quintile are students who are performing in the 81sr-100th percentile. M-STEP metrics are reported as advanced, proficient, partially proficient, and not proficient. The metric is based on a scaled score students receive on the assessment.

In order to get a true picture of the 3rd-5th grade students, and how they are performing data was pulled on the percent of students far below, or in the first quintile on NWEA-MAP, and students who are not proficient on M-STEP. Table 26 shows a break down on NWEA-MAP data by school and by grade and the percent of students performing in the first quintile. Table 27 shows M-STEP data by school and by grade and the percent of student that are preforming at the "not proficient" level.

Table 26

NWEA-MAP 1st Quintile ELA Data (2019)

School	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	Building 2019	Building 2018
Ann J Kellogg	28%	31%	27%	37%	50%
Verona	48%	49%	36%	37%	65%
Valley View	22%	42%	44%	37%	33%

Table 27

M-STEP Not Proficient ELA Data (2019)

School	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
Ann J Kellogg	60%	71%	60%
Verona	72%	74%	77%
Valley View	49%	62%	65%

Battle Creek Public Schools has a very large percentage of students who are performing in the first quintile on NWEA-MAP or not proficient on M-STEP. When buildings have numbers over 50% large consideration needs to be made in how the master schedule is adjusted to meet student's needs. In addition to this, building leaders need to prescribe additional instructional time devoted to reading in order for students to attain the skills they need.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISTRICT IMPROVMENTS

After a review of the data provided for adult practice implementation, and ELA proficiency on NWEA-MAP and M-STEP, there are two recommendations for the District to implement in order to see greater alignment in teachers implementing the Districts ELA GVC as evidences by adult practices, and increases in ELA proficiency for all 3rd-5th grade students.

The first recommendation is for the district to develop a District Intervention Plan to address the needs of tier two and tier three intensive students. Tier two intensive students are students who fall within the 21st to 40th percentile rank as identified by NWEA-MAP, and tier three intensive are students who fall in the 0 to 20th percentile rank on NWEA-MAP. It is at these percentile levels that the District needs to prescribe the targeted response for students who fall within these categories. This will require District administrators who make decisions in regard to curriculum, instruction, and assessment to research and become familiar with intervention programs of support that are scripted and have proven impact on student achievement. Examples of these programs are Systems 44 intervention by Houghton Mifflin, Corrective Reading by McGraw Hill, Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), and i-Ready by Curriculum Associates.

After researching, the District should then develop a comprehensive response plan for intervention, and a plan for providing training and support for implementation district wide. Please see Appendix D as an example of a district wide intervention response plan. Developing a district response will ensure all 3rd-5th grade buildings have an adequate plan, and resources to address the needs of all tier 2 and tier 3 intensive students.

The second recommendation is for the district to monitor adult practices implementation on key strategies. “It is important to overstate the importance of literacy. Yet nothing so begs for

clarity in k-12 education. Because literacy is foundational to learning in every subject, we must be crystal clear about what it is and what it is not" (Schmoker, 2018, p 29). Strategically monitoring specific adult practices that impact literacy achievement from the district level will allow for all stakeholders to be held accountable for the systems of support in place for students, from the Superintendent and directors, to principals, and teachers. Battle Creek Public Schools should develop a data collection tool that captures the adult practices identified in Table 7 which would support consistent implementation of the Districts' ELA GVC across the district.

Reviewing this data monthly will serve as a way to monitor building leaders' impact on teacher practice. It will be important for BCPS district administration to utilizing this information to engage in regular data reviews along with student achievement data, in order to implement effective action plans for support. As stated by Boudett, City, And Murnane (2014) "The most important way a school leader can support schools' efforts to improve is to model the process, engaging in each step so that they have first-hand experience in what is involved" (p. 203). This data will also provide feedback to building principals in how well their schools are working towards accomplishing fidelity in the Districts instructional framework, and implementation of the curriculum.

In order for BCPS to successfully implement the recommendations, there are budget implication. In developing a district intervention response plan, an inventory of individual buildings current practices will most likely illuminate vast differences in the resources available to them. With this information, BCPS will need to take into consideration the cost of providing resources across three buildings and 1,206 students. Online programs often come with continuous costs such as renewable licenses. Examples of these programs are System 44 and i-

Ready. If the District is not financially able to renew online licenses, a resource that is a one-time purchase such as PALS and Corrective Reading would be the best course of action.

CONCLUSION

A guaranteed and viable curriculum provides a roadmap for teachers that guarantees all students gain equal access to a high-quality education. This project investigated specific actions in Battle Creek Public Schools 3rd-5th grade buildings by grade, schools, and level of implementation. Data was collected on the movements that promoted specific adult actions and positive student achievement results as identified by the state test (M-STEP), and the District's local benchmark assessment (NWEA-MAP) to identify trends where implementation of the GVC had the greatest impact.

The administration of Battle Creek Public Schools will need to implement additional accountability systems to monitor building leader and teacher practices, in order to effectively support individual buildings within the district. Within the research, there was a positive correlation between buildings with high levels of implementation of identified adult practices and alignment in the ELA GVC and building M-STEP and NWEA-MAP ELA proficiency data. There were promising practices aligned to student achievement data identified at Ann J. Kellogg Elementary. A deeper dive into the leadership actions and expectations around ELA curriculum and instruction at Ann J Kellogg could provide the District greater insight into what is contributing to their success, and how to duplicate that success at Valley View Elementary and Verona Elementary School.

Additional contributing factors such as building principal and teacher turnover, were taken into account when analyzing each individual school's data. Marzano's research indicates that a GVC when implemented can have a large impact on the achievement of students. "Once a

specific intervention is identified, it must be thoroughly implemented if a school is to expect it to impact student achievement" (Marzano, 2003, p. 165). More research is required once the ELA curriculum is implemented and monitored on a consistent basis across all three schools to determine the absolute impact of the ELA GVC on ELA student proficiency.

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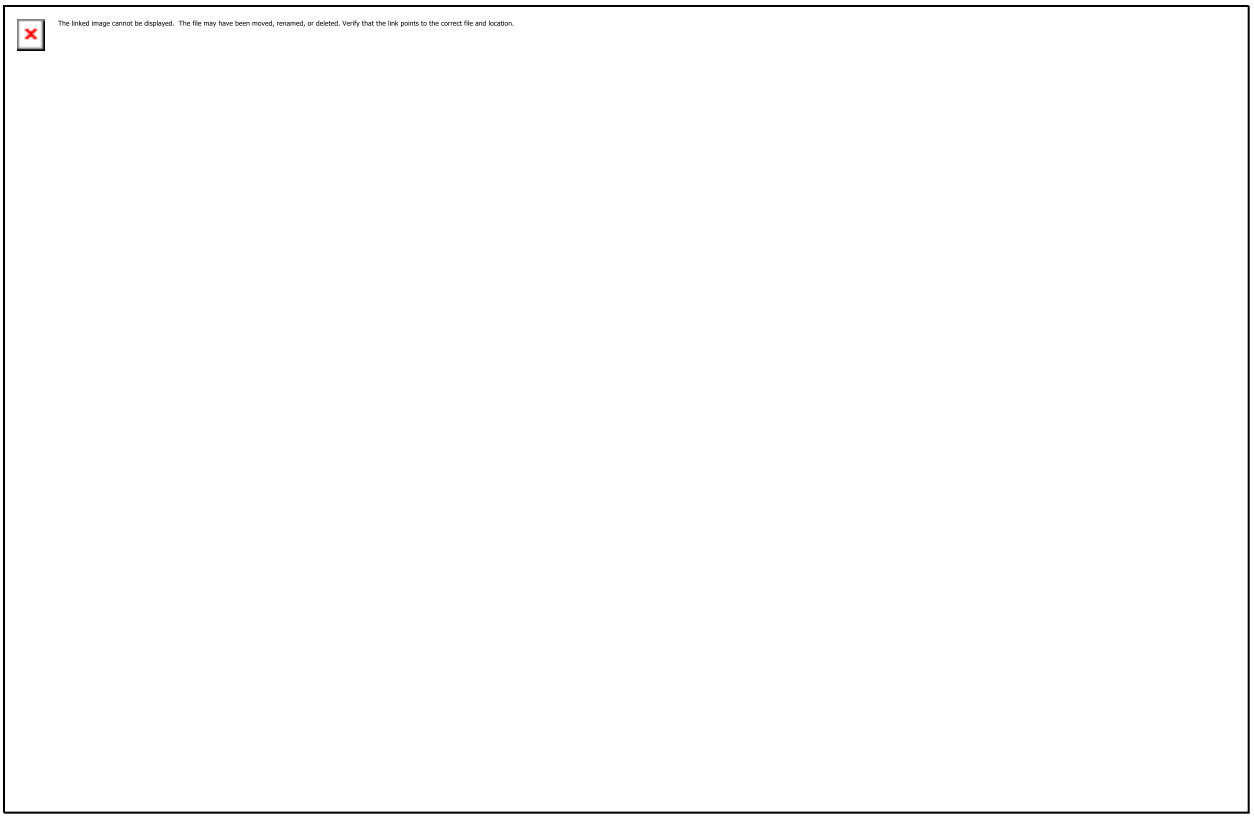
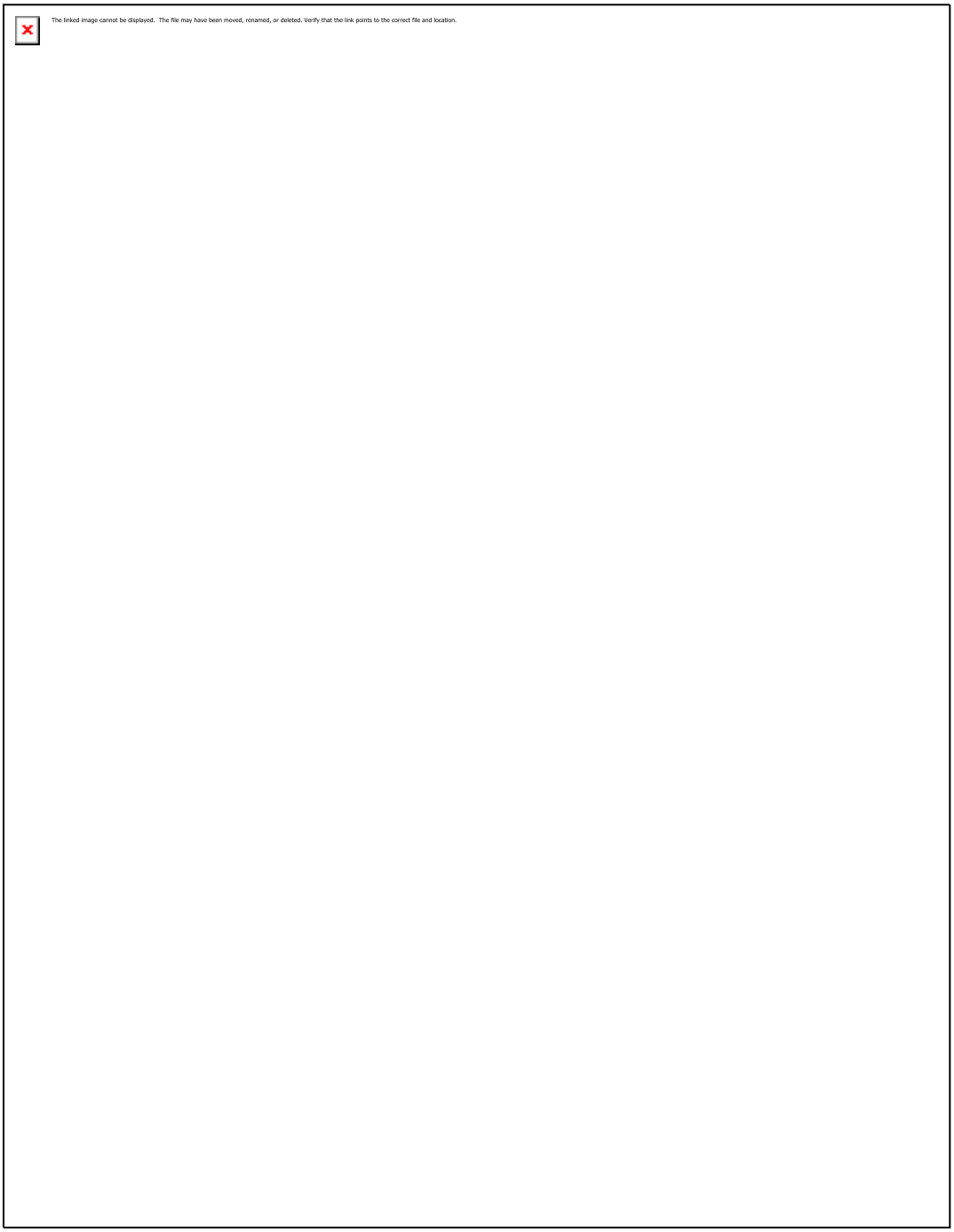
Appendix A

Power Standards Document



Appendix B

GVC Walkthrough Tool

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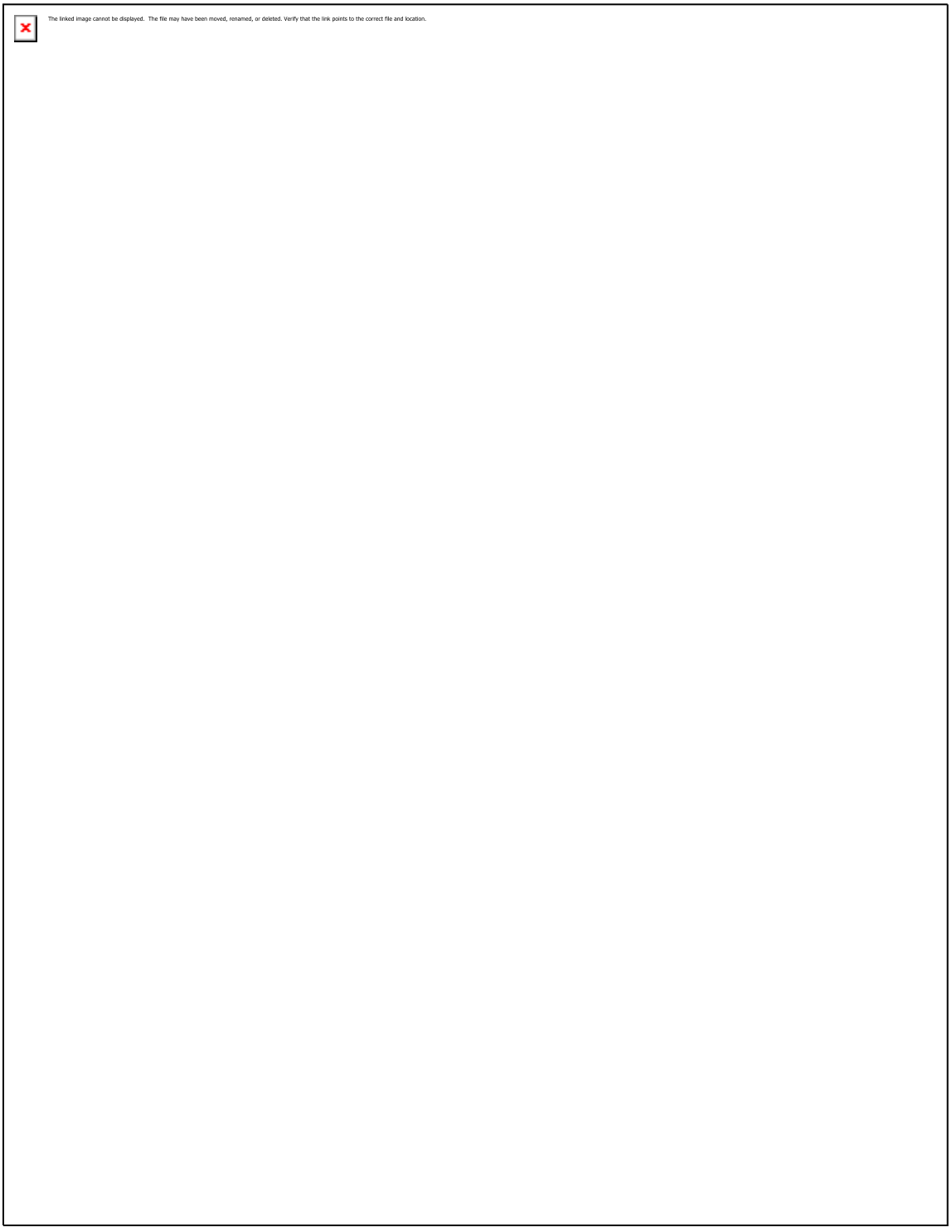
Appendix C

2019-2020 Instructional Minutes Guidelines



Appendix D

Example of District Intervention Plan