Orange County Public Schools
Diagnostic Site Visit Report

The following report provides information on the extent to which the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) practices align with effective districtwide practices identified in the research literature and expressed in the Broad Prize Framework for School District Excellence. This report was commissioned to provide more information to assist in the district in its efforts to reach world class standards. An overview of the district and an overall summary of ratings are presented first, followed by a detailed presentation of evidence for rubric scores for each of the indicators and elements in the Framework.

Background

The Broad Prize, established in 2002, is awarded each year to honor urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among low-income and minority students. A review board of prominent education experts analyzes extensive publicly available data on 75 eligible districts and selects four finalists. A team of experienced researchers and practitioners then conducts site visits to each finalist district using the Broad Prize Framework for School District Excellence.

In 2011, The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation began offering the opportunity for a select group of districts that – like most large urban American school districts – have not been Broad Prize finalists, to undergo the same diagnostic site visit process. The foundation hopes that these site visits may help launch districtwide discussions regarding which existing policies and practices are already strong and should be maintained (meaning likely to contribute to increased student achievement for students of all backgrounds) as well as which policies and practices the district may be able to improve upon, relative to what other districts that have produced stronger student gains are doing.

Through this work, researchers have found that no large urban district in America is perfect: most have certain strengths as well as certain areas for improvement, and all have something to learn from one another and to share with others. But what districts showing the greatest student gains have in common is that they have all been willing to take a close, introspective, transparent look at their policies and practices and have all had the courage to improve policies and practices where necessary to better support their teachers and students. As background, The Broad Prize Framework assesses the quality of district-wide policies and practices relative to indicators that the research literature identifies as being associated with excellent student achievement outcomes, including

outcomes state assessments, narrowing/closing the achievement gap between subpopulations of students, increasing the graduation rate, and preparing students well for postsecondary education and career.

How to Interpret This Report

Because the Broad Prize Framework is meant to distinguish large urban districts identified by the review board as the ones making the greatest progress in raising student achievement, the framework is much more rigorous than other district diagnostic tools, including those that have been developed by states as part of their state systems of support. In the Broad Framework, "proficient" is equivalent to "excellent" since exemplary practices are expected of the finalist districts. "Exemplary" in any area indicates that the district has practices that are "world class", that is, they go beyond the realm of excellence, distinguishing the district as being one of the best in the nation in that area. Few districts reach that level of performance. Thus for a diagnostic audit, districts should be aiming to achieve "proficient" as the standard for excellence.

Similarly, being rated "area of concern" indicates that the district should examine its practices because they have not yet met the criteria for excellence, but the rating does not indicate that the district is failing. Rather, the rating means that the district has not yet met the criteria that the research indicates should be in place for excellent performance. "Area of need," however, does indicate that there is an issue that requires much more attention.

In some cases, a district may receive an "approaching proficiency" or "approaching exemplary" rating. The use of the word "approaching" in the ratings has a specific meaning. Each of the indicators has three elements on which the district is scored. If the district satisfies the requirements for two of the three indicators, then it is considered "approaching" the next rating. Thus if the district demonstrates two of the three elements needed to meet "exemplary," it will be scored "approaching exemplary." In lay terms, this would be considered an "A minus" or a "B plus" since it is doing better than a "B" but has not yet reached "A" status. The elements are listed for every indicator in the detailed presentation of the framework.

The following report provides information on the extent to which the OCPS practices align with effective practices identified in the research literature and expressed in the Broad Prize Framework for School District Excellence. This report was commissioned to provide more information to assist in the district's improvement processes. An overview of the district and an overall summary of ratings are presented first, followed by a detailed presentation of evidence for rubric scores for each of the indicators and elements in the Framework.

District Overview

OCPS is located in Orlando, Florida and is the 10th largest school district in the United States. With 182 schools serving 181,500 students, OCPS has nearly 22,000 employees. About 27% of the district's students are white/Caucasian; 35% are white/Hispanic, 29% are black/African American; 5% are of Asian descent; 3% are multi-cultural; and 1% is American Indian/Alaska Natives.

The district's vision is to be the top producer of successful students in the nation. Overarching goals are to have an intense focus on student achievement; a high performing and dedicated team of employees; safe learning and working environments; efficient operations; and sustained community engagement.

To differentiate itself from others in the educational marketplace, OCPS is focused on establishing itself as a leader in academic and operation innovation, technology, and capital improvement. They strive to offer broad education and extracurricular opportunities, invest in capacity building of their staff, emphasize preparation of students for a real world environment, and are proud of their ability to serve a diverse community.

The 2012 OCPS Annual Report notes that the district's graduation rate stands at over 80%, and has increased more than 30 percentage points since 2000. Excluding charter schools, the graduation rate is 91%. In 2011, 96 schools received an A grade from the state of Florida; 40 received a B; 32 received a C; 6 received a D; and 1 received an F.

District leaders pride themselves on their ability to be strategic and nimble and to anticipate needs and meet them in advance. They are in the midst of transitioning to a new curriculum based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), employing increasingly rigorous instructional strategies to help students become college- and career-ready, immediately intervening with schools in need to address emergent concerns, and deploying new assessment reporting systems to provide easier access to data to use for instructional planning and progress monitoring.

The district has nurtured college and career readiness for all by providing open access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses, International Baccalaureate programs at five high schools, many opportunities for dual enrollment with community colleges, and pathways to achieving industry certification within specific careers while students are still in high school. More students are participating in these opportunities each year.

The district has engaged in building the capacity of its workforce through provision of in-depth professional development and by transitioning to more rigorous educator evaluation systems. OCPS has also engaged in an ambitious capital improvement program, opening two new schools and renovating or

replacing 10 other schools in 2012, and scheduling openings or completion of seven other schools in 2013.

The district is also financially sound and fiscally prudent, having saved many dollars from steps taken to ensure efficiency and lean administration. OCPS has an impressively large level of reserves to use in the event of budget shortfalls.

OCPS has an extensive outreach program and community support. Taxpayers recently passed a one mill increase to cover operations for the district, and community partners are actively engaged in donating funds and providing interesting internship and other opportunities and materials for students in the district.

The many changes being instituted in the district have had many positive outcomes, but not without some unintended consequences, particularly in light of the site-based management approach in the district. As will be explained below, there is uneven implementation of several of the initiatives and confusion and inconsistent understandings about others. For example, leaders and teachers do not have a common definition of the terms within the rubrics being used to evaluate teacher performance. Expectations for proficient performance are different from one school to the next. The amount and maintenance of technology in the schools varies dramatically. Student formative assessment strategies, teacher collaboration, priority focus areas, and content of professional development also spans a wide range of practice across the different learning communities. The result is a lack of organizational coherence and cohesion. The lack of coherence can be problematic, particularly considering the high rate of student mobility in the district but also in terms of the ability of the district to close the achievement gap and raise the performance of all students.

The district is currently working on the balance between centralized and decentralized decision-making by promoting site-based management within the context of the "One Vision, One Voice" approach that features several non-negotiable practices associated with high achievement. However, respondents believe that the right balance has not yet been struck.

Summary of Strengths and Challenges

Category I: Teaching and Learning

Curriculum. OCPS has order of instruction documents for all grade levels and core content areas. The documents are in the process of being aligned to the CCSS. Some respondents felt that the curriculum documents were too ambitious and reported that they could not cover the standards to the depth required for mastery if they followed the guides.

Recently, the district initiated several approaches to help students become more college- and career-ready, including increased access to AP courses, more IB programs in the high schools, and stronger links with local community colleges to encourage dual enrollment and provide opportunities for industry certification. AVID and Destination College programs have been put into place in elementary and middle schools to help students aspire to postsecondary education and careers.

Technology access and sufficient materials are a challenge at many schools. Site-based management has led to some schools having few computers, interactive white boards, and other technologies. Some schools have inadequate technology infrastructure. Teachers run out of supplies at some schools.

Instruction. Although teachers have been provided with professional development to teach with rigor and to differentiate, too little understanding of rigor is in place and too few teachers implement differentiated instruction. There is wide variation in the extent to which instruction is challenging and engaging.

On the other hand, there are a variety of effective interventions in place, and schools are adept at identifying students and providing them with multiple types of interventions. The district recently put into place several interventions to help over-age students with credit accrual and to provide tutoring and summer camps for remediation. Extensions of learning in the traditional classrooms are rare, as is identifying children of color for gifted and talented programs. However, the district now has a testing program for all second grade students in Title I schools to identify students for gifted and talented programs.

Classrooms are relatively well managed, with many schools using the CHAMPS program to implement programs for positive behavioral supports. While teachers have been trained to be sensitive to students' backgrounds, few implement culturally responsive instruction in the classroom.

Assessment. OCPS has a comprehensive and cohesive assessment system with summative, interim, and formative assessments in place. Most teachers also engage in weekly assessments to determine mastery of lessons. Administrators and teachers are adept at analyzing data for planning instruction and reteaching.

The district recently adopted an Instructional Management Program to complement the Enterprise Data Warehouse already in place. Most believe the new system has provided much easier access to data though some still struggle with its use.

Parents and students are routinely provided with reports on student progress. Parent reports are issued in many languages at the elementary school level. The reports provide information on academics and behavior. Parents can also access information through Progress Book, an online program, and many use the site

often to check on their children's homework assignment completion and other data.

Students generally learn of expectations for proficiency through teacher information given at the beginning of class and through objectives posted on the board. There is a common board configuration. This information typically includes grading scales, but does not often provide models of or rubrics defining proficient or advanced work. Teachers are uneven in the level of feedback provided to students, though most give results back in a timely fashion. Some students engage in self-assessments and/or track their progress, and many know what it will take to reach the next level on the FCAT.

Professional Development. The district offers a wide array of professional development opportunities both at the district and school levels. Professional development has been offered in both content and pedagogy. Most recently, training has centered on the Marzano teacher evaluation system (one of the two options required by the state) and implementation of the CCSS. Some of the training, however, especially at the school level, is not seen as useful by teachers, and the district training on the Marzano system was described as ineffective due to the inconsistency of definitions of some of the terms, particularly the term innovation, within the rubric and the inability of facilitators to answer questions consistently.

Mentors are assigned to all new teachers and individualized coaching is available to all teachers at the school level. Coaching in some schools has been cut, though, since many of these staff also serve as testing coordinators. Teachers speak highly of the Great Beginnings program for new teachers.

Collaboration time and professional learning communities (PLCs) are required by the district, but are unevenly implemented. Some are very effective, but some meet only four times a year. When PLCs meet, they typically follow a structured and useful format where data are analyzed and successful instructional strategies are shared. Most respondents reported that there were sufficient resources available for professional development. The district does not measure fidelity of implementation of acquired skills and knowledge, though, and has not correlated professional development to student achievement. Some steps are being taken to measure professional development seat time and outcomes.

Category II: District Leadership

Instructional Leadership. The district recently received a five-year BRIDGE grant to help foster instructional leadership. The program funds professional development for newly appointed principals, aspiring principals, and master teachers. Experienced principals receive some professional development, but believe that community learning network meetings could be used to better effect for this purpose.

District and school staff have become highly visible in the schools since the Marzano evaluation system has been implemented. More assistance is being provided to new and struggling teachers and the current learning community structure has meant that more district help is available at the schools. Most district and school staff are thought to be adept at problem-solving, though there is variation reported among the learning communities. Principals would appreciate having more collaboration time than is currently allocated.

The character of walkthrough tools has changed since the Marzano evaluation system was put into place and now tools are aligned with the system. However, teachers reported they are not consistently applied even though inter-rater reliability training was offered. The key challenge is in the definition of innovation.

There are some capacity building efforts to help school leadership teams and in some schools, staff are included in decision making. However, capacity building tends to be directed to low performing schools, and inclusion in decision-making is dependent upon the principal.

District Governance. The school board is perceived to be effective, with a strong emphasis on student achievement and a close watch on finances. They are known to have an aggressive building plan in place. The board tends to iron out their differences in workshops so that the consent agenda is relatively efficient. The chair is elected and facilitates the board decision-making process.

The board receives progress reports on the district strategic plan and is said to be cognizant of their roles as policy makers rather than becoming involved in daily management decisions. They are able to catalyze community support and recently passed a one mill tax levy for operations and other district needs.

The superintendent is relatively new in her position but has been in the district for several years. She is known to be direct and action-oriented. Some believe she is intense and demanding, but staff appreciate the desire to accelerate progress and get things done. Both the current superintendent and her predecessor are considered to be effective problem-solvers and both have enjoyed very productive working relationships with the board.

Strategic Planning. The strategic plan was originally developed in 2007 and was updated in 2011. The original plan development included a systematic process with deep data analysis and many opportunities for various stakeholders to provide input. The strategic plan was translated into multiple business plans with specific benchmarks, activities, and tactics. The evidence base was comprised of data from the district and studies from the research literature, although specific studies were not cited.

The new strategic plan spans five years and contains well articulated goals, objectives, activities, timelines, benchmarks, and persons responsible. School plans are not explicitly aligned to the district plan, though, since school plans follow the state-required format.

Both the 2007 and the 2011 plans have been routinely monitored and informally evaluated for effectiveness. Progress is posted on the district website on a scorecard and care is taken to address any area where insufficient progress has been made.

Performance and accountability. The district has a set of performance expectations for teachers and principals that come from its newly adopted educator evaluation system, but as yet the expectations for exemplary are not consistently defined or applied. The district is working on key performance indicators for its departments and staff, but these are in progress. There are not clear expectations for classified staff performance.

Struggling and new employees, particularly teachers and principals, are offered intensive assistance in the form of coaching and collaboration to share effective strategies. Assistance provided to other struggling staff is dependent on supervisors. Consequences for ineffectiveness are formally defined. In the past, though, few staff have been terminated based on ineffective performance.

The district has multiple programs in place to help students graduate on time. There are summer camps for third and eighth grade students who do not pass the FCAT and opportunities to recover and accrue credits for students in high school. The district has an array of alternative education programs and tries to promote graduation through its AVID and Destination College programs.

All schools are held strictly accountable for their progress and aggressive and intensive support is provided to any school that has received a D or F and many of the schools that received a C on the state report card.

Category III: Organizational Structure and Climate

Financial Resources. The district has about a $2.7 billion budget and is financially sound with a very healthy reserve. OCPS engages in strong financial planning and several forecasting strategies. OCPS also has a five-year building plan. Several initiatives have been put into place to ensure fiscal accountability and cost effectiveness, such as monitoring school budgets and reducing use of electricity.

The finance department is especially lauded among stakeholders for its budget transparency. Individuals find the budget easy to understand and most know where they can find a copy of the budget. The budget is clearly aligned with the priority of school achievement. Schools are given discretion to develop their own

budgets, which has sometimes resulted in parent perceptions of unfairness when they see counselors or technology at one school and not another.

The district is aggressive in finding external sources of funding and receives about $3 million a year from external funders. In addition, the district has established many strong business and community partners and has many volunteers in its schools.

Human Resources. OCPS recently implemented a new payroll and benefits system which, after a rocky start, has become efficient and effective. The district has an effective recruiting system and tries to recruit diverse candidates and a pool for hard-to-fill positions, such as English language learner teachers and teachers of advanced mathematics and science. Most positions are filled by the start of the school year. Principals interview and hire people for their staff. There is significant turnover in some positions, however, notably classified staff and mathematics and science high school teaching positions, since salaries are so low relative to many other large urban school districts in Florida.

Employees express high levels of satisfaction with their human resources department. Staff surveys of working conditions have not yet been routinely conducted.

Principals determine placement of teachers and the district places principals. Some principals have been shuffled recently and are not sure of the criteria for moving principals. District staff reported that they move principals to underperforming schools when principals have records of effective performance. They also consider fit with school culture.

Orientation to the school district is considered to be very effective for teachers in the New Beginnings program and less effective for other staff. Other staff typically only receive a half day orientation, whereas new teachers are supported with a two-day orientation and mentoring throughout the year.

Organizational Structure and Processes. The district recently developed a "One Vision, One Voice" initiative to bring greater coherence to the district as a whole. The initiative included a set of non-negotiables. However, according to respondents, there is still considerable variation between schools in curriculum, instructional strategies in use, professional development, and implementation of the non-negotiables. The district is working on establishing more consistency but has not yet achieved the right balance between centralized and decentralized decision making.

There is inconsistency in grading, and an A on a report card in one school is not equivalent to an A in another. Many teachers give higher grades for those who exert more effort even if the result is not mastery.

District facilities are reasonably well maintained and are generally clean. However, several schools experience challenges with the HVAC systems and technology infrastructure. Transportation and food services are said to be good and improving, especially with the new key performance indicators being put into place. Data analysis for improvement is taking place in about half of the district departments. Some departments are known for having a responsive, customer service orientation. However, most do not measure customer service yet.

Organizational Culture. OCPS has a written code of conduct that is relatively evenly enforced, and a detailed safe schools plan that is also reported to be working well. The Act4Change program was introduced to help prevent bullying and several steps have been taken to reduce gang violence in the schools. Students, teachers, administrators, and parents all report that they feel relatively safe in the schools.

Budget reductions have resulted in the dismissal of many social workers and counselors, and so respondents have concerns about the ability to meet all of the behavioral support and counseling needs that students have. However, the district has taken several steps to implement programs, especially in the middle schools, and to provide wraparound and other services for needy students.

Most respondents believe that the schools and classrooms have respectful and caring environments. Many schools implemented the Change Starts with Me curriculum for character development, and students engage in service-learning and other initiatives to contribute to the community. A study was recently completed to see what can be further implemented to meet the specific needs of African American and Hispanic males.

AVID and Destination College both help students develop social-emotional skills and other work-related skills such as time management. Counselors reported, though, that there is not enough emphasis or time for students to learn important social-emotional skills needed for success in the schools and later in the workplace.

The district has special outreach efforts for parent involvement associated with its Title I programs, and has instituted multiple advisory committees and established parent centers in Title I schools. Both Title I and other schools attempt to involve parents through parent-teacher conferences, family nights and other activities. Most respondents in Title I schools believed that outreach efforts were good, but the yield was not, with few parents becoming meaningfully involved in their children's education.

Recommendations

Specific recommendations have been provided below for each of the indicators of effectiveness discussed in the Broad Framework. Overarching recommendations include:

- Bring more coherence to the district by providing a more effective balance between centralized and decentralized decision-making – there must be more centralized control for curriculum, assessment, and professional development;

- Immediately address the issues of definition of indicators within the educator effectiveness system;

- Increase the rigor of instruction in all content areas by aligning all curriculum to the CCSS, implementing more challenging and engaging instruction, and differentiating instruction in all classrooms;

- Build capacity by providing more targeted professional development to all staff, including administrators and teachers;

- Fully develop and implement the data warehouse system so all teachers and administrators have easy and timely access to student performance data.

Summary of District Ratings

CATEGORY I: Teaching and Learning	Area of Need	Area of Concern	Proficient	Exemplary
Curriculum Statements				
C-1. The district has a rigorous, effectively articulated standards-based curriculum.			Approaching	
C-2. The district provides sufficient standards-aligned instructional materials needed to implement the curriculum effectively.		X		
Instruction Statements				
I-1. The district implements evidence-based instruction as a standard practice.		X		
I-2. The district provides effective instructional supports for all students.			X	
Assessment Statements				
A-1. The district has a cohesive, comprehensive, and user-friendly system for assessing and reporting student performance and uses results to make instructional improvements.			X	
A-2. The district routinely provides assessment results and information on how to improve performance to students and their parents.			X	
Professional Development Statements				
PD-1. The district provides multiple types of ongoing differentiated professional development to all teachers and instructional staff designed to meet district and school goals.			X	
PD-2. The district has a system for supporting and evaluating the effectiveness of professional development.			X	

CATEGORY II: District Leadership	Area of Need	Area of Concern	Proficient	Exemplary
Instructional Leadership Statements				
IL-1. The district develops and sustains effective instructional leaders.			Approaching	
IL-2. The district supports instructional leaders in building instructional capacity in schools.		X		
District Governance Statements				
DG-1. The board works collaboratively, efficiently, and effectively to fulfill its responsibilities for district governance and oversight.				Approaching
DG-2. The superintendent provides skillful leadership.				Approaching
Strategic Planning Statements				
SP-1. The strategic plan is developed using a systematic planning process that engages relevant stakeholders and is built on research-based evidence of probable effectiveness.			X	
SP-2. The district strategic plan is long range and visionary, well-articulated, and routinely monitored for implementation and effectiveness.				X
Performance and Accountability Statements				
PA-1. The district provides and enforces a clear set of rigorous expectations for staff performance and provides supports and consequences to improve effectiveness.		X		
PA-2. The district has strong accountability practices at all levels of the system.			X	

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CATEGORY III: Organizational Structure and Climate	Area of Need	Area of Concern	Proficient	Exemplary
Financial Resources Statements				
FR-1. The district is financially sound, implements prudent financial planning processes, and displays strong fiscal accountability.				Approaching
FR-2. The district has a transparent budget process aligned with its strategic plan, evaluates its spending decisions and is able to attract additional funding to support district priority initiatives.				Approaching
Human Resources Statements				
HR-1. The district has an efficient and effective human resource management system.			X	
HR-2. The district has a comprehensive system for cultivating and placing highly effective staff.				Approaching
Organizational Structure and Processes Statements				
OSP-1. The district ensures organizational coherence.		X		
OSP-2. The district engages in effective continuous improvement processes for all its systems.			Approaching	
Organizational Culture Statements				
OC-1. The district provides a safe and secure environment for teaching and learning.			Approaching	
OC-2. The district promotes a positive climate for learning in all its schools.			X	

Summary of Evidence

This section of the report presents detailed evidence on which the ratings are based.

Category I: Teaching and Learning

Curriculum

C-1. **The district has a rigorous, effectively articulated standards-based curriculum.**

Rating: **Approaching Proficient**

Rigorous. OCPS has "order of instruction" documents and blueprints for all core content areas. These documents provide information on the benchmark to be met, deconstructed standards and/or item specifications for FCAT 2.0 and deconstructed standards for social studies. The standards have been aligned to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) and have been correlated to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) where applicable. The district curriculum is in the midst of being updated to address the CCSS. There are indicators as to when tests are blended and when the full implementation of CCSS will occur. The reading/language arts and social studies documents include information on 21st century skills and suggested learning experiences. Several mathematics documents included OCPS Deconstructed Standards and/or a link to a website that teachers can access for test item specifications. The CCSS are relatively rigorous compared to the NGSSS.

College and career ready. In 2012, OCPS began training staff to prepare students, especially high achievers, to become ready for college. The district has increased access to Advanced Placement (AP) courses in every high school; the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme in 5 schools; dual enrollment with local community colleges; and high school credit courses in middle schools in Algebra I, Geometry, Physical Science Honors, Earth Space Science Honors, Spanish I, and French I. All 9th and 10th graders will be taking the PSAT this academic year. In 2011-2012, there were 12,980 students enrolled in AP classes. That number increased to 14,206 in 2012-2103, representing a 9.4% increase. In 2012, OCPS was selected by the College Board for the AP District Honor Roll which recognizes districts nationally that are able to expand access to AP courses to a more diverse group of learners while simultaneously improving performance. The Orange Talent Identification Program has targeted seventh graders in the top 10% of each school to take the PSAT on January 26, 2013. Ten hours of tutoring will be provided for these students, and students taking the assessment will qualify for a summer camp supported by OCPS consisting of four days of inquiry study at state universities. The district also offers Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) at most middle schools and at some elementary schools.

Destination College, a truncated AVID-style program, is also offered at 70 elementary schools for students in Grades 3-5. The extent to which teachers focus on college-going, though, varies across the district, with some placing a greater focus by posting information about colleges teachers attended and having counselors discuss college-going with students and others doing little or nothing to encourage college aspirations. OCPS also has a robust career-technical education program that offers industry certification in multiple fields, such as Microsoft certification, medical technician certification, and early childhood education. Students may enroll in local community colleges to further both college and career aspirations and the district provides transportation for their attendance.

Effectively sequenced and paced. OCPS curriculum documents for reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies show standards to be covered in each of the four nine-week periods during the academic year. Focus group respondents reported that there were similar guides in several other content areas and grade levels. Teachers across the district, though, reported that it was often difficult to address all of the standards at the depth indicated in the time allotted. Many felt that the expectations embedded in the guides were unrealistic and that they had no guidance on how to prioritize when they knew it would not be possible to address everything in the order of sequence. Similar sentiments were expressed for each content area and at most grade levels.

The district will improve in this area when each school has implemented a core academic curriculum that has embedded expectations that match "world class" standards, such as those top-performing districts in the nation or the world and/or has fully implemented the CCSS. The curriculum should also have well-articulated content that specifically prepares all students for postsecondary education and/or career. The district should help all students acquire social-emotional, time management, and other skills to prepare for postsecondary work. The district should also provide tools that help teachers to pace and sequence curriculum delivery effectively so that they can address the subject matter being taught to the necessary depth in the time available.

C-2.   The district provides sufficient standards-aligned instructional materials needed to implement the curriculum effectively.

Rating: Area of Concern

Sufficient supply. Respondents from multiple focus groups reported that there were not enough textbooks for all students in the classroom. Some mentioned that obtaining additional textbooks, especially when new students enrolled mid-year, could take several weeks. Some schools used their entire photocopying budget before midyear, so some teachers were paying for photocopies out of their own pockets.

Technology access. Under the district's site-based decision making structure, principals choose whether to equip their schools with technology. As a result, there is no basic technology package for each school except for the new schools that were recently built. Many schools have few computers; many have few or no SMART boards or devices. Technology support has to be shared among schools and is not timely or responsive to school needs, according to respondents. Individuals are concerned about how all students will be able to access computers to take the online standardized assessments (the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) that will be required starting in 2014-15.

Review and revision of curriculum and materials. During the past year, a committee engaged in a K–5 Mathematics and Reading Textbook Adoption Process. The committee was charged with ensuring that all instructional materials are correlated to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Committee members were chosen based on overall teaching experience; professional ELA/math experiences within the last two years; certifications; instructional leadership experience; reading and/or math recognition awards; experience providing ELA/math professional development; and a written application. The committee was systematic in its approach, training adoption committee members on the adoption process and Common Core instructional shifts, and sending information to principals to share with teachers and parents to solicit their input. Once the textbook is selected, the tasks and timelines indicate that the committee will establish professional development calendars for the 2013-2014 school year and reprioritize work commitments for district resource teachers in elementary math and elementary ELA to update the Instructional Management System. The district curriculum is in the midst of being updated to address the CCSS. School-level respondents believe that the updating process has lagged and that the curriculum does not yet address CCSS to the depth necessary to guide instruction. The district has put into place summer writing teams to help with this process, but by most accounts, there is still work to do to revise the curriculum.

OCPS will improve in this area when it ensures that all teachers and students have standards-aligned materials needed to implement the curriculum in all content areas for all grade levels. The district should provide access to technology for all teachers and students and use the technology in more powerful and integrated ways to advance learning. The district should also develop a systematic review process for revision of curriculum and instructional materials in all areas to improve their effectiveness for all students.

Instruction

I-1.   The district implements evidence-based instruction as a standard practice.

Rating: Area of Concern

Grade appropriate rigor. Beginning teachers take four 21-hour professional development modules that cover the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs), which include strategies for delivering instruction with rigor. New teachers also receive training in rigor through the district's online coursework. The district has also offered workshops that discussed rigor to all teachers. *Teaching with Depth* is a presentation that provides teachers with a brief description of DOK, in-depth explanations of benchmark and a framework for deconstructing standards. *Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Follow-up* is a presentation that provides teachers with a brief review of DOK and instructional strategies. However, focus groups and interviews indicated that there is substantial variation in the rigor found in the classrooms. Some teachers and administrators could articulate a definition of rigor and provide examples of rigor in the classroom, but many could not. Observations showed very few classrooms that were being taught on grade level and/or that used appropriate depth of knowledge levels or higher order questioning strategies.

Differentiated instruction. Beginning teachers are provided training on differentiated instruction in their first and second years. In addition, OCPS has a partnership with the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resource System (FDLRS), a state center that offers assistance to districts to help them provide effective instruction for students with disabilities. FDLRS also provides training to teachers on how to differentiate instruction. However, focus groups indicated that while differentiated instruction is commonly used by teachers in Grades K-3 for reading, it is not commonly used for any other content area; it is occasionally implemented in middle schools, and is rarely implemented in high schools. When asked about differentiation, teachers and administrators most often discussed the MTSS (Multi-Tiered Support System)/RtI (Response to Intervention) process. Observations and interviews with students revealed occasional use of differentiation in the form of flexible groupings, but showed no use of differentiated assignments, pacing, or grouping based on anything other than ability.

Challenging and engaging activities. AVID, SpringBoard, and Advanced Placement professional development opportunities also provided teachers with information on strategies for providing challenging and engaging activities for students. Teachers and administrators in focus groups discussed several instructional activities that were occasionally offered to students to keep them engaged, such as A and B. However, observations showed a wide range of student engagement, with some classrooms having the majority of students

engaged and other classrooms having students who were sleeping during class. Student interviews, both formal and informal, revealed that engagement varied widely by teachers and content areas. Science teachers were said to have the most engaging classes while mathematics teachers have the least engaging classes. Elementary school teachers occasionally use engagement strategies such as cueing, interactive white boards, and manipulatives, but according to students, the majority of middle and high school instruction was lecture and independent practice.

Ratings in this area will increase when all teachers provide instruction at grade-appropriate levels of cognitive demand or depth of knowledge. The district should aggressively monitor instruction to ensure rigor. All teachers should be asked to employ flexible grouping, varying the pace and content of instruction to students' needs. Teachers should provide differentiated assignments so that all students, including those who are accelerated or struggling, will make progress toward learning objectives.

I-2. The district provides effective instructional supports for all students.

Rating: Proficient

Remediation and enrichment. The district has a wide array of interventions for remediation and enrichment. The district also uses the state model for MTSS/RtI (Response to Intervention) implementation. Teachers are asked to collect and analyze student data and then work in teams with district and school coaches to align instruction/intervention to student need. A K-12 decision tree indicates how instruction is to be provided for any student that has not responded well to the initial reading intervention. Progress monitoring tools are provided to the school to measure success of the instruction/intervention and to assist in adjusting the intensity of services provided to students. The district provides training to all school leadership team members and teachers on using data for instructional decision making to ensure learning growth for all students. Module training is also provided through PDS online to address the structures of MTSS/RtI, instructional problem solving, and progress monitoring. Teachers also received copies of the RtI Resource Inventory. Third and eighth grade students who do not meet retention exemption criteria may attend intensive summer remediation programs. Focus group respondents reported that a wide variety of reading and math interventions were in place for students, such as Read 180, Imagination Station, Kaleidoscope, Read Well, Voyager Passport, and Saxon Phonics. Tutoring is available at most schools. Though not specifically evaluated, most programs are thought to be effective since many students raise their interim test scores as a result of participating in the interventions. To promote academic readiness, OCPS also provides AVID in 19 high schools, 29 middle schools, and 13 elementary schools. Advanced Placement (AP) courses are offered at every high school and have shown increasing enrollment of students over time, particularly students

from communities of color. Because past OCR findings reported that there were not enough children of color represented in gifted and talented (G/T) programs, all second grade students in Title I schools are now being screened to G/T. However, enrichment in the traditional classroom is relatively rare, according to some students, with accelerated students most often being asked to help others or read a book when they are finished rather than receiving additional assignments.

Student behavior management. Although there is not a single district-wide behavior management program, many OCPS schools utilize CHAMPS (Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, Participation, Success) as their model for positive behavior support. The district's CHAMPS trainer helps teachers make the connection between tiered support systems in behavior and academics. Some schools use the Harry Wong approach. Other schools do not have a school-wide behavior management approach but let every teacher decide what to do. Most respondents believe that classrooms and schools are relatively well-managed and orderly. However, some students say that their classrooms are disruptive and report that their teachers are inconsistent in the ways that they apply consequences to negative behaviors.

Culturally responsive. For more than ten years, OCPS offered Ruby Payne training to help acquaint administrators and teachers with the challenges posed by being raised in poverty. Teachers and administrators believe that they are culturally sensitive and respectful. However, few instances of culturally responsive instruction were observed in the classrooms, and other than discussing the Ruby Payne approach and the idea that they should display understanding of a student's circumstances, teachers and administrators were rarely able to identify specific ways that instruction addressed students' backgrounds or cultures.

The district will be rated exemplary when all teachers routinely identify students in need of remediation or enrichment using current valid and reliable data from multiple sources and when these students receive appropriate interventions or assistance needed to make progress and stay in school. Additional supports should be provided for traditionally underrepresented students to ensure that they are well-represented and supported in advanced placement, honors, and G/T programs. The district should consider using a single school culture approach wherein the schools adopt school-wide classroom management techniques that are consistently enforced. All teachers in the district should also consistently implement culturally responsive instructional strategies, such as scaffolding to their backgrounds, using multiple representations and examples, and establishing an environment that encourages academic risk-taking.

Assessment

A-1.   The district has a cohesive, comprehensive, and user-friendly system for assessing and reporting student performance and uses results to make instructional improvements.

Rating: Proficient

Cohesive and comprehensive system. OCPS administers the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT 2.0) for Grades 3–10 in reading and math; Grades 4, 8, and 10 in writing; and Grades 5 and 8 in science. There are district end-of-course (EOC) exams for middle and high school students in geometry, biology, and algebra. The Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) are administered throughout the year for Grades K–12. Advanced Placement exams take place in May each year. Dates are being determined by the state for administration of the Comprehensive English Language Learning Assessment (CELLA) in 2013 for Grades K-12. OCPS has developed benchmark assessments that are designed to measure student progress toward mastering the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) and to forecast student performance on the FCAT and Florida EOCs. Benchmark assessments are aligned to FCAT and the Florida EOCS and are repeatedly reviewed by district content specialists for alignment to the NGSSS and the Florida Item Specifications. FCAT benchmark assessments are administered two to five times a year depending on the subject area. EOC benchmark assessments are administered four times a year. OCPS also administers mini assessments that are intended to support classroom instruction. These are five-item "testlets" covering one benchmark that are also aligned to the NGSSS and Florida Item Specifications. They can be used as pre- and post-tests for a unit or as a refresher test to ensure students maintain knowledge or skill. Reading and math have multiple rounds of mini-assessments. Some teachers found these mini-assessments to be useful, but others thought they were too short to yield accurate information. Other types of assessments administered include the ACT, SAT, PSAT, PISA, and NAEP. Formative assessments include exit slips, mini assessments, and oral summaries, with samples of these assessments provided in the "Order of Instruction" Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (CIA) Blueprints for reading/language arts and social studies for elementary, middle, and high school grades.

Use of data for decision making. The Accountability, Research, and Assessment (ARA) team provides data analysis workshops throughout the year. This past year, ARA offered a series of training sessions for the newly implemented Instructional Management System, and existing systems including the Enterprise Data Warehouse and EduSoft Assessment Management System. Teachers and administrators report weekly analysis of data during professional learning community (PLC) meetings. In addition, the results of the FCAT and EOC benchmark assessments are divided into performance bands that correspond to the expected achievement levels on the FCAT or EOC, which teachers and

administrators analyze to identify and re-teach students who are performing below expectations (i.e., below a 3 or a 4). According to district personnel, some schools are more adept at analyzing and using data for instructional planning than others, but most are relatively savvy. Teachers can use the assessment item bank to develop common assessments, though they are more strongly encouraged to access the mini-assessments that are already available and aligned with the high-stakes tests. Data walls were found in several of the schools in which observations occurred.

Data access. The Educational Data Warehouse (EDW) serves as a central repository for data gathered from multiple sources and systems throughout the district. Data are uploaded and updated on a nightly basis. School-based EDW users are able to access data on their own site, while district-level EDW users can retrieve information for all schools. EDW reports allow users to access information relating to student achievement, such as performance on state assessments (i.e., FCAT, EOC Assessments, and FAA) and locally-developed benchmark tests. Users are also able to access information on attendance, discipline, and exceptional student education information for their school. All reports are able to be disaggregated according to a variety of demographic options (i.e., ethnicity, gender, and other subgroup categories). According to OCPS, the EDW has evolved to offer new reports and data displays to help assist administrators and instructional leaders. These changes include providing information on college readiness, advanced coursework participation and performance, teacher-level student performance reports, and reports to assist schools in planning for students scheduled to arrive in the following year. OCPS also has an Instructional Management System (IMS) that serves as a central repository for all curricular, student performance, and professional development information for teachers. This information is updated on a nightly basis, with data supplied from the district EDW. Teachers are able to access data on their current students in the student information system, while principals and other global-users can access school-wide or district-wide information, based on their user role. Under the Curriculum section of the IMS, teachers can obtain updated standards (i.e., Common Core State Standards) as well as vetted instructional resources specific to the courses they teach. The Insight section of the EDW provides teachers with student performance data on state and locally-developed assessments updated on a nightly basis for their current students. When completed, the Professional Development section of the IMS will provide teachers with individualized growth opportunities based on the needs of their students. As the IMS continues to grow and expand, parents and students will be granted access, creating a common system between all stakeholders in OCPS. IMS was developed because there were complaints about EDW and its ability to be user-friendly. Teachers and administrators in focus groups believe that IMS has provided a much better interface for them. Some teachers, however, report that the system is still hard to use because of inadequate professional development and data reports that are not easily accessible.

Improvement in this area will occur when all teachers analyze classroom assessments and use results for improving instruction and the district improves the utility of its data warehouse by making access to student performance data reports more efficient and providing more professional development for users.

A-2. The district routinely provides assessment results and information on how to improve performance to students and their parents.

Rating: Proficient

Information for parents and guardians. The district provides its report cards for elementary school students in Creole, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. K-5 report cards included quarterly ratings for academic progress and grade level performance in all content areas and academic, personal, and social development. For example, the Grade 7 report card showed letter grades by course taken for each of the four nine-week periods along with exam scores and grades for semesters 1 and 2 and the final grade. The student's grade point average (GPA) was noted along with their most recent FCAT performance levels in reading and math (with a notation as to whether the student was on/or above grade level), and absences. Report cards are standardized throughout the district. Parents also have access to Progress Book, an electronic grade book which provides information on student performance, assignments and attendance/ tardies. Some parents use EdModo accounts, which let them know about the calendar of events for the school and other information. The district also provides information about schools through Connect Orange, a telephone and online text messaging program. All schools have parent-teacher conferences. Teachers in elementary schools report that they often send home information in folders about how parents can help their children practice reading and mathematics. Other teachers report that they occasionally call parents when children have faced academic or behavioral challenges or have performed particularly well. Occasionally, students are asked to track their own performance.

Student understanding of expectations. According to administrators and teachers, teachers have a common whiteboard configuration and are required to post learning objectives on the board every day. The board typically has daily objectives and essential questions. Teachers are asked to refer to the objectives often and summarize at the end. Administrators check on teachers by asking students during their walkthroughs what they had learned during the lesson. Observations showed that nearly all teachers posted objectives and essential questions, but some were not in student-friendly language or were posed in a manner that made no sense, for example by simply taking the standard and posing the question of whether the standard was being met as the essential question. Students reported that they generally understand what it is that they are supposed to learn and that their teachers do refer to the objectives during the lessons and as a summary of the lesson. Some are given examples of proficient

performance, particularly in writing. Others are simply informed of the grading scale that will be used.

Student feedback and self-assessment. According to students, most teachers provide them timely and constructive feedback, reporting that they typically receive their graded assignments back within a day or two. During independent seatwork time, most teachers were observed walking through the room, checking student work and offering feedback to help those who were struggling or who had the wrong answer. Some did not give specific feedback, though, telling students only that their answers were wrong. Others guided students through approximations, helping them understand their misconceptions. Some teachers reported that they engaged students in data chats to help them see and monitor their progress. However, most said they did not have time for this, unless a student was in need of remediation. Students are aware of what it will take to get to the next level of the FCAT.

The district will become exemplary when teachers ensure students understand the criteria for advanced work, when students track their progress over time to discover their strengths and needs as a learner, and when teachers offer more information to parents to help them assist their children to acquire specific knowledge and skills.

Professional Development

PD-1.   The district provides multiple types of ongoing differentiated professional development to all teachers and instructional staff designed to meet district and school goals.

Rating: Proficient

Provision to all educators. During the past year, professional development responsibilities shifted from Human Resources to Curriculum and Instruction. The Great Beginnings menu shows that multiple workshops are available to novice teachers. The curriculum department also offers a wide array of workshops and seminars for all teachers. According to respondents, every time a district "non-negotiable" is introduced, multiple professional development opportunities are provided. For example, when RtI (and now MTSS) were required, the district had many workshops available for staff to attend. In the past, much of the additional professional development centered on the research conducted by Robert Marzano and concentrated on high-effect size instructional strategies and more recently on the new teacher evaluation program. In addition, the district is using a "black belt" system to implement CCSS by training select teachers through both online and face-to-face staff development. Staff estimated that 1,800 teachers (approximately 15% of total teachers) attended workshops on CCSS last year. All principals and other administrators and many teacher leaders attended professional development on the teacher evaluation system. Schools are also responsible for providing professional development to teachers and other

instructional staff. Title II funds were used to train teachers in AVID methods, differentiated accountability, and International Baccalaureate coursework. Teachers and administrators reported that there were adequate opportunities provided for professional development.

Differentiated to meet needs. Schools differentiate professional development according to the needs of the teachers at the school. Many administrators delivered workshops to meet specific needs identified through data analysis. Examples include workshops on algebra, explicit instruction, and creating a college-going culture. Individuals could pursue personalized training through the online and face-to-face courses offered by the district, but typically chose the content based on their perceived needs rather than on needs identified through student performance measures or as part of a school-wide effort for improvement.

Individualized coaching and mentoring. Each school has a designated Instructional Coach, who is the beginning teacher/mentor coordinator and contact. The Instructional Coach works collaboratively with the principal to assign a mentor to all first year teachers. Each teacher in the Alternative Certification Program (ACP) is also assigned to work with a school-based mentor. Coaching and mentoring approaches are aligned with the Florida Professional Development Standards. Mentors are trained through the face-to-face *Clinical Educator* training, and the online course *Coaching and Mentoring*. Instructional Coaches are trained in the Professional Development Protocol Standards, professional learning communities, support for the strategies used in the teacher evaluation system, and strategies for differentiated coaching. In addition, reading coaches are designated at most schools and receive monthly professional development from the district. Teachers report that struggling teachers are typically assigned a coach but anyone can request help if they feel they need it. Both teachers and administrators say that most instructional coaches are very effective, though there was variation in some schools, with some teachers and principals saying that their coaches were not effective and they would rather use the funds for coaching for different purposes. Instructional coaches report that most of their time is spent modeling lessons, providing feedback, and helping those who request help.

Ratings in this area will increase when the district ensures that all educators receive timely professional development to implement district-level assessments including those associated with CCSS and when there is provision of individualized professional development based on needs surfaced through an analysis of student performance data. In addition, coaches and mentors should be convened to share strategies and improve the effectiveness of their support.

PD-2.   **The district has a system for supporting and evaluating the effectiveness of professional development.**

Rating: Proficient

Collaboration time. All OCPS schools are required to provide collaboration time and to implement PLCs. Most PLCs meet on early release Wednesdays, though some use the common time for faculty meetings, which some teachers do not find useful. Teachers reported that some schools have PLC meetings as many as four times a week, while others only meet four times a year. The frequency depends upon grade span (with high schools meeting far less frequently) and the principal. In PLCs, teachers typically discuss student needs based on the data they collected. Some co-plan lessons or share effective instructional strategies. Some schools have time for vertical team meetings but some do not. Likewise, some schools provide time to discuss transition between grade spans, but many do not. According to focus group respondents, vertical conversations depend upon the learning community in which the school is located and the principals' preferences.

Sufficient resources. The district typically devotes just over 2% of its funds to professional development. Because of the easy access to online professional development, most teachers and administrators reported that there is a sufficient amount of professional development available. However, the quality of professional development was questioned by some. Generally, respondents reported that AVID training and Great Beginnings programs were very good. Training on the use of IMS was mixed. Many thought that insufficient resources were being allocated to training for CCSS.

Evaluation for fidelity and effectiveness. After each training session, OCPS administers a survey about its effectiveness. In addition, OCPS monitors teacher and administrator "seat time" in professional development and reviews usage reports at least quarterly. Most professional development is not monitored for fidelity or implementation of the strategies contained therein. In the past, the district tried to correlate professional development and student achievement, but they felt that the study was unfair since they did not know who had implemented what they learned and with what level of fidelity. Survey feedback and usage report data have led to cancellation of some professional development sessions. More recently, there has been some criticism of the teacher evaluation training, with teachers reporting that the sessions were ineffective. Respondents said that session leaders were unable to answer questions and provided inconsistent information. They felt confused about the definitions of innovation in the rubric associated with the teacher evaluation, especially those that defined innovation.

OCPS will improve its ratings when vertical teams and teams of teachers from adjacent grade spans meet to discuss student needs and when the district routinely evaluates and refines professional development practices to ensure that content learned is being implemented with fidelity. Internal studies should be conducted to

show that the professional development being provided is associated with an increase in student performance. All school-level professional development plans should be evaluated/monitored to ensure that they have the components necessary for effectiveness.

Category II: District Leadership

Instructional Leadership

IL-1.   The district develops and sustains effective instructional leaders.

Rating: Approaching Proficient

Intensive professional development. In 2010, the district won a BRIDGE Leadership Grant, a $3.75 million grant provided by the U.S. Department of Education's School Leadership Program. The goals of the BRIDGE Leadership Grant are to recruit, mentor, train and retain effective instructional leaders. The grant supports various leadership programs, including: the Principal Leadership Academy (serving newly appointed principals); the Preparing New Principals Program (serving newly appointed assistant principals); and the Aspiring Leaders Program (serving up-and-coming school administrators). Evaluations conducted on the BRIDGE program and reports from the focus groups point to the effectiveness of the BRIDGE program in providing mentors to new leaders. Principals attended Edusoft and IMS training and learned how to reconcile data errors. In addition, all principals are required to attend Marzano teacher evaluation training to learn how to observe and score the rubrics consistently. The district also provides mandatory training on budgeting and procedures. Some training is online and some are face-to-face. Those schools that have AVID also have required administrator training each year. The rest of the professional development that leaders receive depends upon individual needs.

Highly visible and expert at solving instructional challenges. The implementation of the new teacher evaluation requires principals to complete multiple teacher observations each year, both formal and informal. The system provides "look-fors" in each classroom, such as whether learning goals are posted, students are engaged, and instruction is rigorous. This year, only two of the domains and associated design questions are being measured, and next year three more domains will be added. In two years, all domains will be measured. Principals go into classrooms of struggling teachers more often than teachers who are doing well, though they visit the requisite number of times to complete the evaluation. The extent to which principals are perceived as being expert at solving instructional challenges varies considerably by school, though most are rated highly. Similarly, coaches and district personnel receive a wide range of ratings on their ability to solve instructional challenges. Principals generally find it easy to communicate with district staff, though the visibility and presence of district staff varies by campus. However, principals report that if the school shows

declining academic performance, help tends to be abundant. Many principals expressed specific challenges in working with exceptional children and reported that the department does not have enough staff to provide adequate levels of support.

Collaboration and sharing. Principals meet monthly within their learning communities and occasionally across networks. Typically meetings are for information dissemination and professional development purposes rather than collaboration and sharing. However, principals get together informally when they need assistance.

Improvement in this area will occur when the district provides intensive and targeted professional development to enhance the instructional leadership skills of all individuals who serve as instructional leaders. The district should support individual administrator participation in targeted seminars to address differentiated needs. In addition, instructional leaders from the district should be consistently visible in the schools and expert at helping educators diagnose and implement effective solutions to instructional challenges. The district should strongly encourage collaboration and joint problem-solving among instructional leaders and organize cross-school visits as appropriate to enable leaders to understand and replicate best practices from other schools.

IL-2.   **The district supports instructional leaders in building instructional capacity in schools.**

Rating: Area of Concern

Walkthrough tools. Administrators have begun to use the walkthrough tools related to the domains that are included as part of the Marzano teacher evaluation system currently being measured. According to some teachers, there is a very wide range of definition for innovation being used for the design questions and ratings, even though administrators have been to professional development sessions meant to increase inter-rater reliability and to calibrate measures more precisely. This was verified when the site visit team asked the definition of innovation and no respondent defined innovation in the same way. District leaders use the same tools, but are viewed as being inconsistent in their definitions of performance expectations.

Capacity building for school leadership teams. The district has several departments that work collaboratively to support schools identified for corrective actions through the district's Plan of Involvement and Partnership process, which involves targeted data analysis, monitoring, coaching, and implementation of interventions. District resource teachers are assigned to one or more school sites to provide support. There is a summer retreat for school improvement teams (comprised of administrators, teachers who are typically grade-level representatives or department heads, parents, and others chosen by the school,

such as coaches) where professional development is offered to ensure plans are at the level of depth expected by the state. Focus schools (bottom 10% of Title I schools) submit a draft plan to the district and receive feedback and resubmit until approval is received. Teams from these schools receive team building training and professional development on the CCSS. Monthly or bimonthly meetings occur to monitor school improvement processes. During monthly meetings, student achievement data are analyzed. Sustainability plans are created at the end of the year to ensure progress continues with minimal district support. Some teams attend state-level workshops to learn how to develop and implement their improvement plans. Schools that are not in need of improvement receive far less assistance in developing their plans.

Inclusion of staff in decision making. Inclusion of staff in decision-making is completely dependent on the principal. Some schools have representative leadership teams or ask everyone to serve on committees. Others only include a few staff in decision-making. Some schools have faculty advisory committees and some do not. Several teachers reported that they had no input.

OCPS will increase its ratings in this area when the district provides more and better training on the consistent use of walkthrough tools. The district should monitor to ensure that observation tools are being used properly, reliably, and equitably, providing prompt feedback to users to improve their observations and ability to provide constructive, timely feedback to teachers. In addition, the district should provide more capacity-building support to all school leadership teams, helping them to understand and implement effective improvement strategies. The district should disseminate research on best practices to help build instructional capacity. Schools should involve more of their staff in making decisions that affect instruction and improvement so that the staff will be more likely to implement the improvement practices. Finally, the district should ensure that its instructional leaders routinely collect feedback on the implementation and effectiveness of improvement decisions that were made.

District Governance

DG-1.   The board works collaboratively, efficiently, and effectively to fulfill its responsibilities for district governance and oversight.

Rating: Approaching Exemplary

Efficient and effective decision-making. By all accounts, the school board is focused primarily on student achievement and particularly on the schools that received a grade of D or F under the state's accountability system. They also frequently focus on construction and new buildings. The board meets three to four times a month to discuss various topics and tends to have in-depth discussions before board meetings so that the consent agenda is efficiently dispensed during meetings. Meetings are facilitated by an elected chair. The

board tends to be collaborative in nature and seeks advice from the superintendent and cabinet. While members sometimes disagree with each other, they are generally congenial and professional in their dealings with each other and district staff. Most decisions are made efficiently, though some of the more contentious topics, such as terminations, zoning, and domestic partner benefits, take longer to debate. During retreats, board members occasionally reflect on their own processes to ensure that they are working efficiently and effectively.

Oversight. The board provides appropriate oversight to ensure its policies and practices are being implemented with fidelity by asking for formal reports on specific initiatives, such as academic performance for low-performing schools, facilities planning, and progress on the strategic plan. The board delegates nearly all day-to-day management responsibilities to the superintendent. Both the superintendent and the board chair monitor delegation and remind board members if they are overstepping their roles.

Catalyze stakeholder support. Board members are active in soliciting support for the district. They have actively engaged many local businesses and organizations, such as Disney, Universal Studios, Lockheed Martin, and local restaurant chains in providing funding, mentors, and internships for students. They are currently engaged in a district "branding" campaign to show why OCPS is competitive with other schools in the region. Town hall and other meetings were held when the district's strategic plan and business plans were being formulated. In November 2010, Orange County voters approved a 1 mill property tax increase for four years to preserve OCPS academic programs, retain highly qualified teachers, and protect arts, athletics and student activities.

Ratings in this area will improve when the board engages in self-reflection and evaluates its own performance and effectiveness and when the board analyzes areas where fidelity to the strategic plan is lacking and takes appropriate action.

DG-2.   The superintendent provides skillful leadership.

Rating: Approaching Exemplary

Internal leadership and management. Superintendent Barbara Jenkins assumed leadership in May, 2012. According to respondents, Dr. Jenkins' leadership style is "intense" and "direct." She is considered to be very serious about her job and very action-oriented. She was widely respected in her former position as Chief of Staff, especially for her work on the district strategic plan. Dr. Jenkins has an open door policy and meets with her chiefs frequently, typically at least once a week. She has reorganized some departments, and most believe that the reorganization will lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness. Some at the district level call her "very demanding," though without exception, they agree with the direction in which she is taking the district. Principals are pleased with her

leadership and believe that her directness benefits them in that they are clear about priorities and strategies. Teachers and parents do not yet feel that they know her, but from the few instances they know of her – notably her reaction with immediate outreach and information after the Sandy Hook tragedy – they believe she is doing a good job. Prior to her arrival, Mr. Ron Blocker was superintendent for many years. His board evaluations in all areas were consistently high, ranging from 3 (Meets Expectations) to 4 (Commendable).

Effective problem solving. Dr. Jenkins is widely known as an effective problem solver. To correct alignment issues and challenges associated with student mobility, she brought more centralization to the district, particularly in the area of curriculum. Most respondents believe that the change has been effective. She bases all of her decisions on available data and will consistently look for patterns and solutions. She engages the board in brainstorming on difficult issues, and often weighs decisions based on risk and benefit. She is known to be cautious and often consults with others before making a final decision. She is also highly regarded in her ability to be strategic, to gather intelligence from behind the scenes, and to work well with the media. Her predecessor was also highly regarded as an effective problem solver, picking his battles carefully and serving as a good financial steward and performance advocate.

Productive working relations with the board. Dr. Jenkins, like her predecessor, enjoys very positive relationships with the board members. She meets with them individually to discuss concerns and is responsive to their information needs. She often asks the board members to be the ones to present the good news about the district, and she is appreciated for that invitation. The communication between the superintendent and the board is characterized as "open," though many acknowledge that the superintendent does not like surprises. In response to her wishes, the board often contacts her about issues before bringing them up to each other. The board and superintendent also both emphasize that the superintendent is in charge of daily operations while the board concerns itself with policy.

Ratings will increase to exemplary when the superintendent becomes better known to her constituents and demonstrates to stakeholders that she is consistently able to anticipate challenges before they become problems.

Strategic Planning

SP-1. **The strategic plan is developed using a systematic planning process that engages relevant stakeholders and is built on research-based evidence of probable effectiveness.**

Rating: **Approaching Exemplary**

Systematic process. The district initiated its strategic planning and district scorecard (reporting) process in spring 2007 and finalized its strategic plan in December 2007. The 2007 planning process included data review from the 2005-06 plan, SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) analysis, development of a draft strategic plan, focus group input, a revised plan, employee and public input, and finalization of the plan. The plan has a Strategic Articulation Map Definition with areas for "drivers" (vision, mission, and values), market differentiators, goals, measurable objectives, and initiatives. A scorecard that showed progress on plan indicators was developed and updated in 2011. Area superintendents, school administrators and staff, and district staff provided input regarding strategic plan targets, scorecard targets, business plans for scorecard targets, extended scorecards, and five-year integrated business plans using a protocol with multiple structured questions. The district scorecard for 2012 included 26 key measures and recommended revisions to the district scorecard for 2013.

Stakeholder input. In preparing for the initial strategic plan, the district reviewed many documents that provided external reviews of schools and the district, such as The Blue Ribbon Report and feedback on school improvement plans. The district held focus groups in May 2007 and solicited stakeholder input through employee meetings, multiple town hall meetings, surveys, and business community meetings from September-November 2007. As part of these meetings, individuals were informed about the status of OCPS, student enrollment figures, county growth trends, diversity, student mobility and socioeconomic status, FCAT and school grade data, and statistics from various district departments. Presentation of the draft strategic plan was followed by audience discussion and questions. Documents from 2011 show that area superintendents, learning communities, administrators, and district staff provided input on the revised district scorecard, but parents, students, and community members were not involved in the 2011 revision process.

Evidence-based. The 2007 Strategic Planning PowerPoint presentation listed types of research gathered to develop the draft plan economic diversity indicators, comparable high performing districts, operations data, sales tax program statistics, and data for the four goals of the plan). A SWOT analysis was also included. The 2011 plan also included the same multiple levels of data analysis that were employed in the development of the 2007 plan. The 2011 plan did not cite research studies that supported the strategies.

Improvement in this area will occur when all stakeholders are involved in the revision of the strategic plan so that there is greater buy-in and knowledge of the plan, when the plan is built on current research-based evidence of probable effectiveness in urban school districts, and when a rationale is provided for the ways in which the selected strategies will meet projected and actual needs.

SP-2.   The district strategic plan is long range and visionary, well-articulated, and routinely monitored for implementation and effectiveness.

Rating: Approaching Exemplary

Long-range, visionary, and well-articulated. The OCPS Strategy Map notes that the vision of OCPS is "to be the top producer of successful students in the nation." The mission is "to lead our students to success with the support and involvement of families and the community." The 2011 strategic plan includes five broad goals: Intense Focus on Student Achievement, High-Performing and Dedicated Team, Safe Learning and Working Environment, Efficient Operations, and Sustained Community Engagement. Values espoused in the OCPS Strategy Map include: Accountability, Community, Family, High Performance, Student Success, Integrity, Quality, Respect, and Safety. The Strategy Map shows "Market Differentiators" where the district "leads in academic and operation innovation, technology, and capital improvement" such as offering broad education and extracurricular opportunities, investing in staff, preparing students for a real world environment, and serving a diverse community. Measurable objectives are detailed in the District Scorecard and Extended Scorecard on 27 key measures of district performance. There are Integrated Business Plans (IBPs) that relate to each measure. The IBPs include targets for improving performance over a three to five year period and some of the strategies that will be used to meet or exceed those targets. The business plans include five-year objectives for each of the five goals. For example, for the goal related to having an "intense focus on student achievement," objectives are set for both a five year target and for each year. The five year target specifies that the district will receive an A and all schools will be graded B or higher based on FCAT scores. Each year, the average percentage points of students performing at Level 3 and above in Reading will increase by 10% over the five year period and 2.5% each year. Specific objectives are set for reading, math, writing, and science in this goal area.

Alignment with school plans. School improvement plans follow the state-mandated template. The plans have considerable overlap with the district strategic plan. For example, plans articulate data on achievement, show strategies for increasing the number of highly effective teachers, and indicate expectations for growth. However, the plans are not explicitly aligned with the district plan, primarily because of the state requirement, according to focus group respondents.

Regularly monitored and evaluated for effectiveness. District departments set ambitious targets for improving district performance on measureable objectives related to each of the five goals. Each of the objectives is measured and reported each year and results are reported on the district scorecard. Student achievement progress is measured in reading, math, writing, and science for the first goal (Intense Focus on Student Achievement), along with data that show participation and performance in advanced coursework, graduation rates, and dropout rates. In the integrated business plans posted on the OCPS website, progress on each goal is color coded: green sections indicate progress toward a goal, white sections indicate no movement towards the goal, and red sections indicate progress below expectations. Extended Scorecard Data for the Division of Teaching and Learning, Facilities Services, Fiscal Services, Human Resources and Executive Services, Learning Communities, and Operations indicate more detailed, department-specific data not reflected on the district's primary scorecard. Measures are tracked to ensure that district goals are met. Reports are routinely provided to the board. In addition, school improvement plans are also closely monitored and evaluated for effectiveness, according to district and school administrators. Each year, the plans are evaluated to determine the effectiveness of any given strategy and are revised as needed to become more effective.

Ratings will improve to exemplary when all school improvement plans are directly aligned to the district strategic plan and both plans reflect the coherent strategic thinking of the district. The district plans should also be communicated to stakeholders in a way that is clear and prompts commitment and buy-in to the vision and objectives embedded within the plan.

Performance and Accountability

PA-1. **The district provides and enforces a clear set of rigorous expectations for staff performance and provides supports and consequences to improve effectiveness.**

Rating: Area of Concern

Clear expectations. The OCPS Instructional Personnel Evaluation System is based on the research of Dr. Robert Marzano. Evaluators receive intensive training through Learning Sciences International. Teachers develop their Individual Professional Development Plans based upon the results of performance data connected to their classroom practice. This may include standardized test scores and EOC results, and trend data spanning several years. In 2011-2012, 166 were rated as highly effective (1.3%), 12,271 teachers were effective (97.9%), 32 teachers were rated as developing (0.2%), 68 as needing improvement (0.5%), and 1 was unsatisfactory. Both teachers and school and district administrators believe the numbers of teachers rated as less effective will be higher this year. As previously mentioned, there were inconsistent definitions of innovating of several of the rubrics within the evaluation forms, and teachers believe that the

expectations are not clear. There are no clear performance expectations for classified staff; possible ratings are simply satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Intensive individual support. All teachers are provided with feedback and opportunities to improve through the evaluation system. The district provides more intensive assistance to new and struggling teachers at all levels in the form of a Professional Improvement Plan (PIP). The plan includes specific strategies to address weak areas and may last from 10 weeks to 5 school months. If a teacher does not successfully complete the PIP within the agreed upon timeline and additional time is needed for improvement, the plan may be extended or a new plan could be written. The performance appraisal for district administrators and school-based administrators calls for an initial, mid-year, and final assessment. If at any time in the year a change in performance or other problems occur, a Professional Improvement Plan may also be developed. Classified staff are provided with feedback from principals if they are rated unsatisfactory (and are also placed on a Classified Improvement Plan, described below).

Consequences. In the past, there were few consequences for ineffectiveness in one's job. However, with the new system in place, consequences for ineffectiveness are detailed by Florida state law. For any teacher whose final evaluation reflects an instructional practice score of "unsatisfactory", the principal must develop a 90-day performance probationary plan (PPP). The Employee Relations and Professional Development Services departments meet with the impacted principals on a monthly basis during the development of the PPP. The departments provide the principals with a checklist and sample forms and plans for use in the development of the PPP. The PPPs require review by the appropriate Area Superintendent for content and the Employee Relations department for technical compliance. The term of the PPP may be extended depending on the magnitude of progress shown by the staff member. Classified employees that are rated unsatisfactory are placed on a Classified Improvement Plan (CIP), as governed by the district's contract with the support professionals' association. The Employee Relations Department assists principals with the implementation of the CIP. However, respondents in focus groups report that classified staff never receive consequences for unsatisfactory performance. For administrative/technical employees evaluated as not meeting expectations, the Director of Employee Relations contacts the supervisor to begin the development of a professional improvement plan. The time period for completion of this plan depends on the strategies/outcomes desired. Respondents report that this process is in flux and that those whose performance is not satisfactory generally receive direct feedback from supervisors and choose to resign if they do not improve in a timely fashion.

OCSP should improve its practices by clearly delineating its performance expectations for all categories of staff and ensuring consistent interpretations of evaluation rubrics in all schools across all staff. Expectations for all central office departments should be clearly specified and criteria should be consistently applied

when making judgments about effectiveness. The district should engage in regular study and evaluation of its performance criteria by using assessment data to determine how to work with struggling staff and how to prevent challenges from emerging. Consequences should be equally applied to all staff who are ineffective or do not show adequate growth. The district should track reasons for ineffectiveness and use information to change recruitment, placement, and professional development practices.

PA-2.   The district has strong accountability practices at all levels of the system.

Rating: Proficient

Helps students graduate on time. The district is taking some active steps to help students stay on track and graduate on time, though most programs are responsive to needs rather than being proactive in prevention due to very high student-counselor ratios The Drop Back In program is a mentoring program that pairs dropouts with caring adults who encourage them to go back to school. The program allows students to obtain missing credits needed for graduation but does not allow students to re-enroll in other courses. Students who may have had behavior issues in the past are welcome as well as those needing special education or second language assistance. The program uses Education2020, a standards-based, interactive curriculum software, as well as face-to-face instruction. The district also has 13 Centers for Success, which are alternative education programs. The Orlando/Orange COMPACT Mentoring Program's mission is to positively impact the lives of students through mentoring by improving GPAs, increasing attendance and increasing graduation rates of at-risk students. Two main events highlight the year for COMPACT: the Annual Washington D.C. Cultural and Educational Trip and the "Salute to COMPACT" Awards Banquet. The Washington D.C. Trips have been conducted annually since 1992 for approximately 20 special achieving COMPACT students. More than 12,000 students have benefited from COMPACT from local business people and other community members who serve as mentors. OCPS has an Acceleration Academy for over-age eighth grade students and summer programs to help students with remedial coursework in algebra. AVID programs are also reported to help stem the dropout rate. The district recently completed a black and Hispanic male study to address the specific dropout rate concerns associated with these subpopulations.

Holds all schools accountable and provides aggressive assistance. The district's Plan of Involvement (POI) process objectives are to increase district oversight, accountability and support to the most vulnerable schools. The specific goals of the process are to cultivate instructional school leadership teams; know, understand, and use school data; develop school-wide approaches for implementing instructional strategies; identify monitoring systems involving staff development, teacher capacity, and student progress; develop the culture of

frequent honest conversations with school staff; and ensure sustainability of best practices by becoming culturally embedded in school operations. Protocol instruments have been developed for classroom observations, instructional calendar planning, and action plan progress reporting. Because of the POI success, a second layer of intervention has been added to assist schools at the next level of concern. These schools are known as Partnership Schools and a modified POI process is applied. Schools receive a checklist to prepare for the instructional review. The checklist includes documents, checklists of activities that must be accomplished, assessment documentation, and self-study (review) material. Respondents believe that the intensive levels of support are effective. Many of the formerly failing schools have new principals and many new staff who are tracking data on a weekly basis and offering an array of student interventions and services.

Compliance with regulations. The district is generally in compliance with federal and state laws, but has not complied with requirements related to the Title I private school program, specifically related to consultation and control. Per the Title I monitoring report from 2011-12, some areas requiring further attention include areas such as methods and sources of data, consideration of size and scope of the services, needs determination, service determination, decision making protocols, assessment concerns, materials, professional development and property control concerns.

Performance will improve in this area when the district proactively involves parents, when the district is able to provide proactive preventive support to students so that they graduate on time, when the district works more aggressively with schools on a downward trend to prevent chronic underperformance by providing greater indepth professional development in content pedagogy, coaching, and monitoring, and when the district complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Category III: Organizational Structure and Climate

Financial Resources

FR-1. **The district is financially sound, implements prudent financial planning processes, and displays strong fiscal accountability.**

Rating: **Approaching Exemplary**

Financially sound. OCPS has a total budget of about $2.7 billion. The budget has fluctuated over the past few years, ranging from $2.6 billion to $3 billion. Total reserves for capital appropriations range from 26% to 33%, and the district has a total capital reserve of 53.24% as a result of the mill bond. A description of OCPS' return on investment noted that the district was able to build adequate reserves to protect it during its period of fiscal uncertainty. This move protected

the district as it went through significant revenue reductions. A Fitch Rating statement for March 22, 2012 stated that the district's "unreserved general fund balance improved for the eighth consecutive fiscal year in 2011, a trend achieved in large measure through careful budgeting and effective cost controls." A Moody's statement of November 2, 2011 noted that, after seven years of operating surpluses, the district had nearly tripled its fiscal 2003 reserve levels. The FY10 unreserved General Fund balance was $224.8 million or 19.1% of General Fund revenues. As of November 2011, Moody's expected the district's debt position to remain manageable with the district's net direct and overall debt burden averaging at 1.3% and 3% respectively. School budgets are based on per pupil weighted average funding. The principal has discretion to decide how to use funds as long as the state-mandated class size requirements are met. Principals in the focus groups reported that they sometimes choose to invest in having more people on campus, such as paraprofessionals, extra teachers, coaches or security guards and sometimes to allocate funds to have more technology. Principals are allowed to purchase supplies without using district contractors, which has resulted in savings at the school level. For example, a principal noted that she was able to purchase handheld devices on sale at a much lower price than in the past.

Financial planning and forecasting. The 2008-2009 Adopted Budget Summary showed the FY09-10 Fiscal Forecast for the operating budget with a balanced budget of $1.48 billion assuming a 3% increase in per student revenues and a 3% increase in per student costs. Subsequent budgets do not include this type of forecast for the operating budget, but include ten-year capital revenues and appropriations projections. Respondents reported that this type of analysis is still routinely conducted but not reported. Finance staff routinely track demographic trends to anticipate enrollment. The district experienced multiple cuts in revenue over the past several years and tried to keep reductions away from the classroom. This resulted in cutting many counselors, budgets for photocopying, and other reductions that respondents report have influenced the quality of education that children receive. The district is in the process of developing a philanthropic strategic plan with hopes for implementation in the near future.

Fiscal accountability. The superintendent appointed a Budget Study Committee in 2009-2010 to determine the potential impact of proposed budget reductions on the district's strategic plan. The committee was composed of a citizens' team, with representatives from local community groups, and a technical team comprised of certified public accountants, chief financial officers, and others with expertise in budget and finance. The district reduced department budgets by 7% and school budgets by 6%. In addition, town hall meetings were held and cost savings suggestions were collected from employees, students, and the public. Examples of cost savings measures employed from 2008-09 to 2010-11 included reducing the number of social workers, reducing school improvement allocations, turning off power from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., raising the temperature in buildings, eliminating district cell phones, and reducing extended contracts. The district

uses a position control process in the Office of Management and Budget to ensure budget allocations are not exceeded. OCPS has been recognized for its effective budget management; as a result of these efforts, Moody's increased the district's outlook from stable to positive in 2011. Fitch Ratings for March 2012 gave the district a rating increase from AA to AA+. The district has consistently received the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) and the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA).

Ratings in this area will improve when the district more effectively allocates its budget to pressing needs – building a more effective data warehouse and providing deeper and more sustained professional development – and when the district is better able to anticipate fluctuations in funding sources and sets aside or procures funds for scaling up and replicating effective programs.

FR-2. **The district has a transparent budget process aligned with its strategic plan, evaluates its spending decisions, and is able to attract additional funding to support district priority initiatives.**

Rating: Approaching Exemplary

Transparency. The OCPS budget is split into five major areas: the operating budget, the capital budget, debt service, special revenue funds, and internal service funds. Public budget documents provide an explanation of each of these budget areas in user-friendly language. For example, the operating budget summary is broken out into two major sections: Sources of Revenue and Appropriations or Allocations of Dollars with an explanation of the district's nine basic operating categories. Tables and graphs show total operating expenditures by function and by function per student. Operating revenues per student were also shown with the highest percentages coming from local (40%) and state (42%) sources. The budget is the result of a lengthy data and information gathering process. Board members, the superintendent, and senior staff gather input throughout the year from parents, principals, teachers, unions, and other community groups through budget "road shows." Budget work sessions are scheduled to discuss priorities, available revenue, and other relevant issues. The Final Budget is posted on the OCPS website. District and school administrators and teachers report that the process is transparent and the budgets are easy to understand. Parents know where they can access the budget and affirm that budget hearings are open to anyone who wishes to express an opinion. The district also issued "pocket budgets," which are small booklets that explain the district budget allocations.

Alignment with priorities and evaluation of spending decisions. The superintendent and her executive cabinet use business cases and a numerical matrix process to prioritize potential budget items, both for reductions and

additions to the budget. As the cabinet is reviewing the upcoming budget and looking at potential reductions (or additions), each proposal is evaluated using a matrix. This matrix process scores a proposal as more likely to be included in reductions if it yields significant savings at a relatively low impact on the district's strategic plan. Similarly, to add or expand a program, a business case must be developed and submitted to the Cabinet for evaluation. Adequacy of resource allocations to schools is determined by the feedback provided by principals through their area superintendents and adjustments are made the next year as needed. The state provides data for each school district which shows the expenditure per student in various program categories, which allows the district to benchmark against other Florida districts. OCPS also receives a report from the Florida Department of Education that shows a summary of "administrative costs per FTE" which provides a good indicator of how districts compare in this area. OCPS was ranked #1 in the lowest General Fund administrative expenditures per student in the state. Respondents say that all fiscal decisions are discussed in terms of student achievement, but that they have not yet evaluated any specific program or expenditure to determine its impact on student achievement. According to some staff, there was a long discussion on how to analyze data to determine impact, but the group determined that there were too many influential factors to take under consideration. Respondents said that some schools had discontinued programs that appeared not to impact student achievement, though no formal study was conducted.

Additional funding. Over the past four years, the district has received varying amounts of additional funding through grants, contracts, and donations, ranging from $252,563 in 2009-10 to $3.1 million in 2011-12. Examples of foundation grants awarded include a six-month NASA Summer of Innovation grant; Winter Park Health Foundation grants for community gardens and school nurses; and Universal Orlando for a "Change Starts With Me" character education program. Donations have included funds from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for elementary science ($90,000 for 1 year) and middle school science ($30,000 for 1 year); donations to Tangelo Park's Parent Connection, Summer Program, and Before and After School Program; and Target Family Literacy Grants ($100,000 for 2 years). Contracts awarded include a 1-year NYU P-SELL Subaward ($150,000) and a 1-year Department of Juvenile Justice – Evans Project award ($50,000). The district's official volunteer program is called ADDitions School Volunteers. Volunteers in this program work at the schools of their choice and participate in activities that match their interests to help meet the schools' needs. In 2011-12 more than 56,977 volunteers contributed more than 893,804 hours to the district. Computed at the Florida designated volunteer hourly rate of $18.66, this represents nearly $16.7 million of in-kind contributions. At the end of the 2011-12 school year, 1,900 businesses were partnered with schools across the district. Other organizations that provide volunteer opportunities include the Foundation for Orange County Public Schools and Orlando/Orange County COMPACT, an education and business partnership aimed at encouraging challenged students to succeed in schools and reach their maximum potential. Business and community

partners often seek to partner with schools located near their facilities and have provided opportunities for internships, funds for school supplies, and incentives/rewards for students to do well in school. The philanthropic strategic plan being created will also target specific fundraising and donation opportunities for partners.

The district will score exemplary when it routinely evaluates impact of financial decision-making on student achievement and conducts return on investment studies.

Human Resources

HR-1.   The district has an efficient and effective human resource management system.

Rating: Proficient

Records, payroll, and benefits management. OCPS uses an SAP ERP system to manage payroll and benefits. The system functionality expansion is an ongoing process. Most respondents report that the system is relatively efficient and that individuals are responsive to their requests. Respondents report that when upgrades occur, though, many mistakes are made and it takes several months to return to efficiency. Several respondents reported that the system improved during the past year in response to survey feedback about employee needs. The district is self-insured for health insurance and uses a third party administrator (CIGNA) to process claims. Their prescription drug program is administered by Express Scripts. The district also uses a third party for administering flexible spending accounts (TASC).

Recruitment and hiring. Teacher recruitment is conducted through a variety of initiatives including college/university teacher fairs, private job fairs and recruitment sources such as job websites and referrals. During the 2011-2012 school year the district hired 1,926 applicants. Administrators conduct candidate interviews and make recommendations for hiring. The district recruits administrators from pipeline programs such as Florida Turnaround Leaders Program. Staff is prescreened using a variety of prescreening and candidate evaluative tools to account for minimum qualifications. Strong efforts are made to recruit a diverse staff, such as advertising in targeted magazines that serve various racial/ethnic groups, posting jobs at historically black universities, and talking to various business partners and asking them for help in identifying potential candidates for alternative certification. Focus group respondents mentioned challenges that had arisen in the past with the efficiency of fingerprinting which have now been addressed through the purchase of a new verification system. While some respondents reported that the hiring process was smooth, others complained that the paperwork process is too complicated and cumbersome, and has an impact on hiring of classified positions since the paperwork is hard to understand. Principals are responsible for hiring individuals

who will work at the school. They report that the quality of the pool of candidates varies from year to year and they have challenges in hiring individuals with appropriate backgrounds to teach English language learners. High schools also struggle with finding candidates for advanced coursework in mathematics and science. Some schools devote secretarial time to help potential candidates through the application process. Respondents also recommended that background checks be conducted at the beginning rather than the end of the process so that new hires can start right away. The district is nearly fully staffed at the beginning of the school year. However, several respondents mentioned that the low compensation for classified staff translates into consistently high turnover rates.

Employee satisfaction. The customer service strategy goal is to improve touch-points, which are communication points between the district operations team and staff. Primary touch-points are a direct communication or interaction with a customer. Secondary touch-points are one-way information (web pages) or pass-through information such as communication to employees regarding information or services from a department. New Employee Customer Satisfaction Surveys are administered online. Survey results showed relatively high levels of satisfaction (95% or higher) with Human Resource department accuracy, responsiveness, consistency, accountability, availability, knowledge and courteousness. Working conditions and work environment are not specifically measured by the district.

OCPS will increase its ratings in this area when the district human resource systems are consistently efficient and effective, when the district shows better proportionality in the diversity of its staff, and when all employees are regularly surveyed about their customer satisfaction, and when surveys indicate that most staff are satisfied with human resource systems and their work environment.

HR-2.   The district has a comprehensive system for cultivating and placing highly effective staff.

Rating: Approaching Proficient

Cultivation. Seven OCPS assistant principals and seven district administrators are participating in the Florida Turnaround Leaders Program, an innovative principal preparation program funded by the state's Race to the Top grant and facilitated by the Southern Regional Education Board. Participants attend ten quarterly seminars and a series of online training modules. Participants will practice their skills in selected schools where they work in teams to identify the root causes of student achievement challenges and plan and implement research-based interventions. At the end of this initial field experience, participants will be assigned full-time for six months at a school identified by the superintendent where they will put their turnaround skills to work to create a 90-day plan for improving student achievement. The district also received a BRIDGE Leadership Grant to support the Principal Leadership Academy, the Preparing New Principals Program, the Aspiring Leaders Program, and the Stetson Cohort for the Aspiring

Leaders Program, as mentioned previously. Teacher leaders may also attend an educational leadership class and receive certification and an M.A. Principals and assistant principals reported that the new programs have filled a void and participants are pleased with the programs, saying that they have acquired new skills and knowledge. Assistant principals reported that they are exposed to finance, human resource, community outreach, and other functions, and typically take two years to complete their preparation program. They engage in dialogues, submit written plans, and have an eight-week internship during which they take over the principal functions at the school while being supervised by the principal.

Placement. The district sometimes shuffles principals around, although principals are not clear what criteria are being used for those decisions. District staff reported that principals are moved to fragile schools when they have a good track record of effectiveness and the area superintendent thinks they will be a good match for the fragile school. District staff also take fit with school culture into account when placing or shifting principal positions.

Orientation. Orange County Public Schools provides pre-employment orientation sessions, known as PREO, for all new employees. From September to June, sessions are offered two days each week, and during the summer hiring season (July/August) sessions are held four days weekly with multiple sessions daily. Orientation includes completion of paperwork, drug testing, and fingerprinting. Participants are given a DVD with information on retirement benefits, insurance benefits, insurance application processes and payroll information. Orientation to the specific job is provided at the school. Principals receive additional information about their performance expectations and administrative policies. Teachers are oriented through a program called Great Beginnings which include two-day sessions to teach them about effective instruction, classroom management, teacher evaluation and other pertinent topics. According to respondents, Great Beginnings is a very useful source of information when teachers enter at the beginning of the year. Those teachers who come during the year receive a truncated orientation which many believe needs to be improved. All new teachers receive mentors and an instructional coach. However, several respondents reported that the instructional coaches are being used as testing coordinators and have limited time available for new teacher coaching.

Improvement in this area will be realized when the district more proactively recruits and prepares highly effective candidates with strong results for hard-to-staff positions. The district should review its administrator placement strategies and balance the need for strong turnaround leadership with the need for stability and maintenance of progress. Orientation processes should be improved for central office and classified staff so that they have a better understanding of their specific job expectations and what excellent work looks like. In addition, all new staff should be systematically offered opportunities to observe effective performance.

Organizational Structure and Processes

OSP-1.   The district ensures organizational coherence.

Rating: Area of Concern

Vertical and horizontal coherence. OCPS has five geographic "learning community organizations" (East, North, Southeast, Southwest, and West) supervised by area superintendents who report directly to the Deputy Superintendent with an indirect reporting line to the superintendent. Within each Learning Community, there is an area administrator of student support services and a senior administrator, both of whom report to the area executive director. The area executive director and principals report to the area superintendent. Respondents believe that the learning community structure has helped to make information more accessible and has brought a measure of greater coherence to the district. The district has implemented a "One Vision, One Voice" initiative to try to bring more coherence to the district and to break up traditional "kingdoms." Area superintendents were shuffled to bring fresh perspectives, and all learning communities now use the same meeting agendas and information strategies. Some believe this structure has added a lot of coherence to the district. However, some report that this structure has led to an inability to collaborate to discuss common problems that have emerged within learning communities since the communities face different issues. There are multiple "non-negotiables" that all instructional staff are to implement. However, multiple respondent groups say that the non-negotiables can be interpreted in various ways and reported lack of consistency in expectations across schools. For example, all schools have PLCs, but some meet four times a week and others meet four times a year. Some emphasize teaching on-grade level and others say that teachers should teach at students' developmental levels. Some have anticipated and started to implement CCSS and others just implement CCSS in required grades. Supervisors (principals and area superintendents) are perceived to have varying definitions of what effective practice looks like and different priorities for their schools.

Consistent definitions of proficiency in student grading. OCSP does not use standards-based grade cards but does have site-based grade scales. However, by nearly all accounts, grading is not consistent from school to school or even classroom to classroom, especially in elementary and middle schools. Many elementary school teachers believe that it is important to reward students for effort and thus grades reflect both motivation and results. These teachers would like to reward any student growth. Others, particularly at the high school level, base grades on mastery, but also count effort and practice, such as homework completion. No studies have been completed to see if failing grades are correlated to achievement. Students notice the inconsistencies, saying that some teachers are "harder graders" than others.

Balance between centralized and decentralized decision-making. By most accounts, the district has not yet achieved an effective balance between centralized and decentralized decision-making. The "One Vision, One Voice" and non-negotiables represented steps to bring more efficiency and coherence to the district, while site-based budgeting was put into place to offer more autonomy to principals and schools. However, after meeting class size requirements, principals do not have a lot of flexibility in their remaining budgets, and when they do make choices, such as funding a reading specialist rather than a counselor, parents are not always aware of the rationale and complain that their school is not receiving what is available in another school. Technology access is uneven – in many schools, technology is outdated and inaccessible, while in other schools, every teacher has a SMART board and computers in the classroom. This is problematic in that schools will not have the computers they need when PARCC becomes required. Some schools have excellent professional development while others provide training that is considered a waste of time. Some schools are helping students to become college- and career-ready while others have not begun to think about how to execute this initiative. Many respondents would like to see a little more centralization to guarantee quality, though most also said that teachers should be allowed to select the instructional approaches that they deem most appropriate. However, even in this arena, teachers wished that the district provided more professional development to help them understand and implement rigorous instruction. Many people felt overwhelmed with their jobs and expressed the desire for more tools to perform their work more effectively. A few principals thought there should be more rather than less autonomy so they could engage in better problem solving.

OCPS will improve its performance in this area when the system is better organized to ensure vertical and horizontal coherence and has a better balance between centralized and decentralized decision-making, such that there is a common curriculum, common assessments, common professional development and potentially common instructional frameworks. The district should consider a move to standards-based report cards to ensure consistency among and between schools, both to improve the promotion of higher expectations for students in high poverty areas and to ensure equity.

OSP-2.   The district engages in effective continuous improvement processes for all its systems.

Rating: Approaching Proficient

Facilities and operations. Over the past five years, OCPS has added 4.3 million net square feet of school space while the maintenance budget has decreased by nearly $4 million and 72 positions. Maintenance operations have tried to keep pace with the demand of increased space by prioritizing work orders based on safety, health and functionality of the learning environment. The 2012-2013 Work Plan shows the 5-year District Facilities Work Program for 2012-2013 through

2016-2017 with a five year total budget of $3.4 billion for new construction and remodeling projects. Three new elementary schools, two new middle schools, and one new high school are scheduled to be built and three elementary schools and three high schools are scheduled to be replaced. In addition, the district tracks electricity use by type of schools and strongly encourages cost savings by turning out lights and reducing energy consumption. A new recycling program has been put into place. Respondents reported that most maintenance concerns are addressed quickly, but that many have had problems with HVAC and maintenance in older buildings. Meal participation rates have increased in the past several years, primarily through the district's efforts to improve the application process. The district has made efforts to improve the quality of its menus and encourage healthy eating through participation in the Chefs Move to Schools initiative (whereby local chefs work with students to create healthy, appetizing meals) and the district's annual food festival (a student food-sampling event), though some students complain that meals do not taste as good as in the past. Transportation is generally considered efficient and effective, and several key indicators have been put into place recently to ensure better performance, such as A and B.

Analysis of data for improvement purposes. OCPS is a data-driven district and all schools are required to spend a considerable amount of time analyzing data for improvement. The OCPS District Scorecard reports current data on 27 key measures of district performance and include the Integrated Business Plans (IBPs) that relate to each measure. All district departments were asked to formulate key performance indicators and to date, about half of the departments reported that their indicators had been developed. The business plans include targets for improving performance over a three to five year period. There were no areas where the district failed to make progress in 2011-2012. The operations group has been particularly active in setting and monitoring indicators. The districts "FY 11-12 Operations Service Efforts and Accomplishments" report states that the Operations Division is beginning the use of Six Sigma measurement development standards to carefully establish performance measures to ensure integrity in the data collection and reporting. Built into the process is the concept of "Managing for Results" which includes strategic planning, program/activity planning, budgeting for results, measuring for results, producing and analyzing results (including redesigning or improving), and reporting and evaluating results. OCPS is also a member of the Council of Great City Schools and makes use of that organization's key performance indicators to determine how they compare with their urban district peers across the county.

Customer service. OCPS defines its customers as parents, community members, the OCPS Workforce, and vendors. Customer surveys were not administered prior to 2012, but have been administered in the past few months by the Operations Division. In the future, these surveys will be administered on an annual basis, with Operations Division employee surveys administered in October and February, and OCPS Workforce customer surveys (measuring the OCPS Workforce's satisfaction

with the Operations Division) being sent out in November and March. After each survey, a survey results session will be held to review the findings, with a strategy/score card summary for the current fiscal year taking place in May-June. The response rate for the October 2012 Operations Division employee survey was 75%. Most responses were positive. Highest ratings went to understanding how one's job affects student success (99% responded "Yes); being confident when speaking to a customer and having expert knowledge about one's job (97%); and being comfortable using technology required for the job (93%). While still fairly high, lowest ratings were for receiving recognition or praise in the last 30 days (68% responded "Yes"); having had the opportunity for training in the past year (74%); and knowing the 5 OCPS goals (79%). Solution Implementation Teams will be meeting weekly beginning in January 2013 to develop plans in the areas of Communication, Recognition, and Training based on the feedback gathered. Data gathered from the November 2012 OCPS Workforce customer survey showed a response rate of only 27% (5,822 out of 21,733 employees). Fifty-seven percent rated provision of customer service by the overall Operations Division at "Above Average" or "Outstanding." Thirty-five percent gave an "Average" rating, with 8% rating it as "Below Average" or "Poor." Parent surveys developed by the marketing department are planned for April 2013. Vendor and community experiential surveys are also planned as an on-going practice administered by each department.

Ratings will increase when the district ensures that its school facilities are consistently well-maintained and all operations are efficient and effective. The district should routinely collect and analyze the effects of specific departments on student performance, including the practices in the areas of human resources, district programs, community engagement, and professional development. Each department and the district overall should begin or continue to collect data on customer satisfaction with its services from internal and external stakeholders and results should be used for improvement.

Organizational Culture

OC-1.   The district provides a safe and secure environment for teaching and learning.

Rating: Approaching Proficient

Code of conduct. OCPS Management Directive B-12/Policy of Civil Conduct defines the Code of Civility for students, OCPS faculty and staff, parents, guardians, and all other members of the community. OCPS also has a district-wide Code of Student Conduct**,** although each school develops its own rules and expectations for student conduct based on the district policy. The Code includes student rights and responsibilities; policies pertaining to Internet and communication device use; disciplinary response codes for elementary and secondary/postsecondary schools; and procedures related to disciplinary action

and expulsion. Parents/guardians and students must sign a form stipulating that they have read and discussed the Code. The Code is in a user-friendly format. There is also an anonymous student hotline where students can call, text, or provide information via a web link if they have witnessed other students being involved in acts of bullying, gang activity, making threats, damaging school property, harming themselves or others, using drugs, etc. In 2011-12, OCPS had 23,275 in-school suspensions, 28,724 out-of-school suspensions, and 1,517 expulsions. There were 145,302 code of conduct violations during the 2011-2012 school year. No data were provided on trends, but school personnel believe that the number of violations has been pretty consistent over the past few years. Students, teachers, and administrators report that the code of conduct is relatively evenly enforced, especially for major offenses.

Safety, security, and bullying. OCPS has a detailed Safe Schools/Healthy Students Implementation Logic Model that describes needs/gaps, goals, elements, objectives, activities, partners, process measures, and indicators and Government Performance Reporting Act (GPRA) measures for safe school environments and violence prevention activities. The OCPS Bullying Committee developed a comprehensive plan to inform and distribute anti-bullying resources to OCPS employees. As part of this process, principals were asked to send in the name of their school's "bullying designee." At trainings, designees were introduced to the OCPS Act4Change Bullying program which includes online resources on bullying prevention for administrators, instructional and classified personnel; a handout with suggested guidelines on how the designees can disseminate Act4Change information at their school; DVDs with bullying prevention information for school staff and a section for students; and handouts for both staff and students with bullying prevention information. The district's School Safety Manager, through collaboration with school and district administrators and local law enforcement, developed a formal OCPS Gang Procedure that outlines a standardized, uniform and consistent response to suspected and potential gang activity on campus. Professional development has been provided for district and school staff on recognizing and understanding the warning signs of gang behavior and on the Gang Related Code of Conduct. Additional programs throughout the district include the *Too Good for Violence* curriculum which is designed to decrease the percentage of 4th and 5th grade students at targeted schools who report being involved in a physical fight on school property and Non-Violent Crisis Prevention Intervention training for school staff and bus drivers at targeted elementary schools. Respondents report that there is bullying at the schools, but that the bullying is generally "under control" and there are many strategies in place to work with the bully and the victim. Students, parents, and teachers all report feeling relatively safe at their schools. Gang violence is still an issue at some schools. Some schools have reported challenges with maintaining security cameras due to frequent vandalism.

Behavioral supports and counseling. OCPS uses the Florida School Counseling Framework's Standards, Competencies and Indicators as the basis of their

counseling and student development curriculum. School counselors have comprehensive developmental school counseling programs that provide education, prevention, and intervention services and address students' academic, personal, social, and career needs. Counselors implement the guidance curriculum; counsel small groups and individual students with problems that create barriers to school success; consult with teachers, staff and parents regarding meeting the developmental needs of students; and refer students with severe problems to appropriate community agencies in consultation with parents. Lessons, including those that have a literary basis and support positive social emotional and behavioral development topics such as bullying, social skills, self-esteem, attitude, building strengths, listening, getting along, decision making/problem solving, attitude, and anger are available for all elementary students. The district partners with the Center for Drug Free Living and the Orange County Coalition for a Drug Free Community to provide education to middle school students and parents on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention (ATOD) activities. Four district ATOD prevention specialists plan to conduct ATOD prevention education for sixth-ninth grade students and help four tier two and tier three middle schools implement *Project Success* (Schools Using Coordinated Community Efforts to Strengthen Students). The district's Guidance Department has a comprehensive suicide prevention program which includes cooperative agreements with five mental health receiving hospitals. Focus group respondents report that counseling services are effective but inadequate to meet needs. Many schools cut social workers when asked to reduce their budgets so that several schools no longer have adequate personnel needed to work with large at-risk populations. Some schools report too few career counselors to be effective.

OCPS will improve in this area when the number of student conduct code violations decrease each year; when the district has consistently effective strategies for decreasing the frequency and effects of bullying and gang violence, and when students are provided with a variety of effective approaches for supporting positive behavior. As possible, schools should provide wraparound services for needy students and their families and adequate counseling support.

OC-2. The district promotes a positive climate for learning in all its schools.

Rating: Proficient

Respectful and caring environment. Respondents reported that most schools have a respectful and caring environment. Approximately 193 OCPS schools and programs implement the *Change Starts with Me* (CSWM) curriculum which promotes "Improving School Climate through Infusion of Character Development." The program includes monthly seminars and promotes student and staff recognition, instructional support, parent engagement, positive behavioral supports, and service-learning activities. Students said that most of

the time the school environment is respectful and the rewards for positive behavior are abundant. Disruptive students are typically handled first by the teacher and then the assistant principal. District personnel reported that they conducted a study of African and Hispanic male students to understand what the district could do to better meet the needs of these subpopulations and make school an attractive place for them. The study was just recently completed and has not yet led to action.

Social-emotional skills and self-efficacy. Specific programs to develop social-emotional skills vary by school. Some schools have AVID and Destination College programs that provide skills training for time management and self-efficacy. Student government also helps to provide students with leadership skills. Character education programs help with development of conflict management, respect, and students taking responsibility for their actions. The Too Good for Violence program is in several schools to help targeted students. Counselors believe that there is not enough support for social-emotional development, though, and that there should be clearer directions for how to implement programs. Parents and students are relatively satisfied with current programming in this area. Teachers and administrators believe that more could and should be done, but do not see how this is possible given the need to focus instructional time on increasing academic performance.

Meaningful parent involvement. District staff from the Office of Parental Involvement work with Parent Involvement School Coordinators on strategies for planning and implementing effective parental involvement activities and programs in all Title I schools. The district has a written Parental Involvement Policy that is developed, evaluated and revised by an established Parental Involvement District Advisory Council that consist of Title I school administrators and teachers, parents, the Office of Parental Involvement coordinators and the Title I Director. During the 2011-2012 school year, more than 60,000 parents participated in activities including literacy/reading activities, extended media hours to allow parents to use computers to study for a GED, parent curriculum nights, parenting classes, Building Parents as Leaders, Effective Communication Strategies for Parents and Teachers, Parenting Academy Classes, IB/AP/AVID Program information sessions, Math and Science Nights, Empowering Parents Activities, English Language Learner/English as a Second Language Parent Nights, Writing Nights, FCAT Focus Nights, Academic Night, Title I Annual Meetings, Open House, Parent/Home Checklist/Compacts, and the Partnership with schools in support of the Mayor's Children and Education Initiative. In 2010, Orange County Public Schools Community Resources office partnered with Be There.org, a national organization that inspires parents to become more involved in their children's education. Through this campaign, schools received posters to encourage parent involvement activities, a district webpage was created with tips and resources, parents were given the opportunity to take the Be There Pledge and submit their "Teachable Be There Moment", and a local media partner created public service announcements to promote parent involvement in the Central

Florida communities. Forty-four of the district's 102 Title I schools are implementing Parents as Partners, a curriculum designed to build home-school connections for every child's success. In 2011-12, Orange County schools had 128 active PTA/PTSA local units with a total membership of 26,437. Respondents reported that parent involvement varies widely by school. Schools actively try to secure involvement and invite parents to volunteer for various activities. Schools sponsor many parent programs and provide translators and babysitting services to remove barriers to participation. However, results show relatively low parent involvement in several schools.

To improve in this area, OCPS should assist schools in providing a respectful and caring learning environment in all schools through the implementation of strategies associated with positive school climate, including the provision of opportunities for students to learn conflict management skills, tenacity and pursuit of personal best, self-regulation, and a sense of efficacy. Students should be provided with ample opportunities to provide service and become leaders. In addition, the district should increase the effectiveness of its parent involvement strategies so that more parents are meaningfully involved in their children's education.