The Urban Schools Human Capital Academy

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# Leadership Sustainability Report

## *For Tulsa Public Schools*

**Final Report:  March 6, 2013**

Prepared by the Urban Schools Human Capital Academy

For the Tulsa Public Schools Superintendent and Board of Education

# Executive Summary

## *Context*

The mission of Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) is to provide quality learning experiences for every student, every day, without exception. The Superintendent and Board of Education have developed a strategic, reform-minded approach to assess and improve the current systems, structures, and processes in order to ensure every TPS student achieves at a high level and is ready for college and career. Having the right leadership to drive this work is mission critical.

The Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools for Tulsa Public Schools are serving as partners in the process of succession planning for the Executive Leadership Team in TPS. The current superintendent, Dr. Keith Ballard, has announced his retirement, originally planned to be effective July 1, 2013, and the Board of Education has extended his contract until at least July 1, 2014 as they search for a new superintendent. Dr. Ballard is a highly respected leader who is considered by many to be "the heart of the district." The TPS Board of Education has identified the need to have an executive staff structure that effectively supports the district's key work over the next 18 months and in particular ensures a successful transition phase. This thoughtful process is supported by the business community through a grant provided by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, which allowed the Urban Schools Human Capital Academy to benchmark other districts, review current research, and complete an internal assessment through a series of interviews, and thus propose this succession planning guidance.

The Project Goals were identified as the following:

- Identify great Executive Team structures for a transitional time period to support improved student growth and achievement, with a focus on effective management of principals as well as the delivery of a strong curriculum/instruction/assessment approach and strong collaborative structures for staff and community.
- Develop job descriptions for a second tier of Executive Team positions (i.e., deputy superintendent, chief academic officer, etc.).
- Identify areas of strength within the current leadership team, including areas of development needed.
- Identify a blueprint for strong candidates for second tier Executive Team positions who can also be strong candidates for superintendent within 18 months.
- Recommend a set of interview questions to match the identified new Tier 2 roles.

## Supporting Research

Existing research has consistently shown that effective school leadership is associated with improved student learning. Given the multitude of ways principals can have such an influence, school leaders are recognized as a powerful force in influencing teaching and learning. In addition to a focus on the impact of school leadership on student learning, recent research also highlights the role of central office leaders in promoting school and student success. A recent report by Honig et al. describes the essential leadership role of central office administrators in supporting school principals and building capacity for effective reforms particularly around instructional improvement.[1] When central offices are transformed around several key principles, district-wide improvements in student learning are possible. Aspects of this transformation include:

- Focusing centrally and meaningfully on teaching and learning improvement.
- Engaging the entire central office in reform.
- Calling on central office administrators to fundamentally remake their work practices and their relationships with schools to support teaching and learning improvements for all schools.
- Considering central office transformation as an important focus for reform in its own right.

## Key Findings

Through benchmarking similar school districts, reviewing the most current literature about effective and efficient structures for high-performing executive leadership teams, and a series of internal and external stakeholder interviews, the following high-level key findings were identified.

1. The current organizational structure is far too flat. The district is commended for trying to keep costs of administrative positions low during tight budget times; however, the flat Executive Team organizational structure is serving to hinder a very talented Superintendent and strong team of executives from ensuring that the right work is being done by the best people in the most efficient and effective way possible.
2. A robust model to ensure that principals have the support and monitoring needed to significantly move student achievement must be implemented. The current Associate Superintendents are very talented, but they lack the time and capacity to provide the necessary school support. Benchmarking and research show that there should be a 15:1 manager to school supervisory model.

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[1] Meredith I. Honig, Michael A. Copland, Lydia Rainey, Juli Anna Lorton, Morena Newton, *Central Office Transformation for District-wide Teaching and Learning Improvement.* Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, April 2010.

3. As Tier 2 positions are filled, the candidate(s) should reflect and build on the strengths of the current superintendent while also bringing the expertise needed to build systems, structures, and processes that ensure effective and efficient implementation of the work. Tier 2 candidates should be experienced district leaders who have already demonstrated success in increasing student achievement in an urban setting, and should already have knowledge and experience with a planful, strategic approach so that they can provide the direction, supervision, support, and monitoring of current Executive Team members.
4. When hiring new people for roles on the Executive Team, ensuring that there is a strong culture fit is critical.
5. The key elements of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment approach are at beginning stages of development and need to be completed.
6. The strategic planning process needs to be implemented with fidelity.
7. Effective communication processes, strategies for collaboration across teams, and regular meeting structures need to be implemented.
8. A comprehensive approach to building the capacity of leaders needs to be implemented. The current work being accomplished for Teacher and Leader Effectiveness is extremely strong and needs to be fully executed.

## *Key Recommendations*

In order to address these key findings, the following recommendations are being submitted:

1. Implement a Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability position to oversee all of the work in the area of curriculum/instruction/assessment and the direct supports to schools to ensure student results. In the preferred organizational structure that is recommended, the Deputy Superintendent oversees the Chief Academic Officer, Chief Accountability Officer, and those positions that directly manage principals. A major responsibility of this role will be to put in place structures and systems to ensure the effective alignment and communication among key directors so that the work does not occur in silos.
2. Implement a Chief Academic Officer position focused on the development of the preK-12 aligned curriculum/instruction/assessment approach, professional development, and a set of strategies and processes focused on meeting the learning needs of all students including gifted and talented, English Language Learners, and special education students.
3. Implement six Instructional Leadership Director (ILD) positions with a caseload of no more than 15:1, including one ILD to focus on innovative school support to ensure student results. In order to provide leadership and coordination for the elementary and secondary ILDs, consider a lead ILD position for both levels. One of the ILDs should have the responsibility to oversee innovative/Turnaround schools and support leaders in those schools.

4. Align the Office of Accountability with the Office of the Chief Academic Officer and the Office of School Support and have them report to the Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability to ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, including data, analysis, and tools, with the direct support to schools to ensure results.
5. Organize the work of the Chief of Staff so that this role serves as an extension of the Superintendent, driving communication, collaboration, and alignment to accomplish the Superintendent and Board goals and objectives.  The COS would ensure effective communication with the Board of Education, oversee the strategic planning process, support the deliverables of the Executive Team, and serve as a key strategic advisor and problem-solver for the Superintendent.
6. Review and upgrade the pay scales for all members of the Executive Team so that they are not only competitive with other districts in the state of Oklahoma but are above other scales in order to attract highly skilled current educators and members of the business community.
7. Align all professional development responsibilities related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment under the Chief Academic Officer to ensure a tightly aligned focus on the improvement of teaching and learning to ensure student results.
8. Develop a strong methodology of collaboration and communication with a highly focused meeting structure.
9. Align the work of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness under the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer.  Ensure direct communication between the Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability and the Chief Human Capital Officer to ensure alignment.
10. Review and upgrade all of the job descriptions for every member of the Executive Team so that they all have clear actions, goals, metrics and deliverables stated.
11. Develop an executive coaching model for the Executive Team so that they continue to receive collective support for their quarterly executive team retreats as well as individual, focused coaching on both their job skills and their individual learning and growth needs.

## *Next Steps and Conclusion*

Concrete next steps are identified in the body of the report.  At the highest level, this report and its learnings will be presented to Dr. Ballard and the Sustainability Subcommittee of the Board of Education.   Decisions will be made about the organizational structure and next steps, and the Superintendent and Board of Education will collaboratively select the candidates for identified Tier 2 positions. Finally, the USHCA team will work with the TPS team on implementation strategies. In summary, TPS has a very talented Superintendent and Executive Leadership Team.  Implementing the new structures, systems, and processes identified in this report would serve as a catalyst of change to improve teaching and learning and thus student achievement for all students.

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# Introduction

The importance of effective leadership, particularly at the school and district levels, has come to the forefront of education policy and research in recent years. According to results of a 2010 survey administered on behalf of the Wallace Foundation, "school and district administrators, policymakers and others found principal leadership as among the most pressing matters on a list of issues in public school education. Teacher quality stood above everything else, but principal leadership came next, outstripping subjects including dropout rates, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education, student testing, and preparation for college and careers."[2] Similarly, the federal Race to the Top program encourages states to invest more in principal leadership and equip principals to focus on improved instruction.

Research has consistently shown that effective school leadership is associated with improved student learning. Researchers from the University of Pennsylvania described the direct and indirect ways a principal can impact student learning, for example by providing guidance to a teacher resulting in improved teaching practices, or by providing resources for teachers to interact with peers in ways that positively impact teaching and therefore student learning.[3] Given the multitude of ways principals can have such an influence, school leaders are recognized as a powerful force in influencing teaching and learning. Similarly, in the culminating report of a six-year study on leadership, researchers from the University of Minnesota and University of Toronto described the empirical link between leadership and learning, and importantly emphasized the role of the principal in creating the necessary conditions for school and student success. Looking at both qualitative and quantitative studies, they concluded that most school-level factors alone have a small impact on student learning, but when combined effectively can produce large effects on student learning. It is the job of school principals, and others in leadership positions across the district, to "create synergy across the relevant variables" thereby enabling significant improvement in student learning.[4]

In addition to a focus on the impact of school leadership on student learning, recent research also highlights the role of central office leaders in promoting school and student success. A recent report by Honig et al. describes the essential leadership role of central office administrators in supporting school principals and building capacity for effective reforms particularly around instructional

[2] *The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning.* Wallace Foundation, January 2012.
[3] Supovitz, J., Sirinides, P., & May, H. (2010). "How principals and peers influence teaching and learning," Educational Administration Quarterly 46(1): 31–56.
[4] Karen Seashore Louis, Kenneth Leithwood, Kyla L. Wahlstrom, Stephen E. Anderson, *Learning from Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning: Final Report of Research to The Wallace Foundation*, University of Minnesota and University of Toronto, 2010, p9.

improvement.[5]  When central offices are transformed around several key principles, districtwide improvements in student learning are possible. Aspects of this transformation include:

- Focusing centrally and meaningfully on teaching and learning improvement.
- Engaging the entire central office in reform.
- Calling on central office administrators to fundamentally remake their work practices and their relationships with schools to support teaching and learning improvements for all schools.
- Considering central office transformation as an important focus for reform in its own right.

With the critical roles of both central office and school leadership in driving improvements in student achievement as a foundation, this report provides a review of the current Executive Leadership Team structure, systems, and processes in Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) as well as key recommendations and next steps for implementing new leadership structures and promoting leadership sustainability while leveraging the district's existing leadership team strengths.

Specifically, this project intended to address the following goals:

1. Identify great Executive Team structures for a transitional time period to support improved student growth and achievement, with a focus on effective management of principals as well as the delivery of a strong curriculum/instruction/assessment approach and strong collaborative structures for staff and community.
2. Develop job descriptions for a second tier of Executive Team positions (i.e., deputy superintendent, chief academic officer, etc.).
3. Identify areas of strength within the current leadership team, including areas of development needed.
4. Identify a blueprint for strong candidates for second tier Executive Team positions who that can also be strong candidates for superintendent within 18 months.
5. Recommend a set of interview questions to match the identified new Tier 2 roles.

## _Current Context in Tulsa Public Schools_

TPS is considered to be an urban school district, and it also has a very strong feel of a small city district with a rich history and a deep sense of community.  The district's core goals are defined in its five-year strategic plan and include a focus on achieving career and/or college readiness for all students, ensuring teacher and leader effectiveness through an effective teacher in every classroom, an

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[5] Honig et al., 2010.

effective principal in every building and an effective employee in every position, creating a performance-based culture, being financially sustainable, and ensuring safe and secure schools.  Because of economic reasons, a desire to provide a more streamlined district office, and current staffing vacancies, the Executive Leadership Team has, over time, developed into an extremely flat organization with the leadership team members all reporting directly to the Superintendent.

Three major events have occurred leading to the necessity of this report.  First, the current Superintendent in Tulsa Public Schools has announced his retirement which was originally planned to be effective July 1, 2013.  The Board of Education has extended his contract until at least July 1, 2014 as they search for a new superintendent.  There is a need to have an executive staff structure that effectively supports the district's key work over the next 18 months and in particular ensures a successful transition phase.  Second, according to the district's student growth and achievement metrics and the new system that the state of Oklahoma has developed to grade schools, it is clear that TPS needs to increase its focus on both developing an aligned curriculum and assessment approach as well as ways to provide direct supervision of schools   (46 of the 81 schools in TPS receiving state grades last year were given D's or F's). Finally, 8 out of 10 current Executive Team members are new to their roles, and on-the-ground support for strong supervision and support is needed beyond what a superintendent can directly provide.

The remainder of this report is organized as follows.  First, key learnings from a review of the literature on effective school district Executive Leadership Teams and a benchmarking study of Executive Leadership Team structures and roles in other urban districts are presented.  Next we present findings from interviews of key TPS leaders and stakeholders about current Executive Team functioning and needs.  A summary of the strengths and areas of growth for current Executive Team members is then presented, followed by recommendations for a new executive leadership organization.  Descriptions of new Tier 2 leadership roles along with a proposed interview process and timeline are then presented.  Within each section, findings and recommendations are presented.  The report then concludes with a unified list of key findings, recommendations, and next steps.

# Research on Executive Leadership Team Structures in Urban Districts

### *Review of the Literature on Effective Central Office Executive Leadership Teams*

District leaders, and central office staff in general, play a critical role in instituting effective systems to promote districtwide instructional improvement.  Recent research by Honig et al. examining the central office's role in teaching and learning improvement efforts documents the need for true transformation of central office structure, roles, and work in order for instructional improvement to

be successful across a district rather than in selected schools or pockets.[6] Among the key aspects of a central office transformation are reorganizing and reculturing the central office to focus on instructional improvement, providing effective development and other support to district administrators directly responsible for managing school principals, ensuring coordination of efforts across central office units, and minimizing other burdens on those managing principals to free up time for direct engagement with schools. Additionally, providing "stewardship" over the central office transformation, meaning taking an active and purposeful stance on the work needed to develop new systems, communicate about them, broker key relationships, and continually monitor and improve, is needed to ensure success.

A recent report by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation also sought to better understand how district central offices are supporting principals to be successful in their work to improve teaching and learning at the school level.[7] The report found that work in three "action areas" may represent important ways district offices can support principals and enable improvement in teaching and learning. These areas include:

- Clarifying the principal's role as an instructional leader by specifying the high-impact practices for which principals will be accountable.
- Developing principals' instructional leadership practices through job-embedded supports that build expertise.
- Enabling principals to succeed as instructional leaders by providing them with sufficient time and strategic supports to perform the job well.

Central to all of these tasks, and in particular to developing and executing the type of transformational work described in these reports, is the Executive Leadership Team.  The development of key strategic messages and plans, as well as the reorganization, role restructuring, and redeployment of resources needed to implement a districtwide focus on teaching and learning must be instituted and supported by the Executive Leadership Team.  Particularly important to the success of this work is the role of the Superintendent and Tier 2 leaders.  The Superintendent has a critical voice through setting the vision, articulating key priorities, and shepherding the reforms within the central office and across the district.[8] Tier 2 leaders, specifically those that manage the work of administrators directly responsible for working with school leaders, are similarly critical to putting in place the conditions necessary to enable district and school administrators to focus successfully on teaching and learning improvements.  Research also points out that successfully

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[6] Honig et al, 2010.

[7] Craig Jerald.  *Leading for effective Teaching:  How School Systems can Support Principal Success*.  Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, November 2012.

[8] Honig et al., 2010.

building the systems, structures and beliefs needed to transform district work to focus on instructional improvement relies on consistency and continuity in district leadership, highlighting the need to attend to succession planning for top district leadership.[9]

Furthermore, the success of the Executive Leadership Team in developing and instituting these kinds of changes within a district will rely in great part on the individual members of that team and their ability to work together. As described by Smart and Street in *Who: The A Method for Hiring*, a successful leadership team has talented members who each make unique contributions based on their specific skills and expertise, and together their talents and work collectively add up to meet the organization's larger goals. Each member, and the specific talents they bring to the team, must work together. The unique skills of each member must also be well matched to the overall organizational culture and goals and also be uniquely situated to meet the objectives and outcomes of their specific role.[10]

## ___Benchmarking Study___

To inform TPS on how to structure the Executive Leadership Team, a benchmarking study was conducted to review and summarize the leadership team organizational structures and roles currently in use by several other comparable urban districts.

Seventeen urban school districts were studied, including districts that were reviewed in the recent Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation report *Leading for Effective Teaching,*[11] Broad Prize for Urban Education winners or finalists, and similarly sized urban districts. While some of the districts identified through the Gates report or Broad Prize are significantly larger than TPS, these districts were included in this review because they are structured in ways that can inform the organization and responsibilities of the Tier 2 executive leadership in TPS. Finally, Oklahoma City Public Schools was included because it is the most similar school district to TPS in Oklahoma.

Organizational charts and/or narrative information about the superintendent's cabinet were collected for the 17 districts reviewed. Job descriptions were reviewed when available from the district websites or when provided by the school district.[12] Several telephone calls were made to districts to obtain clarifications about the organizational charts and job descriptions. While all districts had organizations that included instructional oversight and business operations, this review focused on the instructional executive level positions in a district, particularly on the Tier 2 positions that reported to the superintendent and those positions that had oversight for

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[9] Michael S. Knapp, Michael A. Copland, Meredith I. Honig, Margaret L. Plecki, Bradley S. Portin. *Learning-focused Leadership and Leadership Support: Meaning and Practice in Urban Systems.* Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, April 2010.

[10] Geoff Smart and Randy Street. *Who: The A Method for Hiring*. Ballantine Books, New York. 2008.

[11] Jerald, 2012.

[12] Information obtained from districts was the most up-to-date as possible. However, it is possible that in practice one or more districts may employ a different organization or role definition than is specified in public documents. This review relied on the information found in available documents.

schools and instructional support. A summary of Tier 2 positions and listing of specific job responsibilities in benchmarked districts can be found in Addenda A and B.

The following table identifies the name and enrollment of districts included in the benchmarking study.

| Gates District (Enroll) | Broad Districts (Enroll) | Similar Size (Enroll) | Oklahoma District |
|---|---|---|---|
| Atlanta Public Schools (48,796) | Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Schools (136,969) | Charleston Public Schools (43,654) | Oklahoma City Public Schools (42,989) |
| Denver Public Schools   (78,339) | Houston  (204,245) | Cincinnati Public Schools (33,783) | |
| Pittsburgh Public Schools (27,982) | Palm Beach County (174,663) | Wichita Public Schools (49,329) | |
| Prince George' County  Public Schools (126,671) | Long Beach Unified School District (84,812) | Oakland Unified School District (46,586) | |
| | Aldine Public Schools (63,154) | Tucson Public Schools  (53,275) | |
| | Corona-Norco USD (53,424) | Baltimore City Public Schools (84,800) | |

## *Context*

The organization of the central office and most importantly the executive leadership that reports to the superintendent is a key contributor to ensuring student achievement.  In *Leading for Effective Teaching,* the authors showcase several urban school districts that are transforming the central office to ensure an integrated system of support for school improvement.[13]  What this means is that Executive Teams are focused on school and principal support and the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure student results.   Therefore, central offices should be organized to ensure this alignment.

## *Findings from Benchmarked Urban Districts*

- None of the districts reviewed had a flat organization at the executive leadership level.  All districts had executive leaders reporting to a deputy superintendent and/or the CAO.  Each district had one or two Tier 2 leaders who reported directly to the superintendent.

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[13] Jerald, 2012.

- All seventeen districts had a deputy superintendent and/or a chief academic officer. Eight (47%) had a deputy superintendent only, while six (35%) had a chief academic officer (CAO) only. Three districts (18%) had both a deputy superintendent and a chief academic officer.
- The deputy superintendent and the CAO had a variety of titles across the districts, however the strategic focus of their work was consistent and centered on school support and/or supporting other executive leaders who had the responsibility to supervise, evaluate, and support principals.
- Five of the districts have designated associate/assistant superintendents whose responsibility was to work directly with Turnaround schools and to promote innovation and school improvement. These positions usually reported to the deputy or CAO. In some districts, principal managers were assigned to supervise Turnaround schools.
- Every district had some combination of K-12 area superintendents, zone superintendents, or Instructional Leadership Directors (ILD) whose direct responsibilities were to supervise, evaluate, support, coach and provide professional development to principals. These leaders also monitored academic performance and helped principals plan for instructional improvement. In a majority of the districts, these principal managers reported directly to the deputy or CAO.
- TPS has a much higher ratio of principal manager to schools than any of the benchmarked districts or that recommended in the research. Reduction in span of supervision to schools is a significant factor in school improvement. In contrast, several school districts studied here, such as Denver, Prince George's County, Baltimore City, Houston, and Oakland, are organizing support to schools in response to the newest thinking about the importance of central office leaders to focus meaningfully on ensuring strong instructional leadership in schools. Following the recommendations in this research, the direct supervision responsibilities of these ILDs are being reduced to a ratio of 15 to 1.
- A majority (71%) of the benchmarked districts organized the ILDs by school level, i.e. elementary, middle, K-8, and high school.
- Five districts had assistant superintendents/directors of accountability reporting directly to the deputy or CAO.

## *Recommendations*

1. TPS should implement two Tier 2 positions: (1) a Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability to focus on school and principal support, and (2) a Chief Academic Officer to focus on the development and alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment.
2. Reduce the ratio of principal manager (ILD) to schools to 15:1. ILDs should supervise, evaluate, and coach principals. The ILD should liaise with central office teams to provide support for schools. This principal manager role must be a strong leader of leaders.

3. Assign ILDs to support schools by levels, and ensure that the ILDs have experience and expertise that is aligned to their assignment.
4. Implement a position that reports to the deputy superintendent with responsibility to oversee innovative/Turnaround schools and support leaders in these schools.
5. The Chief Accountability Officer should report to the deputy superintendent who oversees the ILDs, thus supporting the role of the ILD in monitoring academic performance and using data to drive school improvement.

## *Tier 2 Leader Salaries*

According to the April 2012 Compensation Study report that TPS commissioned Battelle for Kids to complete, the pay structure for the Executive Team is out of line with the market.[14]  In the Battelle report, there are key findings around ensuring that the salary scales are built on the particular role being performed instead of the person in the role. Currently, according to the compensation study, Executive Team salaries are closer to the lower end of the market scale.  To attract the best candidates for leadership roles, it is critical that salaries are raised to be closer to the market maximum.

Through our benchmarking of other districts both across the country and in the state of Oklahoma, it was often difficult to ascertain the specific pay scales.  Nonetheless, it is recommended that TPS review and upgrade the pay scales for all members of the Executive Team so that they are not only competitive with other districts in the state of Oklahoma and surrounding states but are above other scales in order to attract highly-skilled current educators and members of the business community.

# Stakeholder Views about Current Leadership Structure and Needs

To understand the existing and needed executive leadership work and culture in TPS, interviews were held with 18 executive leaders or stakeholders. The interview protocol included questions about the potential of additional Tier 2 leadership roles.  A list of those interviewed is included in Addendum C and a copy of the interview protocol is found in Addendum D.

According to those interviewed, there are several leadership functions that are currently going well. Superintendent Ballard does a superlative job with the "external facing" roles, such as working with the philanthropic community, the unions, the State Department of Education, and other stakeholders. The Board has adopted a long-term strategic plan, and virtually everyone interviewed could describe the district's vision and its theory-of-action, namely to place an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader at

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[14] *Compensation Study Prepared for Tulsa Public Schools*.  Battelle for Kids, April 2012.

every school. The strategic plan also serves as a stabilizer for district leadership transitions.  While a new superintendent or Tier 2 leader is likely to have new ideas about specific work streams or structures, the overarching goals and theory serve as a foundation for the Executive Leadership Team's work and helps maintains consistency in purpose.   Finally, it is clear that the current Executive Leadership Team, where only the CFO retains the same role as last year, is transitioning into an effective team.  Relationships are strengthening, conflict is becoming more productive, and cross-functional work is starting to show results.

However, interviews also surfaced several gaps in Executive Leadership Team structure and process that are hindering the team's ability to accomplish its work efficiently and effectively.  Several of these gaps can be addressed by cultural or structural changes or by the addition of new leadership roles and/or resources. The following list summarizes key findings and recommendations.

## *Findings*

- Roles and responsibilities are unclear and the span of control of most executives is too wide.  Only two associate superintendents overseeing approximately 80 schools places far too heavy a burden on these executives.  Current vacancies in leadership positions as well as a lack of clarity in the specific responsibilities for many roles are leading to confusion and inefficiencies.
- The instructional leadership of the district is too diffuse, without clear accountabilities and responsibilities. There does not exist a central leader, or strategic plan, aligning the various instructional work streams and school support/management responsibilities. As one respondent said, "We're not a school system, we're a system of schools." Interviewees identified the current work being done to improve curriculum, instruction, and assessment as being on the right track, but this needs to be aligned.
- Cross-functional work is being done but it is unnecessarily inefficient. Lack of clarity in individual roles, lines of accountability, and the absence of structures and processes to facilitate effective collaboration are hindering effective cross-functional work.
- The capacity of some functions, specifically performance management, student achievement accountability, HR recruiting, and leadership development, is critical for district success.  However, budget cuts have led to staff reductions in these areas that have hampered key work.
- Because of the broad span of control of the Superintendent, there is limited time for the necessary communication to occur, thus causing a gap. The flat organizational structure coupled with key vacancies, relatively new team members, and unclear communication processes heightens the challenges in communication between a busy Superintendent and other key leaders.

## _Recommendations_

1. Add a Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability to direct all the activities related to the improvement of student achievement. This position should supervise the ILD role.
2. Enact an organizational chart for the Executive Leadership Team that accounts for all strategic and operational work. Each employee should have one clear supervisor.
3. Implement an ILD role with a portfolio of schools of reasonable size (15:1) following recommendations in recent research.
4. Identify the work and results principals will be held accountable for and require an annual, data-driven, improvement plan from each principal, integrating the plan with the principal's and ILD's evaluation.
5. Develop formal charters for each cross-functional project and assign joint accountabilities. Identify _ad hoc_ and standing committees to manage key initiatives. Develop master calendars for the annual recruitment/hiring cycle; the annual allocation/budget cycle; and an annual cycle for performance management and review of student results. Create dashboards for all the activities on the above calendars so that the Executive Leadership Team can evaluate progress-to-goals.
6. Assess the current fiscal and human resources allocated to these functions and improve capacity where needed, with clear metrics to evaluate progress.
7. Organize the work of the Chief of Staff to ensure that expectations and deadlines are clearly communicated to executives and that issues that need the Superintendent's attention are dealt with in a timely way. Ensure the Executive Leadership Team (and all employees) know who is "in charge" of the district when the Superintendent is away.

## _The Potential of Tier 2 Leadership_

There was consensus among interviewees that the highest priority work for Tier 2 position(s) should be creating a detailed plan for improving student achievement results. This work would begin by identifying and continually refining an improvement strategy that is aligned to the Common Core standards. Respondents communicated that the current low achievement results have created a sense of crisis in the district. Several stakeholders also expressed concern about the need to hold high expectations for and improve performance of students across the demographic continuum and not focus all improvement efforts on the lowest-performing schools.

When asked about the most valuable work tasks and deliverables of Tier 2 positions, interviewees responded with the following:

- Aligning the work of ILD's and the Teaching and Learning team to provide principals with clear direction, coherent support, stable resources, and rigorous supervision.
- Reducing the variability in curricula, instruction, and assessment and implementing a vertically aligned curriculum and assessment system.

- Integrating performance management systems from the district's strategic plan through continuing to implement scorecards and into principal and teacher evaluations.
- Putting rigorous and routine accountability structures in place.
- Integrating and institutionalizing district initiatives such as Promise Neighborhoods, Project Schoolhouse, EdLabs, and the Achievement Zone.
- Getting effective leaders into each and every school.
- Facilitating conversations that lead to consensus on "this is who we are and this is how we do things around here."

There was consensus that successful Tier 2 candidates should have demonstrated success moving achievement in a comparable district. Other necessary skills included: (a) strong planning and project management skills; (b) the ability to lead difficult conversations and hold high expectations while still developing teamwork and collaboration; (c) understanding how to create data-driven structures and processes; and (d) the ability to identify and develop leaders.

# Strengths and Areas of Growth for Current Executive Team Members

Given the critical role of the Executive Leadership Team in supporting instructional improvement efforts across a district, and the importance of each member of that team being uniquely qualified to hold his or her role and work together across the Team, we next discuss the strengths and areas of growth of the current TPS leadership team.

## *Perceived Areas of Executive Team Members' Strengths and Areas of Growth*

Interviews were held with 10 members of the Executive Leadership Team to understand their perception of their own leadership strengths, skills, and growth areas as well as their perception of these areas for their colleagues on the team. The interview protocol included questions about each individual's self-perception of strength and skills; self-perception of growth areas and specific ways they can continue to grow; their major contribution to building a high-performing leadership team; and their perception of the strength, skills and growth areas of each of their colleagues on the Executive Leadership Team. Additionally, information related to each Executive Team member's "Strength Finders 2.0," completed by the Gallup organization in the fall of 2012, were reviewed and analyzed. A summary of the gestalt from the team is identified below, and individual meetings will be held with each Executive Team member to share the summaries and determine next steps. Interview questions can be found in Addendum D.
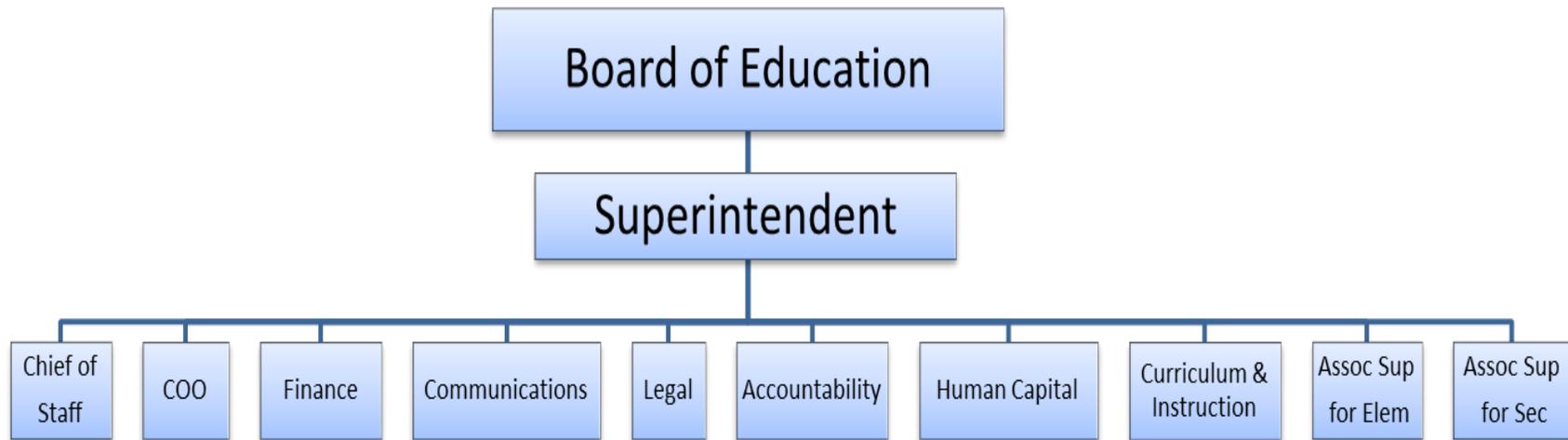
## Context

The context of the Executive Leadership Team is important to understand as collective and individual strengths and areas of growth are identified. The best word to describe this team is *new*. Of the 10 team members, only the Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer have been in their roles for the full four years of the Dr. Ballard's superintendency. The other eight members are all new to their roles since July of 2012, with several members taking on their roles as recently as October and November of 2012. This change in the leadership team was due to the promotion of three key members to roles outside of the district as well as retirements and the transition of several Executive Team members to positions outside of TPS.

The former Executive Leadership Team was made up of veteran administrators who were often retired TPS leaders or consultants who came back to serve with Dr. Ballard as he began his superintendency in 2008. Additionally, Dr. Ballard hired several outside-of-the-district business leaders interested in school reform, and he promoted several inside leaders to new positions. All but one of the team serving during the first four years of Dr. Ballard's superintendency have transitioned out of the district. It should be noted that several of the leaders returned to retirement, two were promoted to their own superintendent roles, and two received high-level promotions in both the public and private sector. This speaks to Dr. Ballard's great skill in building the capacity of his leadership team.

The current Executive Leadership Team is composed of a highly experienced superintendent, no one serving as the deputy superintendent (the position was vacated July 1, 2012), two associate superintendents in charge of all 80 schools, a new assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum and instruction, an acting chief of staff, and new officers/directors in charge of the following offices: human capital, operations, accountability, communications, and legal. Notably, no one currently has the responsibility to directly align, manage, communicate, and accomplish the daily supervision of the ET members responsible for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school support, and no one currently has the responsibility to lead the instructional team members during weekly meetings or for check-ins about progress towards goals. As noted, the Chief Financial Officer is experienced and highly respected. By all benchmarking standards, this is an extremely flat organization with limited resources used to support the teaching and learning wing of the district's work.

The current organizational chart in practice for the Executive Leadership Team is as follows:

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                          ┌─────────────────────┐
                          │ Board of Education  │
                          └──────────┬──────────┘
                                     │
                          ┌──────────┴──────────┐
                          │   Superintendent    │
                          └──────────┬──────────┘
                                     │
   ┌──────┬──────┬──────┬──────┬─────┼──────┬──────┬──────┬──────┐
┌────────┐┌────┐┌───────┐┌───────────┐┌─────┐┌──────────────┐┌──────────────┐┌────────────┐┌──────────┐┌──────────┐
│Chief of││COO ││Finance││Communica- ││Legal││Accountability││Human Capital ││Curriculum &││Assoc Sup ││Assoc Sup │
│Staff   ││    ││       ││tions      ││     ││              ││              ││Instruction ││for Elem  ││for Sec   │
└────────┘└────┘└───────┘└───────────┘└─────┘└──────────────┘└──────────────┘└────────────┘└──────────┘└──────────┘
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## _Summary Findings about the Current Executive Team's (ET) Strengths and Areas of Growth_

- Five of the ET members have strong school-based experience, while five of the ET came from outside of the public school setting.
- There is a good balance of "inside" and "outside" members, with half of the team understanding the TPS context and the way schools have worked in the past and half of the team coming from the business community and having a deep understanding of their area of expertise outside of schools.
- Four of the team have been principals in TPS, and TPS is their only experience. One member of the ET has been in an instructional leadership position in professional development in other districts. Because of this, there is limited knowledge about instructional improvement, and no experience with urban districts other than TPS.
- All individuals on the team hold their colleagues in high regard and were able to easily identify strengths that each of them brings to the team.
- There was a strong correlation between what each ET member identified as their own strengths and areas of growth and those identified for them by their peers, demonstrating strong self-awareness within the team.
- As determined by the observation over time, the 1:1 interview, and the review of their Gallup Strength-Finders, collectively, their strengths fell in the areas of their commitment to the mission, their credibility with stakeholders, their experience working in their field of focus, and their willingness to collaborate on the work.
- As determined by observation over time, the 1:1 interviews, and the review of their Gallup Strength-finders, their collective areas of growth fell in the area of developing systems to do their work efficiently and effectively; aligning their strategic work to the strategic plan of the district; increasing their knowledge about the urban setting and how district-level work is accomplished at TPS; and lifting their experiences of doing the work on the ground to a more strategic and high-level focus on planning.
- Because of their newness in management positions, many team members also identified a need to be able to better prioritize, align, and supervise the key work as an area of growth.
- The major resource for growth for all members was the availability of executive coaching in their field. Members who already receive executive coaching identified this as a current support that they value, and others want to begin working with a coach. Secondarily, team members want to regularly meet with others across the country who do the same work they do in order to benchmark and learn from them.

## *Recommendations*

1. In order to ameliorate the lack of organizational clarity and the sense that there is no one responsible for ensuring direct management and support of the instructional program as well as school support, Tier 2 candidates should be experienced district leaders who have already demonstrated success in increasing student achievement in an urban setting. They should already have knowledge and experience with a planful, strategic approach so that they can provide the direction, supervision, support, and monitoring of current ET members who are generally new to their roles. Along with this, the new team member(s) should be considered "reformers" so that they bring this mantle with them.
2. As Tier 2 position(s) are designed, there is a strong need for a leader who will play a key role in aligning and monitoring the key work that needs to be accomplished and to create and implement strong plans of action directly aligned to the BOE's strategic plan.
3. The Tier 2 position(s) should design ET meeting time where there are regular open and honest discussions about the work where every member of the team is expected to participate fully.
4. A plan of action needs to be developed for team growth in the areas of understanding the urban setting, understanding the role of the district office in TPS, reaching decisions based on data, and using data to support individual schools.
5. Reduce the scope of supervision between district leaders and schools to a 15:1 ratio and redesign the role of the Associate Superintendents of Elementary and Secondary Schools to be more similar to the Instructional Leadership Director model identified in the recent Gates report.[15]
6. A comprehensive Executive Coaching system should be put in place so that all members of the ET are connected with the right coach who can help them grow.
7. The interviewer should share out the summary and strengths and growth areas with each team member and with the Superintendent so that individual plans of action can be developed.

## *Related Recommendations*

1. A set of effective meeting structures should be developed and put into place so that it is clear how decisions are being made for the key work.
2. There is limited diversity in the district office workforce, and the Tier 2 position(s) should focus on ways to broaden the diversity.
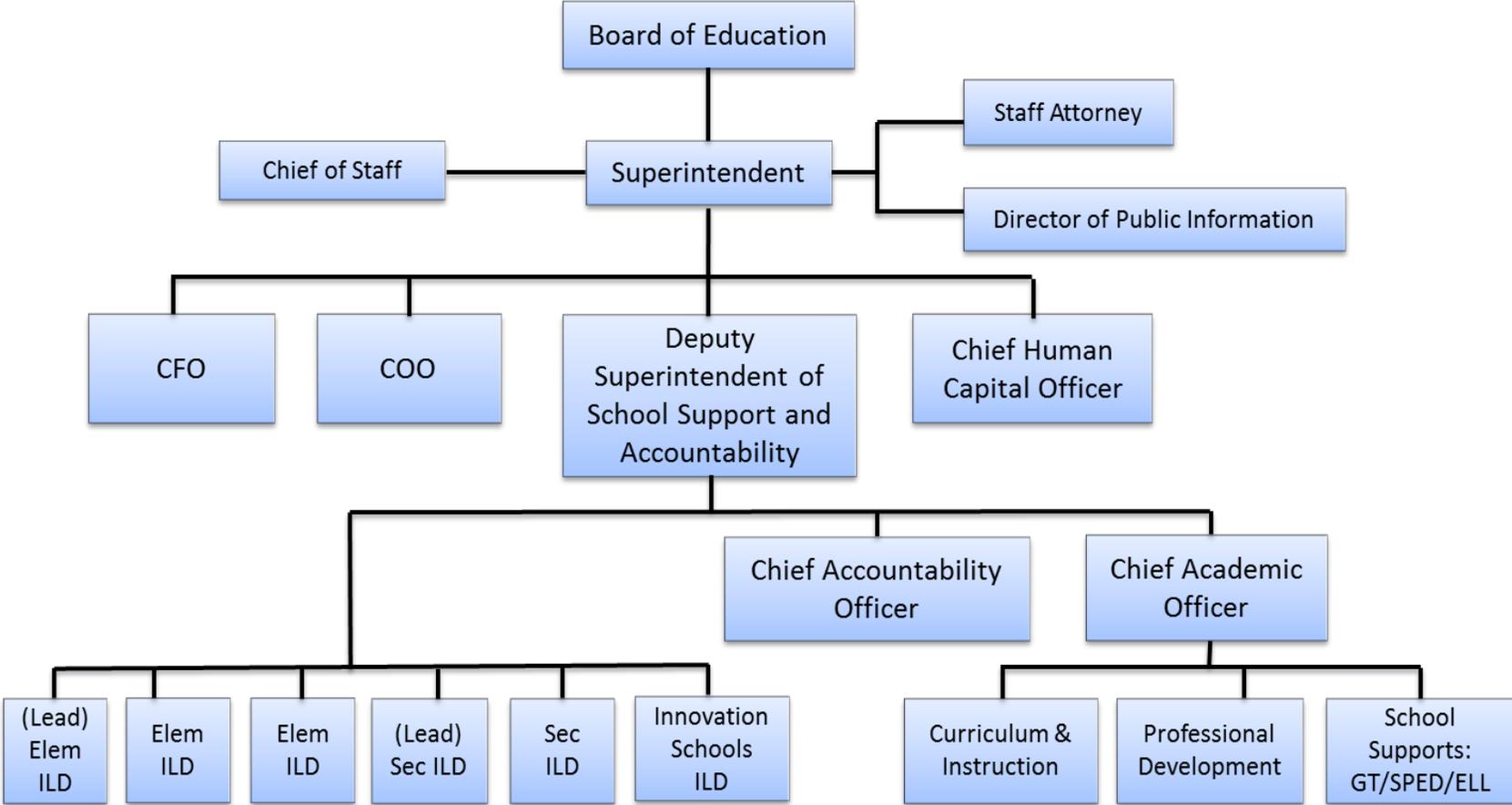
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[15] Jerald, 2012.

# Recommendations for Organizational Structures and Tier 2 Leadership Positions

*__Executive Leadership Team Organizational Structures__*

After careful review of the research, benchmarking, and information gleaned from the two sets of internal stakeholder interviews, three organizational structures have been identified as meeting the needs of TPS.  The first structure, scenario #1, is the strongly preferred recommendation of this team.  In scenario #1, shown below, a single Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability is in charge of curriculum and instruction, accountability, and school supervision and support.  This scenario is the preferred recommendation because it has the greatest possibility for alignment of the key work around curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the way schools are supported.  This alignment is critical for accomplishing the district's primary goals.

# TPS Organizational Structure - Scenario #1

- **Board of Education**
  - **Superintendent**
    - **Chief of Staff**
    - **Staff Attorney**
    - **Director of Public Information**
    - **CFO**
    - **COO**
    - **Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability**
      - **Chief Accountability Officer**
      - **Chief Academic Officer**
        - Curriculum & Instruction
        - Professional Development
        - School Supports: GT/SPED/ELL
      - (Lead) Elem ILD
      - Elem ILD
      - Elem ILD
      - (Lead) Sec ILD
      - Sec ILD
      - Innovation Schools ILD
    - **Chief Human Capital Officer**

Organizational charts depicting scenarios #2 and #3 can be found in Addendum E. Scenario #2 differs in that accountability is a direct report to the superintendent rather than falling under the management of the deputy. In scenario #3, the deputy is only responsible for school supervision and support while the CAO holds a similar cabinet-level role.

The following section describes the recommended Tier 2 positions in more detail and outlines a proposed interview strategy and timeline for filling these positions.

## *Recommended Tier 2 Positions*

We recommend the creation of the following Tier 2 positions:

- Deputy Superintendent
- Chief Academic Officer
- Chief of Staff
- Instructional Leadership Director

Job descriptions have been developed that reflect the needs and input identified from the stakeholder interviews. These descriptions can be found in Addendum F. The following table provides a high level summary of each position including a description and rationale.

| Position | Description | Rationale / Current Organizational Challenges |
|---|---|---|
| Deputy Superintendent | Provides strategic direction for and supervises the Chief Academic Officer, the Chief Accountability Officer, and the Instructional Leadership Directors and has primary authority and accountability for the district's academic performance of all schools. Acts as the Superintendent in his/her absence. | • To better support succession planning, need to create two key Tier II positions, one with a wider scope of work and responsibility (Deputy Superintendent), and the other with a narrower instructional leadership focus (CAO)<br>• Need for clarity for executive leadership team (and all employees) as to who is "in charge" of the district when the Superintendent is away<br>• Positional and functional need to align the work of ILDs and the Teaching and Learning team to provide principals with clear direction, coherent support, stable resources, and rigorous supervision |
| Chief Academic Officer | Drives the educational performance of the district through providing leadership, vision and strategic direction for the district's curriculum, instruction, and school improvement initiatives; and designing and | • Wide variability currently exists in curricula, instruction, and assessment<br>• Strong need for a vertically aligned curriculum and assessment system |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | implementing professional development that provides educators with understanding of instructional best practices. | |
| Chief of Staff | Drives communication, collaboration, prioritization and alignment across departments to accomplish the Superintendent and Board goals; oversees the strategic planning process. | • Despite a flat organizational structure there are communication gaps between the Superintendent and the Board, and between the Superintendent and executive staff.<br>• Need to improve:<br>  o Executive staff coordination and collaboration to gain consensus and support for high-quality and efficient implementation.<br>  o Ensure that expectations, priorities, and deadlines are clearly communicated to executives and that issues that need the Superintendent's attention are dealt with in a timely way.<br>  o Ensure that existing priorities are aligned to accomplishment of district strategic goals. |
| Instructional Leadership Director | Oversees a portfolio of schools (15:1) and will be responsible for inspiring, providing thought-partnership, coaching, holding principals accountable, and building the capacity of principals to improve the conditions of teaching and learning in each of their schools. | • Instructional leadership is too diffuse without clear accountabilities and responsibilities<br>• Connections between the "school side" and "curriculum side" need to be clarified and aligned<br>• The high ratio of instructional leadership directors (i.e., principal supervisors) is promoting non-compliance among principals and inconsistencies in services and supports |

## *Tier 2 Position Interview Process*

As the recommended Tier 2 positions and job descriptions were based on key insights and feedback from the stakeholder interviews, the recommended interview process and questions are based on the skills and attributes that were also identified through the process. Interview guides and questions are provided in Addendum G.  For each position, a screening rubric has been developed to evaluate each candidate on the following categories:

- Passion for Mission, Motivation and Fit
- Relationship Building and Communication Skills
- Leadership & Organizational Skills, Execution Minded
- Instructional Knowledge and Expertise

- Results Driven / Leading Change

For each position, four sets of interviews are recommended to evaluate each candidate. Note that this complete process is highly recommended for the Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability position and may be streamlined for other positions. The first two exercises are performance tasks either prompting the candidate to prepare in advance a brief presentation, respond to a case study scenario, or engage in role play. The scenarios were designed to portray a situation the candidate may experience in the role. The third interview step is an experience interview with a series of lead and probing questions. The last step is a summary interview to gauge the candidate's level of interest based on the interviews and exercises, provide a self-reflection opportunity, review next steps and answer any questions. The performance tasks and interview questions were designed to assess the candidates based on the skills, attributes, and competencies that have been identified. Of course a thorough review of references is necessary.

We further recommend TPS identify three interviewing groups (2-3 members per group) aligned with the first three interviews and one lead facilitator to conduct the Summary Interview, provide a general overview to the candidates, and facilitate the entire process. It is critical that the Board of Education be represented in the interview and selection process for the Deputy Superintendent in scenarios #1 and #2, and the Deputy Superintendent and CAO in scenario #3. If multiple candidates are scheduled concurrently, additional interview team members will have to support the lead facilitator with the closing Summary Interviews. For each interview group, identify a lead interviewer who will present each question to the candidate while other interview team members will take notes used for the debrief and rubric completion discussions. Other interview participants may ask clarifying questions as needed.

A sample interview schedule is provided in Addendum G. The internal team should meet prior to the start of the first set of concurrent interviews for initial planning and meet at the conclusion of the interviews to debrief and share findings and insights from the interviews. Time should be scheduled between interviews to complete scoring rubrics for each candidate.

Consider inviting school leaders or other community leaders to participate as an interviewer to drive buy-in and improve overall transparency.

*Recommended Timeline*

| 2013 | Mar | Apr | May | June |
|------|-----|-----|-----|------|
| | • Confirm job descriptions and process<br>• Identify selection team members by position<br>• Identify lead interview facilitator by position<br>• Post Job Opening and advertise on select sites | • Conduct pre-screening of applicants<br>• Phone screen promising candidates<br>• Identify candidates for in-person interviews | • Conduct in-person interviews<br>• Identify finalist(s)<br>• Conduct reference checks<br>• Superintendent final interview | • Provide onboarding and orientation support |

The overall quality of the applicant pool will determine the timing of this process. If possible, prioritize the posting and interview process for the Deputy Superintendent position over the ILDs and CAO which would allow the Deputy Superintendent's involvement in the screening process for these positions who are direct reports.

# General Findings, Recommendations, and Next Steps

We conclude by presenting a set of general findings, recommendations, and next steps. Findings are presented in the following areas: the organizational structure of the Executive Leadership Team, current leaders, and systems, structures and process improvements for the key work of the district. Recommendations speak to steps to improve structures and systems.

## _Findings_

### _Organizational Structure_

- _The Flat Organization._  The current organizational structure is far too flat. The district is commended for trying to keep costs of administrative positions low during tight budget times; however, the flat Executive Team organizational structure is serving to hinder  a very talented Superintendent and strong team of executives from ensuring that the right work is being done by the best people in the most efficient and effective way possible.   In every other school district we studied, there is a "second tier" of leadership to connect the superintendent, who by job description must "face out" to the community, the schools, and the state and federal government, with the layer of executives who are focused on "facing in" on the key work of teaching, learning, and the supports needed to ensure all students achieve at high levels.  In most districts there is at least one key Tier 2 leader; with urban organizations that have the need for deep improvement in the curriculum, instruction and assessment approach and a need to retool the way that schools are managed and supported, there are two Tier 2 leaders, one focused on the instructional development work and the other on providing supports to schools.
- _Support Provided to Schools._  A robust model to ensure that principals have the support and monitoring needed to significantly move student achievement must be implemented.  The current associate superintendents are very talented, but they lack the time and capacity to provide the necessary school support. Currently, TPS has 80 schools with only one elementary associate superintendent and one secondary associate superintendent; benchmarking and research show that there should be a 15:1 supervisory model.  Through the years, much like many other urban schools districts, TPS has experimented with approaches such as site-based management and various structures around zones, areas, and feeder patterns.  At various times there was more or less direction provided by the district about what strategies should be consistent and pervasive across the entire district.  TPS is to be commended for the current, intense focus on teacher and leader effectiveness.  The benchmarking research strongly supports this focus area, and the evidence from our interviews indicates that this is being implemented with increasing fidelity.  However, without a clear alignment of teacher and leader effectiveness to a clear system of how principals and teachers are supported in their work, there will be varied results.

## Leaders

- *Current Superintendent.* The current Superintendent is universally viewed as a strong leader who demonstrates particular strength in bringing people together collectively to care about the schools in TPS. He is described with the following words: "knowledgeable," "influential," "collaborative," "communicator," and "has strong relationships with everyone." He is also viewed as a leader with convictions who is not afraid to tell the truth.

- *Current and New Leadership.* When hiring new people for roles on the Executive Team, ensuring that there is a strong culture fit is critical. There is a very positive mix of veteran educators and reform-minded business leaders on the current Executive Leadership Team. The Superintendent has made building the skills and culture of the Executive Leadership Team a strong focus, and through our interviews we found that there is a very positive culture of commitment and belief in the power of the team. This work is to be commended. Since 8 out of 10 current Executive Leadership Team members are new to their roles and any role in executive leadership, there is a strong learning curve happening. At the same time, the current members of the ET are highly regarded by all of the stakeholders we interviewed and are considered to be strong leaders with great potential if managed and supported in an optimal way. Our research from sources such as the book *Who* tells us that the culture match of whomever is hired for additional positions on the Executive Leadership Team must be a match to the current team's self-identified needs.[16] The interviews held told us that there is a need for leaders who understand and have been successful in urban settings; who can be both collaborative and demonstrate strong direction; and who can implement systems, structures and processes so that there is no longer "initiative fatigue." Additionally, as Tier 2 positions are filled, the candidate(s) should reflect and build on the strengths of the current Superintendent while also bringing the expertise needed to build systems, structures, and processes that ensure effective and efficient implementation of the work.

## Systems, Structures and Process Improvements for the Key Work of the District

- *Aligned Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Approach*. The key elements of the curriculum, instruction, and assessment approach are at beginning stages of development and need to be completed. There is not yet a rigorous preK-12 curriculum that meets the needs of all students including gifted and talented, ELL, and special education students. The assessment approach is focused on the state report card measures and not yet on the 11 Steps to College Readiness factors the district has adopted. Beginning steps have been taken to directly link leading student learning data to the improvement of instructional practices, but it has not yet been fully developed preK-12.

- *Strategic Planning Process*. The strategic planning process needs to be implemented with fidelity. Individual offices and departments have differing levels of work plans in progress, and these are in the beginning stages of having metrics and

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[16] Smart and Street, 2008.

dashboards for monitoring and improvement. The Office of Human Capital, the Office of Curriculum and Assessment, and the Office of Budget have taken deep steps to begin the process of developing a longer term improvement planning process based on a set of identified metrics. However, there is not yet a systemic and systematic way of aligning office and department work plans to each other and to the broader district strategic plan. Therefore, there is a sense that the work is sometimes disjointed and it is described as being focused on initiatives rather than integrated work. There is also a sense of "initiative fatigue" that staff reference in their comments.

- *Building Capacity of Leaders.* A comprehensive approach to building the capacity of leaders needs to be implemented. In many of the interviews and through the observation of the executive coach to the Executive Leadership Team, there is strong evidence that beginning structures have been put in place to provide effective systems for meetings, organizing for the work, monitoring progress, and building the capacity of leaders. TPS is to be commended for starting this work. For example, the ways that monthly principal meetings are held was identified as a strength of the team because there is a strong focus and method for planning and delivery. Also, the Executive Team has quarterly strategic planning retreats that are considered highly impactful. However, not all meeting and planning structures have been built out so that there a consistent alignment and focus on results. Executive Leadership Team members all noted that they would like to build their skills in relation to meeting the diverse needs within the urban school setting. Finally, the professional development approach in the district is not yet aligned with the expectations in the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness work. The current work in the area of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness is extremely strong and should be fully implemented.

## *Recommendations*

1. Implement a Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability position to oversee all of the work in the area of curriculum/instruction/assessment and the direct supports to schools to ensure student results. The key deliverables of the Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability will be: (1) the development of an aligned preK-12 curriculum/instruction/assessment approach around the 11 Steps to College Readiness, (2) the development of a set of office and departmental work plans that set out the strategies, actions, metrics, and deliverables aligned to the district strategic plan, and (3) the development of a set of systems, processes, and practices to provide for the supervision and support of principals and the schools they lead aligned to the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness work. Specifically, consider hiring an educator who has demonstrated success in improving student achievement in another urban school setting and who can lead through a collaborative, focused, planful approach.

2. Implement a Chief Academic Officer position focused on the development of the aligned preK-12 curriculum/instruction/assessment approach. Specific areas of focus should include curriculum development, the development

of a professional development and learning approach that is aligned with the key work being delivered to schools, and a set of strategies and processes focused on meeting the learning needs of all students including gifted and talented, English Language Learners, and special education students. The key deliverables of the CAO will be: (1) the development of the preK-12 curriculum and instruction components of the comprehensive curriculum/instruction/assessment approach around the 11 Steps to College Readiness, (2) the development of a comprehensive professional learning approach to support the key initiatives for improving teaching and learning, and (3) the development of a set of strategies and processes to increase the differentiated learning needs of students. Specifically, consider hiring an educator who has demonstrated success in improving student achievement in either TPS or another urban school setting and who can lead through a collaborative, focused, planful approach. Note, the federal programs and grants office should be moved from its current placement in the curriculum and instruction office to the office of the CFO so that all funding sources are managed by the CFO.

3. Implement six Instructional Leadership Director positions to ensure student results with a caseload of no more than 15:1 by redirecting the current resources in the Offices of the Associate Superintendents of Elementary and Secondary Schools. Consider naming the current elementary and secondary Associate Superintendents as lead ILDs to ensure cohesion and support. Ensure that one of the ILDs focuses on the innovative/Turnaround school work around schools involved in the EdLab Schools Project and charter schools. The key deliverables of the ILD will be a set of processes, practices, and strategies around the support and supervision of TPS principals and the schools that they lead including a strong focus on accountability measures. Specifically, consider hiring educators from both inside and outside of TPS who have been principals and have demonstrated strong student achievement gains at the schools they have led.

4. Align the Office of Accountability with the Office of the Chief Academic Officer and the Office of School Support and have them report to the Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability to ensure alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment with school support, including data, analysis, and tools to ensure student results. Provide support to the Office of Accountability to develop a comprehensive accountability system.

5. Organize the work of the Chief of Staff so that this role serves as an extension of the Superintendent, driving communication, collaboration, and alignment to accomplish the Superintendent and Board goals and objectives. The COS would ensure effective communication with the Board of Education, oversee the strategic planning process, support the deliverables of the Executive Team, and serve as a key strategic advisor and problem-solver for the Superintendent. Specifically, consider hiring either a veteran administrator who understands the culture and work of the district office or an up-and-coming leader from either the school or business community who can be a fast study about the role and personality of the superintendent.

6. Review and upgrade the pay scales for all members of the Executive Team so that they are not only competitive with other districts in the state of Oklahoma and surrounding states but are above other scales in order to attract highly-skilled current educators and members of the business community.

7. Align all professional development responsibilities under the CAO and restructure the work of the office so that it directly reflects the key work that is being rolled out to schools and ensures student results. At this time, it is recommended that the principal pipeline development work continue in the Office of Human Capital and eventually be transitioned to the CAO.
8. Develop a strong methodology of collaboration and communication with a highly focused meeting structure so that there is a weekly Cabinet Meeting (Superintendent and direct reports) for strategic planning; a bi-weekly Executive Leadership Team (Superintendent and all Executive Staff) for alignment and oversight of the key work ; and a monthly Appointments Committee Meeting (Executive Team), for the purpose of discussing the staffing of principal, assistant principal, and director-level positions. Re-assess and continue to upgrade the monthly principals' meetings so that they focus on the most important school improvement work.
9. Align the work of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness under the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer. Ensure direct communication between the Deputy Superintendent of School Support and Accountability and the Chief Human Capital Officer to ensure alignment.
10. Review and upgrade all of the job descriptions for every member of the Executive Team so that they all have clear actions, goals, metrics and deliverables stated.
11. Develop an executive coaching model for the Executive Team so that they continue to receive collective support for their quarterly executive team retreats as well as individual, focused coaching on both their job skills and their individual learning and growth needs.

## Next Steps

### For TPS

1. Determine which recommendations to accept.
2. Select which organizational structure scenario for the Tier 2 positions to implement.
3. Depending on which scenario is selected, the Chief Human Capital Officer should ensure that the job descriptions align with the chosen structure.
4. Create a detailed plan of action for implementing key recommendations with specific action steps, milestones, deliverables, timelines, and accountability measures.
5. Examine the detailed, comprehensive selection process to determine which positions require this detailed process and where the process could be streamlined for other vacancies.

_For the USHCA_

1. Streamline the interview process, as requested.
2. Provide the supports to implement the application, interview, and selection process, as deemed necessary by TPS.
3. Provide a comprehensive verbal overview of the Executive Leadership Team strengths and growth areas to the Superintendent and the Chief Officer of Human Capital.
4. Provide 1:1 feedback to every Executive Leadership Team member about their strengths and areas of growth, with a focus on developing next steps.
5. Confer with appropriate TPS staff about any other tasks from this report where the USHCA can be a thought-partner.

## _Conclusion_

TPS has a very talented Superintendent and Executive Leadership Team. Implementing the new structures, systems, and processes identified in this report would serve as a catalyst of change to improve teaching and learning and thus student achievement for all students.