



Duval County Public Schools – Northwestern Middle School – TOP Addendum

Executive Director Ramsey,

Duval County Public Schools in collaboration with our External Operator, Educational Directions hired a new principal for Northwestern Middle School in November 2016. Although the previously selected administrator had a demonstrated proven track record, a decision was made to change the leadership to better align the needed leadership skills with the school's instructional and cultural needs. The new principal, Dr. Anna Dewese, was selected by Educational Directions and her hire was supported by the district's new Superintendent Dr. Diana Greene. Dr. Dewese is a strong leader with varied turnaround experiences in the state of Florida. Prior to joining the administrative team at Northwestern Middle Schools, Dr. Dewese served as principal and assistant principal at Fessenden Elementary School. During her tenure there, the school improved from a school grade of D to an A. Additionally, Dr. Dewese has proven experience with transforming a school's instructional framework and configuration. During her tenure as principal of Sunrise Elementary School, Dr. Dewese was tasked with transforming the school from a traditional elementary school into a STEAM Magnet School. Finally, Dr. Dewese served for four years as a district level School Improvement contact, and thereby is well versed in the areas of Differentiated Accountability and the assurances to which schools must adhere when implementing a Turnaround Option Plan. With such an extensive history of success as it relates to leadership and school improvement with similar student demographics and grade level populations, both Superintendent Greene and the External Operator, Educational Directions are confident that Northwestern's new principal can lead the necessary work of increasing the overall student achievement at the school under its current TOP plan option.

Since Dr. Dewese's transition to Northwestern Middle School, the school has evidenced improvements in academics, climate and culture, and teacher staffing. Specifically, both the number and the length of instructional vacancies has been reduced considerably during Dr. Dewese's tenure at the school. Improvements in climate and culture indicators such as positive student/teacher interactions, more engaged student learners, consistent consequences for disruptive student behaviors and improved collaboration between faculty members have been noted by district support team members during instructional walkthroughs and observations of professional learning team meetings.

Acknowledging a belief that making systemic change can be hard and that in order to effectively lead change, one must begin with a shared belief that as an educational community we must move away from the notion that formal leaders must be the all-encompassing facilitators for the change. With that belief in mind, Duval in collaboration with Educational Directions also formed an enhanced leadership support team to support the transitional work now being led by Dr. Dewese.

Collaborating with the External Operator, the district has identified key personnel, all with proven track records of increasing student's academic achievement; proven experience with effectively establishing supportive learning environments conducive to supporting rigorous standards based instruction, and recent experiences with supporting new/novice educators working within high poverty schools. Northwestern's re-envisioned administrative support team consists of two experienced assistant principals in addition to a shared alternative assistant principal, who each

have successful experiences at other district turnaround schools with increased student academic performance.

Ms. Mary Cohen, as one of the newly assigned members of Northwestern's leadership team, is an experienced assistant principal with a strong background in working with novice teachers to establish effective classroom management routines, standards based instructional delivery, and data driven lesson planning. She has worked to support both instructional practices and learning environment changes at two other middle schools with similar challenges. Similar to Mrs. Cohen, Mr. Trevor Clayton has also been assigned to support Dr. Dewese as an assistant principal on her leadership team. Mr. Clayton is not only a veteran assistant principal, former middle school reading teacher with demonstrated success in increasing his students reading achievement, but he is also a retired veteran having served in the United States Navy for 28 years. Mr. Clayton, through his past experiences, has been able to add a missing layer of support to the students and teachers with his strong relational leadership methods and deep understanding of middle school students who struggle with reading. Both Mr. Clayton and Ms. Cohen were recruited to Northwestern because of their ability to connect with students of similar backgrounds and demographics, their content specific academic track record with increasing student proficiency as teacher leaders, and their continued commitment to working with students in high poverty schools.

Ms. Andrea Barletta is the alternative principal on assignment designated to provide instructional support at Northwestern. Ms. Barletta, a former Teach for America teacher and district level English Language Arts specialist, will have a primary focus on standards-based instruction, effective lesson planning, student task and data analysis, problem solving and performance management strategies and other necessary instructional supports identified during instructional walks conducted collaboratively with Principal Dr. Dewese, Educational Directions Site Lead, the district's assigned RED, Region Superintendent Dr. Nazario-Valle, and the other members of the school's leadership team in order to problem solve and prioritize resources necessary to address any noted barriers to learning and increased student achievement.

With each member of the leadership team having successful experience with instruction in state assessed content areas, Dr. Dewese under the guidance of Educational Direction's Site Lead can plan for school wide shifts in classroom instructional practices based upon real time data. Furthermore, teachers will be supported by a leadership team that knows the work and can coach and model content-specific best practices. In partnership with the aforementioned instructional support team, the recently reconfigured Office of Innovation and School Improvement (ISI), under the direct supervision of Dr. Julio Nazario-Valle, who will be providing an additional layer of support.

Prior to joining Duval County Public Schools as a Region Superintendent, Dr. Nazario-Valle served as a Regional Executive Director for FLDOE's Bureau of School Improvement where he and a team of specialists provided direct support, focused on effective use of systems and structures necessary for accelerating and sustaining school improvement, to district administrators, school leadership teams, and instructional support staff of low performing schools. Dr. Nazario-Valle also has experience as a school level principal, whereby he led one of the largest, most diverse, Title I elementary schools, serving over 1,200 students, in Lake County, Florida. Dr. Valle, during his tenure as an elementary school principal in Lake County, was selected by the Florida

Department of Education to be among 25 of the highest performing principals in the state to participate in the Commissioner's Leadership Academy.

With his extensive history in school turnaround, Dr. Nazario-Valle will lead the transformation work of the instructional support team that will be providing onsite support at Northwestern Middle School. The ISI support team includes content specific curriculum specialists in the areas of reading/language arts, mathematics, science, civics, and data analysis. The re-envisioned ISI office is further supported by a specifically assigned culture & climate team which under the direct leadership of Mr. Jackie Simmons, the Executive Director of Discipline and Student Supports and Ms. Katrina Taylor, Director of School Behavioral Health, have conducted instructional review walks with the region and external operator to assess the schools needs and design a critical response plan based upon their pedagogical understanding of student support needs. Mr. Simmons, a former middle and high school principal, has more than 24 years of experience in secondary education, with eleven of those years as a school administrator. He has a proven track record with implementing systems at low performing school that created a learning culture and climate supportive to increasing overall academic achievement. Mr. Simmons' prior experiences and background knowledge of the student supports service and systems needed to transform a low performing school environment, similar to Northwestern, has been an essential lever to the formation of the Culture and Climate team assigned to support the school.

In addition to the skill set Mr. Simmons contributes, Katrina Taylor, the Director of School Behavioral Health has also collaborated to ensure that comprehensive wraparound services are in place at Northwestern. Ms. Taylor, a registered Mental Health Therapist with an extensive background in mental health counseling, also manages the project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) grant for the district. With more than 14 years of individual, group and family counseling experience, Mrs. Taylor has been instrumental with identifying key support structures that need to be in place to support Northwestern's students and families as we prepare to transition the school for closure/reassignment at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

Through a collaborative analysis, the Northwestern Full Service Schools team was designed and includes a full-time social worker, truancy officer, and a positive behavior specialist, all veterans in their service areas and extremely familiar with the school's student population and surrounding community. This team's inclusion in the instructional plan for Northwestern provides support in strategies for increasing student attendance and behavior infractions that impact daily classroom instruction. This additional tier of support will advise the school's administration with providing direct student behavioral health support and early intervention resources. Educational Directions Site Lead, the schools administrative team, and the school's counselor will collaborate with the climate and culture staff to provide an array of educationally-relevant services to students through a comprehensive wraparound service model.

As previously stated, the district will continue to partner with the school's External Operator for the 2019-2020 school year. Dr. Dewese, as the new principal of Northwestern will work collaboratively with Ed Directions to provide all remaining 7th and 8th grade students with an academic support plan designed to accelerate mastery of essential skills necessary for demonstrating proficiency of grade level Florida State Standards. An intense remediation and

instructional support plan has been outlined and will be pivotal in guiding the transition processes necessary for preparing the students for entering 8th or 9th grade at their new assigned higher performing middle/high schools in 2020-2021.

The focus of the district's transitional plan for Northwestern is tiered, systematic, and driven by comprehensive data analysis of past challenges along with the many barriers to student learning that this school has faced. Historically, the school has faced considerable challenges to demonstrating instructional practices that result in earning a grade higher than a "C" as measured by the school's grade history. The strategies outlined within the school's 2019-2020 transition plan have been designed to provide instructional staff at Northwestern Middle with tools needed to address the remaining 7th and 8th grade student's current academic needs. These instructional support strategies are research-based, and have proven results within Duval County Public Schools at risk student population, and elsewhere throughout the state and the nation. The district refers to these as "coaching-mentoring-partnering" strategies, and they have been tied to the findings from ongoing instructional reviews. Spring FSA and district progress monitoring assessment data (provided by Achieve 3000, i-Ready, Corrective Reading, ACALETICS, and other district interim assessments) will be utilized to set the instructional focus and inform content and grade level specific instructional practices at the school. Educational Directions' framework for instruction will direct and guide both school leaders and content area teachers along with the District's intervention support staff in making data driven decisions necessary for continued improvement. To support these efforts, the district will implement the following strategies:

1. The Office of Innovation and School Improvement's executive directors will collaborate with Educational Directions site lead, the school's administrative team, contracted content coaches provided by Ed. Directions, and other district academic specialists to design and present interactive learning sessions that will guide Northwestern's instructional staff deeper into grade level and content specific standards and instructional implications revealed through data analysis.
2. The collaborative planning team will lead job-embedded professional learning community meetings to ensure that effective use of intervention tools to build and support small group differentiated instruction that addresses each of the school's targeted student populations (Proficient, Approaching, Below) in increasing grade level proficiency is consistently embedded within in all classrooms.
3. Major emphasis will continue to be placed on effective standards based instructional planning that supports and increases student grade level language arts, math, science, and civics proficiency in both bottom quartile and overall grade level performance indicators.
4. Ongoing, content specific training sessions will be provided for all teachers in order to support school teacher teams in the identification and unpacking of priority standards for each quarter of instruction identified within the district's curriculum guides; grade and content specific differentiated lesson planning through demonstrations of instruction that highlight deliberate practices; and in recognizing student learning "look fors" that demonstrate standards mastery.

5. Through Educational Directions' engaging professional development and coached practice walkthroughs, the school's leadership team will also be supported systematically in the collection of classroom-level data from content specific classrooms and aggregate that data to expose patterns and trends within the school's instructional program. Northwestern's teachers will also learn a protocol to facilitate structured reflective data conversations with their students that increase the self-efficacy needed to transform a learner.
6. The district's assigned RED will be invited to participate in quarterly data meetings with the district's regional leadership, the school's external operators, and the school's leadership team, working collectively to identify key areas of needed support in order to assist intervention staff in providing effective tiers of support specific to meeting individual student growth area needs. This aligned observational and ongoing student achievement data process will provide FLDOE, the district's regional support staff, the external operator's support team and the school's academic leadership team with real-time information that can be used to offer additional support and/or resources as needed.

Additionally, a comprehensive plan will be in place to support and maintain an academic environment that is culturally relevant and a learning climate that is conducive to accelerated learning of Florida grade level standards. To support this strategy, the district's regional leadership in coordination with the school's external operator, Educational Directions, plan to support Dr. Dewese and her administrative team to identify aligned effective strategies for leveraging existing partner resources to address specific challenges that the students and families within their school's surrounding community face to include the following:

1. Use the *5Essentials spring* survey results to streamline the school's focus on the 5 foundational elements that make a successful school: Effective Leaders; Collaborative Teachers; Involved Families; Supportive Environments; and Ambitious Instruction. Dr. Dewese and her leadership team will continue to work and improve on the greatest areas of weakness, collaborative teaching and involved families. This purposeful internal review of current systems will allow leadership at the school to better understand the underlying issues that must be addressed to create an environment conducive to learning and that will foster reengagement of its most needed stakeholders.
2. Continued involvement of current student support staff: Northwestern will continue to rely heavily on the expertise of the school's executive team, content specific instructional specialist, and the full wrap around service support funded through a partnership between DCPS, Kids Hope Alliance through the City of Jacksonville, and t United Way of Northeast Florida. These additional Emotional Support services include a licensed social worker, a truancy officer, and a positive behavior specialist to provide onsite full wrap around support as identified by school data.
3. *A more improved and targeted calendar of Parent Academy activities:* The Duval County Schools Parent Academy provides courses for families at locations throughout the district. Northwestern's administrative team will work with the schools SAC and community partners to offer Parent Academy courses that address the specific needs of their 7th and 8th grade students on site at the school. The Parent Academy will serve as a platform for direct contact

with families, addressing both the academic and the social emotional needs of the students. Additionally, school leadership will further encourage participation in the courses by offering high interest, interactive events, and sessions offered in response to needs identified by parents and assessment tools.

4. *Outreach to active small business owners, home associations, faith-based partners, and other community organizations to increase volunteers and student mentoring participation.* The neighborhood where the school is situated is a high crime area and community partnership with a number of small business owners, home associations, and other neighborhood advocacy groups is essential to the transitioning of the school into a K-5 elementary school. The school leadership will work to engage the surrounding community neighborhood associations with a mission of encouraging increased participation from the disengaged members of the community.

Finally, this addendum addresses how Duval will work collectively to prepare Northwestern Middle School for closure and reassignment of all students by the end of the school's State Board approved Cycle 3, TOP-II plan. The reopening of Northwestern as an elementary school is a part of a comprehensive facilities plan resulting from an extensive review of current school/facility utilization and district-wide future enrollments. The School Board commissioned a third-party facilities expert, Cooperative Strategies, to conduct the study. The superintendent has utilized the results of the study as well as extensive community feedback to make facility recommendations that include school renovations, school closures, consolidations and the construction of new facilities. Included in this comprehensive plan is the consolidation of two existing elementary schools into the new elementary school at Northwestern.

District staff and the school's leadership, in collaboration with our External Operator and other community stakeholders, have begun the initial processes necessary to align Northwestern for final closure as a middle school and reassign all attendance area zoned students by June 30, 2020 as follows:

- May 2019 – Host parent/guardian and community stakeholder notification of school's forthcoming transitional plan of closure and repurposing into a comprehensive K-5 Elementary School.
- June 2019 – Reassignment of all rising grade six students residing within the attendance zone area of Northwestern Middle schools to higher-performing middle schools, with a "C" or higher in the district, along with implementation of a comprehensive quarterly monitoring of each student's performance for a three (3) year period.
- June/July 2019 - Provide opportunity scholarships and parent informational meetings for all remaining 7th and 8th grade students who elected to enroll in a higher performing middle school for the 2019-2020 school year.
- 2019-2020 School Year - Under the continued direction of Educational Directions as the schools External Operator, the administration and staff will continue the implementation of target strategies designed to accelerate an increase in academic achievement and student overall grade level standards proficiency for all remaining 7th and 8th grade students who elect through a signed confirmation to remain at Northwestern for its final year of open middle school enrollment.

- July/August 2019 – After receiving board approval, district staff will submit all necessary documentation to FLDOE requesting the removal of the school MSID# due to closure.

After all necessary processes for aligning Northwestern for final closure as a 6th - 8th grade middle school have been completed, the district will then initiate the necessary procedures for requesting to re-purpose the facility as a K-5 elementary school with a proposed opening enrollment date of August of 2020. As previously stated, the purposed re-purposing of Northwestern Middle School as an elementary school is a part of a comprehensive facilities plan resulting from an extensive review of current school/facility utilization and district-wide enrollment projections. Embedded within the district's comprehensive facilities plan is the renovation of Northwestern to support the consolidation of three existing elementary schools, Rufus Payne, George Washington Carver, and Carter G. Woodson on the school's current campus site.

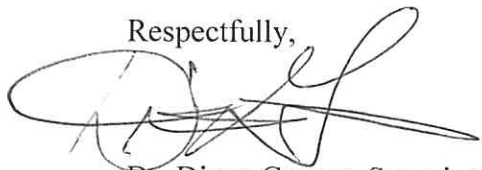
The consolidation of Northwestern's feeder elementary schools into a single community elementary K-5 plan is further supported by a May 2014 Hanover Research report, *School Feeder Patterns: Overview and Impacts*. One of the identified barriers to success at Northwestern has been the inconsistency of instructional supports and lesson delivery within the individual feeder schools. Recent research has begun to more fully analyze and identify possible impacts on student learning that the transition process from elementary to middle and from middle to high. The report suggested that "Districts with mixed or split feeder pathways can help to mitigate the potential of negative impacts by developing targeted orientation programs." To support student's in their new K-5, a linear pathway has been reconfigured to better support a consistent delivery of high quality, grade appropriate standards based instruction as well as additional supporting process to assist with student growth and development at their new school site.

The new linear feeder pattern school will allow the district to provide more supports in the form of coaches and intensive remedial support teachers as a result of consolidating 3 small schools into 1 large K-5. The district also plans to host a week-long orientation for students enrolling into the new K-5 so that the children and their families are provided additional time to become acclimated with the renovated school's campus, meet with their new and returning teachers, as well as more time to understand the new vision and mission of the school and their expectations as partners in providing a high-quality elementary education for their child.

In order to begin with the end in mind, the district will also begin a very targeted recruitment in the Spring of 2020 with giving experienced teachers with proven track records of success priority screenings and early interviews at hiring fairs. An aggressive incentive package is being designed to further encourage high-effective teachers to apply for the new school. Finally, prior to opening the new K-5, all of the teachers hired to open the school will be invited to attend an early return event at the school. This culture defining event will include team-building, content specific professional develop sessions, formation of grade level and content based professional learning communities, and extensive data driven planning time. It

is our commitment to the students' of Duval that every child has an opportunity to learn and grow in an environment conducive to meeting their individual educational needs.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diana Greene', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Diana Greene, Superintendent