



# TOP-1

District-Managed Turnaround Plan – Step 1 (TOP-1)

Polk County Public Schools  
North Lakeland

*Due: September 1*

Form Number DMT, TOP-1, incorporated in Rule 6A-1.099811, F.A.C., effective November 2024

## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to guide districts to plan for the implementation of a district-managed turnaround plan to improve the school's grade to a "C" or higher. The district shall submit a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the Department by September 1, pursuant to sections (ss.) 1001.42(21) and 1008.33(4)(a), F.S.

### Directions

Districts shall complete this Step 1 form for each school that is required to implement a district-managed turnaround plan. This plan must be submitted by the district to the Regional Executive Director (RED) for review and feedback before submitting it to the RED and the BSI. The local school board must approve the plan. This completed form must be signed by the superintendent or authorized representative and emailed to the RED and [BSI@fldoe.org](mailto:BSI@fldoe.org), no later than September 1. The subject line of the email must include the district name, school name and TOP-1.

### School

In the box below, identify the name and MSID number of the school that will be supported through the district-managed turnaround plan.

School Name/ MSID Number
North Lakeland Elementary/0201

### Stakeholder Engagement

In the box below, describe the district's efforts to engage and involve stakeholders, including the Community Assessment Team (CAT), to determine causes for low performance and make recommendations for school improvement. Include a list of names and affiliations of CAT members. The RED or their designee shall be a member of the CAT. Include a list of meetings that were held regarding the development of the district-managed turnaround plan, as well as scheduled meetings that will be held during the implementation of the plan.

**Names and affiliation of CAT members:** Youmone Berrien (Principal), Jessica Curatolo (Assistant Principal), Levi Fleming (Assistant Principal), Nicole Bennett (Assistant Superintendent), Rodrick Gray (Senior Director), Kati Pearson (FLDOE-BSI), community members and teachers.

**Dates of CAT meetings (held and upcoming meetings):** September 23, 2025; February 23, 2026 and May 18, 2026

**What school data was analyzed?** Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST), attendance, Early Warning Systems (EWS), discipline

## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

### Identified causes of low performance:

2024-25 ACCOUNTABILITY COMPONENTS BY SUBGROUPS													
SUBGROUPS	ELA ACH.	GRADE 3 ELA ACH.	ELA LG	ELA LG L25%	MATH ACH.	MATH LG	MATH LG L25%	SCI ACH.	SS ACH.	MS ACCEL	GRAD RATE 2023-24	C&C ACCEL 2023-24	ELP PROGRESS
All Students	28%	24%	39%	46%	32%	35%	36%	28%					51%
Students With Disabilities	12%	6%	34%	38%	15%	26%	36%	14%					31%
English Language Learners	21%	10%	37%	31%	32%	36%	33%	24%					51%
Black/African American Students	23%	34%	45%	60%	24%	28%	36%	14%					
Hispanic Students	22%	8%	35%	40%	31%	40%	41%	27%					49%
White Students	46%	42%	41%	41%	41%	30%		42%					
Economically Disadvantaged Students	25%	21%	36%	45%	26%	33%	43%	21%					56%

North Lakeland Elementary has identified benchmark-aligned instruction as a critical area of focus for the 2025–2026 school year due to a continued decline in student achievement and learning gains in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics and science.

Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) Progress Monitoring (PM) results from the 2024–2025 school year indicate the following:

- ELA Grade 3 proficiency declined to 24%, down from 35% the prior year.
- Overall ELA proficiency (Grades 3–5) declined to 28%, down from 33% the prior year.
- ELA learning gains declined to 39%, down from 46% the prior year.
- ELA learning gains of the lowest quartile declined to 46%, down from 49% the prior year.
- Math proficiency declined to 32%, down from 36% the prior year.
- Math learning gains declined to 35%, down from 43% the prior year.
- Math learning gains of the lowest quartile declined to 38%, down from 42% the prior year.
- Science proficiency remained the same at 28% from the prior year.

These data trends identify that Tier 1 instruction is not yielding the academic growth or proficiency needed to meet grade-level expectations, particularly for students in the lowest quartile.

A root cause analysis points to the inconsistent implementation of benchmark-aligned Tier 1 instruction. Observations and instructional walkthroughs reveal that many classrooms did not ensure daily instruction was aligned to grade-level expectations. Additionally, teachers frequently omitted essential instructional practices such as:

- Explicit instruction to clearly model and guide student understanding;
- Scaffolding to support students as they progress toward independence with complex content;
- Differentiated instruction tailored to meet individual student needs and readiness levels;
- Systematic instruction that builds knowledge and skills in a logical and coherent progression.

## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

Furthermore, a lack of consistent checks for understanding meant that teachers were often unaware of whether students were mastering the content, resulting in missed opportunities to adjust instruction in real-time.

These instructional inconsistencies have directly contributed to the downward trajectory in student performance. Addressing this area of focus is essential for building teacher capacity, ensuring instructional coherence and ultimately improving student achievement across all content areas.

### **Recommendations for school improvement:**

Mrs. Youmone Berrien will serve as the Principal of North Lakeland Elementary based on her effectiveness within turnaround settings, curriculum and instruction expertise and district support experience. Most recently, in November 2025, Mrs. Berrien was called upon to lead as an Assistant Principal at McLaughlin Academy of Excellence, a school supported by the district's Transformation Region. Upon arrival, Mrs. Berrien was tasked with creating an action plan to address the academic deficiencies, which included development of a plan for academic planning structures, job-embedded coaching and professional learning. Mrs. Berrien also established school goals and objectives to meet the needs of all students. While at McLaughlin, she was instrumental in improving student outcomes with direct focus on literacy instruction, data chats with adjustments, small group instruction and reading comprehension skills. Mrs. Berrien analyzed the student data to identify target students and provided additional learning opportunities with more grade-level resources and additional support. Due to the intentional focus on the curriculum presented to underperforming learners, along with weekly assessments on a curriculum designed for this targeted group by Mrs. Berrien, learning outcomes improved. Goals included increasing ELA and math proficiency, learning gains, science, social studies and middle school acceleration. McLaughlin increased from a D to a C based on 2024-2025 school grade data.

To address the deficits in benchmark-aligned instruction and improve Tier 1 instructional delivery, North Lakeland Elementary has established the following measurable outcomes for the 2025–2026 school year. These targets reflect ambitious but attainable growth based on current performance and are aligned with schoolwide academic improvement efforts:

- ELA Grade 3 Achievement will improve from 24% to 41%.
- ELA Achievement (Grades 3–5) will improve from 28% to 41%.
- ELA Learning Gains will improve from 39% to 50%.
- ELA Learning Gains – Lowest Quartile will improve from 46% to 57%.
- Math Achievement will improve from 32% to 37%.
- Math Learning Gains will improve from 35% to 45%.
- Math Learning Gains – Lowest Quartile will improve from 38% to 50%.
- Science Achievement (Grade 5) will improve from 28% to 34%.

### **Other information:**

The Regional Assistant Superintendent will provide principal support on campus two to three times a week; this support will include, but not be limited to, data chats, participation and feedback regarding planning and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), classroom walkthroughs and action planning. The District, which includes the Division of Schools and Division of Teaching and Learning, will continue to ensure benchmark-aligned instruction, interventions, personnel selection and coaching support are provided in a timely manner. The district will ensure North Lakeland Elementary has priority hiring.

## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

- The school will begin the year with every classroom fully staffed. The district will ensure that if an instructional vacancy occurs during the school year, daily coverage by a certified teacher in the applicable content area(s) will be provided until the vacancy is filled.
- The district will provide a full-time attendance specialist for this school and district staff will monitor the attendance goals in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). District staff will monitor the attendance data at this school in comparison to other elementary schools in the district. Attendance will be a focus area at monthly meetings with school, district and Bureau of School Improvement (BSI) staff with action steps and reported outcomes.
- The school will have a consistent schedule of district support, submitted to BSI for approval, including scheduled visits from an assigned mentor principal with successful turnaround experience to include, but not limited to, review of staffing, professional learning for staff, student and staff attendance, classroom walkthroughs and implementation of the SIP. This mentor will not be the current district School Improvement (SI) personnel or principal's evaluator, but a sitting or retired principal.

### District-Managed Turnaround Plan Assurances

The district must agree to ALL of the following assurances by checking the boxes below.

#### Assurance 1: District Capacity and Support

The district shall ensure the district leadership team, which includes the superintendent and district leadership, has an integral role in school improvement. This team may include those in charge of curriculum, general and special education, student services, human resources, professional learning and other areas relevant to school improvement. The district leadership team shall develop and implement the district-managed turnaround plan. The district shall dedicate a position to lead the turnaround effort at the district level. The selected employee shall report directly to the superintendent and support the principal.

The district shall ensure that instructional programs align to Florida's state academic standards for English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, social studies and science. The district shall provide the evidence that shows instructional programs to be effective with schools that are low-performing with students of similar demographics, how they are different from the previous programs, how the instructional and intervention programs are consistent with s. 1001.215(8), F.S., as well as how remedial and supplemental instruction resources are prioritized for K-3 students with a substantial deficiency in reading and for K-4 students with a substantial deficiency in mathematics. The district shall demonstrate alignment of Florida's state academic standards across grade levels to improve background knowledge in social studies, science and the arts.

The district shall prescribe and require progress monitoring assessments that are aligned to Florida's state academic standards in ELA, mathematics, social studies and science for all students. The district shall ensure that its progress monitoring assessments are predictive of statewide assessment outcomes and provide valid data to support intervention and acceleration for students.

#### Assurance 2: School Capacity-Leaders and Educators

## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

The district shall ensure the school has effective leaders and educators capable of improving student achievement.

### Leaders

The district leadership team, in collaboration with the school, shall develop an annual professional learning plan that provides ongoing tiered support to increase leadership and educator quality.

The district shall ensure the principal has a successful record in leading a turnaround school and the qualifications to support the student population being served. The district shall complete a Principal Change Verification Form when there is a proposed principal change at the school no later than 10 days prior to the proposed principal hire date.

The district shall ensure that the principal will be replaced, unless recommended for retention in collaboration with the Department, upon entry into district-managed turnaround based upon the individual's turnaround record and degree of success, the length of time since turnaround success, the degree of similarity in the student populations and any other factor that would indicate the principal will have turnaround success with this school.

### Educators

The district shall ensure the review of practices in hiring, recruitment, retention and reassignment of instructional personnel have been reviewed with priority on student performance data.

The district shall ensure the instructional personnel who do not have a VAM rating and who do not show evidence of increasing student achievement are not rehired at the school.

The district must ensure that the percentage of inexperienced teachers, instructional personnel with a VAM rating that is below Effective or out-of-field instructional personnel assigned to the school is at least or at a minimum, not higher than the district average.

Ensure that K-12 intensive reading instruction is provided by teachers with a reading certificate, endorsement or micro-credential.

## Required Documentation

The district must submit the following as part of the TOP-1: (check boxes)

An MOU pursuant to s. 1001.42(21), F.S., shall be emailed to [BSI@fldoe.org](mailto:BSI@fldoe.org) no later than September 1. The subject line of the email must include: district name, school name, and MOU. If an MOU has not been approved by the district school board, provide a detailed status of negotiations.

**The district must submit instructional rosters for this school no later than August 1.** These lists are utilized to ensure that the most proven effective teachers are staffed at the most fragile schools and to verify rosters for teachers eligible to receive an additional district UniSIG allocation.

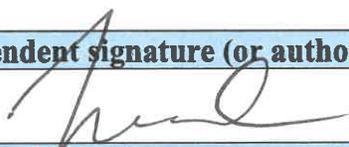
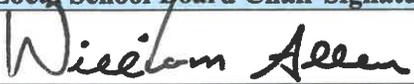
## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

The district must complete the table below by providing the number and percentage of instructional personnel in each of the VAM ratings of Highly Effective, Effective, Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory for this school and the district.

<b>VAM DATA – School % Compared to District and State %</b>				
VAM Data	Highly Effective (HE)	Effective (EF)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Unsatisfactory (UN)
Number of instructional personnel	0	4	0	0
School %	0%	100.0%	0%	0%
District %	6.64%	64.47%	17.65%	11.24%
State %	11.82%	68.21%	12.29%	7.69%

### Acknowledgment

The district verifies the information in this form and confirms that they have collaborated with the school and the RED.

<b>Name and title of person responsible for completion and submission of TOP-1</b>
Nicole Bennett, Regional Assistant Superintendent/School Improvement Contact
<b>Contact information: email, phone number</b>
<a href="mailto:Nicole.bennett@polk-fl.net">Nicole.bennett@polk-fl.net</a> , 863-647-4706
<b>Date submitted to the RED and the Bureau of School Improvement (due September 1)</b>
<b>Superintendent signature (or authorized representative)</b>

<b>Local School Board Chair Signature (or authorized representative)</b>

<b>Date approved by local school board</b>
09/09/25

## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

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### Leaders

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### Educators

The district shall ensure the review of practices in hiring, recruitment, retention and reassignment of instructional personnel have been reviewed with priority on student performance data.

The district shall ensure the instructional personnel who do not have a VAM rating and who do not show evidence of increasing student achievement are not rehired at the school.

The district must ensure that the percentage of inexperienced teachers, instructional personnel with a VAM rating that is below Effective or out-of-field instructional personnel assigned to the school is at least or at a minimum, not higher than the district average.

Ensure that K-12 intensive reading instruction is provided by teachers with a reading certificate, endorsement or micro-credential.

## Required Documentation

The district must submit the following as part of the TOP-1: (check boxes)

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**The district must submit instructional rosters for this school no later than August 1.** These lists are utilized to ensure that the most proven effective teachers are staffed at the most fragile schools and to verify rosters for teachers eligible to receive an additional district UniSIG allocation.



# TOP-1

District-Managed Turnaround Plan – Step 1 (TOP-1)

Polk County Public Schools  
Crystal Lake Middle School

*Due: September 1*

Form Number DMT, TOP-1, incorporated in Rule 6A-1.099811, F.A.C., effective November 2024

## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to guide districts to plan for the implementation of a district-managed turnaround plan to improve the school's grade to a "C" or higher. The district shall submit a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the Department by September 1, pursuant to sections (ss.) 1001.42(21) and 1008.33(4)(a), F.S.

### Directions

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### School

In the box below, identify the name and MSID number of the school that will be supported through the district-managed turnaround plan.

School Name/ MSID Number
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Crystal Lake Middle School/1501
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### Stakeholder Engagement

In the box below, describe the district's efforts to engage and involve stakeholders, including the Community Assessment Team (CAT), to determine causes for low performance and make recommendations for school improvement. Include a list of names and affiliations of CAT members. The RED or their designee shall be a member of the CAT. Include a list of meetings that were held regarding the development of the district-managed turnaround plan, as well as scheduled meetings that will be held during the implementation of the plan.

**Names and affiliation of CAT members:** James Monds (Principal), Paula Northern (Assistant Principal), OJ Marbra (Assistant Principal), Katelyn Gregory (Assistant Principal of Curriculum), Nicole Bennett (Assistant Superintendent), Rodrick Gray (Senior Director), Kati Pearson (FDOE-Bureau of School Improvement), community and school members.

**Dates of CAT meetings (held and upcoming meetings):** September 24, 2025; February 25, 2026 and May 20, 2026

**What school data was analyzed?** Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST), attendance, Early Warning Systems (EWS), discipline

## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

### Identified causes of low performance:

**2024-25 ACCOUNTABILITY COMPONENTS BY SUBGROUPS**

SUBGROUPS	ELA ACH.	GRADE 3 ELA ACH.	ELA LG	ELA LG 125%	MATH ACH.	MATH LG	MATH LG 125%	SCI ACH.	SS ACH.	MS ACCEL.	GRAD RATE 2023-24	C&C ACCEL 2023-24	ELP PROGRESS
All Students	31%		44%	48%	23%	37%	51%	19%	55%	53%			55%
Students With Disabilities	14%		32%	40%	13%	36%	47%	10%	37%				
English Language Learners	19%		37%	45%	20%	38%	48%	19%	42%	77%			55%
Asian Students	30%				53%								
Black/African American Students	27%		43%	43%	21%	40%	47%	13%	55%	38%			
Hispanic Students	28%		40%	48%	23%	36%	49%	18%	51%	67%			53%
Multiracial Students	28%		41%		14%	41%							
White Students	36%		51%	52%	25%	39%	49%	22%	59%	43%			
Economically Disadvantaged Students	28%		43%	48%	18%	35%	50%	16%	57%	43%			44%

Students continue to perform below proficiency in reading, math, and science. Decreasing proficiency levels were observed in academic content areas. Additionally, based on district walks, 45% of classrooms observed provided evidence of benchmark-aligned instruction. These instructional inconsistencies have directly contributed to the downward trajectory in student performance. Addressing benchmark-aligned instruction as an area of focus is essential for building teacher capacity, ensuring instructional coherence and ultimately improving student achievement across all content areas.

Student proficiency levels for 24-25 were as follows:

- ELA - 31%
- Math - 23%
- Science - 19%
- Civics - 55%

By administrator use of our district walkthrough tool to conduct regular classroom walkthroughs, our goal is to demonstrate:

- 100% of classroom teachers delivering benchmark-aligned instruction.
- 100% of classrooms displaying lesson information, visible through the display of benchmarks, objectives and tasks.
- 100% of classrooms assessing student learning throughout the lesson to check for understanding and collect data through assessments to make teaching adjustments.

### Recommendations for school improvement:

In July 2024, Mr. Monds became the principal at Crystal Lake Middle School in Lakeland, FL. During his first year, Mr. Monds successfully addressed a variety of concerns and challenges that had a critical impact on student achievement. He reduced the number of vacancies in English Language Arts (ELA) that existed on the campus from the previous year. He implemented effective systems to address the school’s Early Warning System (EWS) concerns, including discipline and student attendance. Through the school’s new Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework, the school demonstrated a reduction in Office Discipline Referrals (ODRs) which decreased from 2,956 SY24 to 1,236 SY25, in-school suspension (ISS)

## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

counts from 1,212 in SY24 decreased to 422 in SY25 and a reduction in out-of-school suspension (OSS) actions from 1,081 in SY24 to 461 in SY25 which is over 50%. In addition to effective discipline systems, Mr. Monds created an effective system for attendance monitoring and improvement with the support of the district's attendance team. The daily attendance rate increased from 87% to 90% during the 2024-2025 school year.

Due to the large volume of non-certified teachers in key accountability areas during the 2024-25 school year, the district has already taken steps to ensure that Crystal Lake Middle School has priority for hiring. Priority hiring includes: early access to the district's teacher transfer list, placement of displaced teachers from schools with reduced staffing and hosting school-specific hiring fairs during the early weeks of the summer. Potential candidates are informed of the Supplemental Teacher and Administrator Allocation (STAA) for which they may be eligible if they meet the state's requirements. Additionally, due to Crystal Lake's TOP status, the district will be in compliance with Rule 6A-1.099811, Florida Administrative Code and Florida's Value-Added Models (VAM) requirements. The district is prepared to take appropriate actions to remove any staffing barriers to Crystal Lake Middle School and is committed to ensuring that the school starts the school year completely staffed with certified teachers.

To address the deficits in benchmark-aligned instruction and improve Tier 1 instructional delivery, we will:

- Deliver effective lessons that are aligned to the state benchmarks.
- Communicate the learning objectives throughout the lesson to help students become aware of what they should know, understand and do by the end of the lesson.
- Provide students with learning tasks that promote critical thinking, student engagement, collaboration and support students in meeting the objectives of the lesson.
- Regularly assess student progress throughout the lesson to determine understanding of the concepts and to provide additional support when needed.
- Monitor the data by grade level for our Every Student Succeeds Acts (ESSA) subgroups and present findings with the administration, coach and intervention team.

The goal for 25-26 is to demonstrate a 15% increase in proficiency levels across all subject areas.

### **Other information:**

The Regional Assistant Superintendent will continue to ensure benchmark-aligned instruction, interventions, personnel selection and coaching support are provided immediately for students with a sense of urgency and instructional care.

- The school will begin the year with every classroom fully staffed. The district will ensure that if an instructional vacancy occurs during the school year, daily coverage by a certified teacher in the applicable content area(s) will be provided until the vacancy is filled.
- The district will provide a full-time attendance specialist for this school and district staff will monitor the attendance goals in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). District staff will monitor the attendance data at this school in comparison to other middle schools in the district. Attendance will be a focus

## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

area at monthly meetings with school, district and Bureau of School Improvement (BSI) staff with action steps and reported outcomes.

- The school will have a consistent schedule of district support, submitted to BSI for approval, including scheduled visits from an assigned mentor principal with successful turnaround experience to include, but not limited to, review of staffing, professional learning for staff, student and staff attendance, classroom walkthroughs and implementation of the SIP. This mentor will not be the current district School Improvement personnel or principal's evaluator, but a sitting or retired principal.
- If the school does not increase to a school grade of C or better in 2025-26, the principal will be replaced for the 2026-27 school year.

### District-Managed Turnaround Plan Assurances

The district must agree to ALL of the following assurances by checking the boxes below.

#### Assurance 1: District Capacity and Support

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The district shall prescribe and require progress monitoring assessments that are aligned to Florida's state academic standards in ELA, mathematics, social studies and science for all students. The district shall ensure that its progress monitoring assessments are predictive of statewide assessment outcomes and provide valid data to support intervention and acceleration for students.

#### Assurance 2: School Capacity-Leaders and Educators

## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

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### Leaders

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### Educators

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The district shall ensure the instructional personnel who do not have a VAM rating and who do not show evidence of increasing student achievement are not rehired at the school.

The district must ensure that the percentage of inexperienced teachers, instructional personnel with a VAM rating that is below Effective or out-of-field instructional personnel assigned to the school is at least or at a minimum, not higher than the district average.

Ensure that K-12 intensive reading instruction is provided by teachers with a reading certificate, endorsement or micro-credential.

## Required Documentation

The district must submit the following as part of the TOP-1: (check boxes)

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## District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

**The district must submit instructional rosters for this school no later than August 1.** These lists are utilized to ensure that the most proven effective teachers are staffed at the most fragile schools and to verify rosters for teachers eligible to receive an additional district UniSIG allocation.

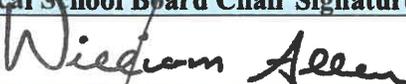
The district must complete the table below by providing the number and percentage of instructional personnel in each of the VAM ratings of Highly Effective, Effective, Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory for this school and the district.

<b>VAM DATA – School % Compared to District and State %</b>				
VAM Data	Highly Effective (HE)	Effective (EF)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Unsatisfactory (UN)
Number of instructional personnel	0	7	4	0
School %	0%	63.64%	36.36%	0%
District %	6.64%	64.47%	17.65%	11.24%
State %	11.82%	68.21%	12.29%	7.69%

### Acknowledgment

The district verifies the information in this form and confirms that they have collaborated with the school and the RED.

<b>Name and title of person responsible for completion and submission of TOP-1</b>
Nicole Bennett, Regional Assistant Superintendent/School Improvement Contact
<b>Contact information: email, phone number</b>
<a href="mailto:Nicole.bennett@polk-fl.net">Nicole.bennett@polk-fl.net</a> , 863-647-4706
<b>Date submitted to the RED and the Bureau of School Improvement (due September 1)</b>
<b>Superintendent signature (or authorized representative)</b>

<b>Local School Board Chair Signature (or authorized representative)</b>

<b>Date approved by local school board</b>

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 1 (TOP-1)

09/09/25