



## **Redesign Plan**

Vassar High School

Vassar Public Schools

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# **Executive Summary**

## **Introduction**

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

## Description of the School

**Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?**

The city of Vassar was founded in 1851 and was nicknamed the "Little Big Town of the Thumb." It was a tranquil community on the banks of the Cass River in the Thumb area of Michigan. The town was named after Matthew Vassar, a philanthropic businessman. Four men, led by Townsend North located a suitable site for a dam on the Cass River where a sawmill could be built. The mill was an immediate success which attracted other industries and settlers to the area.

Like all pioneer towns, Vassar has been plagued with its share of catastrophes. The Cass River, which once had teemed with Indian canoes and later provided convenient transportation for the logs from the forest to the mills, often became a violent enemy, its floodwater inundating the downtown. In the summer of 1881, fire ravaged Vassar. When it was over, much of the Thumb area was a charred and blackened ruin. But the town fought back and the next two decades were the most dynamic in its short history.

During this time, Vassar established a furniture factory, foundry and machine shop, brick and tile company, and a woolen mill.

Although it was not clearly audible at the time, the death knell of the lumber industry in Vassar was beginning to toll in the closing years of the 19th century. With the depletion of the pine forests, the last lumber mill in Vassar was shut down in 1901. Again the town had to fight for its existence. With the demise of the lumber industry, the area's most important natural resource was its rich farmland.

During the 20th century, Vassar turned from lumbering to other industries and has concentrated on supplying the needs of the surrounding farm community. When the logging was completed, farming flourished and agriculture became an important resource to the community.

Foundries came to Vassar starting in 1920. Vassar entered another era. Vassar was once named the capital of Tuscola County, and served as a bedroom community for many employees in the shops in Saginaw, Bay City, and Flint. With the coming of the automobile age, and that industry's spectacular growth in Flint, Vassar embarked on a vigorous campaign to lure related industries into the area. Vassar became the Industrial capital of the thumb and continued to prosper.

Due to the economic downturn in the 1970's and also the 1990's, Vassar began a downward trend. Many of the industries have closed leaving Vassar in difficult economic times. Many jobs were lost and people began leaving the area. These hard times have remained for a number of years and caused a direct effect on the community and our schools. There have been few new businesses in our area over the last 10 years.

Vassar's original school was built in 1851, replaced in 1917, and continued to be our high school until 1960. When our new High School was built, the old High School (now named Central) housed grades four through eight. In 1869, the North School opened for students in Kindergarten and first grade. In 1888, the McKinley School opened its doors for second, third, and fourth graders. In 1952, Townsend North was built (replacing the former two schools) for students in Kindergarten through third grades. In 1968, an addition was made to the High School, which currently houses our middle school students grades sixth through eighth. In 1996, Central School was closed and a new Central School was built housing students third through sixth. Presently, the new Central School houses grades Kindergarten through 5th, including a Young Five Program. Only Preschool, Latch-Key, and a Head Start Program remain at Townsend North School.

In 2004, the population of Vassar was 10,099. Presently, our population is 9,713 with a median income of \$38,000.

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Vassar has the highest poverty level in Tuscola County and our home value is the lowest in Tuscola County.

Our 2014 student population has declined 34% over the past seven years from 1,838 to 1,208 students. That trend is continuing to decline at approximately 50 students per year in grades K-12.

Vassar has the highest Special Education population in Tuscola County in grades 6-12 at 14%. As our overall student population decreases, our Special Education population remains stable, causing a noticeable decrease in our State Standardized Test Scores.

Based on a report from Tuscola/Huron DHS caseloads sorted by zip codes, Vassar's caseload is the second highest out of 91 cities with a total of 1,408 cases.

Our Free & Reduced Lunch Count percentage has increased over the past three years, while our student population has decreased.

Free & Reduced Lunch 2012 2013 2014

Grades 6-12 52% 53% 57%

Grades K-5 64% 66% 65%

Townsend North 72% 66% 67%

## **School's Purpose**

**Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

Vassar High School's vision statement is, "Inspire future excellence....learn, achieve, succeed."

The mission statement for the high school is, "The community of Vassar High School will inspire and assist students through a diverse and challenging education to become innovative and responsible citizens in a changing world."

We believe that:

- learning is a lifelong process.
- the responsibility for learning is shared by students, families, staff and the community.
- respecting worth, dignity, choices, ideas and diverse backgrounds of each individual is critical to learning.
- effective communication, active participating, and cooperation are essential for learning.
- a safe, comfortable, flexible environment is conducive to learning.
- students have equal opportunity and choices for learning.

Vassar High School consistently scores at or near the state and county average on standardized testing. Vassar High School was labeled as a rewards school by the MDE in 2010 and 2011. Vassar complies with all requirements for graduation as well as non-core curriculum classes. We offer an Advanced Placement course in English, consistently send juniors and seniors to the Tuscola Technology Center for career readiness, dual enrollment classes are offered to juniors and seniors to obtain college credits before high school graduation. Vassar High School has maintained a strong traditional education program for the children within the City of Vassar and the surrounding communities. Based on a 7 period day, our educational concentration has been on the basics, providing the students with a strong foundation in the areas of English, math, science, and social studies. Vassar High School students participate in a student mentoring program where they are linked up with a staff member who will check on and connect with the student. Their staff mentor helps the student stay on top of their goal, and monitors the student's progress.

Overall, the school provides a well-rounded educational experience both in academics and extra-curricular activities. Within the extra-curricular programs, Vassar High School maintains football, basketball, volleyball, cross country, wrestling, gymnastics, golf, baseball, softball, competitive cheer and track teams. Club activities include yearbook, student council, Youth in Government, SADD, Stratosphere club, Spanish club, Art club, NHS, Book club, History club and Debate team. Students also have the opportunity to perform in either the choir or band programs. With continued support from the community, Vassar High School has been able to maintain strong programs for college-bound, vocational, and general education students of which we, as a community, can be proud.

## **Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement**

**Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

We have implemented universal screening in reading, writing and math with intervention classes for students in all grades who test significantly below grade level. Our classes and our focus on literacy and math computation have shown benefits. We have seen an increase in student and teacher engagement in the classroom. Our collaboratively developed norms for instruction have decreased the tradition of students working silently in a class while the teacher works at his/her desk and increased active learning processes that work toward higher order application of knowledge and skills.

The school has also put in several new plans to adopt anti-bullying and proactive interventions. Vassar High School has put into effect the Responsible Thinking Process. Student behavior and reflection has led to a decrease in unacceptable behavior across the board. In addition the school has a Teacher/Student Mentor program that will meet daily for 30 minutes. Teachers will mentor the same group of students from freshman to senior year. The school also houses a Teacher Collaboration Center for teachers to collaborate on instructional and curriculum processes.

Over the next three years the focus will be on:

1. Improvement of facilities to help teachers and students improve achievement, which will include a new 80 computer media center, new technology in the classrooms, and new televisions throughout the building.
2. Improvement of teacher practice and instruction to increase student success. Teachers will be given multiple opportunities for improving professional practice and instructional delivery, especially in the areas of student engagement and literacy, through use of the Teacher Collaboration Center, individual professional development opportunities, and the Transformation Teacher Institute.
3. Improvement in student achievement by focusing on inquiry based instruction and questioning, reading for information and inference, and instituting a multi-tiered student response system. These three big ideas will help teachers improve their teaching to increase student learning in the high school.

## **Additional Information**

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

We have embraced this transformation process because we believe that our test scores are not indicative of the quality of education of which our students, staff, and community are capable.

# **Priority School Assurances**

## **Introduction**

All priority schools are required to certify yes/no to each of the following assurances and upload a copy of the required documentation in ASSIST.

### Priority School Assurances

<b>Label</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Attachment</b>
Teacher Evaluation Tool	Our district has implemented an evaluation tool, that includes a significant connection to student growth, to assess the effectiveness of teachers.	Yes		Teacher Evalaution

<b>Label</b>	<b>Assurance</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Attachment</b>
Administrator evaluation tool	Our district has implemented an evaluation tool, that includes a significant connection to student growth, to assess the effectiveness of leaders.	Yes		Admin Evaluation

# **Operational Flexibility Assurance**

## **Introduction**

To ensure that all priority schools are in compliance with the required Michigan Department of Education Assurances it is required that acknowledgement and submission of certain documentation be completed.

## Assurance of Operational Flexibility

All identified Michigan priority schools must complete and submit the following operational flexibility assurances as part of their Redesign Plan no later January 30, 2014.

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
	Our school assures the Michigan Department of Education that under our current collective bargaining agreements, board policies, and operating procedures that the school building has the authority and autonomy to implement all redesign plan requirements as written. This assurance requires that schools upload either an Executed Addendum or a Memorandum of Understanding as evidence on the following screen.	Yes		

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
	<p>Our school has an executed addendum to the districts applicable collective bargaining agreements which includes all the following elements required by Section 8 of the MCL 380.1280c:</p> <p>Section (8) An addendum to a collective bargaining agreement under this section shall provide for any of the following that are necessary for the applicable school intervention model to be implemented at ___ School.</p> <p>(a) That any contractual or other seniority system that would otherwise be applicable shall not apply at ___ School. This subdivision does not allow unilateral changes in pay scales or benefits.</p> <p>(b) That any contractual or other work rules that are impediments to implementing the redesign plan shall not apply at ___ School. This subdivision does not allow unilateral changes in pay scales or benefits.</p>	Yes		Executed Addendum

Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
	Our school has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the commitment to hold a negotiated addendum meeting to address requirements of Section 8a of MCL 380.12080c	Yes		MOU

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Label	Assurance	Response	Comment	Attachment
	<p>Our Local Educational Agency (LEA) will comply with all applicable requirements, policies and conditions for implementing the Reform/Redesign Plan. The LEA understands that if it fails to develop an approvable plan, or does not make satisfactory progress on the plan implementation and/or student achievement, the Michigan Department of Education/State School Redesign Officer may issue an order placing the school under the control of the State School Reform/Redesign School District (SSRRD). If the school is placed under the control of the SSRRD, under Section 6 of the MCL 380.1280c, the SSRRD will impose for the school one of four intervention models and impose an addendum to applicable collective bargaining agreements in effect for the school as necessary to implement the school intervention model as required by Section 8 of the MCL 380.1280c.</p>	Yes		Signature Page

# **Transformation Redesign Diagnostic**

## **Introduction**

The Transformation Model addresses four specific areas: 1) developing teacher and school leader effectiveness; 2) implementing comprehensive instructional reform strategies; 3) extending learning and teacher planning time and creating community-oriented schools; and 4) providing operating flexibility and sustained support. Overall, you will write a reform/redesign plan to address eleven separate requirements. The reform/redesign plan should be developed for implementation through the 2015-16 school year.

## **PART A: REFORM TEAM PERSONNEL**

**Please list the individuals involved in the development of this reform/redesign plan. Use a separate line to list each individual, and include name, title or role, and email contact information.**

Jason Kiss; High School and Middle School Principal, [jkiss@vassar.k12.mi.us](mailto:jkiss@vassar.k12.mi.us)

Elaine Makas, Ph.D.; Curriculum Specialist and Central Office Coach, [emakas@vassar.k12.mi.us](mailto:emakas@vassar.k12.mi.us)

Kyle Boros; High School/Middle School Counselor and Student Data, [kboros@vassar.k12.mi.us](mailto:kboros@vassar.k12.mi.us)

\*Kelly Kiss; Teacher Leader and H.S. Science Teacher, [kkiss@vassar.k12.mi.us](mailto:kkiss@vassar.k12.mi.us)

\*Jamie Strauss; Teacher Leader and ELA Department Chair, Teacher, [jstrauss@vassar.k12.mi.us](mailto:jstrauss@vassar.k12.mi.us)

\*Kyle Trisch; Teacher Leader and Drafting/Woodshop Teacher, [ktrisch@vassar.k12.mi.us](mailto:ktrisch@vassar.k12.mi.us)

Ann Auernhamer; Elementary Teacher and VEA Union Representative, [aauernhamer@vassar.k12.mi.us](mailto:aauernhamer@vassar.k12.mi.us)

Ann Zwerk; Parent and Community Leader, [annzwerk@gmail.com](mailto:annzwerk@gmail.com)

Randal Middlin; Board of Education Trustee, [rmiddlin@vassar.k12.mi.us](mailto:rmiddlin@vassar.k12.mi.us)

Jill Baase; Board of Education Trustee, [jbaase@vassar.k12.mi.us](mailto:jbaase@vassar.k12.mi.us)

Ben Guile; Board of Education, Vice President, [bguile@vassar.k12.mi.us](mailto:bguile@vassar.k12.mi.us)

\*Teacher leader representatives were voted in by the priority school staff.

## PART B: TEACHING AND LEARNING PRIORITIES

**State two or three “big ideas” for your reform/redesign plan that are intended to change teaching and learning in ways that promote student growth in your school.**

We recognize the importance of this transformation plan for our students' academic success. As a result of this realization, we have already begun to implement and integrate components of this plan. Several of the recommended trainings have already been conducted in an effort to produce results as quickly as possible.

You will notice that our first two "big ideas" are instructional strategies which target all core subject areas. This is because our test scores indicate we are testing below state average in all areas. Our third "big idea" focuses on a multi-tiered student support system designed to increase student achievement through mentoring and relationship building.

A) Inquiry-Based Instruction/Questioning - We will increase the focus on inquiry-based questioning across all subject areas to better align with state curriculum standards. To accomplish this, we will provide increased teacher collaboration time in a structured and independent setting. We will implement teacher led professional development to help teachers institute into their curriculum inquiry-based questioning strategies. We will access our AdvancEd accreditation resources for data analysis of our standardized test scores to receive strategies, which will assist our teachers in inquiry-based instruction/questioning. We will create and seek out valid assessment questions that align common assessments to inquiry-based state assessment questions. We will provide professional development for our teachers through a Technology Readiness Infrastructure Grant (TRIG) coach to build our technology infrastructure to prepare our students for success in an online-based testing system.

B) Reading for Information and Inference - We will institute a reading enhancement class to bridge the gap in our achievement levels. We will redistribute staff by grade level to better meet the needs of our current students. We will provide a Teacher Collaboration Center to help our staff institute differentiated learning with a focus on reading for information and inference. Teachers will be provided professional development on content reading across the curriculum. In addition, teachers will be trained in strategies that connect reading for information to writing. We will again use our AdvancEd and Teacher Collaboration Center resources to provide instructional based strategies on reading for information and inference. We will incorporate this into our technology infrastructure (TRIG) to better prepare our students for the new online testing system.

C) Institute a Multi-Tiered Student Response System (MTSS) - We will use state testing data, NWEA, failure rate, and teacher referral to create a system of support, encouragement, and accountability for students who are unwilling to engage in order to meet academic expectations. By using our data to determine causation for academic gaps in our student achievement, we will support our first two goals of instructional strategies to improve/align core instruction. We will increase our instructional time by approximately 40 minutes per day with an additional four days added on to the school year. We will put a process in place to protect instructional time. We will provide drop-out remediation through Seat Time Waivers. We will offer reading enhancement, algebra support, and geometry intervention classes to accommodate under-achieving students in those areas. We will implement an inclusion/co-teaching model for better use of inclusion classroom time.

### State what data were used to identify these ideas

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## PART C: DEVELOP/INCREASE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

**Requirement #1: Replace the Principal and increase leadership capacity at the school.**

**Indicator 1A: In your response, describe how the district has taken on of the following actions: (a) a new principal has been hired that meets all five turnaround competencies, (b) the current principal meets all five turnaround competencies, and (c) a principal with turnaround competencies will be hired before the end of the planning year. \*Note: (a) and (c) are the only options if you plan to apply for a School Improvement Grant.**

**Indicator 1B: Describe how the district will increase leadership capacity. Ensure that this plan addresses at least one of the big ideas around which this plan is developed.**

1A.) At the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year Vassar High School replaced the current principal, Paul Wojno, with Jason Kiss. Mr. Kiss started the school year on an interim status as the priority school principal until school board deliberation of his nomination by Thomas Palmer, superintendent of Vassar Public Schools. Mr. Kiss started the beginning of the school year with a staff meeting that described the "Priority School" label. The staff meeting involved all teachers and support staff and was a general overview of what the options are for a Priority School and how the beginning of the process looks for this school. There was a survey given to all staff members to evaluate the current status of the building. Several items were looked at related to curriculum in order to evaluate the current status of the students. MME data from the past four years was the main indicator of a declining trend in academic achievement. This MME data was given to all teachers to identify gaps in their core curriculum and also to identify students at risk. This same data was analyzed to form Big Ideas for student intervention. Strategies were immediately implemented to start looping material back into the curriculum. Reassignment of teachers and new modeling strategies were immediately implemented. To break away from organizational norms, the high school teachers immediately began attending a Teacher Collaboration Center (TCC) once a week on their prep hour to incorporate new strategies into everyday lesson plans, and inclusion teachers were immediately required to start intervening in the classroom two days a week as the lead teacher in the room. In the past, inclusion teachers were not asked to lead classroom learning, but to serve more so as an aide to the teacher. Now, inclusion teachers are using their expertise to incorporate strategies specific to low achieving students. The atmosphere in the building is already changing in lieu of collaboration and peer coaching. The TCC put out a survey to the teachers and received positive feedback from the staff relating to strategies and the collaborative impact in the classroom.

One of the major components lacking in the high school was the use of technology. Mr. Kiss quickly devised a plan to put in place an 80 station computer lab and media center. This money was reallocated through use of "at risk" funding. This new lab will be up and running by December 1st. The current library will be relocated to an existing open classroom. This new media center will be a testing facility and a resource to teachers and students throughout the year.

1B.) Mr. Kiss is uniquely qualified to oversee this aspect of the plan as an administrator with district-level authority, classroom and administrative experience, leadership qualities, and a good rapport with staff and community. As the person in the district who has the most direct authority to reallocate resources and personnel, Mr. Kiss' management skills can bring about more immediate results. Mr. Kiss will be supported in all initiatives by a MTSS. The district curriculum council will make recommendations to Mr. Kiss on aligning all curriculums to state standards. Curriculum Council is in charge of data analysis and the research of best practices to implement change in each department. Department Heads in the high school are in charge of making sure that high school curriculum maps and pace guides are current and being implemented in each classroom. Department Heads will advise Mr. Kiss on what visible curriculum should look like in the classroom. Mr. Kiss will use this information and his previous experience with curriculum management as a former member of the district curriculum steering committee and the supervisor of the Middle School Taskforce, to make the process of aligning and articulating the core curriculum more efficient. Mr. Kiss will be looking to improve the cohesion of the curriculum not only in the high school, but also the curriculum leading up to high school.

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We have elected to hire Dr. Elaine Makas, the former district curriculum director, back from the University of Michigan-Flint, because she has been one of the key components of several of the systems we have in place which are best aligned with the requirements of the transformation plan. She was hired to be the Central Office Authority and resource coach to Mr. Kiss. She has implemented focused professional development and will, through the Teacher Collaborative Center, continue work with literacy (fluency and comprehension) and mathematics (computation and concepts) screening data, and standardized test data (MEAP, MME, EXPLORE/PLAN/ACT) as related to teaching and learning. She has coached teachers in best practices and in the use of inquiry as professional learning. She was part of a team that analyzed data to identify students whose literacy and/or math skills showed the need for placement in a structured intervention program. She helped to build a schedule that allowed for intervention classes for struggling students and made available the resources and training for the staff to provide interventions to identified students.

The district supports Mr. Kiss through the use of Professional Development, conferences, the Thumb Area Principals Association, membership in MASSP, and money for continuing education in the leadership field. Mr. Kiss began an Educational Doctoral program through U of M-Flint this past September. The school district supports Mr. Kiss' efforts through weekly meetings with all district administrators for collaboration and discussion of implementation of new strategies and practices in the high school.

### **Requirement #2: Use rigorous, transparent, and equitable evaluation systems for teachers and principals.**

**Indicator 2A: In your response, detail the collaborative process used to create a teacher evaluation plan and explain how the evaluation includes student growth as a significant factor (by 2015-16, at least 50% of teachers' evaluations must be based on student growth). Attach the teacher evaluation and Administrator Evaluation.**

**Indicator 2B: In your response, detail the collaborative process used to create a leader evaluation plan and explain how the evaluation includes student growth as a significant factor (by 2015-16, at least 50% of leaders' evaluations must be based on student growth). Attach the teacher evaluation and administrator evaluation.**

2A.) Vassar High School piloted the Charlotte Danielson model last year, and the staff and administration believes that it shows educational and academic promise. It has pulled the teaching staff out of their comfort zone and has them reflecting on personal practice connected with how they fulfill the needs of the district. Under the Danielson model, teachers are responsible for providing proof of their involvement and competence in the four identified domains: Planning/Preparation; Classroom Environment; Instruction; and Professional Responsibility. (Please note that the Danielson model will also be exercised for administrative evaluation.)

Student growth tied into a teacher's evaluation is a complex issue; therefore, with this in mind, Vassar High School has developed a new system of calculating student growth to be implemented as 50% of the evaluation for the 2015-2016 school year.

1) The first area of student growth is testing (both standardized and formative/common assessments). Standardized testing (which will include state testing and NWEA) will be divided into the following total percent of a teacher's student scoring ranges. Ranges are students scoring 69% or lower will receive a two in score; 70%-89% will receive a three points toward overall score and 90% and higher will receive a four in overall score. The first area is worth 30% of the educator evaluation.

2) The second area of testing is common assessment, also worth 30% of the evaluation and will be measured using second semester assessments in the high school and third and fourth quarter assessments in the middle school. Below is an example of how common assessment growth will be determined.

Example: If a student scores a 30 on the pre-test, to determine "growth" the process will look at the difference between the original pre-test score (30) and subtract that from 100 (a perfect score). This would calculate to 70%, divided by 2 determines a 50 % growth, thus for that student growth would be 35 points. So, for the teacher to count that student as effective growth, the student would have to score a 65 or better on the end of the course final exam.

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Total students obtaining 50% growth will receive the following: 126 students have 50% growth / 156 Total students = 80.7%

The point range for student common assessments is broken down in ranges much like the previous section only expected ranges will be smaller since these are local common assessments. The growth ranges are as followed; 79% or lower = 2 points, 80% - 89% = 3 points, and 90% and higher = 4, with the overall worth toward the evaluation score being 30%.

3) The final area of student growth calculation is student class failure rate. Adding this component encourages teachers to incorporate interventions into their courses so all students can achieve and pass. The failure rate will be calculated as followed: Total students minus student failures divided by total students = Component.

156 Students - 23 Failures = 133 / 156 = 85.3%

79% or lower = 2 point

80% - 94% = 3 points

95% + = 4 points

The same point value system will apply: 79% or lower = 2 points, 80% - 94% = 3 points, 90% and higher is worth 4 points, with this component being worth 40% of a teacher's evaluation.

The overall formula on the Vassar Student Growth Component of the Educator Evaluation is as follows: Standardized Tests + Common Assessments + Student Pass Fail divided by total possible points = Educator Growth. It is believed that this method of evaluating our staff through student growth and the Danielson domains will provide a more objective and balanced evaluation system.

2B.)The principal's evaluation process will be the same as the teachers using a unified score of all teacher growth data.

This growth model for teacher and administrator evaluation has been modeled after successful student growth models used in other Michigan school districts including Oakland Schools. District administration and Union leadership agreed on the use of the Danielson tool. All district leadership was trained in the use and integrity of the evaluation tool. The consistency and fidelity of the tool is assessed by the union leadership and administration yearly.

**Requirement #3: Identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff members who have increased student achievement. Additionally, the school will remove leaders and staff members who have been given multiple opportunities to improve professional practice and have not increased student achievement.**

**Indicator 3A: In your response, identify the strategies that will be used to identify and reward school leaders, teachers, and other staff members who have increased student achievement. This process must reward educators for positively contributing to increased student achievement and for implementing the instruction program with fidelity (outlined in requirement #6).**

**Indicator 3B: In your response, describe how the school will remove leaders and staff members who have been given multiple opportunities to improve professional practice and have not increased student achievement outcomes, and who have not met criteria based on the teacher evaluation system.**

### 3A. Reward Process

Based on the academic core departments of mathematics (six teachers), social studies (five teachers), science (four teachers), English (six teachers), fine arts (seven teachers), and special education (five teachers), each department will be able to receive a fifteen hundred dollar stipend. This stipend can be used for departmental needs such as conferences, technology, teaching materials, or any other teaching related need the department deems fit. Stipends will be based on academic achievement in accordance to core content achievement goals as assigned by the administrator in collaboration with department chairperson/leaders. In order to earn the stipend, the department will need to

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show left to right ("not proficient" to "advanced") improvement on the state test in two categories: all students and our lower thirty percent. For all students, there must be a five percent movement left to right ("not proficient" to "advanced") in the scores on the state test. For the lower thirty percent, there must be a seven percent movement left to right ("not proficient" to "advanced") in the scores on the state test. This creates a projected growth of twelve percent each year over the next three years, for a thirty-six percent overall increase on state test scores.

In addition, individual teachers will have the opportunity to earn points toward their merit pay document by showing growth on the NWEA. A target RIT score will be set for each student during a pre-test period. Based on that score, teachers who show seventy percent of their students reaching that target score on the post-test, and show any growth in ninety percent of their students, will receive two hundred and fifty points toward their merit pay document, as well as board recognition and a letter in their file.

### 3B. Removal Process

Based on student achievement and growth indicators, as outlined above, if a teacher is not performing to the expectations set, he/she will be placed on an Individualized Development Plan (IDP). The IDP is the beginning of the removal or improvement process. This IDP is set up to have the teacher show the improvements expected of them over one hundred and eighty calendar days. This plan will be based on three major areas:

- Observations,
- Evaluation,
- Student Achievement Growth.

#### Observations:

In observations, teachers will be expected to show student engagement in their classrooms, have a visible curriculum posted at all times to keep students and visitors informed, use the instructional program strategies as introduced in the Teacher Collaboration Center (TCC), and, if applicable, use co-teaching strategies with their inclusion teacher.

#### Evaluation:

In evaluation, teachers are evaluated based on four domains as adapted from Charlotte Danielson's framework: Planning/Prep, Classroom Environment, Instruction, and Professional Responsibilities. They must also show targeted improvements from past evaluations in order to meet the expectations of the IDP.

#### Student Achievement Growth:

They must show significant student growth on all of the following assessments: NWEA, state assessments and district common assessments. The teacher's pass/fail rate will also play a role in the evaluation of student achievement growth.

#### Opportunities for Improvement

The teacher will be given multiple opportunities to improve their practice and for professional development. They will be required to attend the weekly TCC meetings for input on teaching strategies and cross-curricular collaboration. They will have to attend scheduled meetings with administration to document the process and the progress they are or are not making. A mentor teacher will be assigned to assist the teacher through the IDP process. Finally, the teacher will be expected to attend the Transformation Teacher Institute at the end of the school year for additional professional development support.

#### Removal

At this time and after multiple opportunities for improvement, if the teacher has not shown the improvement expected of them as laid out in their IDP after one hundred and eighty calendar days, that teacher will be removed from his/her teaching assignment.

**Requirement #4: Provide staff with ongoing, high quality, job-embedded professional development aligned with the school's comprehensive instructional program. This should be designed with school staff to ensure that staff can facilitate effective teaching and learning and have the capacity to successfully implement the school reform strategies.**

**Indicator 4A: In your response, describe the school's plan for professional development. The plan must: (a) reflect the "Big Ideas" (see Part B), (b) offer repeated opportunities with a common focus, (c) be high quality, (d) be job-embedded (e.g. integrated into the work day), (e) align to the instructional program described in requirement #6, and (f) include a process for monitoring the impact of PD on instructional practices.**

Professional learning and professional development days will be designed to begin teacher-led and teacher-embedded professional development in the key areas of instruction and student achievement support as outlined in our three big ideas: inquiry, reading (inference and information) and multi-tier support. These areas will be focused on through teacher collaboration, enhancement of teaching strategies (i.e. differentiated instruction, feedback, co-teaching, self-inquiry, etc.) and curriculum processes.

### 1.) High Quality Professional Learning:

#### A.) Structure:

The key to sustaining and implementing the school reform strategies is the previously mentioned Teacher Collaboration Center (TCC). The Teacher Collaboration Center vision is for teachers, through facilitation and resources, to support each other to explore, implement, reflect and evaluate best teaching and learning practices for student success.

The TCC will provide fifty minutes a week of structured teacher collaboration time through interdisciplinary teams centered on the above mentioned big idea goals. Each team will be facilitated by Dr. Makas. Each team will identify goals for professional growth with each teacher identifying an area in which they have a personal desire to improve. The process will begin by the teachers completing a self-survey to help them determine their personal growth journey. The Priority Plan and the big ideas will serve as the framework for the TCC's guiding work. Data will be shared and used through TCC time for teacher understanding, discussion and integration with teacher strategies, analyzing of curriculum/standards and facilitating change in context and teaching. In addition, as laid out by the instructional program, specifically identified instructional strategies will be implemented school-wide.

In addition to the TCC structured fifty minutes a week time, the Center will be open Wednesday - Friday all day and before and after school. An additional value to these small groups is the cross curricular aspect as each team will be multi-disciplinary.

#### B.) Expectations:

After Big Idea strategies have been taught, modeled and discussed in the TCC, teachers will be required to implement the new strategies (see section 6B) in their classroom. Follow-up, reflection and peer discussion will be done in the TCC. The TCC protocol will loop new teacher learning with practice and reflection.

#### C.) Feedback:

Teachers will be able to get individual feedback from several sources: the peer coaching model and the new ELEOT protocol, administrative walk-throughs, TCC reflection/problem-solving time and student formative assessment data dialogues. Math teachers will be able to get direct modeling and feedback from Dr. Gould, the SVSU math coach.

### 2.) Job-embedded Protocol in the TCC:

The protocol of the TCC is a looping or scaffold protocol. Each week an email will be sent to participants outlining where we are in the professional learning process and what materials will be needed. Anyone who cannot attend the session will receive a follow-up email with

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notes and materials missed. TCC protocol will encompass the below identified activities

- Data dialogues (pre and post data on student achievement and demographic and behavioral data)
- Individual data and discussion on identified high-risk for failure students (mentoring)
- Teacher strategies as identified by data (big ideas)
- Discussion/reflection of strategies as practiced in the classroom and desired effects on instruction
- Individual and peer feedback and sharing

Another avenue of professional learning in the TCC and in both the peer coaching and ELEOT model will be teacher analysis of student work (his/her own student work and peer-shared student work). Discussion on student work will be directly related to the instructional big ideas and specific strategies addressed in the TCC.

### 3.) Monitoring Professional Learning Impact:

Professional impact will be monitored by administrative walk-throughs, peer coaching, ELEOT protocol and TCC discussions. Formative assessment and student behavior data will also be used in discussing and monitoring the impact of the professional learning in alignment to the instructional program.

### 4.) Alignment to Instructional Program:

The professional learning program is in direct alignment to the instructional program as all professional learning is centered on the instructional strategies and data produced by the three big ideas of informational reading, inference, inquiry and multi-tiered instruction (mentoring of high-risk students). All monitoring of professional learning will follow the instructional program as learned and reflected on in the TCC and practiced in the classrooms.

### 5.) Annual Professional Learning Culmination:

The TCC goals will culminate with an after-school-year Transformation Teacher Institute. The Institute will offer a two-day workshop format where teachers can choose and work with the following content/context specialists. These workshops will include:

- Dr. Pamela Ross (UM-Flint): Peer Coaching and Co-Teaching
- Dr. Jonathon Gould (SVSU): Best Practices in the Teaching of Mathematics
- Literacy Specialist (TBA): Reading in the Content Areas for Information and Inference
- Mr. Kyle Boros (Counselor Vassar Public Schools): Data Driven Decision-Making

Participating teachers will receive a stipend for attendance and additional compensation or specified product production (i.e. new lesson plans aligned to identified standards or student groups, etc.).

### 6.) Departmental Leadership and Professional Learning Reinforcement:

Vassar High School already has the infrastructure to support departmental leadership but needs to empower the department leaders and their department staff to take a more meaningful role in professional learning through data analysis, curricular alignment and assessment, academic decision-making and professional self-improvement. The professional learning leadership structure will move to a shared capacity through rotating leadership within each department through two-year term limitations. Thus leadership development will be experienced, encouraged and coached during each person's two-year term as the department leader. Department chairs will be monetarily compensated for their extra work in leading their departments.

**Requirement #5: Implement strategies to recruit and retain staff with skills necessary to meet the needs of students in a transformational school. These can include strategies such as financial incentives, increased opportunities for promotion and career growth and more flexible work conditions.**

**Indicator 5A: In your response, identify the strategies the district will use to recruit teachers to this school based on student needs and assign teachers to this school based on student needs.**

**Indicator 5B: In your response, identify the strategies the district will use to retain teachers at this school.**

5A.) Increased opportunities for promotion and career growth

Vassar Public Schools is a small district that has been adjusting to its size reduction for the past five years. In the past five years we have had our teaching staff reduced, while still attempting to offer the same quality education and program options for students. It has been the objective of the school board to maintain all content areas, both core and non-core, as a means of offering a well-rounded education for its students. In this recent year, the district, under the leadership of Mr. Jason Kiss, has started reassigning both tenured and non-tenured staff based on district needs as determined by the Michigan Merit Exam (MME). The redistribution of staff addresses the gap that the MME exposed in our past two testing cycles. The district has initiated layers of support within the school year: the Teacher Collaborative Center, TRIG, peer coaching, guest speakers for professional development, and an end-of-year teacher institute. It is through these layers of interventions that we address: inference, informational reading, and inquiry-based instruction. These are the areas identified through data to focus on in working toward closing our achievement gap.

The Teacher Collaborative Center (TCC) is led by the district's curriculum consultant Dr. Elaine Makas. The teachers are using the center a minimum of once a week as a resource in strategies that address our "Big Ideas". However the TCC is a teacher resource room for the entire building; it has research-based books, strategies, and computers dedicated to the service of teachers. It is in this center that cross-curricular content and strategies can be discussed. In addition, new strategies such as, "No Opt Out" which addresses student engagement, "Stretch It" to address inference, and "Word Walls" with every classroom working to address student informational reading skills through vocabulary within content. A questioning protocol as a means of examining inquiry-based instruction will also be implemented. The Center promotes an equitable evaluation since the district is offering every teacher intervention and guidance on one of the levels of their multi-tiered evaluation. This continual support on classroom practice, as well as a clearly defined process of expectations, is meant to promote both career growth and teacher retention.

The district has reflected on the low socio-economic demographics, pairing that with the projections of the state objectives for all schools to have testing on a computer based platform. To address the diverse computer competency of the staff, Mr. Kiss has implemented the Technology Readiness Infrastructure Grant (TRIG) as a part of the 2014-2015 professional development. This program is designed to better acquaint a diverse population of teachers with the interface of CAT state testing. It is the district's objective to better serve our students by offering the test online rather than through paper and pencil. An online computer based test will ensure the integrity of the test and also provide more timely feedback, thus allowing greater instructional response as impacted by data. TRIG is the method for preparing the staff at Vassar for testing interventions with our lower thirty percent on the past MME.

Peer coaching has been implemented in Vassar and is one of the aligned activities that is going to be carried over from the previous years. Peer coaching is heading into its third year at Vassar and was originally brought to us by Dr. Pamela Ross, a professor at the University of Michigan-Flint. Each teacher is responsible for conducting three classroom observations where they attempt to observe strategies they can build upon. This has been educational and supportive for all teachers involved, in that they are able to see teaching styles different than their own, thus they are given the opportunity to discuss and practice new, successful teaching strategies.

Guest speakers are brought in from time to time to start the year off. Topics that address our student population's needs are covered, such as how best to teach students who live in poverty, presented by Dr. Ruby Payne, Ph.D. As referenced prior, we have also had professionals like Dr. Pamela Ross come in on multiple occasions to discuss peer coaching and introduce other teaching styles based on student needs.

To continually address Vassar's current educational gap, the school is going to host an end-of-year teacher institute. This institute is voluntary for all the staff in the priority building. These teachers will be able to attend mini seminars hosted by consultants brought in by the district to address the "Big Ideas" that have been identified on the MME as being responsible for our gap in achievement. As an incentive, the district is offering each teacher that attends the institute monetary compensation.

With Vassar High School being a small urban school, bordering even smaller rural communities, it faces many difficulties. Money is always a factor; working within the finances we have and factoring in lower student counts, the school has to offer professional growth opportunities

within district that best fit the individualized needs of our students. We will continue to place the best people in front of our students based on their needs as determined by test data.

### 5B.) Flexible working conditions designed to recruit and retain staff based on needs of students

Vassar has many appealing attributes that place it ahead of others. Vassar is a small urban school that has retained its small town charm. The community is comprised of small, close-knit families that work hard for their families. Similar to many of the schools in the area, the building is older but a certain amount of pride is taken in the representation of the school. The sense of community will draw new teacher candidates to this district, as well as our extra-curricular activities that are offered.

When looking for new teachers, Vassar High School looks at two of the best universities for teaching in the state: Saginaw Valley State University and Central Michigan University. These institutions are contacted and names of candidates are determined. In addition to this, the position available is posted on the district website and in the schools. Vassar administration invites a panel of professionals, including the building principal, a board member, and a teacher, for the interview process. The questions posed during this process are based on student needs and how that candidate will fit in the district. A candidate is not chosen until the panel discusses all viable candidates.

Vassar High School offers many methods of support to aid in retention of staff; new teachers are signed up for an ISD new teacher's boot camp, and a mentor teacher is assigned by the building administrator. All other teaching staff is provided with interventions via professional development, the Teacher Collaboration Center, and other resources provided by the building administrator. These resources are based on the MME and local assessments to address the low achieving thirty percent. Teachers are given the opportunity to be a department head on a voluntary, rotating schedule. This schedule allows teachers to have the opportunity to be a teacher leader and to steer their department by using data. Vassar's clearly defined evaluation process is a method of drawing and retaining teachers, through clear and concise measurable standards. Vassar is going to start recognizing its highly effective teachers with board recognition, making the dedication to education known among peers and community.

Vassar is looking towards the future of its students' needs, interventions, recruitment, and retention of staff. The district is addressing the number one complaint of all stakeholders, computer technology. Under the oversight of Mr. Kiss, the district is preparing to invest in new computers and a vastly newer infrastructure, which will give our students opportunities they haven't had prior. Teachers can now design instruction using reliable technology, flip classrooms can become a possibility, and many other strategies can be implemented.

## PART D: COMPREHENSIVE INSTRUCTIONAL REFORM STRATEGIES

**Requirement #6: Use data to identify and implement an instructional program(s) that is based on research and aligned from one grade to the next, as well as with state academic standards.**

**Indicator 6A: In your response, detail the process the school used to select an instructional program. The process must address how the school used a diagnostic process that (a) used multiple data sources to understand priority designation, (b) links the instructional program to disaggregated data by subject, grade level, and subgroups, (c) identified and prioritized underlying causes of low student performance, (d) describe a three-year sequence for improving instruction in all content areas related to priority school designation.**

**Indicator 6B: In your response, describe your instructional program. The school's instructional program must: (a) reflect the "Big Ideas", (b) include specific teaching and learning strategies (Tier I) for school-wide implementation, (c) align with career & college ready standards, (d) be based on research, relevant data, and outcomes of data dialogue (if applicable), (e) provide an overview of the implementation timeline, resources, and staff responsible for implementation over three years, and (f) describe a plan to track adult implementation of instructional program**

6A.) Process for Selecting Instructional Programs:

Vassar High School Instructional Programs, as written in part 6B, was selected based on the use of multiple data sources. Data from summative assessments (MEAP, MME and ACT) and demographic data from the school profile were the two main data sources used. A comprehensive formative assessment model and formative assessment data was either not available or reliable in the review of data (i.e. teacher common assessments were teacher developed and were not normed or validated formative assessments). The district is currently planning to use NWEA as the formative assessment system to close the gap between demographic and summative data.

Demographic data indicated that two subgroups, lower socio-economic status and special education are performing below acceptable state average levels on building summative assessments (MEAP, MME, ACT).

Achievement data indicated that all students, including identified sub-groups, were low in the areas of:

- 1) Reading for information
- 2) Reading for inference
- 3) Inquiry.

DATA (to view data used for analysis please follow links):

<https://drive.google.com/a/vassar.k12.mi.us/file/d/0Bx9w3HdO20AjMVVSTDIUb1ZvLXc/view?usp=sharing>

<https://drive.google.com/a/vassar.k12.mi.us/file/d/0Bx9w3HdO20AjWUpWc3BpTGVbZ1k/view?usp=sharing>

These identified skill sets then became the base of our three big ideas from data, which became the base of our instructional program.

According to research, the underlying causes of low student achievement in the identified subgroups are 1) student engagement (Payne, 2009) and 2) a literacy language gap (Archer, 2008). Therefore the formula for our instructional program is:

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Student Engagement + Language Gap Closure = Rise in Student Achievement

In the below section, the qualities of the instructional program of which specific instructional strategies will be targeted and how these strategies will be disseminated are discussed.

### 6B: Qualities of Instructional Program

The instructional program will have three major components:

- 1) How the instructional program will be disseminated to teachers/teacher learning
- 2) What/where/how strategies will be implemented within a three year period
- 3) How results will be measured/tracking teacher implementation of the instructional program.

#### Dissemination and Protocol:

The instructional program will be disseminated through the Teacher Collaboration Center. The Center will be open three days a week and before and after school. Every Thursday, teacher interdisciplinary teams will meet for a structured hour to work on the instructional program. The protocol of the Center will be to discuss data findings (data dialogues), present strategies, and discuss and reflect how the strategies are working, etc. The protocol will then cycle back to data as students and teachers are measured on outcomes through a formative assessment and walk-through process (administration and peer-supported).

Instructional Strategies (for sub-groups and all students). Below is the plan as narrative. To view this as a chart please follow the link at the end of this section.

#### Strategy Area w/Strategy - YEAR 1:

Student Engagement: No-opt-out (Lemov) and Cold Call-Pepper (Lemov)

Inference: Stretch-it (Lemov)

Informational/Content Reading: Word Wall w/content vocabulary instruction (Archer); Text Mapping; Cold Call-Vocabulary (Lemov)

Inquiry: Questioning Protocol: 5 Simple Questions (Alber)

#### Strategy Area w/Strategy - YEAR 2:

Student Engagement: Call & Response, Wait Time, Vegas, 100 Percent, Everybody Writes (Lemov)

Inference: One at a Time, Simple to Complex, Verbatim, Clear & Concise, Stock Questions, Hit Rate (Lemov)

Informational/Content Reading: Six Step Process for Vocabulary Instruction with Tiered Vocabulary Terms CCSS (Marzano) and Classroom Techniques for Teaching Decoding, Vocabulary Development and Fluency (Lemov)

Inquiry: STEM Strategies

#### Strategy Area w/Strategy - YEAR 3 (self-directed learning with the TCC environment):

Student Engagement: Teacher Inquiry-based Strategy Self-Study and Implementation

Inference: Teacher Inquiry-based Strategy Self-Study and Implementation

Informational/Content Reading: Teacher Inquiry-based Strategy Self-Study and Implementation

Inquiry: Teacher Inquiry-based Strategy Self-Study and Implementation

Link to Instructional Program Strategies Chart:

<https://drive.google.com/a/vassar.k12.mi.us/file/d/0Bx9w3HdO20AjcWhER0xPLXRUbWM/view?usp=sharing>

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### Instructional Strategies Resources:

- 1) Lemov, D. (2010). Teach like a champion: 49 techniques that put students on the path to college. Jossey-Bass Teacher. San Francisco, CA.
- 2) Payne, R. K. (2009). Research-based strategies: Narrowing the achievement gap for under-resources students. Aha! Process, Inc. Highlands, TX.
- 3) Marzano, R.A. & Simms, J.A. (2013). Vocabulary for the common core. Marzano Research Laboratory, Bloomington, IN.

### Assessment of Results:

Monitoring the Instructional Program for effective results will be done in two major components:

- 1) Student achievement as measured by NWEA and common assessments
- 2) Teacher Fidelity: Administrative Walk-throughs and Peer Review (AdvancEd ELEOT process).

### Additional Information on the Instructional Program:

As indicated in the book From Mandate to Achievement (Makas, 2010) we will be working with data through curriculum and instruction within the three major pillars: 1) Curriculum Processes, 2) Teaching and Learning Processes and 3) Remediation and Support. Data is the overarching information that will support and drive the decision-making within the three major categories of curriculum. The three pillars will be based on the philosophy of teacher involvement in all curriculum processes, with administrative support and monitoring and curriculum coaching by a curriculum specialist/director. The data to be used to drive the curriculum pillars are:

- NWEA (given three times a year for benchmarking core standards student achievement)
- ACT, MEAP and MME (as applicable)
- Common Assessments
- Credits Earned/Lost
- GPA
- Student Attendance
- Teacher Recommendation/Input

In addition, the newly reestablished K-12 Curriculum Council will review curriculum and ensure its alignment with state standards and cohesion across grade levels. Upon recommendation by department leaders (to ensure that students master grade-level objectives), the curriculum council will determine if courses or subject areas should receive extended time or resources to fulfill that department's components of the transformation plan. The Curriculum Council also works with school improvement and to develop all professional development plans, implementation, and evaluation.

A) Curriculum Processes. This area refers to our teacher-led processes of developing aligned curriculum maps and common assessments. We have aligned all course work to the Common Core standards in math, English language arts and science, and in our priority plan will be beginning the process of implementing these documents into instruction. The social studies curriculum is aligned to the Michigan Merit Curriculum. Curriculum maps are developed, upgraded, monitored, and discussed within department teams, and department curriculum meetings will be held each semester at the Teacher Collaboration Center facilitated by Dr. Makas. The department that houses the non-core course work will determine if their classes best fit into supporting the math or reading/writing core curriculum for cross-curricular content. Curriculum maps and common assessments provide both horizontal and vertical alignment of the core standards across content and grade level.

B) Teaching and Learning Processes: The teaching/learning process will be developed within the philosophy of collaboration and teachers learning, exploring, and achieving together. The process that will be presented will help to address teacher isolation and promote team responsibility for student success in all areas of achievement: both academic, social, behavior and career preparation for all students. As previously discussed, this pillar of curriculum will be facilitated through the new Teacher Collaboration Center located in a well-centered room within the high school. The physical environment will be one of collaboration and growth. The teacher area will have computer work stations, tables for collaboration and many teacher resources such as books, research, and other teaching materials. The center will be the area where all teachers will have access to not only other teachers and resources but to the curriculum specialist. The Teacher Collaboration Center will be utilized in a structured format 50 minutes per week with interdisciplinary teams and will be available for teacher use an additional 90 minutes per week both during and after school. According to, and in accordance with our current data, the Teacher Collaboration Center will begin teacher collaborative processes in the area of co-teaching techniques, identifying and working with struggling learners, key standards instruction (which includes depth of knowledge, Universal Design for Learning and higher-order thinking strategies) and teacher individual inquiry research as an enhancement tool for personal growth. This collaboration process is the arena in which the three big ideas will be implemented into classroom instruction.

C) Remediation and Support: A multi-tiered student learning response system will be developed using data from MEAP, NWEA, Common Assessments, credits earned, and GPA. This data will provide a systematic program for categorizing student assessment data, identifying patterns, linking areas of need to validated interventions, then enacting the interventions with fidelity, progress monitoring and either adjusting the intervention plan or reclassifying the student based on growth. Areas of consistent weakness trigger investigation into potential shortcomings in curriculum and courses. Our current test scores and subsequent third percentile rating by the MDE indicate that we have consistent gaps in core instruction. The fact that we are currently below state average in every content area indicates that the issue is across the curriculum. As our elementary and middle school buildings, along with our ISD, are currently involved in the RTI model, these resources will be used to implement a remediation support program at the high school level. We are currently in the process of developing a Teacher-Student mentor system within the high school to address several issues with students. These issues include grade-level and content performance but also connects to our specific student needs such as a strong relationship with adults within the school structure. The mentor teacher will be meeting with the students 30 minutes per day and will begin with the student in their freshman year and continue with the same group of students until graduation. Mentoring time will be an added 30 minutes to each instructional day and will not pull students from core class work.

**Requirement #7: Promote the continuous use of student data (such as formative, interim, and summative assessment data and student work) to inform and differentiate instruction to meet academic needs of individual students.**

**Indicator 7A: In your response, describe how the school promotes the continuous use of individual student data (such as; formative, interim, and summative). This plan must: (a) outline expectations for regular and on-going building-wide use of data, (b) describe the structure and process for educators to collaborate to analyze data and plan for Tier II and Tier III instruction, and (c) identifies instructional program outcomes and a plan to assess for impact**

Data-Driven Decision Making (DDDM):

DDDM is central to our plan. Although we have used data in the past, the process to generate, analyze, and act on data more systematically, efficiently and timely is needed. Data will be utilized in three areas:

- A) Summative Assessment
- B) Formative Assessment
- C) Demographic Data

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The district will provide, through small group professional development in the Teacher Collaborative Center, structured and unstructured time to review, discuss, and implement data into classroom practice (i.e. the choosing of strategies or standard instruction, etc.). The Teacher Collaboration Center will be open every Thursday and will provide teachers with a weekly opportunity to review, discuss, and implement data into their lesson planning for the week.

A) Summative Assessment: (click on link to view data trend chart)

<https://drive.google.com/a/vassar.k12.mi.us/file/d/0Bx9w3HdO20AjZIY5TXBtXzBPRzg/view?usp=sharing>

### MME Data 5 Year Trend - All Students

The above data table shows Vassar High School's MME data trend for the previous 5 year testing cycles. As evidenced by the graph, Vassar High School has demonstrated a continued decline in proficient scoring during this 5 year testing period. These existing reports, as well as ongoing testing reports, will be utilized by all teaching staff in the TCC to evaluate and assist the educational process with our students.

Teachers will be expected to use the data and implement strategies to enhance student learning and achievement. Vassar High School will use this year as the benchmark data with built-in student growth expectation. The high school will implement a rewards process for teachers to show expected growth on summative testing data. The expected growth is 5% movement for all students and 7% movement for student who score in the lower 30%, leading to a 12% total overall improvement.

The summative assessments data will be primarily centered around are the MEAP, ACT and state high school summative test. Regular review of data from these tests will be happen at the beginning of each year to help guide instructional practices and curriculum alignment processes. In addition, ongoing use of data, (i.e. after new test results are received) will assist Vassar High School to make adjustments to instructional practices, if necessary, as soon as this new data becomes available. Data will be examined for student performance, standards performance, and demographic achievement information. We will also give a retired ACT in May to test the 10th grade students and have baseline data available for summer planning and/or interventions.

B) Formative Assessment. The formative assessment process will be centered on the NWEA testing process, which is a national criteria referenced test. The students, grades 6-12, will be tested twice a year. The testing will be administered at the end of marking period one and marking period three. The NWEA is aligned to Common Core Standards, which are aligned to our curriculum maps, classroom assessments, and thus classroom instruction. Through NWEA data (and student demographic data) the counselor will create individual student need lists to be shared and discussed with the teachers during collaboration time. The teachers will then design specific instructional strategies for targeted students. Instructional program strategies chosen to help bridge the relationship need of low SES students with teachers and their own learning process will be included in formative assessments.

C) Demographic Data: Demographic data is a very important 'weave' to not only the summative and formative data cycles but to teacher and student learning connections and achievement. As the demographics of Vassar High School indicates, over 70% of our students receive free and reduced lunch, with others who qualify but do not take advantage of the benefit. The attributes and characteristics of students of poverty indicate specific needs in the classroom and especially with homework support. The strategies reviewed and implemented in the Teacher Collaboration Center will include strategies introduced by Ruby Payne as well as strategies that are endorsed by the flipped classroom. The above interwoven plan of summative, formative, and demographic data will be used through the Teacher Collaboration Center to monitor individual and group progress between testing cycles, provide necessary interventions, and then again use the formative assessment cycle to monitor growth. This model, which has been in practice in our elementary school for several years, has been proven to provide a systematic method for categorizing student outcomes, identifying patterns, linking areas of need to validated interventions, enacting the interventions with fidelity, progress monitoring, and either adjusting the intervention plan or reclassifying the student based on growth. Areas

of consistent weakness will trigger investigation into potential shortcomings in curriculum and courses.

### Data ACCESS for All Stakeholders:

**Students:** After each formative testing cycle (twice a year: 1st & 3rd marking period) students will receive their testing results, review the test with the appropriate content-area teachers and/or their mentor teacher, and use the feedback and results to analyze their growth. Through the teacher-mentoring time, students will be assisted in interpreting their data, setting goals for improvement, and developing/enacting strategies for achieving those goals.

**Parents:** Parents will also be made aware of their child(ren)'s data through Skyward Family Access (our grade reporting system). Family Access provides parents immediate information on classes, grades, assignments, attendance, schedule, lunch programs and fees and has a message center. In addition, information is given at parent/teacher conferences and through progress reports, report cards, and other mailings.

**Teachers:** Teachers will have data provided to them in the TCC after every assessment has been administered and the data has been received and compiled. Regular analysis of this data will assist with identifying whether current strategies are effective and will lead to ongoing identification of students who would benefit from differentiated instruction. Ongoing analysis and research of the data will assist in the expansion of teaching strategies provided in the TCC.

### Expanded School Day Instructional Time, Increased School Days and Teacher Collaborative Time (as related to Data):

The district revised calendar will increase our school calendar days to 180 and allow for a 30 minute teacher-student mentor program time each day. In addition front-loaded professional development days will allow us to use aspects of the professional development days for data understanding and analysis. On September 18, for example, data was distributed from the previous year's MEAP, ACT and MME during the teacher collaboration time. Lists of students who were at-risk for poor academic achievement in reading and math were created from the data. Allotted time was provided for each inter-disciplinary team to discuss which of these students each teacher had in class and what strategies and/or lessons he/she may use/develop to meet the needs of the identified population. Team members will execute their strategy and discuss it with their team in the following few weeks. Teams were challenged to look for causation of potential curriculum gaps and to create a plan for remediating lagging skills within instruction. They were also given the ongoing responsibility of revising or developing internal, formative assessments to practice the necessary skills and monitor growth toward mastery. These formative assessments would be used both at tier one (for all students) and at tier two (for groups of students who demonstrate a similar, specific gap or need). The above example demonstrates how the TCC will continue to function to improve targeted instructional practices.

### Roles of Curriculum Council and Department Teacher Leaders (as related to Data):

Department leaders and Curriculum Council members will facilitate data analysis, action planning and professional development based on data. In order for the department leaders and Curriculum Council to play a key role, they have to be at the forefront of data analysis and familiar with the CCSS standards and best practices for assessing standards. The teams are working with our curriculum specialist, Dr. Makas, for connections between data and the CCSS content-standards and standards implementation. Each teacher will have a copy of their aligned curriculum map and the Align, Assess, Achieve, LLC Common Core Clarifying Expectations for Teachers and Students spiral notebook.

After each testing cycle, department leaders and the Curriculum Council will analyze and compare the data for longitudinal patterns/needs, and the above process will be followed again for analysis and creation or revision of action plans. Department and collaborative teacher time throughout the year will be used to provide time for enacting and refining components of the action plans based on the most current data, including progress monitoring data for students currently receiving interventions.

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### RESEARCH:

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- Payne, R. K. (2005). *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. Highlands: aha! Process.
- Schon, D. A. (1995). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. England: Ashgate.
- Silver, H. F., Strong, R. W., & Perini, M. J. (2000). *So Each May Learn: Integrating Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences*. Alexandria: ASCD.
- Wald, P. J., & Castleberry, M. S. (2000). *Educators as Learners*. Alexandria: ASCD.
- Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (1998). *Understanding by Design*. Alexandria: ASCD

### EVIDENCE:

Professional development agenda, sign in and worksheets

MDE summative data

NWEA data

Demographic data

Curriculum Council minutes

School calendar

Skyward family access

Common assessment data

TCC sign in sheets

Parent correspondence regarding student progress

## PART E: INCREASED LEARNING TIME AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**Requirement #8: Establish schedules and strategies that provide increased time for instruction in core academic subjects, enrichment activities, and professional learning for teachers.**

**Indicator 8A: In your response, describe the district's plan for increasing time for core academic subjects that specifies: (a) whether additional time will happen through a longer day, week, and/or year OR redesigning the use of the current schedule (choose one); (b) a description of how much time has been allocated; (c) a rationale that supports why these changes will lead to increased student achievement.**

**Indicator 8B: In your response, describe the district's plan for increasing time for enrichment activities that specifies: (a) whether additional time will happen through a longer day, week, and/or year OR redesigning the use of the current schedule (choose one); (b) a description of how much time has been allocated; (c) a rationale that supports why these changes will lead to increased student achievement.**

**Indicator 8C: In your response, describe the district's plan for increasing time for professional collaboration that specifies: (a) whether additional time will happen through a longer day, week, and/or year OR redesigning the use of the current schedule (choose one); (b) a description of how much time has been allocated; (c) a rationale that supports why these changes will lead to increased student achievement.**

Standardized data such as MEAP/MME will be used to identify areas of improvement. Internal assessment such as failure rate, common assessments, exam scores, and other assessments will provide data to guide instructional strategies. There are limitations of these tests in a small school in which there are not multiple teachers teaching a course, so professional development and coordination with the curriculum coach and AdvancEd resources will need to be intensive to bolster validity. Teachers will create and implement Smarter Balanced-like assessments in core courses. The newly established teacher collaboration time will be used to analyze the scores of the students to focus interventions in problem areas. Staff members will use their relationship-building skills to help students see the importance of investing themselves in their own academic achievements.

The increase of student learning time will be established, allowing for the school day to be increased by a total of fourteen minutes and instructional time increased by thirty minutes. Additionally, we will move from 176 student instruction days to 180 student instruction days. Overall, this will add 112 additional instruction hours annually for students.

This increase in the amount of contact time with students will allow for instructional time to stay the same and add an additional enrichment opportunity for students called "Mentoring." Mentoring will be a thirty minute class that will meet on a daily basis with a single designated teacher throughout the student's high school career at Vassar. Embedded within the framework of Mentoring will be teacher led instructional strategies and interventions aimed at improving each student's academic outlook and success. Research-based skills and strategies will be provided to the teaching staff within the Teacher Collaboration Center. The focus of the mentoring program will be on identification and intervention with the bottom 30%, thus providing extra services to address student's education in this demographic.

In addition to adding the mentoring program, after school tutoring will be offered with certified staff once a week for sixty minutes. This after school tutoring program will be encouraged through the teacher-student mentoring program/relationship to support students who are struggling in core areas.

Furthermore, there will be continued revamping of additional enrichment opportunities for students to enhance the transitional use of core skills and build career development and citizenship qualities. Currently, a wide variety of enrichment opportunities are offered such as

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National Honor Society (NHS), Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), Youth in Government (YIG), student council, Tuscola Technology Center and dual enrollment, college visitation on campus, college exploration field trips, and academic games. Additional enrichment opportunities are offered through clubs such as history, rocket, book, art, debate, equestrian and drama. Policies will be revised regarding meeting times to regulate the ability for student clubs/organizations to operate within limited classroom disruption. This reduction of disruption to core subject areas and extra emphasis on enrichment opportunities will increase educational engagement, thus increasing student achievement.

In order to assist teachers in maximizing their instructional time to improve student learning, the TCC has been created. The center will be a designated room where teachers can meet on a weekly basis for fifty minutes to obtain vital information and strategies to assist them in improving student learning. A curriculum director will be made available to the teachers at this time to provide the teachers with strategies to incorporate into their presentation of lessons. Additionally, teachers will be provided with information regarding standardized test scores, grade point average (GPA), and pass/failed credits to assist with identifying students who may benefit from differentiated learning strategies. Providing teachers with this information and instructional strategies are certain to assist students with academic achievement.

The above information will also be used to properly place students in remedial learning classes. Reading enhancement, algebra I intervention, and geometry intervention courses are currently offered with data aiding in the determination of other needed remediation courses. Additionally, we will be using the Teacher Collaboration Center to brainstorm additional strategies to utilize with students to improve learning.

### RESEARCH:

Davis, S. (2007). *Schools Where Everyone Belongs*. Champaign: McNaughton & Gunn, Inc.

Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S. S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J. A., & Wayman, J. C. (2009). *Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making*. Washington DC: US Department of Education.

Payne, R. K. (2005). *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*. Highlands: aha! Process.

### EVIDENCE:

Standardized test scores

Common assessments

Failure rates

AdvancEd resources

School calendar

School day schedule

Parent contact logs through mentoring

**Requirement #9: Provide ongoing mechanisms for engagement of families and community.**

**Indicator 9A: In your response, describe multiple strategies to engage families in reform efforts.**

**Indicator 9B: In your response, describe multiple strategies to engage community partners in reform efforts.**

9A.) One of the main objectives for the student mentoring program is to assist in the engagement of families. With the new implementation of the Teacher-Student Mentoring Program, teachers will be providing daily academic guidance and support the students on an individual basis. Parents will be sent weekly progress reports via email on Friday of each week with notes from the teacher about the overall progress of their

student(s).

During the week before school officially starts for students, the high school will implement a "Back to School" night. This night will be designed to get students and parents prepared for the upcoming school year. Staff will provide the students and parents who attend with class schedules, transcripts and a "welcome back" package. The students and parents will also be able to attend their classes on an abbreviated basis where they will have a "meet and greet" with their teachers. There will be numerous resources available to assist students and parents in planning for their future high school schedules, college admissions, scholarship opportunities, etc.

The high school will offer services and support through the Vassar High School website. On this website parents can obtain access to "Family Access" which allows parents to view student grades, contact teachers, and monitor credits. Ongoing communication between teachers and parents will continue through email, parent-teacher conferences, and community events.

The Vassar District School Improvement Team is another way that we engage families. This team meets twice a year and contains members of the school's teaching staff, a parent and a community member. The goal of this team is to utilize the parent and community member to integrate parental and community views into the school improvement plan.

9B.) Vassar High School is implementing Public Service Announcements at all events held at the school. PSA's will serve as a way for the community to get information about critical events happening in the school, and ways for the community to interact on an academic level with the students. This initiative will serve as a way for community members to help engage students in academic achievement by giving helpful tips on reading, literacy, and gathering information.

Another way the community is involved in high school planning is through committee service. There is a community member that serves as a member of the District School Improvement Team, and also as a member of the Priority Planning Team. This community member brings an objective perspective to issues being dealt with inside of the school.

A new program which is just getting started is Pathways to Potential. This program will provide the school district with a Department of Human Services social worker as support for our students, parents, and community five days a week. The objective of this program is to assist with engaging disconnected students, improving attendance, enhancing parental involvement, and providing assistance to improve and support student health.

## **PART F: PROVIDING OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY AND SUSTAINED SUPPORT**

**Requirement #10: The district is providing the school with operational flexibility for issues such as staffing, calendars, time, and budgeting to implement a comprehensive approach to substantially increase student achievement and increase graduation rate.**

**Indicator 10A: Describe how Operational Flexibility will be provided to the building in the following areas: staffing, use of time, professional learning, and budget. Also, describe a statement that the priority school improvement team and building leader will determine the school's Title I budget (subject to federal regulations). The district must also complete a signature page, signed by the Superintendent, School Board President, and Union Representative, which certifies that the school has the autonomy required to implement the plan as written (see template on AdvancEd site). Finally the district must upload either an Executed Addendum to the collective bargaining agreement OR a Memorandum of Understanding that commits the Superintendent, School Board President, and Union Representative to negotiate an addendum by August 1, 2014.**

10A.) Vassar High School is not a Title 1 school and does not receive Title 1 funding.

10B.) The team has developed a well-rounded plan to implement a comprehensive approach to increase student achievement and graduation rates. The inclusion of Ann Auernhamer as the VEA Representative on the priority team has proven most beneficial in developing plans for operational flexibility. Working with Ann Auernhamer, the high school developed a calendar for the 2015-2016 school year which will increase the school year by 3.5 days and also allow thirty minutes of additional instructional time each day.

Staff members have been reallocated to areas where their strengths, education, and instructional ability will have a greater effect on student achievement. All of these changes have been in the best interest of the students and staff, but have also been done without an increase in the overall cost to the district. Staff members can be shared between the middle school and high school based on certification.

Staff members at the high school will have ample opportunity for professional learning. The TCC offers weekly strategy and instructional improvement. The Teacher Transformation Institute at the end of the year will build upon what has been presented in the TCC and give time for reflection over the past year and planning time to improve strategies for the coming year. The speakers at the instructional institute will have a wide and varied background of expertise in strategic approaches to dealing with closing the achievement gaps. Teachers will also have the opportunity throughout the year to pick targeted conferences to help implement strategies to improve the Big Ideas that have been identified to close the achievement gap.

Mr. Kiss and the central office administration, in conjunction with the school board, will evaluate the expenditures each year. The monetary resources will be reallocated from year to year to make the most impact on student achievement. Money is being reallocated from the "at risk" fund immediately for implementation of technology into the high school. Money will be immediately allocated from the general fund for incentives and teacher retention.

**Requirement #11: The school and district will ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the district, ISD, Michigan Department of Education, or other designated external partners or organizations.**

**Indicator 11A: In your response, describe how the district plans to access and provide supports for the school.**

**Indicator 11B: In your response, list the central office contact person responsible for monitoring and supporting the school.**

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The team has and will continue to consult with professionals in many different areas to ensure ongoing success with staff and students. These professional relations help guide instructional practices and training aimed at increasing a student's educational experience. Below is a list of current professional contacts and the department/company through which they are employed.

Ann Auernhamer - VEA Representative

- Mes. Auernhamer is involved with negotiations and guidance from our local union to ensure the plans being approved are in line with union expectations.

Elaine Makas, Ph.D. - Central Office Priority Schools Assigned Coach

- Dr. Makas has been assigned to the high school principal Jason Kiss as a coach for work with the Priority School Transformation Plan. In addition, Dr. Makas will be facilitating the Teacher Collaborative Center.

Karen Southgate - DHS Pathways to Potential

- We are currently working with Ms. Southgate to implement the Pathways to Potential program within our middle and high school.

Carrie Haubenstricker - Tuscola ISD/School Improvement

- Ms. Haubenstricker has and will continue to be consulted for the ongoing construction and implementation of a school improvement plan that is conducive to student success.

Dr. LaWanna Shelton - Michigan Department of Education (MDE)

- Dr. Shelton has been assisting Vassar High School with working through the priority schools process.

Dr. Johnathon Gould - Saginaw Valley State University Math Coach

- Dr. Gould is currently working with our 6-12 mathematics teachers. He is teaching best practice strategies and modeling.

Dr. Pamela Ross - University of Michigan - Flint Coach

- Dr. Ross is currently working with our 6-12 teachers in the areas of peer coaching and co-teaching/inclusion best teaching practice.