Preston County School District

Strategic Planning Guidance Document 2021-2026

International Center for Leadership in Education
From Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Strategic Planning Process

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Superintendent's Message

Preston County Schools
731 Preston Drive
Kingwood, WV 26537
304-329-0580
Superintendent: Stephen L. Wotring
Assistant Superintendent: Bradley Martin
Assistant Superintendent: Ange Varner

Superintendent's Message

Preston County Schools is committed to the development of our system as a leader in learning – not just within our state, but well beyond our borders. This commitment is based upon our philosophy that improvement is a continuous process grounded in research-based strategies that empower staff and students in our efforts to exceed stakeholder expectations.

Central to our continuous improvement efforts is a dedication to effective strategic planning, which includes a focus on:

- Core Values, Vision, and Mission
- Data Analysis
- Goals and Evidence-based strategies
- Continuous Improvement
- Communication

Our 2021 – 2026 was developed during the spring of the 2020 – 2021 school year. It has truly been a collaborative effort that has involved central office administration, school administrators, instructional coaches, Deans of Students, faculty, students, service personnel, parents, and community members. Information was gathered through face-to-face virtual meetings, surveys, and focus groups representing all stakeholder groups.

The key to success will be the implementation of the SMART goals outlined within the plan and the progress monitoring that will occur throughout the next several years to ensure that improvement is being realized. We are committed to being results focused in becoming a leader in learning.

The dedication, professionalism, and support of our staff, faculty, administrators, students, parents, and community is appreciated as we take on the challenging work outlined in the following pages. Together, we will achieve the vision of becoming a leader in the field of education and a leader in learning.

Stephen L. Wotring
Superintendent

Strategic Planning Leadership Team

Steve Wotring	Superintendent
Ange Varner	Asst. Superintendent
Brad Martin	Asst. Superintendent
Jeanne Dreisbach	Board of Education Member
Carol Riley	Attendance/Home School
Michelle Berry	Fed. Programs/Elementary
Brenda Layton	Fed. Programs/Secondary
Jana Miller	Special Education
Cara Radford	Special Education/PreK
Darla Moyers	Testing/Technology
Jonas Knotts	Principal, Aurora School
Michelle Martin	Asst. Principal, Bruceton School
Angie Zofchak	Dean of Students, Central Preston Middle School
Robin Davis	Instructional Coach, Fellowsville Elementary and Rowlesburg School
Samantha Peaslee	Dean of Students, Kingwood Elementary
Jim Hoit	Principal, South Preston School
Lori Baker	Dean of Students, Terra Alta/East Preston School
Darcie Barno	Asst. Principal, West Preston School

Strategic Plan Purpose

The Preston County School District Strategic Plan is a comprehensive process by which all stakeholder representation is at the table to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges that exist for the district. The ultimate goal of the process is to ensure that a strategic plan is built that unifies Preston County School District to a set of goals in which it hopes to achieve. Without a strategic plan, each individual may have his/her own set of goals; this ends up creating misalignment and creating confusion in the ultimate goal. Through a strategic planning process, the district can create one voice that moves the organization forward.

Figure: Each individual goal

Figure: Unified voice of goals

Strategic Planning Process

This component of the strategic plan provides a narrative of the strategic planning process and includes a historical record of each step of the process in the table provided. Photographs can be included to capture the process if desired.

In partnership with the International Center for Leadership in Education, Preston County School District utilized a 12-step process for the strategic planning execution. The 12-step process is listed here:

- **Step 1:** Creation of a diverse stakeholder lead team for the project.
- **Step 2:** Develop timeline of the project with benchmarks that connect to goals.
- **Step 3:** Conduct academic/behavior data analysis
- **Step 4:** Host a series of focus groups for various stakeholders.

- **Step 5:** Develop emerging themes based on data collection.
- **Step 6:** Set goals and action steps based on themes.
- **Step 7:** Make modifications to the goals based on recommendations.
- **Step 8:** Approve strategic plan by Board of Education.
- **Step 9:** Create communication plan including talking points/elevator speech for internal stakeholders.
- **Step 10:** Launch strategic plan.
- **Step 11:** Support implementation of plan with advisory sessions for district leaders.

A summary of the events that took place for the strategic planning process are as follows:

Date	Activities
January 2021	Strategic Plan concept was created.
February 2021	A diverse team of stakeholders to lead the strategic planning process was finalized.
March 19, 2021	The first leadership team meeting was held to approve the timeline, begin identifying data points to analyze, and scheduling perception data survey and focus group interviews.
March 26-April 01, 2021	Focus groups conducted.
April 2021	Academic/Behavior Analysis was conducted.
April 2021	Triangulation of data sets were presented for review.
April 01, 2021	Product Usage Report reviewed by elementary curriculum director.
May 21, 2021	The second strategic planning session was conducted.
June 01, 2021	The third strategic planning session was conducted.
June 08, 2021	The fourth strategic planning session was conducted.
June 14, 2021	1st reading of plan with Board of Education.
June 28, 2021	Final reading and approval of plan with Board of Education.

Vision & Mission Statement

Vision: Student Centered, Future Focused, Learning Together

Mission: Preston County Schools is dedicated to improving outcomes for each student in an ever-changing world through the evolution of learning for staff and students.

Core Values & Examples

Core Values:

- Trust
- Commitment
- Belief
- Passion
- Unity
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Respect
- Growth Mindset

Trust: Trust is the belief and confidence in the integrity, reliability and fairness of a person or organization

Commitment: dedicated to the success of our students, families, staff, and community members

Belief: trust, faith, and confidence in the students, staff, and education

Passion: a strong feeling or emotion in the execution of the vision and mission

Unity: an alignment of stakeholders working toward a common goal

Innovation: a new method, idea, or strategy built to support learners in achieving their goals

Integrity: is the practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values

Respect: admiration for the people or the organization's abilities, qualities, and achievements

Growth Mindset: individuals who believe their success depends on time, effort, and belief

Data Analysis, Goal Development, & Action Plan Development

Three-year historical data of academic, discipline, and other relevant information was synthesized by the International Center for Leadership in Education (see Appendices A-C). Additionally, Superintendent Steve Wotring conducted qualitative interviews with stakeholders to uncover current success and opportunities. The International Center for Leadership in Education also conducted focus groups based on the initial data collected. This data was triangulated and presented to the strategic planning team. The team analyzed the data and created themes through the use of Google Jamboard.

From the themes identified, five goals were established. The goals were written using the SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time based. Once the goals were written in this format, strategies were developed to support the goals. Each strategy was carefully crafted to maximize staff, resources, and time to reach the goals. Key Performance Indicators were developed to ensure a system was created for measuring the success after the benchmark data was identified.

Goals by 2025-2026

Goal 1: By 2025-2026, all schools will reach their annual proficiency targets each year in English/Language Arts and Math.

Goal 2: By 2025-2026, all Preston County Schools will conduct a minimum of 4 events for families throughout the year.

Goal 3: By 2025-2026, Preston County Schools will increase student engagement to 90% in all classrooms by ensuring rigorous instruction occurs.

Goal 4: By 2025-2026, 100% staff members adopt a growth mindset as they implement professional learning as it translates to increased student learning.

Goal 5: By 2025-2026, 90-100% of students report that the learning they experience is relevant to their lives.

Goal 1 Dashboard

GOAL 1: By 2025-2026, all schools will reach their annual proficiency targets each year in English/Language Arts and Math.					
#	**Strategy**	**Key Performance Indicators**	**Measurement Tool**	**Baseline**	**Owner**
1	Implement rigorous and relevant learning that is based on student evidence.	1.1.1 – % of students who achieve stretch growth	1.1.1 iReady	19%	Michelle Berry
		1.1.2 – % of students achieving proficiency	1.1.2 WVGSA	34%	
		1.1.3 – % of teachers participating in Professional Learning Teams	1.1.3 Data Team Meeting Template	NA	
2	Conduct learning walks with the RRR frameworks to ensure learning matches the level of rigor necessary for students.	1.2.1 – % of learning walks documented as developed and well developed	1.2.1 Learning Walk Template	NA	Steve Wotring
		1.2.2 – % of teachers and principals who can articulate the RRR framework	1.2.2 Survey/questionnaire	NA	

Goal 1 Action Plan

GOAL 1: By 2025-2026, all schools will reach their annual proficiency targets each year in English/Language Arts and Math.	
Strategy 1: Data Driven Instruction that is rigorous and relevant.	

Action Steps:
• Implement Student-Centered Coaching
  ○ Train instructional coaches and principals in the Student-Centered coaching model; provide ongoing coaching and support
  ○ Provide professional learning opportunities to teachers on Student-Centered coaching model
• Provide Rigorous Curriculum Design Professional Development
• Develop a Multi-Tiered System of Support in every school to meet the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional learning of every student.
• Develop micro-teaching expectations
  ○ Provide professional learning opportunities to teachers, instructional coaches and principals on micro-teaching protocol and benefits
	Lead Person(s)
	• Instructional Coaches
	• Michelle Berry
	• Brenda Layton
	• Principals
	• School Leadership Team

Strategy 2: Conduct learning walks with the RRR frameworks to ensure learning matches the level of rigor necessary for students.	
Action Steps: • Conduct quarterly data meetings with shared responsibility of data presentation ○ School leadership team will be responsible for collecting, organizing, and presenting relevant school data on a regular basis to stakeholders such as county administrators and the board of education • Create of OneDrive folder where school data will be uploaded • Create survey/questionnaire to gather data regarding teacher knowledge of RRR framework • Create of Data Team Template	**Lead Person(s)** • Steve Wotring • Ange Varner • Brad Martin • Principals

○ Provide professional learning opportunities on how to effectively conduct data team meetings using the PLC+ Framework • Provide professional learning for principals and teachers in rigorous classroom instruction and data collection	

Goal 2 Dashboard

GOAL 2: By 2025-2026, all Preston County Schools will conduct a minimum of 4 events for families throughout the year.					
#	Strategy	Key Performance Indicators	Measurement Tool	Benchmark	Owner
1	Implement a community engagement plan with at least 4 events per year for the community	2.1.1 – % of schools that present plan for a quarterly event before the beginning of the year	2.1.1 Community engagement plan	N/A	Darla Moyers
		2.1.2 – # of people who attended event	2.1.2 Sign-in sheet or record of attendees	N/A	
2	Engage families in 2-way communication to enhance the school, family, community partnership	2.2.1 – # board meetings at each area schools	2.2.1 Sign-in sheet or record of attendees	N/A	Steve Wotring
		2.2.2 – # of participants engaged in 2-way communication	2.2.2 Survey	N/A	

Goal 2 Action Plan

GOAL 1: By 2025-2026, all Preston County Schools will conduct a minimum of 4 events for families throughout the year.	
Strategy 1: Implement a community engagement plan	

Action Steps:
• Develop a quarterly plan for the year to engage the community
  ○ School administrators will work together to develop a quarterly plan for engagement events. There will be 4 community-based events outside of LSIC, parent-teacher conferences, sporting events, and booster organization events.
• Communicate school-level calendar for events with all stakeholders
  ○ A district-level calendar will be developed and regularly maintained by school administration so that events limit cross over between schools. The calendar will be communicated monthly with the community.
	Lead Person(s)
	• Principals
	• Darla Moyer

Strategy 2: Engage families in 2-way communication to enhance the school, family, community partnership	

Action Steps:
• Ensure each school's social media is active
  ○ Each school will be responsible for keeping social media accounts up to date. School-based events will be communicated through social media along with other means.
• Determine location for quarterly board meeting with community
  ○ The superintendent will determine the dates and locations for the board meetings. There will be one board meeting per quarter held in a different community throughout the county.
• Select questions for the stakeholder survey
	Lead Person(s)
	• Darla Moyers
	• Principals
	• School-based social media designee
	• Steve Wotring
	• Jeanne Dreisbach
	• County leadership team

○ Develop measurable questions for the family survey to provide viable data	

Goal 3 Dashboard

GOAL 3: By 2025-2026, Preston County Schools will increase student engagement to 90% in all classrooms by ensuring rigorous instruction occurs.					
#	Strategy	Key Performance Indicators	Measurement Tool	Benchmark	Owner
1	Provide professional learning that defines and increases student engagement.	3.1.1 – % of all teachers participate in engagement PD	3.1.1 Sign-in sheet	N/A	Brenda Layton
		3.1.2 – % of teachers self-reporting increases in engagement based on professional learning	3.1.2 Survey	N/A	
2	Provide learning experiences that encourage and promote student engagement.	3.2.1 – % of students engaged in learning in each classroom	3.2.1 Engagement Rubric	N/A	
		3.2.2 – % of schools meeting quarterly with county office team to discuss engagement strategies	3.2.2 District level calendar	N/A	

Goal 3 Action Plan

GOAL 1: Through 2025-2026, Preston County Schools will increase student engagement to 90% in all classrooms.	
Strategy 1: Provide professional learning that defines and increases student engagement.	

Action Steps:
• Design and provide research based professional learning
  ○ Work with the county office to create professional development for the district and schools.
• Design and implement a county-wide protocol for measuring and discussing engagement in classrooms
  ○ Create a uniform measure for monitoring engagement in classrooms. Develop a county-wide plan for school-based discussions around engagement.
• Ensure data-based engagement conversations are a part of every PLC
  ○ Engagement is listed on every agenda and PLC minutes are turned into school administration. Data is prepared and provided to teachers in advance to each PLC.
• Select questions for the stakeholder survey
  ○ Develop measurable questions for the staff survey to provide viable data.
	Lead Person(s)
	• Michelle Berry/Brenda Layton
	• Principals
	• Inst. coaches
	• Michelle Berry/Brenda Layton
	• Principals
	• Inst. Coaches
	• County leadership team

Strategy 2: Provide learning experiences that encourage and promote student engagement.	

Action Steps:
• Provide training on the engagement rubric
  ○ Train the administrative staff and instructional coaches on using the engagement rubric provided in "The Instructional Change Agent."
• Research and implement an engagement walkthrough format
  ○ The team will research the best format to use for engagement walkthroughs across Preston County.
• Develop calendar for data conversations with county office team
	Lead Person(s)
	• Michelle Berry, Brenda Layton
	• School admin
	• County leadership team
	• Steve Wotring
	• Darla Moyers
	• Inst. Coaches

○ The superintendent and the county office staff, with input from principals, will create a yearlong calendar for data meetings. • Online platform for teachers to share best practices/resources ○ We will create an online resource hub for teachers to share lessons, ideas, best practices, and various resources to increase engagement. • Provide coaching to teachers focused on student engagement ○ School administration and instructional coaches will use walkthrough data to determine strengths and weaknesses in each classroom. Administration and instructional coaches will provide coaching and resources to struggling teachers.	• Principals • Inst. Coaches

Goal 4 Dashboard

GOAL 4: By 2025-2026, 100% staff members adopt a growth mindset as they implement professional learning as it translates to increased student learning.					
#	Strategy	Key Performance Indicators	Measurement Tool	Benchmark	Owner
1	Utilize student-centered professional collaboration so that student evidence shifts instruction for learning.	4.1.1 – % of grade levels/departments have all common formative assessments written	4.1.1 Common Formative Assessment bank by grade level/department	N/A	Member of RCD Team
		4.1.2 – % of Schools with a structured professional collaboration schedule and full implementation of that schedule	4.1.2 Quarterly Data Talks	N/A	
		4.1.3 – % of students who demonstrate performance/increase growth based on common formative assessments	4.1.3 Common Formative Assessment growth report	N/A	
2	Build strategic professional learning experiences based on staff communication as evident by student learning.	4.2.1 – % of staff indicating which professional learning they need to meet student goals	4.2.1 Professional Learning Interest Survey	N/A	Brenda Layton
		4.2.1 – % of staff self-report the relevance of professional learning after experiencing the event(s)	4.2.1 Post-Survey of Professional Learning	N/A	

Goal 4 Action Plan

GOAL 1: By 2025-2026, 100% staff members see the relevance and implement professional learning as it translates to increased student learning.	
Strategy 1: Utilize student-centered professional collaboration so that student evidence shifts instruction for learning.	

Action Steps:
• District Communication
  ○ The district will communicate the relevance of the professional development planned for teachers, how it will impact their classroom and how it connects to our county strategic plan.
• RCD - Common Assessment Development
  ○ A select group of teachers, instruction coaches and admin will work through the Summer of 2021 and the 2021-22 school year to develop/revisit power/priority standards in ELA grades K-12 and Math grades 6-12. In addition this team will develop instructional roadmaps, common assessments and until plans that will unify teachers across common grades and subject areas.
• Instructional Coaches - Coaching Cycles
  ○ Each school has an Instructional Coach assigned. These coaches will work one on one with teachers to help improve student achievement in the classroom.
• PLCs
  ○ Every school will be required to have PLC teams, a structured schedule/plan, agendas and leaders in place for the 2021-22 school year.
  ○ All school administrators will participate in a book study (PLC+) throughout Summer 2021.
• Admin Team - Building level Quarterly Data Talks
  ○ County office team members visit schools to discuss student data and how it is impacting achievement.
• Instructional Leader Walkthroughs
	Lead Person(s)
	• Brenda Layton, Michelle Berry, Jana Miller
	• Michelle Berry, Brenda Layton
	• Instructional Coaches
	• Book study - Steve Wotring, Michelle Berry, Brenda Layton, Darla Moyers
	• Steve Wotring
	• Building Administrator

○ Walkthroughs designed to target specific implementation of data driven instruction, curriculum initiatives, student engagement, rigor, high impact instructional strategies, classroom expectations, mastery instruction, student ownership, etc. • Organize Staff Dev Schedules by goal ○ When sending out communication about staff development, it will be listed under the targeted goal as it relates to the strategic plan. • Data Teams ○ Establish teams and determine resources for monitoring and accountability (such as templates). ○ Ensure that the data team process is supported in PLC teams.	
Strategy 2: Build strategic professional learning experiences based on staff communication as evident by student learning.	
Action Steps: • Surveys with "the why" listed on the survey ○ Develop New Post-PD survey form to be used in all PD sessions beginning with the 2021-22 school year. • Encourage an attitude of continued professional growth (school admin, written communication) ○ Principals must verbally communicate the need for ALL to be life-long learners. ○ Written communications must reflect the need for life-long learning. ○ Admin must leave the principal's meetings as a united front. "We can disagree in this room, but once we leave, we're on the same page, sharing the same message" • Staff Development Council. ○ A professional and service staff development council is established and meets quarterly to discuss staff needs. • Staff Choice Sessions ○ When possible, staff will be given a choice of relevant professional development activities so they may choose the ones that they feel they need the most. • County office - Weekly Staff Meetings - Data Discussions, discuss strategic plan goals, share relevant information to establish a consistent message from the county office.	Lead Person(s) • Brenda Layton • Curriculum Team Member (volunteers?) • County and Building Administration • Steve Wotring

Goal 5 Dashboard

GOAL 5: By 2025-2026, 90-100% of students report that the learning they experience is relevant to their lives.					
#	Strategy	Key Performance Indicators	Measurement Tool	Benchmark	Owner
1	Students understand the standards and goals they are working towards accomplishing	5.1.1 – % of teachers with power standards/daily goals posted in the classroom	5.1.1 Walkthrough (admin or coaches)	N/A	Katie McDonald
		5.1.2 – % of students who can articulate how the standards/goals supports their learning	5.2.1 Student Interview (Walkthrough or advisory group)	N/A	Katie McDonald
		5.1.3 – % or students at mastery or above	5.3.1 Proficiency Scales	N/A	Katie McDonald
2	Utilize relationship strategies to ensure students feel connected to staff and classmates and feel vulnerable in taking risks in their learning.	5.2.1. – % of classrooms demonstrating developed/well developed on relationships rubric	5.2.1 Relationships rubric	N/A	Attendance Director
		5.2.2 – % of students who indicate that what they are learning is relevant to their lives	5.2.1 Student survey	N/A	Attendance Director

Goal 5 Action Plan

GOAL 1: By 2025-2026, 90-100% of students report that the learning they experience is relevant to their lives.	
Strategy 1: Students understand the standards and goals they are working towards accomplishing	

Action Steps:
• Use RCD process to determine common goals for each grade level
  ○ Lessons designed in this process will have specific student tasks that are designed to show relevance to the real world.
• Adopt a uniform way of communicating the daily goals/statements in the classroom
  ○ Teachers will display 1 clear, daily goal/standards somewhere, clearly visible in the front of the classroom. This should change daily as the instruction changes. A full list of all standards for the year being posted in the room does not meet this requirement.
• Develop Walkthrough form with target questions
  ○ School leadership teams will develop a district, consistent form that targets the goals and priorities of the school (Part A/Part B). These forms will be shared with county office staff at the beginning of each school year. The data from these forms will be shared at each quarterly data meeting.
• Use the 3 Questions Rubric from "The Instructional Change Agent"
  ○ A student survey will be administered to track student awareness of what they are learning. This survey will be used as part of the walkthrough process. The data from this survey will be shared at each quarterly data meeting.
• Student Data Conversations
  ○ Students will discuss the 3 Question Rubric, iReady data, dolce & fluency, behavior data, attendance issues etc. These conversations should take place quarterly. A student may have this discussion with admin, coaches, classroom teachers, LINKS/Advisory teachers, etc. A building plan will be provided to the county office at the beginning of the year.
• Design Template for Student data talks plan (to be turned into county office)
	Lead Person(s)
	• Teachers, Admin to monitor
	• Building Principals
	• Instructional Coaches
	• School Staff
	• County Office Staff

Strategy 2: Utilize relationship strategies to ensure students feel connected to staff and classmates and feel vulnerable in taking risks in their learning.	

Action Steps:
• Professional learning focused on the Relationships Rubric
  o Plan a professional development session in late fall to build teacher capacity around the use of the relationships rubric
• Utilize relationships rubric to support classrooms building capacity to developed- and well-developed levels of relationships.
  o School leaders work with ICLE coaches to advise and recommend strategies to support implementation of the rubric
• Utilize Student Support Team/social workers/counselors to support tier 2 and tier 3 strategies of identified at-risk students
  o Upon referral from teacher/school, SST/social workers develop a plan to ensure students are connected in- and out-of the school.
• Implement the Character Strong & Purposeful People curriculum.
  o Teachers use the curriculum weekly to provide a tier 1 curricular approach to social/emotional learning (SEL)
	Lead Person(s)
	• Brenda Layton
	• Building level admin and coaches
	• Attendance Director
	• Building Principals and Instructional Coaches

Communication Plan

Preston County School District will develop a communication plan upon the approval of the approval of the Board of Education.

Appendix

Appendix A: Survey Data, Spring 2021

Preston County Schools

Family/Community Survey Results
337 Respondents

1. What do we want to keep?

- 155 respondents (46%) referenced in-person learning. Of those…
  - 95 respondents stated that we needed to return to in-person learning.
  - 37 additional responses expressed favor in maintaining remote learning on snow days or illness days so that these days did not have to be made up and the calendar dates were firm.
  - 23 additional responses expressed favor for maintaining remote Fridays.
- 27 respondents (8%) favored keeping the virtual schooling option.
- 17 respondents (5%) favored the blended model of 2 days in-person/3 days virtual
- 23 respondents (7%) favored maintaining the platforms of SeeSaw and Schoology. Other programs were also mentioned such as iReady and NearPod.
- 17 respondents (5%) like the block schedule at Preston High and their shortened day. References were made that the shortened opportunities helped students who had to travel longer distances, assisted those who worked at jobs outside of school and allowed for older siblings to provide care for younger students.
- 14 respondents (4%) specifically mentioned the communication received from the schools and county.
- 14 respondents (4%) specifically referenced the live teaching that was occurring during remote instruction.
- 13 respondents (4%) were thankful for the 1:1 devices supplied to students.
- 28 respondents (8%) felt that nothing from this year was worth keeping.
- 15 respondents (4%) were totally satisfied with everything this year.
- Other items to keep were as follows:
  - 8 respondents stated paper/pencil activities
  - 5 respondents like the safety protocols that have been implemented.
  - 4 respondents liked flexibility in timelines for assignments
  - 3 respondents like that Preston County Schools is community based and has a family atmosphere.

- 2 respondents favored PHS lunch time being continued in their LINKS.
- 2 respondents felt that PCS always put children first.

2. What do we need to fix?

- 93 respondents (28%) spoke of the need to return to in-person instruction.
- 72 respondents (21%) felt there was a discrepancy across the county in the level of teaching during remote days. Some schools were doing live instruction while others rarely did. Others expressed frustrations in communication with their teachers in trying to receive timely feedback. There was a general frustration at the lack of live teaching at the high school.
- 32 respondents (9.5%) spoke of the difficulty navigating the platforms and that some of the platforms were not user friendly. Although some spoke very positively – others had difficulty. Complaints about SeeSaw centered around the difficulty of parents being able to see completed work or get feedback until it ended up in the student's journal. Concerns around Schoology were more general in nature.
- 29 respondents (8.6%) spoke directly about the lack of high-speed Internet access.
- 12 respondents (3.6%) felt there should be more paper packets offered to students as opposed to having so much screen time.
- 9 respondents (2.7%) felt there needed to be more tutoring and extra help opportunities for students who were falling behind.
- 9 respondents (2.7%) spoke of the workload. Some felt it was too much and others felt not enough.
- 9 respondents (2.7%) felt that the virtual program needed to be improved in general.
- 7 respondents (2%) wanted snow days to remain snow days and not have remote learning.
- 7 respondents (2%) spoke of needing to improve the grading system.
- 13 respondents (3.8%) felt that nothing needed to be fixed and all was working well.
- 5 respondents (1.4%) felt that everything needed to be fixed.
- Other ideas mentioned within the survey to fix were the following:
  - Keep increasing the cleaning protocols
  - Increase accountability for parents
  - Put more of a focus on academics as opposed to sports
  - Change the start time for school to a later time
  - Keyboarding offered at younger grades
  - More life skill classes
  - More multicultural programs
  - Increase mental health care programs

- Alternative schools for behavior problems
- Eliminate iPads and laptops for elementary and middle school
- Don't do 2 hour delays
- Mr. Wotring is too detached from what is going on
- Keep class sizes small

3. Where do you want to see Preston County Schools in 5 years?

- 91 respondents (27%) hope to see schools open to in-person instruction 5 days/week.
- 40 respondents (11.9%) wished to see an improvement in student achievement.
- 29 respondents (8.6%) would like to see an improvement in school culture where everyone is valued and there is a plan for discipline issues.
- 24 respondents (7.1%) wish to see improved instructional practices and more program offerings.
- 22 respondents (6.5%) are pleased with the direction the county is moving and just wants to see continued improvement.
- 17 respondents (5%) hope to see improvement with technology and infrastructure within Preston County.
- 16 respondents (4.7%) hope to see improvement in the virtual school offerings.
- 6 respondents (1.8%) stated that they feel in the future parents will opt for students attending charter schools.
- 5 respondents (1.5%) stated they would like to see deconsolidation of schools in the future.
- 5 respondents (1.5%) hoped for better funding for schools in the next 5 years.
- 5 respondents (1.5%) hoped the remote snow days would continue.
- 4 respondents (1.2%) wanted a return to textbooks and the elimination of technology.
- 3 respondents (1%) mentioned the following:
  - Improved communication
  - Improved buildings/cleaning
  - Less focus on testing
  - More extracurricular activities
- 2 respondents mentioned the following:
  - More partnerships (Farm-to-Table)
  - Keep snow days
  - Less focus on sports
  - Qualified staff
  - More focus on social-emotional learning

    - More summer programs
    - More police in schools
- The other items were mentioned:
    - Improved meal offerings
    - More options post-graduation
    - Close small schools
    - Keep small schools open
    - Field trips

Appendix B: Data Analytics

Data Analysis
Preston School District

Type: **Academic**
Assessment/Data Analyzed: LEA Strategic Plan Academic Data-ELA and Math, MAP Assessments-ELA and Math, Reading Lexile Distribution
Summary of Assessment/Data Points
• The LEA Strategic Academic Plan provides data over a three-year period (2016-2017 through 2018-2019. The data show ELA and Math proficiency and ELA and Math Academic Progress for all students by status (economically-disadvantaged, EL learners, foster care, homeless, military connected, and students with disabilities) by race (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino Native, Multi-racial, Native Hawaiian, and White), and by gender (male and female). • MAP Assessments for 10 schools (6 Pre-K-8, 2 elementary, 1 middle, and 1 high school). MAP Assessments begin in grade one. • Reading Lexile Distribution in grades 3-11 in 4 categories (percentage of students below grade level, grade level band to proficiency, proficiency to top of CCR band, and above top of CCR band.)
Key Findings of Assessment
• For 2018-19 Preston's Annual Target Goal for ELA proficiency for all students was 44.57%. Preston proficiency rating fell below their goal, scoring 38.9%, and below the state rating of 46.14%. • 2018-19, in ELA Proficiency, Preston scored below the state in all categories in student status, race, and gender. Except for Black or African American students, who exceeded the state by 2.4%. • 2018-19, a compilation of all students showed Preston's academic progress to be 45.99% which was greater than the state's 45% progress. • 2018-2019, academic progress in student status subgroups: economically-disadvantaged and foster care students scored above the state; homeless and students with disabilities scored below the state. For academic progress in race, Black students, Hispanic students, and White students scored above the state; multi-racial scored below the state with 42.86%. • 2016-17 presents the best data for ELA student proficiency. In 2017-18, there is a decrease in all students' proficiency level and there is a drop in every category with data, except for students with disabilities and multi-racial. The is no comparative data for 2016-17 to 2017-18 for foster care, homeless, and military connected students.

- 2018-19 ELA proficiency data: economically-disadvantaged stayed the same as in 2017-18 but was still 10% below its 2016-17 data. Foster care, homeless, and students with disabilities dropped from the 2017-18.
- For race, Asians stayed the same at 50% in 2018-19 and 2017-18 but was still 50% below 2016-17. Black, Hispanic, and multi-racial student achievement dropped. For Black and Hispanic students there has been a consistent drop in data since 2016-17. White students gained in English proficiency in 2018-19 but did not surpass the 2016-17 data.
- For 2018-19, in Math Proficiency, Preston scores below the state in all categories in student status, race, and gender.
- Preston's Annual Target Goal for Math for all students in the 2018-19 school year was 33.22%. It achieved 30.32%. That is a gain over the previous two years, but still below its set goal by 2.9% and 8.42% below the state rating.
- 2018-19, a compilation of all students showed Preston's academic progress to be 37.32% which is below the state average of 43.84%.
- 2018-2019, academic progress in student status in all categories except multi-racial students scored below the state average.
- In all Math proficiency categories that received data, there was improvement from 2016-17 to 2017-18 except in Hispanic students. In 2018-19, all categories dropped except for foster care and multi-racial students.
- Two MAP Assessment Benchmarks were given in Reading and Math to all Preston Schools. The chart below depicts data by grade increasing or decreasing from benchmark one to benchmark two.

- Elementary MAP Assessment Benchmarks. The chart below depicts data by grade increasing or decreasing from benchmark one to benchmark two.

Elementary MAP Benchmarks	MAP Data Increased by grade	MAP ELA Data remained the same by grade	MAP Data Decreased by grade	MAP Math Data remained the same by grade
Fellowsville ELA	2, 3 Grade 1, no comparative data	5	4	--
Fellowsville Math	2, 3, 5 Grade 1, no comparative data	--	4	--

Kingwood ELA	2, 3, 4 Grade 1 & 5, no comparative data	--	--	--

Kingwood Math	2, 3 Grade 1 & 5, no comparative data	--	--	4

- K-8 MAP Assessment Benchmarks. The chart below depicts ELA and Math data by grade increasing or decreasing from benchmark one to benchmark two.

K-8 MAP Benchmarks	MAP Data Increased by grade	MAP ELA Data remained the same by grade	MAP Data Decreased by grade	MAP Math Data remained the same by grade
Aurora ELA	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 Grade 1, no comparative data	--	5	--
Aurora Math	1, 2, 3, 4	--	5, 6, 7, 8	--
Bruceton ELA	2, 3, 4, 6, 7 Grade 1, no comparative data	--	8	--
Bruceton Math	4, 5, 7	--	2, 3, 6	8
Rowlesburg ELA	8 Grade 1, no comparative data	2, 4	3, 5, 6, 7	--
Rowlesburg Math	6, 7	--	2, 3, 4, 5, 8	--
South Preston ELA	2 Grades 3-8, no comparative data	--	1	--
South Preston Math	1, 2 Grades 3-6, no comparative data	--	7, 8	--
Terra Alta ELA	2, 3, 6 Grade 1, no comparative data	--	4, 5, 7, 8	--
Tera Alta Math	1, 2, 3, 4, 5,	--	6, 7, 8	--
West Preston ELA	2, 3, 7	--	4, 5, 6, 8	--

	Grade 1, no comparative data			
West Preston Math	1, 2, 3, 5,7	--	4, 6, 8	--

- Middle School MAP Assessment Benchmarks. The chart below depicts ELA and Math data by grade increasing or decreasing from benchmark one to benchmark two.

Middle School MAP Benchmarks	MAP Data Increased by grade	MAP ELA Data remained the same by grade	MAP Data Decreased by grade	MAP Math Data remained the same by grade
Central Preston ELA	5, 7	--	6, 8	--
Central Preston Math	7	--	6, 8	5

- High School MAP Assessment Benchmarks. The chart below depicts ELA and Math data by grade increasing or decreasing from benchmark one to benchmark two.

High School MAP Benchmarks	MAP Data Increased by grade	MAP ELA Data remained the same by grade	MAP Data Decreased by grade	MAP Math Data remained the same by grade
Preston High School ELA	--	9	10, 11	--
Preston High School Math	10, 11	--	9	--

- In Lexile distribution, grades levels 3-11 were assessed. The only grade level to score above 50% at or above proficient was 11th grade with 53.51%. All other grade levels scored below 50% with 3rd grade scoring the lowest with 65.94% below grade level and grade level to proficiency.

Considerations/Implications

- Overall, in comparative academic proficiency in ELA and math, Preston scores below state averages.
- Subgroups academic proficiency in math is extremely concerning.
- ELA scores and especially Math MAP scores show there is substantial need for improvement.
- Lexile Reading levels are below 50% in all grade levels but one.

Type: **Behavior/Discipline**
Assessment/Data Analyzed: LEA Strategic Plan-Attendance and Behavior Data
Summary of Assessment/Data Points
The assessed data covers a 3-year span (2017-18 through 2019-20) of the percentage of students with no out of school suspensions (exceeding levels 3 and 4). All student data was displayed and broken into subgroup status, race, and gender.
Key Findings of Assessment
• All student behavior data exceeded the state's requirement for no out of school suspension. • Within the status subgroups, economically-disadvantaged, EL learners, homeless, and students with disabilities exceeded the state's requirements for no out of school rating. One subgroup, foster care met the state's requirement. • Within the race category, Asian, Black or African American, Multi-racial, and White exceeded the state's requirements for no out of school suspensions. For Hispanic students, no out of school suspensions met state requirements
Considerations/Implications
• Continue behavior management programs. They are working. • Less behavior allows for more teaching and learning.

Type: **Human Capital**
Assessment/Data Analyzed: LEA Strategic Plan – Educator Effectiveness Data
Summary of Assessment/Data Points
Educator Effectiveness data from 2021 and from 2022. Teacher evaluation data has four categories: Distinguished, Accomplished, Emerging, and Unsatisfactory. Data was also presented that show teachers with 0-3 years-experience at Title 1 schools and non-Title I schools.
Key Findings of Assessment
• 2018-2019 teacher evaluations: 85.02 % of Preston teachers scored accomplished which was above the state average of 81.45%. • 2019-2020 teacher evaluations: 89.16% of Preston teachers scored accomplished which was above the state average of 82.46%. • Over a 3-year span, 2017-18 to 2019-20, Preston averaged higher than the state in teachers with 0-3 years-experience in Title-1 schools. • Over a 3-year span, 2017-18 to 2019-20, Preston averaged higher than the state with teachers in non-Title1 schools.
Considerations/Implications
• Consider administrator training for teacher evaluations. • Consider moving experienced teachers to Title 1 schools.

Final Summary

Academic

- Pinpoint academic weakness and apply instructional strategies to strengthen academic proficiency, academic progress, MAP data, and levels of reading.
- In ELA proficiency, what happened between 2016-2019? In most categories, the data drops or is inconsistent over the three-year period.
- Math data is frequently lower than ELA data.
- Status student sub-groups score low consistently.
- Students of Color, except Asians in ELA, score lower than White students in ELA and Math.
- In grades K-8 schools, grades 6-8 MAP Benchmark Assessments in ELA and Math are lower than other grades.
- High School MAP Benchmark assessments--only one out of four assessments (2 ELA and 2 math) increase in data.
- Consider trainings of SEL and cultural relevance to address learning deficits in sub-groups and students of color.
- Programs need to be put in place to assure that students can read well by 3rd grade.
- All teachers need considerable training in rigorous instructional strategies to teach the state standards, relevance training, and relationship building training to improve student academic achievement.

Behavior/Discipline

- Continue strategies that are providing such positive results.
- With so little behavior, academic achievement data should increase.

Human Capital

- On both sets of data, teachers overwhelmingly rated accomplished and outscored the state. However, the accomplished teacher rating does not match lagging student achievement data. If teachers are truly accomplished, student achievement should improve.
- Administrative training should be provided on Collaborative Instructional Review (CIR) rubric to determine an "accomplished" teacher.
- The academic needs of a Title-1 school can be great and a large number of inexperienced teachers can hinder the process of teaching and learning.
- By having more experienced teachers in Title 1 schools, students would benefit academically.

Appendix C: Focus Group Interviews

Focus Group Interviews
Preston School District

Type: **Student Focus Groups**
Summary of Session(s)
ICLE interviewed a total of ten students for this focus group. The questions asked were designed to provide a transparent understanding of students' perceptions of their own school careers. Seven questions were asked during the interview process. Those questions centered around describing classwork and the content being learned, relationships with teachers and administrators, describing strategies used to assess student understanding besides grades, instructional strategies that are used to promote student understanding and lastly, giving students an opportunity to voice their own ideas of what the future of Preston County Schools could look like. Students were honest and upfront in answering questions and shared very personal stories with me as examples of some of the things discussed.
Key Findings from Group(s)
• Classwork, in general, is easy, simple and repetitive with little or no time spent in collaborative groups to help in deepening understanding of what is being learned. • Classwork rarely connects to anything beyond school and that's frustrating for students, although currently, students are involved in some work that makes sense beyond school - argumentative writing in english class, balancing a checkbook, relevant because of the pandemic, etc. • Students expressed that all work should be relevant; not just certain times of the year. • Students appreciate the teachers that constantly make connections to the real world and involve them in hands-on activities that help them learn more effectively instead of giving them worksheets, videos, copying teacher's powerpoint slides and lecture. • Providing choice and voice is something the students value in terms of relationships. They feel teachers that do this are valuing them as equal members in class and they aren't simply being told what to do and how to do it. • Accepting ALL students for who they are and respecting their choices helps them feel safe and cared for.

- Students shared that when teachers stand in the hallways with smiles on their faces, make eye contact with them and ask about their personal lives, it makes them feel more connected and valued.
- Students have appreciated block scheduling because it has created more time for them to develop relationships with their teachers.
- Students find classes that are game-based, provide visuals, answer their questions thoughtfully, push them in their own thinking, allow for questions, provide examples of how it would "look" in the real world, have structure and high expectations, and consider how quickly they become bored are the classes that challenge them the most and are the ones they look forward to attending.
- Students voiced concerns about learning styles when asked about how teachers help them and their classmates learn in different ways. Many reiterated game-based learning and sitting in classes where they are set up to support very informal conversational settings. One student stated that it just feels "right" when in that space.
- Students shared they need teachers to understand how much they need to stand up, get out of their desks and talk to others in class.
- Bell ringers, exit tickets, foldables, verbal feedback, working collaboratively, discussions and providing open-ended questions to answer were all examples given of how teachers let students know they have learned what was expected besides giving a letter grade.
- EdPuzzle, NearPod, iReady, Kahoot, NewsELA, Discussion posts and games are some of the resources used by teachers to help students learn concepts and skills.
- When asked about district changes in the next five years, the following responses were given:
    - "This is very important - The Green Project - I researched A LOT on this subject - I want to see the color green everywhere, longer breaks class to class, chill breaks to sit and relax, we are so stressed and struggling right now - and there's been nothing said or done since. Frustrating."
    - "Longer lunch breaks so we can just be"
    - "Gum ban - really affected me - it helps a lot of us focus and I've heard lots of excuses from teachers and principals (rolling my eyes) but that wouldn't happen if we could have gum. Candy helps with focus - especially sour candy - anxiety, panic attacks, strong flavors cause my attention to that and bring me back peacefully. Would help so much!"
    - "Pinned up energy, chew gum, sour candy and would help students focus. Some students would make better choices with behavior if

there were options for them at schools to support their emotional needs - like a Green Space."

- "Change in chairs - variety of chairs - yoga balls, beanbags, office chairs has helped students focus - higher participation and test scores."
- "I'm very tall - sitting in those chairs all day hurts my back. Adapting to meet the needs of us would be very helpful."
- "Outdoor learning, please!"
- "First Week of school should be totally about finding out how we learn best and then use that information to plan for us."
- "Mental health programs - stress, anxiety, sports, and teachers don't understand I have other classes and due dates are ridiculous"
- "Teachers need to collaborate so there's more connections between subjects and homework."
- "We aren't just students, we have lives outside of school, band, theater, all these different things, we work, it's hard to have all of that homework on top of all those things - it's not good for our mental health."
- "I've lost all interest in my art and instruments ; no motivation at all since Covid so do everything you possibly can to keep us IN school."
- "Higher expectations for students and better ways of teaching ALL students so we are less depressed and anxious all the time."
- "Get rid of iReady - don't agree with it at all - but it affects our **entire** grade."
- "Standardized testing puts so much pressure on students. I don't agree with it, I am a bad test-taker.I feel awful about myself."
- "Too much unnecessary stuff done in class - constantly testing and assessing - wasting my time - spend more time deepening understanding - state and school mandated stuff that doesn't make us feel good about ourselves."
- "Get rid of all these time consuming assignments with no long term learning effects. What's the point?"
- "Give us Choice Boards and other meaningful learning activities to help us show you what we understand."
- "Upcoming Freshmen - shouldn't be pressured to take classes above your level. That happened to me and it really depressed me because I was making bad grades. Honors classes are good for some people but not others so stop pushing us to take them."
- "Need time to meet with students that have taken the classes - we would know more of what we were getting into."

- "Give me some choice as to which classes I can take - I am drawn and passionate about art and I wasn't allowed to take them. Who cares if I take two art classes? It's what I'm passionate about but yet I'm constantly told NO."

Considerations/Implications

- Collaboration vs. group work
- None of the students shared anything about the relationships they had with administration.
- How to create a rigorous and relevant learning environment that respects all learning styles.

Type: Parent, Volunteer and Community Members Focus Group
Summary of Session(s)
ICLE interviewed eight participants for this focus group session. Four of the participants were parents, two were school volunteers and two were community members. The questions asked were designed to give parents, community members and volunteers a voice in this process and to provide a transparent and informative view of the Preston County Schools based on their perceptions. Seven questions were asked during the interview process. Those questions centered around how challenging, engaging and exciting the classwork is, sharing examples of how teachers care about their children, the conversations they have with their children regarding school experiences, learning styles and how those affect understanding, communication between school and home about learning goals, and lastly, their thinking and input about how Preston County Schools could grow in the next five years. Participants were eager to answer the questions given and thoughtfully responded to each. The parents and school volunteers were more vocal than the community members, mainly because most of the questions could only be answered if you were a parent or someone who visited and worked in schools regularly.
Key Findings from Group(s)
• Associated hard and difficult to the term 'challenging' • Nothing has been too challenging for their children • Sometimes it's not about the content but about how it's being delivered by the teacher that makes it either difficult or easy • Hasn't been engaging or fun because teachers aren't teaching to the way children learn • Using the word "some" was the trend of this interview - some teachers shine, are invested and go beyond but there is a fair number of teachers that "don't care either way" if they are building caring and respectful relationships with all students. • This group felt that the principal makes the difference with relationships being established and creating the "feel" of the building - one who seeks advice from teachers, shows true leadership and is instructionally sound. • A few examples were given as to what individual schools have done, especially during the pandemic, to let students know who much they care about them: (direct quotes)   ○ "When students were quarantined after being in school, teacher became very emotional, and his actions prove he cares so much" (sports-related team)

    - "Noticing a child sitting alone at a lunch table, a teacher put another student with her because she cares about all her students."
    - "Parade for teachers to go by everyone's houses"
    - "Dropped off Easter baskets at all students' houses with sweet, caring messages attached"
    - "A tragic accident in my own family and the entire Preston County system was so supportive"
    - "Schools seem to be one of the hubs where support starts coming from"
- When asked about what children talk about and share in terms of school experiences, almost all responded by sharing, in general, they don't talk about academics unless there is a connection to hands-on, relevant learning like projects (Greenhouse). Conversations revolve around friendships and positive interactions with others, as well as, the relationships they have with their coaches and teammates.
- Learning styles seem to be addressed when parents have discussions with teachers about their child's individual needs, but nothing beyond that.
- At the high school level, there are options for students so they can tailor their schedules to address their own learning styles.
- A lot of conversation about passive learning and how that seems to be the norm at the majority of schools. This was said and agreed upon by several in the group: "Teachers spend too much time dealing with the two separate extremes in their classrooms - bright and struggling. Too much time sitting and listening from a lecture or powerpoint presentation - Passive learning isn't the way to today's students. Schools need to be more supportive in this understanding in order to address learning styles more appropriately."
- One parent gave an example of teachers being "mortified" by getting tables in their classrooms. It was shared that teachers are way too nervous to try new things. Hands-on and active learning ("louder and controlled chaos") makes teachers very nervous, yet is what today's kids need to be more successful and invested in learning.
- Major gaps and concerns about knowing where their children are and where they are headed in terms of mastery of learning goals. One parent shared that there is no transparency to the kids or parents and everyone feels lost.
- Not a lot of outcomes-based learning where students know their strengths and next steps through goal-setting.
- Parents shared concerns about grades vs. learning and mastery with one stating, "It should NEVER be about the letter grade."
- When asked about what makes a lesson exciting for students and what are some of their comments, parents focused on the exciting part but could not share many examples of comments made by their children.

- All participants agreed that relevance to the real world, helping students make connections from content being learned to future goals, hands-on, experiential learning, fun tasks, seeing excitement in their childrens' eyes is what it takes to help them understand and find excitement in learning, in general.
- Participants unanimously shared that the mentality "it's always been done this way" is detrimental to growth and schools and there is an enormous need to develop a growth mindset attitude across the board.
- When asked the question about what they would like the district to look like in five years, the following responses were given:
    - Creating a public Montessori school within a school
    - Improvements in relationships between schools and community
    - Networking with other schools around the state and country that have done an effective job with what works and what doesn't work for the 21st child.
    - Community-based mindset - reach out to businesses and connect them to the schools (Read-Aloud Program)
    - Accountability for our students and the work they are doing
    - Pushing for higher expectations instead of saying "these kids can't"
    - Focus groups that will work to get the uninvolved involved. There is only so much the PTO can do.
    - Offering more CTE programs
    - Making sure the district is Remote Ready - broadband access to all
    - Ways to develop the skills and knowledge to troubleshoot, problem solve, persevere, be self-directed and think critically in a relevant and meaningful way for all students
    - Internships for high schoolers
    - Transparency
    - Too much emphasis on STEM and we need to promote all careers equally
    - Field trips into the community to develop a deeper understanding of how everything is interconnected together
    - Academic possibilities to build a student's resume - Quiz Bowls, etc.
    - Foreign language should be expanded into all middle and high schools.
    - Entrepreneurship should be encouraged and all classes promote this concept
    - Comprehensive high school - build on prompting the opportunity to take a higher level math class AND a CTE class simultaneously - working with the whole child
    - Flexibility to get students workforce ready

Considerations/Implications
• There is a big disconnect between school, home and community. • A focus on active learning K - 12 - what it looks like, what it sounds like, and what it feels like in classrooms when students are actively involved and engaged in their own learning processes. • Consistent classroom coaching and workshops with a focus on Instructional strategies that impact different learning styles should be considered • Creating a growth mindset from district-level down to students is needed to build empowerment and motivation.

Type: Staff Focus Groups
Summary of Session(s)
ICLE interviewed three participants for this focus group session. Two of the participants were teachers' assistants and one was the head custodian at one of the schools. The questions asked were designed to give them a voice in this process and to provide a transparent and informative view of the Preston County Schools based on their perceptions. Seven questions were asked during the interview process. Those questions centered around how many opportunities they have to discuss student learning with others, describing adult relationships with students, ways students learn the information being taught, meeting the needs of all students and how their learning is assessed, and sharing their thoughts on how Preston County Schools could look in the next five years. Of the three participants, only two were vocal, therefore, most of the responses are from those two individuals. Some of the questions were difficult for the custodian to answer because he isn't in classrooms and doesn't have opportunities to see learning in action.
Key Findings from Group(s)
• One of the two teacher assistants has played a big part in the success of students because she is constantly part of discussions and articulated how this has happened with her teacher treating her as an equal member which has given her insights to what is going on and how she can create consistency within that context - she said that she works with a "fantastic teacher who involves me in everything". • The same assistant shared that planning and delivering instruction has helped her nurture students, help them solve problems, point them in the right direction and she finds this very rewarding. • The LInks class at the high school level is used as an effective way to build relationships with students. Students feel connected with their Links teachers - good discussions and students have a voice. • Character Strong has helped the custodian build relationships with kids. He said, "I"ve built so many relationships using this program and think it should be accelerated throughout the county and get the community involved." • Schoology, EdPuzzle, NearPod are used consistently to help students learn the information that is taught • Formative assessments and practicing up to the test, pre and post tests, reviewing and redoing to get students where they need to be are all ways this assistant knows her students have learned what is being taught. • Learning tools such as discussion, Schoology, EdPuzzle, iReady, NearPod, NewsELA, powerpoint presentations, Quizzlet, and other games for review are used with students.

- When asked where they would like to see the district in five years, the following responses were given:
    - When getting new programs, let's use it for at least 3 or 4 years. There's no follow-through on programs before we move on to something else.
    - Character Strong - needs to become a county-used program to build relationships and get the community more involved.
    - Getting students truly prepared for a college setting.
    - Maintenance needs to be a priority - it's "dysfunctional" in my opinion.
    - Too much training - we need to review what we are training on - sometimes it's the same thing over and over again. Input from custodial staff is critical to this process. It has to be more than a one day overview. On the job training is critical so they get involved

Considerations/Implications

- Inconsistencies with teacher assistants in classrooms

Type: **Teachers Focus Groups**
Summary of Session(s)
ICLE interviewed a total of 11 teachers spanning across the elementary, middle and high school levels. The questions were designed to give teachers an opportunity to voice opinions about instruction and learning. Seven questions were asked during the interview process. These questions related to rigorous and relevant instruction, relationship building, depth of content knowledge, differentiated instruction, assessments that drive differentiated instruction, use of instructional strategies, best practices and technology and a final question regarding the future of Preston County Schools as a way to give teachers opportunities to voice their own ideas about where they would like to see the district move towards. I had two cohorts to interview. The first cohort was focused and driven to answer the questions with meaning and purpose, however, the other group struggled to think beyond behavior.
Key Findings from Group(s)
• Varied understanding of rigorous and relevant learning for all students. • Much time spent on talking about student behaviors instead of instruction and learning. • PLCs are used as an opportunity to discuss ideas in relation to rigor and relevance and most find relevance is more difficult to obtain. • Some teachers shared they don't understand the standards they are teaching as deeply as they should and this affects their understanding of rigor and relevance. • Some teachers shared they don't ever meet in PLCs and get together informally to discuss student work, standards and data. • PBIS is used to reward students for behaviors so they can buy items in the school store, eat with a teacher, etc. for positive reinforcement and this is how teachers feel they are building strong relationships with students. • In buildings where enrollment is small, teachers find it easy to get to know all the students by the end of the second week of school. • The comment was made that Preston County in general is very strong in building relationships. • The high school uses the Links class, an hour a day, as a tool for building relationships and it has been used for five years. Each student in the building has an adult that they are assigned to for their entire high school career. The Links class talks about the world and current events, shares concerns, meets individually if needed/wanted, has rich discussion and allows students to form bonds with teachers until they graduate.

- Middle school uses this same format and structure to build relationships with their students, as well.
- Lots of discussion about student behaviors and how that interrupts relationship-building. Comments like the following:
    - Unfortunately, kids that struggle the most have the worst relationships
    - Teachers are overwhelmed and frustrated and it's taken out on students.
    - We need more staff and support because the expectations and directives become overwhelming.
    - We are short with SPED teachers and counselors to help with the students who misbehave and struggle.
    - There are no discipline consequences - teachers are being verbally abused. Teachers are being asked to use their planning periods to get out into hallways and bark at students to get to class - this is definitely a relationship breaker.
    - There has been lots of turn-around at our school which makes it really hard to build relationships
- Teachers shared that they are always searching and looking for new ideas online or training that may be offered in the district and beyond through the county curriculum directors who send out emails about workshops offered to help them grow deeper in their content knowledge.
- The high school made the decision to allow teachers to choose what training and staff development is needed. They have found it better suits their needs because it is personalized to what they are interested in or feel is a "next step" in their understanding of best practices.
- Teachers shared that they differentiate instruction constantly because no kid is the same. They don't use the same strategies day in and day out and use different things to engage them into lessons like Think, Pair, Share, elbow partners, peer time, and learning styles.
- Guided reading, guided math, EdPuzzle, NearPod, SeeSaw, using iReady to group students, using different assessments to map out instruction and reacting in real time to students needs and challenges were mentioned as examples of structures for differentiation.
- When asked HOW they use assessments to guide decisions on differentiated instruction, teachers shared that they meet in PLCs to review results and determine if they need to extend or reteach to "get test scores up".Weekly data checks/progress checks are used to help differentiate students' needs and next steps.
- Teachers design lessons to include some type of technology embedded to address today's learners. Variety of resources are used in the designing process such as exit tickets to help plan for the next day or lesson, discussion,

virtual labs, not teaching concepts in isolation, utilizing the SmartBoard, using elbow partners and Think, Pair, Share.

- The final question elicited a plethora of ideas about what teachers want to see happening in the district in five years. Here are those responses:
    - Let us teach. Sometimes we are told to do this and that. I miss the fun with kids. Everything is based on data.
    - Balance between fun and data analysis and usage.
    - Base so much on data for every single aspect of what we do and how we do it. Too much time spent on other things besides my students' personal needs. There is no creativity. Data can sometimes be skewed from data and being in person. Trust our instincts as teachers.
    - Drugs are becoming a huge problem in our community. We need more one on one time with our students.
    - More mental health professionals in our buildings. Having breaks for Middle school students - time to hang out and chill.
    - Accountability - Learned helplessness is a problem here. Too many students are playing the system. More focus on attendance and grades.
    - Commit to academic excellence
    - Bring back the 4 x 4 model
    - Autonomy
    - Offering after school and summer school for recovery classes.
    - Parent workshops offered continually and consistently - help them get certifications for work
    - Support Staff in schools
    - Transparency and prioritization in the district - i.e., a teacher learned from a press conference on the internet instead of from the school's administrator
    - Focus on kids first

Considerations/Implications

- District-wide focus on rigor and relevance
- Brain science and relationships (even with "difficult" kids)
- Effective lesson design
- Differentiated Instruction workshops and coaching
- Choosing instructional strategies that enhance critical thinking, collaboration, and communication

Type: Leaders Focus Groups
Summary of Session(s)
ICLE interviewed a total of six administrators spanning across the elementary, middle and high school levels. The questions were designed to give them an opportunity to voice opinions about instructional leadership and how they guide and facilitate a culture of rigorous and relevant learning. Seven questions were asked during the interview process. Each question asked administrators to reflect on their own instructional leadership capabilities in regards to rigor, relevance, relationships, assessment, differentiated instruction, and how they support/lead teachers in deepening their understanding of those ideas. All administrators were open and honest in answering each question and were comfortable elaborating and building upon other administrator's thoughts and opinions.
Key Findings from Group(s)
• As administrators, focusing on rigorous and relevant instruction has been very difficult and it was identified as a "weak area" by all of them. • Most administrators shared that rigorous and relevant instruction are "brought up" during grade level team meetings to see how instruction is working efficiently. • Administrators have found value in using the walkthrough checklist that was created at the county office and use it to gauge management and culture. • Some concerns about the amount of different directives given at the last minute which shifts their focus from instruction and learning. • Programs, such as PBIS and Character Strong, are predominantly used as relationship-building tools with students. • Modeling relationship-building strategies at staff meetings was the only mention of how administration builds relationships with teachers. • A lot of discussion around rewards and incentives to build relationships • Administration shared that iReady has been one of the "tools" to gauge rigor, but many teachers don't understand how to use it valuably - most notably, that teachers have low expectations and don't understand the details and depth of each standard being taught. • When asked about providing teachers with opportunities to expand their depth of knowledge of the content, nothing was discussed that would help teachers do this. Everything centered around meeting with academic coaches, looking at pre and post data, meeting with data coaches, and discussing "next grade level" expectations. • Differentiated instruction is also a weak area that was identified by administration. Some of them shared it has become part of their strategic planning process, while others said teachers teach to the middle. Again,

administration voiced concerns about directives from district level expressing "high flyers will take care of themselves".

- The only identified strategies used by teachers centered solely around iReady, guided reading/math groups and Tier 3 students with a couple of administrators sharing their teachers are in PLCs weekly to focus on standards and fluid groups to ensure standards are specifically targeted.
- When asked about the support teachers have been offered to help them understand how to use assessments to differentiate instruction, the following statements were given:
    - We have a couple of teachers who are assessment "gurus"
    - Airways for test-item analysis
    - Majority of support has been at the PLC level
    - Collaborative planning units
    - Coaching Cycles - some consistent; others not.
    - We are an instructional team (Dean of Students and myself) and work together to jigsaw content areas
- Administration shared that analyzing walkthrough data, doing 5-minute quick observations and utilizing their PLC structure, has helped them identify many instructional strategies and resources being used in classrooms.
- Seeing the district evolve in the next five years brought about a plethora of responses from administration with principal collaboration across the district being the most talked about idea. Administrators feel isolated and in "silos".
- Other important ideas for being a future-focused district, included the following:
    - Programming for extreme behaviors beyond what a classroom teacher or administrator can strategize and understand what to do when they exhibit traumatic behaviors.
    - Community-connected
    - More preparation from each of the bands (elementary to middle to high) because students are not prepared for expectations
    - Whole child education - community service, citizenship, how to work in groups, preparing them for the real world.
    - Increased focus on rewarding academic excellence and performance by showcasing academic skills as a priority and emphasis.

Considerations/Implications

- Meaningful opportunities need to be provided to ensure there is a deep understanding of what relationships are beyond programs and rewards/incentives (extrinsic vs. intrinsic).
- Training on how to determine if rigorous and relevant instruction is occurring in all classrooms (CIR training).

- Provide teachers in-depth training on rigorous curriculum design (RCD).
- On-going Administrative Coaching and Training