

## **Executive Summary: Caverna Independent Management Audit**

On February 4, 2015, the Kentucky Board of Education voted to enter Caverna Independent into state assistance so as to address academic, facilities, and leadership concerns.

Pursuant to 703 KAR 3:205(2)(2), the comprehensive audit conducted from February 26 through March 1, 2017 included an investigation of the district's compliance with state and federal statutes and administrative regulations and local board policies. The comprehensive audit included an on-site review, investigation, and analysis of the governance and administration of the school district.

### **Key Findings:**

- The leadership team had addressed each of the Improvement Priorities from the Diagnostic Review Report of 2014 and worked diligently to focus on improved student performance. This team had established many new processes in the central office and the three schools to improve student performance and ensure systemic program improvements.
- The Diagnostic Review Team acknowledged that the district had made great progress toward ensuring a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise and communicate the purpose for school success; however, progress was inconsistent across the three schools. The district had not operationalized its mission and vision such that it could be used to make decisions for the district. Most documentation demonstrated efforts had been made to support progress at the elementary school; however, less evidence was provided to address the efforts of the middle and high schools. The administration confirmed that the initial focus on the elementary school was intentional as the district wanted to establish a strong foundation.
- A review of lesson plans and classroom observation data showed some teachers in the district were deliberate in planning instruction that engaged students in their learning, personalized instruction and intervened to address the needs of learners.
- A review of the district Self-Assessment showed that revising the mission and vision was an articulated part of the strategic planning process and that each school developed "their own purpose statements, and each professional learning community establishes their shared beliefs." The district also described a process of developing core words as part of writing belief statements. The district mission and vision was shared publicly at each board meeting and was included on the district leadership meeting agendas, the 30/60/90-day plan and the district strategic plan. It was not clear from the documents as to how the mission and vision impacted student performance.

### **Recommendations:**

- Design and implement policies and practices to ensure each school engages in a systematic, inclusive and comprehensive process to review, revise and communicate a school purpose for student success. These policies should include a formal statement of shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning that supports challenging, equitable educational programs and learning experiences for all students. Implementation of these policies and practices should guarantee students attain learning, thinking and life skills.
- Develop, implement and evaluate a systemic instructional process that clearly informs students of learning expectations and standards of performance and gives students specific and immediate feedback about next steps in their learning. Ensure teachers use formative assessment practices to continually modify instruction and design data-based interventions. Provide students with exemplars of high quality work to establish and communicate high learning expectations. Monitor and implement the district-wide process with fidelity and hold teachers accountable for deliberate

planning and use of instructional strategies that require student collaboration, self-reflection and development of critical thinking skills.

- Develop, implement and monitor a written, systemic process for using data from a variety of student and program assessments to create a comprehensive picture of student learning, instruction and program effectiveness and to continually monitor and adjust 1) curriculum alignment and rigor, 2) classroom instructional strategies and 3) student performance and program evaluation assessment practices. The assessment and data use process should be collaboratively developed among professional staff members to ensure ownership and effective implementation.
- Design a Response to Intervention (RtI) plans and a progress monitoring system to ensure district-wide implementation.