

ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

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The Graduate School
Morehead State University

April 10, 2014

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TURN-AROUND INITIATIVE

Abstract of capstone

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
College of Education
At Morehead State University

By

Mark Andrew Blackburn

Beauty, Kentucky

Committee Chair: Dr. Carol Christian, Assistant Professor

Morehead, Kentucky

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The study investigated the impact of a systemic approach to central office transformation in the process of district improvement. The Martin County School District has been the subject of several audits and reviews since the Kentucky Department of Education has begun the scholastic audit process. Martin County is predominantly rural, located at the far Southeastern part of Kentucky. The county borders the state of West Virginia and is only separated by the Tug River. This location to a border state makes the county a transient school community. This study analyzed the Martin County School District to determine if the central office and schools, Eden Elementary School, Inez Elementary School, Warfield Elementary School, Inez Middle School, Warfield Middle School and Sheldon Clark High School functioned as a true system and not a system of schools. The research revealed that many times organizations confuse the two concepts. The glimpses of success at isolated sites cannot be claimed as a systems approach. The characteristics used to determine the organizational health was systemic thinking, high reliability organizations, effective schools, ISLLC standards and turn-around research. This study's findings indicated that by using characteristics common to systemic thinking, HRO's, ES's, ISLLC standards and TA in the development of a systems approach a true understanding was shared by the administration and staff of the Martin County School District. This process will refine and improve the overall system.

KEYWORDS: Leadership, Communication, Systemic, Vision and Coordination

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DEDICATIONS

This project is dedicated to my wife, Pamela Dawn Blackburn who encouraged me to complete the required work. I also dedicate this work to my four children, Marc Tyler, Todd Austin, Grant Carson, and Kadence Leah, whom I have always tried to provide an example to on a daily basis. They have endured with me and supported my pursuit of improved education for all students even through the difficult times.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Many district level and school administrators do not fully understand the critical role in influence of central office leadership in school turn-around improvement results. Central office leaders often believe the problem is school based (Copland, Honing, Lorton, Newton, & Rainey, 2010). Datnow and Stringfield (2000) noted that for schools to change, changes must occur from top to bottom within the organization. If schools need to be transformed, it is likely that central offices need transformational change as well. It is time for district leaders to take the lead in several areas that will help low-performing schools become high performing schools (Downey, 2001). The vision and support provided by central office leadership is critical in order for schools to achieve at high levels.

According to Lezotte (2011), district offices are highly inefficient when it comes to developing effective schools. The research of Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2003) found that high functioning organizations could not become or remain effective without the support of the central office leadership. Schools need the support of district resources and personnel to be fully operative in the 21st century. Schmoker (2011) noted that individuals and schools could no longer work in isolation and still be effective.

Most school and district change is inherently not systemic because it focuses solely on a school or a part of a school as the unit of change. True systemic change requires substantial changes in all aspects of an educational system, which includes

the board of education, district office, schools, classroom practices, curriculum, and assessment (Reigeluth, 1994).

School district central office administrators currently face unprecedented demands to play key leadership roles in the effort to strengthen teaching and learning district-wide (Honig, 2008). The role of the central office administration is one that is evolving while being redefined by the practitioners that strive for improvement. Chrispeels and Gonzalez (2006) observed that improvements in student learning are more likely when there are coherent and coordinated change efforts at all levels of the system simultaneously. All levels include district leadership.

“Turning around chronically low performing schools is challenging work that requires fundamental rethinking of the change process and a systemic approach rather than a school-by-school approach,” (Robinson, 2011 p. 22). Every central office staff member must think cross-functionally because everyone plays a role in dealing with system-wide as well as school-level problems (Tewel, 1995). Transformational and sustainable success on a large scale require substantial engagement by school district leaders who have the capacity to initiate, support and enhance dramatic change (Wallace Foundation, 2010). Successful districts have high impact leaders who demonstrate the capacity to begin, facilitate, and encourage transformational change (Robinson & Buntrock, 2011). Effective district leadership focuses on all students’ learning as the core of school improvement (Shannon, 2004). Districts that improve learning have a clear focus on student learning combined with an action oriented

mentality to implement needed strategies to improve the learning at high levels (Bylsma & Shannon, 2004).

School districts are complex, organic, adaptive systems (Duffy, 2010). School systems must begin engaging in the development of a systemic structure that includes teachers, school principals, and other school based staff with special attention of the central office staff as central agents in strengthening teaching and learning district-wide (Honing, 2008). This study therefore elected to target district structures with the goal of implementing effective school and district turn-around strategies.

Problem Statement

Little evidence exists that districts create systemic processes that address the transformational changes needed to turn around schools and districts. To better ensure school and district success, school systems must follow a pattern of structure and culture within the organization (Datnow, Hubbard, & Mehan, 1998). Within organizations, staff members are many times resistant to change. People do not like the idea that the way they have worked for decades needs to change (Foley, Harrison, Honing, Moffit, & Sigler, 2009). Organizations that lack structure resist change and maintain their old ways of doing things and therefore continue with ineffective practices.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined a district turn-around initiative and the systemic processes used in one rural Appalachian school district. The purpose of this study was to explain the processes used to transform a district central office by improving

district organizational structures and systems that guided school leadership toward improved student outcomes.

Significance of the Capstone

There is limited research available that examines the critical nature of district leadership involvement in the school and district turn-around process and the systemic structures that impact school and district improvement results. Schools that receive district support experience greater levels of success (Stingfield & Teddlie, 1991). Resources are available on school turn-around structures, but minimal research is available that investigates the impact of district involvement in producing long-term, sustainable, school improvement results (Stringfield & Datnow, 1998). This study will add to the body of research in this area. The impact district leadership has in leading and developing systemic processes in turn-around initiatives must be examined by research.

Context of Study

The Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI) was developed in the school year 2011-2012. Systemic processes were developed and implemented in August 2011. In the spring of 2011, prior to the implementation of this capstone's strategies, the Martin County School District underwent a District Leadership Assessment administered by the Kentucky Department of Education. Five deficiencies were identified as areas of needed improvement for the Martin County School Central Office. The following identified deficiencies served as the catalyst for the development of the systemic structures of this capstone:

1. District leadership has not ensured that the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan drives decision making throughout the district.
2. District leadership has not ensured that the analysis of data and policies drive the district.
3. District leadership has not ensured that organizational structures are in place to effectively monitor all district and school programs.
4. District leadership has not developed a plan to communicate to all stakeholders the sense of urgency needed for all students to reach proficiency.
5. District leadership has not ensured that high expectations define the culture of the Martin County School District (Education.ky.gov/school/documents).

The Martin County School District central office administrators collectively realized that all of the deficiencies listed were a direct result of a fractured system district-wide. Each school was operating as an island and there was no connection or flow of processes or systems. It was the belief of each member of the central office leadership team that a systemic process should be developed to organize the Martin County School District into an efficient, unified school system rather than continue to function in its current state as a system of individual schools. In response to the deficiencies, the Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI) was developed.

Research Question

This study addressed the following research question: *How has the Martin County Turn-around Initiative --which included systemic processes for*

transformation-- enabled Martin County Schools to function as a more effective school system?

Summary

The research conducted for this study was embedded into the systemic processes implemented in the Martin County Turn-around Initiative. The goal of this study was to create a unified vision and develop a cohesive, effective school system that would no longer function as separate individual schools but as one system with a shared vision and a set of systemic strategic plans to reach that end. The central office members worked collaboratively to develop systemic processes that would improve the organizational planning, analysis of data, monitoring, communication and culture of expectations. The focus of the plan was to create a sense of urgency for change within the schools through focused district leadership. Additionally, this plan would create unity of vision and purpose from the top down and bottom up within the organization.

Definition of Terms

Academic standards – The benchmarks of quality and excellence in education such as the rigor of curricula and the difficulty of examinations.

Culture – The beliefs and custom of an organization.

Effective Schools – Defined by seven correlates: clear school mission, high expectations of success, instructional leadership, frequent monitoring of student success, opportunity to learn and student time on task, safe and orderly environment and home-school relations (Lezotte & Synder, 2011).

Highly Reliable Organization – An organization that has succeeded in avoiding catastrophes in an environment where normal accidents and poor decisions can be expected due to risk factors and complexity (Karnilow, 2006).

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISSLC) – Six standards defined around common traits of effective leaders from the educational field.

Leadership – Is the process of enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of teachers, pupils, and parents toward achieving common educational aims (www.ask.com/wiki/Educational_leadership).

MAP Testing – Measures of Academic Progress. The assessment provides a source of each student’s academic level, which will allow for the teacher to address areas of concern or growth. The computerized assessment provides details for every student in selected academic areas (www.nwea.org).

Martin County School District Leadership Team – Group of administrators located at the central office level and school level membership.

Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI) – Martin County implemented the changes for the project. Collectively, formed committees, reviewed literature on systems, and participated in the processes for improvement.

Persistently Low Achieving (PLA) – Schools identified by KRS 160.346 A non-Title I school in the group of non-Title I schools that contains a minimum of the lowest five (5) or the lowest five percent, whichever is greater, of the non-Title I schools that contain grades seven (7) through twelve (12), or any combination thereof, and has at least thirty-five percent or greater as identified

in the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. secs. 6301 et seq., or its successor, that have failed to make adequately yearly progress for three (3) consecutive years. (KRS 160.346.aspx.pdf)

Turnaround Process – Junction point in the life of an organization, a point of instability, a point at which the organization has to make a choice about its future.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

This chapter describes the review of literature that served as the conceptual framework for this capstone project. This capstone centered on five bodies of research that included systems thinking, high-reliability organizations (HRO), effective schools (ES), Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards (ISLLC), and turn-around research. Knowledge gained from these various bodies of research guided the work of this capstone initiative and the five components of the systemic turn-around plan that encompassed comprehensive district planning, analysis of data and policies, effective school programs, communication, and culture of high expectations.

Conceptual Framework

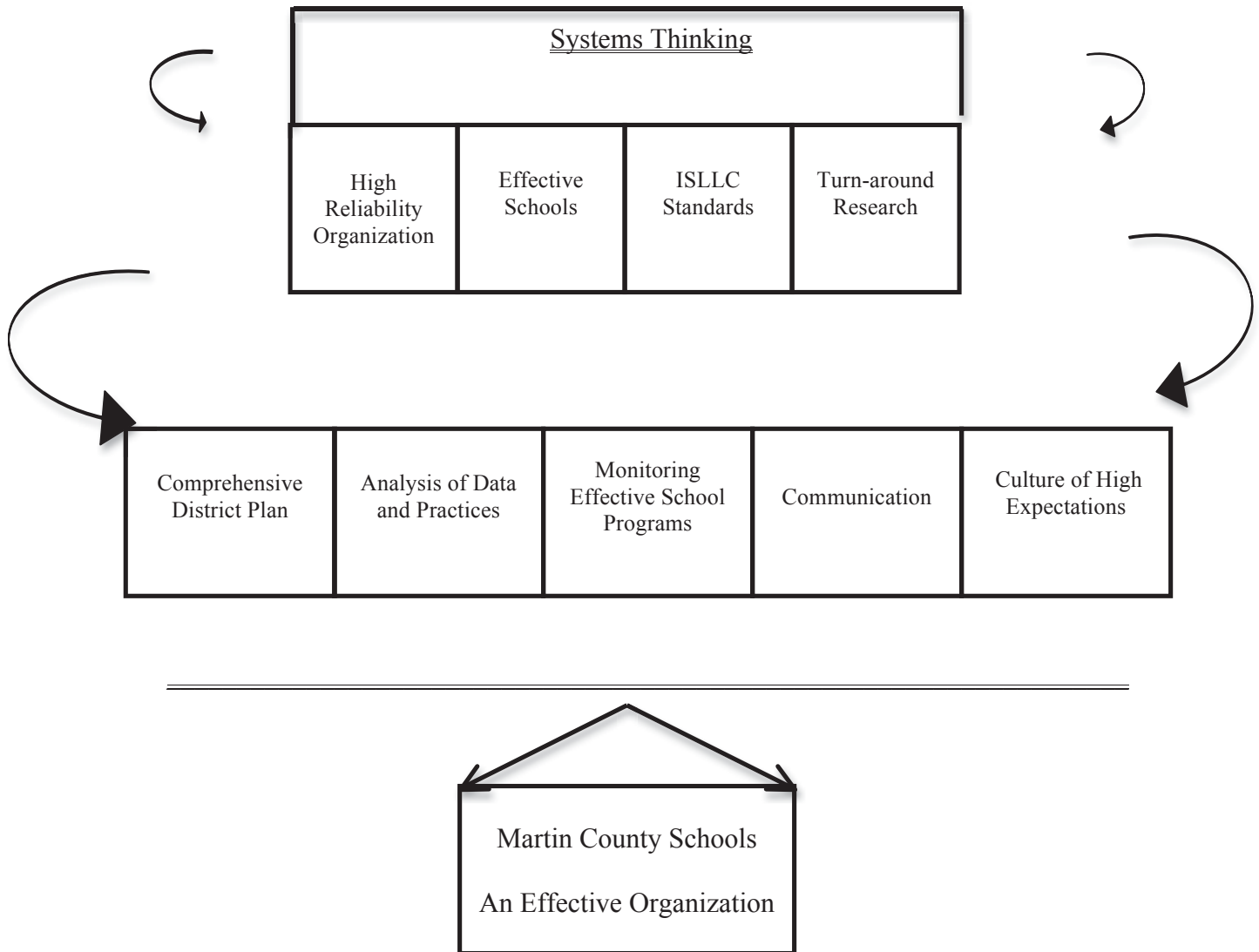
The underlying focus of this capstone's research was grounded on the research of systems thinking. Four other areas of research served as additional pillars for the conceptual framework of this study: HRO, effective schools (ES), ISSLC standards, and turn-around research. Utilizing systems thinking and the characteristics common to all of the bodies of research, the researcher identified five sub-categories that defined the systems approach to this initiative; comprehensive district planning, analysis of data, effective schools, communication, and culture of high expectations.

Figure 1 provides a graphic representation of MCTI. Many times schools within a district work independently of each other functioning rather as a system of

individual schools versus one unified, highly functioning school system. Before MCTI, Martin County central office leadership and the schools within district worked in isolation. From the State Department of Education's assessment report and the review of the literature, it became apparent that a movement toward systemic processes was needed in Martin County.

The Martin County District Turn-around Initiative (MCTI) provided the structure for the development of systemic processes toward systems thinking and functioning more effectively. The commonalities found in the bodies of research were then embedded into the development of MCTI. The five sub categories focused on (1) comprehensive district planning; (2) analysis of data and practice; (3) monitoring effective school programs; (4) communicating a sense of urgency; and (5) creating a culture of high expectations.

Figure 1: Martin County District Turn-around Initiative



Systems Thinking

In the late nineteenth century, the bureaucratic arrangement of a school system was common in response to the management demands of increasingly large numbers of schools and students. Its emphasis was on efficiency and control of the school system. School boards continued to retain legal authority to govern local schools

under state law with the authority to hire and fire superintendents. Superintendents would recommend to school boards the names of potential hires and the school board would conclude the process. Administrators worked for the most part in isolation, following the policies and procedures approved by the Board. Attention to nutrition, transportation and sports defined the standard operating procedure with little focus on high stakes accountability or systemic planning for improved academic performance. This structure and the lack of a district-wide focus further perpetuated the mindset of individually functioning schools in contrast to one highly functioning, unified system of schools within a school district.

The term ‘systemic change’ may mean different things to organizations. When trying to comprehend the concept of systemic change, it is helpful to compare it to fragmented change. A common metaphor used is a jigsaw example to explain why using a fragmented approach to change does not work and why systemic change in education is needed. According to the research of Duffy, Rogerson, and Blick (2000), in a properly completed jigsaw puzzle every puzzle piece is connected to everything else. It is impossible to change one piece without upsetting the pieces connected to the entire puzzle. Small reforms tend to focus on selected parts or pieces of the school system without exploring the necessary changes in the connection of all of the parts. Fragmented change uses a mending-up approach with a focus on a small piece of the puzzle in improving the parts of the school system that needs correction (Joseph & Reigeluth, 2005).

Navigating change is an extraordinarily complex task for change leaders and their followers in school districts (Duffy, 2004). Effective systemic change requires considerable changes in all areas of an educational system. For the purpose of this study it will be helpful to discern between the method and the mode of change. The method of the change process is a reformed educational system, whereas systemic change or the mode is what people do to transform their current system into a reformed system (Joseph & Reigeluth, 2005).

Systemic structures connect organizations (Stingfield & Yonezawa, 2000). In school systems, systemic processes for linking the various levels in a connected pattern must be detailed in a clear plan of expected action. Strong district leadership that develops a shared vision and set of clear goals to accomplish that end helps establish the focus. Systemic change can be thought of as a process based on systems theory and systems design principles. Systems theory embraces the importance of a global perspective accounting for a myriad number of components and interconnections in an educational system. Systems design concerns creating something new by applying a methodology that is grounded in a set of defined principles (Jenlink, Reigeluth, Carr, & Nelson, 1998).

For decades, the efforts to improve teaching and learning in schools have failed beyond a few pockets of success. Those pockets of success have been scattered and difficult to maintain. Initiatives to improve school districts have been attempted by many superintendents and agencies. Large-scale improvement requires systemic efforts and support from the district level. Sergiovanni (1992) points out that in a

professional organization the traditional hierarchy of the school is upended, it is not the principal who is at the apex, nor the students and teachers. That position is reserved for the ideas, values, and commitments that are the basis for a professional relationship. The basic system beliefs must take the same approach at the district office level. The district office must not see themselves as the apex but as a part of the organizational system. Improvement efforts driven by top-down directives from the central office proved no more effective in raising student achievement. This approach failed to “garner ownership” (Fullan, 2007, p.11). Effective school district leaders have resolved this bottom-up versus top-down dilemma by embracing the concept of defined autonomy (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

Unfortunately, district central offices are often viewed as substantial barriers to the valuable work (Schlechty, 2001). It is important that central office personnel understand that they must not be barriers in the process of school improvement. In conducting research for this project, five dimensions are related to central office transformation (Fullan, 2007). The five dimensions are: (1) establishing learning focused central office partnerships with school principals, (2) working in a collaborative effort by providing support to all stakeholders and, (3) refocusing all central office units on teaching and learning, (4) stewarding the transformation effort to all stakeholders and (5) using evidence to guide decision making using real time data and assessment information (Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton, & Newtown, 2010).

To transform a school system, leaders need to guide their colleagues through a change process that will simultaneously create the needed groundwork (Duffy, 2010). To transform an entire school system, change leaders in that system must know what a system is and how it functions. They must be skillful in using a specifically designed protocol to navigate whole-system change in their school districts (Duffy, 2003; Duffy, 2004).

Systems thinking should be viewed as the connection of all parts within an organization. The procedures and processes must have an alignment toward a specified goal of the organization. It is not acceptable to allow individual schools or districts to operate as 'lone wolves'. Common threads must connect the entire system or it will result in failure.

This understanding is a constant of systems thinking. Systems thinking are an essential element of organization learning (Senge, 1990). Systems thinking help leaders see their school system as a whole that includes interrelationships, interdependencies, patterns, and relationships (Blick, Duffy, & Rogerson, 2000). Leaders use systems thinking to determine where small but powerful changes in their districts might result in the greatest improvement (Duffy, 2010).

The research has shown that in order for school districts to truly exhibit a systemic approach they must have a thorough and comprehensive effort. The district central office must lead that effort. A smart district focuses on six key functions in order to produce results and equity. These six functions are: (1) lead for results and equity; (2) focus on instruction; (3) manage human capital; (4) use data for

accountability and continuous improvement; (5) build partnerships and community investment and (6) align infrastructure with strategic vision (Foley and Sigler, 2009)

In order to initiate change and move school districts into the 21st century, school leaders must be aware of the past and the concept with which the educational system was developed in the early years. In the early years of education, school districts were developed to meet the needs of the Industrial Age. The system was designed to provide every student with the same style of teaching and learning. As we moved forward in the 21st Century, the system must be able to distinguish the needs of each and every student (Duffy, 2010). The traditional approach cannot be applied to today's systems. The attempt to correct or improve one school at a time is not fitting for the 21st century. District improvement needs to begin with a clear framework and map for what changes are to be made (Adelman & Taylor, 2007). The beginning of systemic change without a clear plan or point of reference would be foolish. The framework for the MCTI was established and conveyed to all stakeholders with the goal of addressing the findings of the Kentucky Department of Education's diagnostic review. Effective improvement on a large scale cannot be approximated as long as policymakers, education leaders, and researchers continue to treat systemic change as an afterthought (Adelman & Taylor, 2007). The belief that the school district central office can dictate this process in isolation is false.

A system is a set of connected things or parts forming a complex whole. Over the past several decades, consensus has been growing that districts have substantive and productive roles to play in supporting instructional improvements (Burch &

Spillane, 2004). Not all systemic change efforts aim to create transformational change. Some systemic change efforts aim to make systemic improvements to a system's current operations. Making system-wide improvements to current operations is called continuous improvement and does not create transformational change. Transformational change seeks organizational reinvention and true innovation rather than change by replication of best practices, discontinuity and incrementalism (Lazlo & Laugel, 2000, p. 184). Transformational change requires substantial change in how a district functions, how it is designed, and how it is managed (Duffy, 2010). Substantial changes were needed in the Martin County School District; the MCTI was designed to be the vehicle of change.

High Reliability Organizations

“Organizational health will one day surpass all other disciplines as the greatest opportunity for improvement and competitive advantage,” (Lencioni, 2012, p.1). The health of an organization is one of the most important aspects of a high-reliability organization. The organization must have a sense of ownership and a clear plan for improvement.

Murphy and Hallinger (1988) were among the first to identify a group of high performing districts and their distinguishing characteristics. Their study of 12 “instructionally effective” school districts in California found an established instructional and curricular focus, consistency, and coordination of instructional activities, strong instructional leadership from the superintendent, and an emphasis on monitoring instruction and curriculum. In the structure or protocol of the

organizations, these districts showed a habit for rationality without bureaucracy, established district practices with school independence, a systems viewpoint with human capital alignment, and strong leadership with committed executive teams (Murphy & Hallinger, 1988).

A study by the Education Commission of the States researchers (Armstrong & Anthes, 2001) examined six districts in five states. They found in each high reliability organization, each offered a service oriented culture focused on supporting principals and teachers to use student data for continuous improvement, combined with structural mechanisms for training assessments. Cawelti and Protheroe's (2001) study of six high poverty districts (Sacramento, Houston, two smaller districts from Texas, one from Idaho, and one from West Virginia) initiating system-wide improvements in student achievement found a similar focus on equipping teachers to use research-based instructional practices, and aligning curriculum with test content, as well as decentralizing management and budgeting at the district level.

Karnilow (2006) divided one district's ability to function as a high reliability organization into five pillars. The five pillars were determined; (1) how students learn, (2) how to design instruction, (3) how to organize curriculum, (4) tools for instruction and (5) assessment. Datnow and Stringfield (2000) noted that high reliability organizations require coordination among key groups within a school, district, and state. The ability to change the culture of a school district is an incredible task. The true leader of a high reliability organization will garner input from all stakeholders. This will provide ownership to all of the people in that

organization. The theoretical framework of Spillane and Thompson (1997), “measured the district capacity for reform by the dimensions of “human capital”- knowledge, skills, and dispositions of leaders within the organization, “social capital”- social links within and outside of the district, together with the norms and trust to support open communication, and “financial resources”- allocated to staffing, time, and materials” (p. 199).

High reliability organizations should not be afraid of exploring new ways and means to improve the function especially in the education world. Friedman and Mandelbaum (2011) stated Carlson’s Law: “Transformation that happens from the top down tends to be orderly but without knowledge. Transformation that happens from the bottom up tends to be disorderly but clearly focused” (p. 97). The vision and actions of school system leaders and school board members frequently determine whether principals can be effective in leading school improvement (SREB, 2010).

Districts cannot necessarily make weak principals succeed, but the researchers have seen too many districts create conditions in which even good principals are likely to fail (SREB, 2010). Support from the district level to the principals should be extended through the following methods: mentoring programs for new principals; hands on guidance (including school visits) from central office supervisors; professional development in how to be an instructional leader; professional development in how to use data to improve instruction; relevant student data available in a timely fashion; relevant budget information provided in a timely manner; and

relief from bureaucratic demands that take away from instructional leadership (SREB, 2010).

Support from the administrative level to the teachers should be extended through the following methods: mentoring programs for new teachers, professional development linked to specific curriculum and textbook use, follow-up, including hands-on guidance with classroom visits from central office staff or highly qualified coaches. Included in these methods should be time built in for teachers to observe master teachers and talk with colleagues about instructional strategies, how to use data, and how to develop classroom assessments to improve instruction. Schools need district support to be smooth running. Stringfield and Yonezawa (2000) noted the impact of district support toward implementing high reliability organizations and the need for reform strategies to include support from district level administrative teams.

The role and purpose of the school district is to advance and convey the vision and systemic processes that establish an understood message of the standard operating procedures and non-negotiable aspects of the school system. The district including the school board, the superintendent, key staff, and influential stakeholders in the community, must be willing to work toward creating and maintaining a high reliability organization.

The fail-safe school framework draws on studies of HROs to identify school functions that appear most important in the effort to achieve highly reliable performance. The first assumption of a fail-safe school culture is a belief that both

teacher autonomy and collegiality are needed to support student learning (Bellamy, 2005). The second set of norms underlying a fail-safe school culture is confidence in the school's programs as well as skepticism that any approach will work with children (Bellamy, 2005). The third cultural assumption involves collaboratively held visions and program models, combined with diversity of ideas about teaching and learning (Bellamy, 2005). The fourth cultural norm; supporting fail-safe operations requires that school's focus on learning be complemented by a preoccupation with failure (Bellamy, 2005).

The analyses suggested that three important functions are associated with achieving high quality, fail safe schools: (1) improving normal operations, (2) detecting potential problems, and (3) recovering from those problems (Bellamy, Coulter, Crawford, & Marshall, 2005). Just as we do not expect the specific strategies used in HRO's to transfer easily to the unique environments of schools, we also do not suggest that any single approach to meeting these functions would be useful in all schools and districts. The purpose of the framework was not to prescribe strategies but more modestly to bring those functions that appear important for reliable performance to the foreground for systemic attention in research and practice (Bellamy et al., 2005).

Effective HROs are dependent on a set process or protocol for the organization. It is simply not enough to just state the purpose of the organization. The HRO must act and constantly refine their processes. High reliability organizations share many common characteristics that are prevalent throughout their

culture. The set of principles are guided by the organizations willingness to change and maintain a clear set of goals that are present at all organizational levels. The organization must be on constant watch for problems to occur within the organization and then make the necessary changes based on correct decision-making. HRO's should continue to upkeep the processes that ensure a set of procedures are followed by the participants. The participants should receive proper training in order to accomplish and maintain a certain level of proficiency as reflected in strenuous performance evaluations (Reynolds, Schaffer & Stringfield, 2006).

Effective Schools Research

Much research has been conducted to determine what makes an effective school. In 1982, Ronald Edmonds' research on effective schools determined five effective school correlates indicative of highly effective schools; which include (1) strong instructional leadership; (2) clear instructional focus; (3) positive school climate; (4) high expectations; and (5) measurement of student achievement (Edmonds, 1982).

Effective schools support the belief that school effectiveness is measured on student outcomes. The effective school is built on a foundation of high expectations, strong leadership, unwavering commitment to learning for all, collaboration, differentiated instruction, and frequent monitoring of student progress (Lezotte & Synder, 2011).

According to Bergeson (2004), district commitment to improvement efforts helps staff internalize the change. Individual schools must have district support to be

effective over extended periods of time. Stringfield and Yonezawa (2000) noted the need for district support for schools to be able to implement effective reform strategies. District support is a crucial component of effective schools that requires a linking together of all school levels (K-12) in the organizational structure. Recurring themes often merge when research is completed on effective schools (Pearson, Peterson, Taylor, & Rodriguez, 2000).

Lezotte (1991), in his studies of effective schools expanded the first correlates to what is now referred to as the second generation correlates. The second generations of correlates is seven in number and are reflected in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlate Comparison – First & Second Generation Correlates

Correlate	First Generation	Second Generation
Safe and Orderly Environment	Attendance, fighting, and manner of a school	Environment is conducive to learning
Climate of high expectation for success	Mastery of essential skills	Teacher has the ability to go further in the exploration of the subject matter
Instructional leadership	Principal acts as the instructional leader and communicates the mission	Principal becomes leader of teacher leaders
Clear and focused mission	Clearly articulated mission	There is an emphasis on teaching and learning for all
Opportunity to learn and student time-on-task	There is a sufficient time allocated to teach essential skills	There is an assurance that students master what is being taught in class
Frequent monitoring of student progress	Student academic progress is measured frequently by a variety of assessment procedures	Student academic progress is being measured with the use of technology

Home – School relations	Parents have a clear understanding of their role in their child’s education	There is an established partnership between the parents and the school
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Source: Lezotte, 1991

ISLLC Standards

Formal leadership in schools and school districts is complex and multifaceted. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) published Standards for School Leaders in 1996 for the purpose of improving school leadership.

The six ISSLC standards are: (1) Setting a shared vision for learning;(2) developing a school culture conducive for learning; (3) ensuring effective and safe management of the organization; (4) collaboration among a diverse community of stakeholders; (5) acting with integrity and fairness; and 6) influencing the larger political, social, cultural and legal contexts. (CCSSO, 1996). The standards were developed based on seven principles:

- (1) Standards should reflect the centrality of student learning;
- (2) Standards should acknowledge the changing role of the school leader;
- (3) Standards should recognize the collaborative nature of school leadership;
- (4) Standards should be high, upgrading the quality of the profession;
- (5) Standards should inform performance-based systems of assessment and evaluation school leaders;
- (6) Standards should be integrated and coherent; and

- (7) Standards should be predicated on the concepts of access, opportunity, and empowerment for all members of the school community (CCSSO, 1996).

Standard I defines leadership's role in developing a mutual vision of student learning. This vision articulates faculty members' understanding of the school and district focus as the school community strives to establish and execute instructional plans and other activities that give understanding to the vision. Strong leaders align resources with the precedence of the vision and communicate the vision within and beyond the bounds of the school and district (Kearney, 2003).

The administrator should be convinced of and appreciate the role the school and district vision has to promote unfaltering school and district improvement. In addition, there is a focus on the education of all students and the professional growth of staff members. The administrators' role is to facilitate processes ensuring that the vision and mission is communicated, core beliefs are established, and the school community is immersed in school and district improvement results (Fullan, 2007).

Standard II focuses on the development of a positive school culture that enhances learning and professional growth. Acknowledging that the core work of the school is student learning, site leaders focus their work on creating a culture that values such work. This enables the district to provide focus and direction to schools in the support of this endeavor. The continuous improvement of instructional practice is a central feature of the school's professional culture. The process of improvement must be monitored by the district level administration. Leaders develop and

implement accountability systems to monitor and adjust the core work of students and teachers (Kearney, 2003).

Standard III focuses on creating a safe and orderly learning environment that ensures that the school is physically and emotionally safe for all students and adults, and they protect the legal rights of all members of the school community. According to Kearney (2003) district level administrators' are important to the assurance of the safety of each building by providing the needed resources. They apply principles of organizational leadership and management to align and integrate the multiple subsystems that constitute the school so that the infrastructure supports all students in learning to high standards (Kearney, 2003).

Standard IV focuses on the executive having knowledge and understanding of theories and models of organizations, operational practices, and legal issues. The executive should believe in and value such areas as accepting responsibility, high quality standards, and a safe environment. The executive should facilitate processes in knowledge of learning, effective conflict resolution skills, and human resource functions (Fullan, 2007).

This standard supports the idea that the district level administrators should establish partnerships with organizations outside of the educational world to promote success for all students, fostering communication, and influence between the two (Kearney, 2003).

Standard V promotes acting in a fair and equitable manner. It is the school and district level administrators' responsibility to serve as models of professionalism

at their site as well as in the community and district. The work of leadership is informed by a set of ethical and moral principles that inspire and encourage others by demonstrating a commitment to lifelong professional learning working with the adults and children in schools (Kearney, 2003).

Standard VI focuses on school administrators' understanding of democratic principles underlying American public school systems. Leaders must be prepared to participate in ongoing dialogue and processes with a range of stakeholders and policymakers to identify, influence, and respond to issues, trends, and political changes in the operating environments of schools (Kearney, 2003).

The standards have long been used as a guide for district improvement and school improvement. Several school districts have used the standards as bases for their evaluation system of administrators. The MCTI used the standards as a point of reference for the administrators to use throughout the implementation of the initiative.

Turn-Around Research

When the call for school reform began in the 1970's, the stagnant design of public schools was illustrated by an oft-used anecdote about Rip Van Winkle awakening from a long sleep. The only thing he recognized from his former environment was the school, which appeared unchanged from his day (Devin, Miller, & Shoop, 2007). Thus is the challenge with district and school turn-around. Schools can no longer continue to do what they have always done and expect continued improvement results. In schools that are persistently low performing, systemic and

on-going changes must occur in order to turn things around and improve school and district organizational outcomes.

Simmons (2005) sums up what policy makers know, but fail to implement in transforming urban and other poorly performing schools. He believes that districts that have clear goals, open communication with parents and teaching staff, specific objectives, and cost-effective policies and practices aligned to accelerate student learning will impact change to improve results. Simmons (2005) work advocated concentrating on four stages that can facilitate a school system toward turn around and improvement of student outcomes.

- (1) Create leaders at every level. Leadership is shared among teachers, parents, and administrators.
- (2) Transform the structure and culture of the district. Move to the collaborative model supporting solutions proposed by those closest to the problem.
- (3) Improve instruction. Administrators must support high-quality professional development to help teachers apply more effective instructional strategies and help one another to meet the diverse needs of all students and.
- (4) Engage parents and make funding adequate and equitable. Strong partnerships with parents and equitable funding are essential for accelerating and sustaining the transformation process (p.18).

Researchers Togneri and Anderson (2003) stated, “the efforts of heroic principals, and inspiring classroom teachers who single handedly turn around low

performing schools or classrooms are to be applauded and encouraged, but ultimately their efforts produce isolated islands of excellence” (p.1). True leaders are needed to change conditions, including the development of other leaders to reach the critical mass (Fullan, 2001). One impediment to the process lies in the fact that public education is noted for its resistance to changing current practice and for the less than lightning speed at which change occurs (Devin, Miller, & Shoop, 2007).

While questions remain about the term “turnaround”, the definition that many organizations use will provide for a starting point: “Turnaround is a dramatic and comprehensive intervention in a low-performing school that: a) produces significant gains in achievement within two years; and b) readies the school for the longer process of transformation into a high-performance organization” (Gorin, Nico, Kutash, Tallant, & Rahmatullah, 2010, p. 4). The efforts must take place in the system in order to create a change in the whole district.

When the changes needed require a shift in the norms, beliefs, or common assumptions of members of the organization, a guiding coalition must provide the evidence that a change is necessary. What is required is the work to create a sense of urgency among colleagues (Kilgore & Reynolds, 2011). The evaluation of the school district as a whole is often predicated on the evaluations and review of one single school in the district. The tracking of all schools not just turnaround schools is often overlooked at the district level. This less than systemic approach is a reoccurring breakdown in the systemic process. Those who would successfully lead school turnaround must believe that everyone has the capacity for working as a leader and

accept responsibility for building capacity in others to make that happen (Devin, Miller, & Shoop, 2007).

An individual leader can start the transformation process, but it takes a system to ensure that necessary changes are sustainable (WestEd, 2012). A unified vision that is developed through the collaborative efforts district-wide guides school leadership in creating the structure for effective school turn-around. The principal must be a leader of the process. The link between school leadership and improved student achievement is noteworthy (Wallace, 2013). New principals are being told to not only change the way instruction is delivered, but also to change the way teachers do their work, change how they spend their time, inside and outside their classroom. Administrators are at work on the turnaround process to challenge and change basic belief systems about teaching, accountability and learning (Bossi, 2007).

Improving persistently low-achieving schools and districts is difficult work requiring an elemental reevaluation of the change mechanisms, and a systemic rather than a building-by-building method (Duffy, 2004). High impact school and district leaders are critical to turnaround success, and pockets of success around the country demonstrate this in research. The skill of the leader is paramount in the effort of revolutionary change.

Transformational and sustainable success at scale requires substantial engagement by school district leaders with the capacity and will to initiate, support, and enhance dramatic change. The most successful turnaround efforts have both, “high impact leaders and the district capacity to initiate, support and enhance

transformational change” (Robinson & Buntrock, p. 22). The principal is the central source of leadership influence at the school site. Murphy’s research, provides a list of nine lessons for turning around failing schools: (1) not all failing schools are worth saving; (2) focus on leadership; (3) act quickly; (4) diagnose before selecting remedies; (5) emphasize efficiency first; (6) centralize operations; (7) recognize the limitation of structural moves; (8) focus on core lines of work customers and; (9) create hope through vision (2010).

Summary

The supporting literature for this study provided a framework for developing a district-wide turn-around initiative. By incorporating many of the characteristics common to systems thinking, HROs, ES, ISLLC, and school and district turn-around research, this study developed a foundation for creating a more highly functioning and effective district-wide system.

The capstone project examined commonalities of the five bodies of research with the goal of embedding these characteristics into the MCTI. The commonalities included the development of systemic processes, the implementation of a set of standard operating procedures, the presence of strong leadership that creates a unified vision and culture of high expectations, a focus on communication and collaboration among all stakeholders while developing partnerships within the home, school and community, creating a safe and orderly learning environment that ensures success for all and finally, developing a guiding coalition to lead the turn-around process with a focus on efficiency.

The goal of the Martin County School District Turn-around Initiative (MCTI) was to research and gain a better understanding of systemic processes that would improve district leadership and impact student achievement. The discovery of the underlying concepts and commonalities was a great educational tool for the invested stakeholders. The district had a general understanding into the concepts of an effective school system but did not have the entire picture completed. The challenge of getting people to understand that change is needed is a draining experience. The variables that impact and effect the coordination is often overlooked or allowed to consume the process. It requires a tremendous fight and effort to move the necessary pieces in the systemic change process.

The district worked toward the realization that in order to have a systemic school system then all areas must be linked. The system must have a clearly developed vision for the participants. Partnerships must be established across a wide range of places or areas. The district should explore a perspective that opens up the minds of the stakeholders to work toward this process. Principles should be reviewed through a coalition of the team members.

The leadership of the system should ensure that standard operating procedures are engrained in the fiber of the school system. It is not acceptable to slack in the monitoring of data and progress. The district should work toward the establishment of clear goals. Collaboration is one of the key features of the process. It is not a task that can be undertaken by a single individual. The leadership should be strong and decisive in leading the initiatives established. All areas of the organization should

strive toward the establishment of systemic processes. Each member must fully understand the political, social, legal, and cultural context surrounding a school system. The system should be a self-maintaining endeavor regardless of the key players.

The concept of a systemic approach for district improvement was the catalyst for the improvement of the Martin County School District. When school districts provide a focus on shared goals and strategies (comprehensive district plan), intentionally plan for desired results (analysis of data and practice), holding people accountable (monitoring effective school programs) and informing and involving stakeholders (communication and creating a sense of urgency) by creating high expectations (culture of high expectations), they create a whole systems approach to school turn-around. This study hypothesizes that utilizing the knowledge gained from the research and embedding the common themes from the research in the turn-around activities will help the district to function as a more effective, unified school system.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This chapter presents the research question, context/sample, and development of MCTI, research design, instruments, procedures, analysis plan, validity and limitations inherent in this study.

Research Question and Purpose

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of a district level initiative in the turn-around process for the Martin County School District. Systemic processes ensure the cohesive functioning of a system and community.

This study addressed the following research question: *How has the Martin County Turn-around Initiative --which included systemic processes for transformation-- enabled Martin County Schools to function as a more effective school system?* To further investigate the impact of MCTI, five research hypotheses were tested related to the five areas comprising the model.

Context/Sample

Six schools within a single school district were included in this study. The six participating schools; Eden Elementary School, Inez Elementary School, Warfield Elementary School, Inez Middle School, Warfield Middle School and Sheldon Clark High School are within the Martin County School District. The school leadership team totaled 14 members that included the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Pupil Personnel, Director of Special Education, Director of Transportation, Head-Start Director, District Assessment Coordinator, and the

principals from each of the six schools including the Area Technology Center principal. The leadership team served as the guiding coalition of change for the Martin County School for school years 2011-13.

For the 2011-12 school year, the Martin County School District had an enrollment of 2,220 students. The demographics of Martin County included 69% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch for school year 2011-12. The district participates in the Community Eligibility Option that has allowed every student to eat free lunch and breakfast at their school. The Martin County School District currently has a College/Career Readiness average of 58.3% for school year 2012-13. The beginning score in 2011-12 for the district was 19%. The state goal has been set at 60%. The Martin County School District is 6th out of 157 other Kentucky school districts with a rate of 37.6% in county income below the poverty line according to demographics provided for each school district (www.biggestuscities.com/demographics/ky/poverty-rate-by-school-district).

Of the K-12 enrollment, 19.82% of the students for school year 2011-12 had been identified for special education services. The student population is predominately white with less than two percent belonging to a minority group. The unemployment rate and the proximity to West Virginia make the district susceptible to a transient population of students. The school district has 228 classified employees and 191 certified employees, making the school system the largest employer in the community.

The Martin County School District is a rural school district located in the far eastern portion of Kentucky. The most eastern part of the county borders the state of West Virginia. The county consists of two major communities, Warfield and Inez, with Warfield located in the eastern section of the county and Inez centrally located and serving as the county seat.

Martin County has experienced a declining population for several years in a row as a result of both economic and weather related disasters according to the United States Census Bureau. The decline in the coal industry over the last decades has directly impacted the employment rate. The loss of population and its negative impact on employment has resulted in a loss of support and local funding for the school system. The unemployment rate for Martin County was 10.3% in year 2012 as compared to Kentucky's unemployment rate of 9.5% and a national rate of 8.1%. The county's unemployment rate is consistently higher than both areas according to U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The Martin County School District has the support of several factions in the community that have a tremendous desire to see improvement in the school system and community. The support is provided through financial means. Support is also provided by the utilization of the political connections. The factions include parents, local government officials, business owners, and family members.

The Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI)

The MCTI evolved as a response to address the findings as reported by the Kentucky Department of Education's leadership assessment. Leaders in the system

rightly recognized that central offices matter substantially to district-wide teaching and learning improvement (Copland, Honig, Lorton, Newtown, Rainey 2010). The conversation with the leadership team for the need of systemic change of the Martin County School District occurred during school year 2011-12. Research supports the critical role of district leadership in leading change (Chhuon, Gilkey, Gonzalez, Daly, & Chrispeels, 2006). A refocusing of district priorities with the district leadership occurred to begin the necessary changes related to transformation.

Before the inception of this capstone, the Martin County School District did not have systemic processes in place for establishing a unified vision for turn-around transformation to occur. The superintendent initiated the discussion and developed a Leadership Team with the goal of improving the schools, students' educational attainment levels and ultimately the local community. An investigation of the research provided the foundation on which to build MCTI. The five bodies of research included: (1) systemic structures, (2) effective schools, (3) Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, (4) high reliability organizations, and (5) turn-around research. The commonalities of this research included developing: systemic structure of planning, analysis of data, effective monitoring, communication plans and creating a culture of high expectations. As shown in Table 2, the Martin County School District leadership team identified 15 activities under five category areas to initiate change.

Table 2

Description of MCTI Activities Organized by the Five Sub Category Areas

Area	Sub Area	Activity Description
Comprehensive District Plan	Comprehensive District Plan	Staff meetings to complete CDIP
	Staff Realignment	Review of staff placements
	Data Analysis	Review of Data from various sources
Analysis of Data Practices	MAP Testing	Review of MAP Data
	Kentucky Department of Education Audit	Review of Audit
	Middle School Initiative	Pilot program to assist middle schools.
Monitoring Effective School Programs	School Liaisons	Staff assigned to schools as resources
	Walkthroughs	Monthly school visits
	Data Room	Creation of data rooms at each school
Communication	Communication Plan	Development of communication plan for community outreach
	Newsletter	Development of quarterly newsletter
	School Messenger	Phone communication between school and district and home.
	Billboards	Installation of billboards throughout county
High Expectations	Administrator Progress Report	Completion of progress report
	Professional Growth and Effectiveness System	Pilot program with evaluation system

Note: Information provided in this table was retrieved from activities as part of the Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI) administered 2011-13.

Comprehensive district planning. The MCTI recognized the importance of the comprehensive district plan in the quest for a true systemic organization. The central office staff conducted several collaborative meetings within the school and local community in the development of the Comprehensive District Improvement

Plan (CDIP). Staff members deliberated on the areas that would make the most impact on systemic improvement. The superintendent appointed a committee to oversee the continuation of the CDIP process for school year 2012-13. A planning committee was formulated from representatives of the district office (program consultants), schools (principals, teachers, and SBDM with representatives), private sector leaders, parents, and school board members. Building level teams were established to organize planning and lead building level efforts (www.martin.k12.ky.us).

Staff realignment. The central office certified staff responsibilities were realigned to offer more opportunities for leadership support district-wide versus within the central office. They were given direction on the district needs. This served the purpose of linking each central office member and their roles and responsibilities to the schools. This helped create a unified vision for turn-around within the district as a whole.

Data. The leadership team reviewed and examined data from the Kentucky Department of Education Diagnostic Review of the district, schools, and academic and nonacademic data secured from assessment measures. The Martin County District Leadership Team identified the areas of College and Career Readiness, attendance, reading, and math to assist in the turn-around initiative.

Analysis of data practices. The MCTI recognized the importance of developing systems to analyze policies and practices. Central office staff members were assigned to work with the principal and school level leadership teams to analyze

school specific data such as academic and nonacademic determine goals and develop corrective strategies. At regularly scheduled monthly administrative meetings, central office liaisons and principals reported the findings on school specific data. Leadership team members, identified gaps and the corrective action plans needed to address the gaps. Progress was regularly reviewed and connected to intervention strategies. The high school that was identified as persistently low achieving (PLA) was directed to create a 30-60-90 day plan outlining their work as part of the School Improvement Grant (SIG). Additional monthly meetings were scheduled with the high school principal, Educational Recovery Leader, Educational Recovery Specialists, and the superintendent. The purpose of these meetings was to share information related to the processes being implemented at the school level.

MAP testing. The leadership team reviewed the MAP testing data for each school and then placed it in context to the school improvements needed for each school. The testing was administered to all students in three testing cycles. The MAP testing provided performance results in the area of reading and math and was compared in stages of growth for each student.

Middle school initiative. The Martin County School District realized the importance of preparing for students for high school. The realization occurred due to the transition of students from elementary to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to college. The school system developed a partnership to ensure that a focus was placed on math and reading at the middle school level. This partnership required intensive training for staff members in the areas of math and

reading. The learning strategies for teachers were then provided to the remaining school staff.

Monitoring effective school programs. The MCTI relied heavily on the monitoring of the effective school programs. The plight of many small eastern Kentucky school systems is to make sure that all programs are functioning at a high level on a consistent basis. Resources are limited and must be stretched by the district and school. Central office liaisons worked with building principals in identifying the types of data to be collected, and the timeframe for this data to be made available to the school. A timeline in which to complete the data analysis and implement corrective strategies was investigated by the principal and district office staff member. Liaisons were instructed to conduct walkthrough observations at their assigned schools on a monthly basis.

Monthly liaison meetings were held with the superintendent to identify the positives and negatives associated with the process. Each school provided information directly related to their programs. Each school administrator delivered a report for the purpose of providing individual student information related to academic and nonacademic measures. The report included formative assessment data, discipline data and attendance data. The school liaison made regular visits to each school to check for utilization and monitoring of programs.

School Liaisons. Each school had an assigned central office administrator. The liaison provided a line of communication, support and consultation to the school on a daily basis. The liaison was required to attend the monthly SBDM meeting for

their assigned school. The liaison was responsible for providing guidance to the school administrator in all areas.

Walkthroughs. The central office staff was expected to conduct a monthly walkthrough at each school location. The walkthroughs served the purpose of providing a snapshot of classroom and school activities. Each school administrator was provided feedback to the teachers via email. The superintendent also provided feedback to the building administrator via email. The information provided served as immediate feedback for strategies and activities that were occurring at the school level. The central office staff members also prepared a report with strengths and weaknesses (Appendix A).

Data rooms. Each school staff was required to develop a data room which was to be a secured and locked at all times. The identification of every student and their current academic performance in the building was important to the process. Charts were provided that detailed all academic and nonacademic information about each student. The focus was placed all academic testing information. The following questions were asked, What is Growth? What is Gap? What is Achievement? What is College/Career Readiness? and What is Graduation Rate? The school staff reviewed the data and then assisted in making the necessary adjustments to the instructional delivery for the student. The principal monitored this by conducting meetings and review of forms. This process allows for the expectation of being College and Career Ready by the time each student graduates. It also allows for teachers to have an

understanding of their students. This information can be monitored and adjusted on a yearly basis.

Communication. The MCTI was designed and worked toward the ascendancy of communication from all stakeholders in the hunt for a systemic community district – one that had the needed buy-in from the public. A communication committee was formed and named Martin County School District Communication Team. The committee met monthly and consisted of certified personnel, classified staff, parents, community members, and a board member. The superintendent facilitated these meetings and created the monthly agendas. The focus of the meetings was on district and school initiatives to create a sense of urgency for the need for change and preparation of Martin County students toward Career and/or College Readiness.

Communication plan. The communication plan was developed with partners from the school system and community. The committee conducted several meetings and developed the plan to ensure that all stakeholders received information in an appropriate manner and style. The plan also described the purpose and goal of the process. The goal of the plan was to raise public confidence in the Martin County School System by educating key audiences that we have a strategic plan with proactive outcomes that will improve teaching and learning in the system. (Appendix B)

Newsletter. A district-wide newsletter called the Martin County News was published semi-annually. The superintendent instructed principals to appoint or gain

a volunteer to be the building writer of school specific, content level news, and student academic accomplishments. A point of contact was assigned to collect all of the information from the schools to develop the district newsletter. The newsletter provided information from the district and school level, and was distributed at various locations throughout the community. It provided a resource for the delivery of information to the community. (Appendix C).

School Messenger. The school messenger is a phone-based system that allows for every student to be contacted via a phone call. It delivers a recorded message to all students that are placed in the system in a timely and efficient manner. The message is recorded by the school employee and makes a concentrated effort to reach every student household. It can be used to target specific groups of parents within the district or for the entire group. The messages informed parents of student absences, meetings scheduled, notification of school cancellation, special events, assessment dates, and other district and school specific information.

Billboards. The communication committee met bi-monthly and designed billboards that were in two locations of Martin County. The billboards were placed at the farthest end of both sides of the county. The billboard recognized student success and accomplishments. Messages conveyed information about testing, Infinite Campus and the parent portal, parent-teacher conferences, reporting schedules, and accomplishment that needed to be celebrated. The billboard also displayed the district mission statement, “Every Student Proficient and Prepared for Success”.

High expectations. The MCTI was used as a vessel to establish the concept of high expectations for the students of Martin County. The superintendent elected to be a pilot district in the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) that the state of Kentucky was going to implement. The PGES focuses on student growth and building capacity for teachers and leaders to engage in discussions on student content data with access to vertically, horizontally and longitudinally data.

College and Career Readiness (CCR) goals were established for each school district by the Kentucky Department of Education. The CCR goal for Martin County was added to each central office administrators and building level principals growth plan. Each student is expected to show or display growth at the end of each grade level. The administrators were held accountable for working with students to show improvement and growth on a yearly basis. The Martin County School District created the expectation that every school would have a clearly defined Response to Intervention (RTI) program plan. The RTI plan was to focus on the weaknesses of students and to develop strategies to improve each student.

Administrator progress report. The central office staff met on several occasions and developed a progress report that was to be submitted on a bi-monthly schedule. The progress report detailed information that was occurring at school site. The only variance in the report was at the high school in which they were given permission to submit their quarterly report. Since 2010, priority schools in Kentucky have been using a 30-60-90 day planning format for turning around low performing schools. This plan is based on a written course of action that occurs every 30 days.

The plan details the steps that are going to be taken to get results. Teams look at the work every 30 days to see if changes need to be made to improve the possibility that a goal would be reached (KDE, 2010). The plan is a smaller version of the comprehensive district improvement plan for each school district and is systemic by design. The report focused on the same areas as the audit report (Appendix D).

Professional Growth and Effectiveness System. The Martin County School District agreed to be a pilot school system for the Professional Growth and Evaluation System in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education. The approved evaluation system was reviewed, and the committee deemed it to be outdated and need of revision. The pilot program provided opportunity for each school administrator to be trained with the new system. It allowed for each administrator to review quality teaching as outlined by the program and also to test in the understanding of this process. The pilot program also allowed for a select number of teachers to participate in the program and assist in the development. The teachers were provided with an opportunity to receive training in the pilot program. During the training sessions each teacher was allowed to network with peers and gather information from reliable sources. The program is also providing information to current staff members to gain a better understanding of the requirements of the future. The evaluations will be more reliant on student data. This will provide accountability for each school and district throughout the state of Kentucky.

Implementation Timeline of MCTI

In the fall of 2011, the leadership team was formed and the systemic process for the implementation of MCTI were collaboratively developed and implemented. During the school years of 2011-13, the superintendent and leadership team monitored progress of the initiative during regularly scheduled administration meetings. The leadership team members reviewed data and relayed information related to High-Reliability Organizations, Effective Schools Research, ISLLC Standards and Turn-around Research. The team created a list of explicit and focused descriptions of programs to help in the turn-around process as supported by research to improve the systemic processes and organizational effectiveness of the Martin County School District.

The activities developed for the initiative occurred on different schedules, with some having more frequent occurrences than other activities. The only activity to occur on a daily basis was the school visits by the school liaisons. The activities that occurred on a regular scheduled amount of time were data analysis, walkthroughs, data room review, school messenger, and administrator progress reports. The activities that occurred on a longer time-frame were comprehensive district plan, staff realignment, MAP testing, KDE audit, middle school initiative, communication plan, newsletter, billboards, and professional growth and evaluation system. The activities were under constant scrutiny by the staff members.

Monitoring MCTI

Monitoring the impact of the MCTI occurred during regularly scheduled schools visits reported at leadership meetings led by the superintendent at district level meetings. Central office administrators, principals and guest attended the meetings from the community. The superintendent oversaw the implementation of the MCTI. The superintendent was responsible for ensuring the leadership team adhered to all timelines. Some discussion of activities occurred via iChat®. The discussions centered on the timelines and systemic processes for implementing the activities using the characteristics that are common between HRO's, ES, ISLLC, and TA. Monitoring occurred through the submission of progress reports and discussed at a monthly administrators' meeting.

Components of the Study

Independent variable. The independent variable of this study were the four groups of stakeholders impacted by the introduction of the Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI). The stakeholders consisted of the administrators, teachers, parents, and community leaders of the school district. The 15 turn-around activities of the five components of the MCTI model are considered a factor.

Dependent variable. The dependent variable of this study was the Martin County School District functioning as a systemic organization as a result of the impact of the MCTI activities.

Research design. This study used a mixed-method research design. The quantitative data consisted of the responses to the 5-point Likert scale statements

from the online survey made available to school leaders, teachers, parents and community leaders. Qualitative data consisted of open-ended responses to each of the 15 statements that enabled the respondent to provide any additional comments regarding the particular statement. Data provided an in depth analysis in determining if the Martin County School District functioned as a more effective organization as a result of MCTI.

Procedures. Surveys were administered to school leaders, teachers, community leaders and parents in January, 2014 (Appendix E). The survey instrument used to complete the project was titled, “Doctoral Project- MCTI”. The survey had 15 questions using both a Likert scale and open response format. Data gathered provided information from stakeholders as to the impact of the MCTI systemic process of activities in the turn-around process. The researcher analyzed the data and determined recurring patterns and themes from open response comments under each of the questions. Data determined that the Martin County School District does function as a more effective organization as a result of MCTI.

Once the window for completion of the survey was closed, the responses on the 15 Likert-scale statements, along with the demographics of the respondents were entered and descriptive statistics calculated using SPSS®. Summarizations of the respondents were determined and are presented in Table 6 for complete response sets. Any responses to the survey that were missing any component were eliminated from the study and the sample selection process.

The statements associated with the five components of the MCTI model were consolidated and the mean and standard deviations calculated. Table 3 presents the five components and which statements were measures of that component. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed to determine if there existed a difference between the groups for each of the MCTI components. A significance level of .05 was used to reject the associated null hypothesis. The five hypotheses tested were:

H₀1: There is no significant difference between the stakeholders' responses for the MCTI component of District Planning.

H₀2: There is no significant difference between the stakeholders' responses for the MCTI component of Analysis of Data.

H₀3: There is no significant difference between the stakeholders' responses for the MCTI component of Progress Monitoring.

H₀4: There is no significant difference between the stakeholders' responses for the MCTI component of Strong Communication.

H₀5: There is no significant difference between the stakeholders' responses for the MCTI component of Culture of High Expectations.

Table 3

Association of Survey Statement to MCTI Component

Component	Associated Statement
District Planning	12, 13, 14 and 15
Analysis of Data	10 and 11
Progress Monitoring	7, 8, and 9
Strong Communication	1, 2, 3, and 4
Culture of High Expectations	4, 5, and 6

Validity. Validity is the extent to which any measuring instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Carmines & Zeller 1979). Validity is not a property of the test or audit, but rather it is about the meaning of the audit scores. Validity of the measurement tool is considered to be the degree to which the tool measures what it claims to measure (Cowan, 2007). The researcher developed the instrument in collaboration with a professor in educational leadership familiar with this study.

Face validity. Face validity simply means that the validity is taken at face value. While discussing the validity of theory, Lacity and Jansen (1994) define validity as making common sense, and being persuasive and seeming right to the reader. Often time's professional knowledge is counter-common sense. For many researchers, validity is established from results that have the appearance of truth or reality. When using face validity it is important for the researcher to understand that their theory may not be accepted in total form. Did the 15 activities associated with the MCTI impact the systemic process of the Martin County School District?

Limitations

All studies have limitations. Several limitations of the MCTI study and of this capstone are provided below:

1. The sample size of the study was limited; data was gathered in only one school district.
2. The teacher and administrator sample is not demographically diverse. All participants were 100% Caucasian.
3. A perceived bias of survey participants may exist.
4. The change and make up in the Board members. Two new members were not serving as Board members at the inception of MCTI.
5. The population of parents and community leaders and members in the sample population were somewhat already actively involved in the schools and also involved in the development of some of the activities implemented during MCTI. This involvement may have skewed responses from these participants.
6. This study was conducted in one, rural, high poverty school district.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

This capstone focused on the impact of a researched based school district turn-around initiative that would enable the district to function as a more effective organization as a result of the implemented strategies. At the center of the study was the Martin County School System. The results demonstrated the impact of this two-year initiative.

The guiding question for this study has been, *How has the Martin County Turn-around Initiative --which included systemic processes for transformation-- enabled Martin County Schools to function as a more effective school system?*

Requests to complete the online survey were emailed to 198 people. The total number of emails included 136 teachers, 22 administrators, 20 parents, and 20 community leaders/members. Of the 119 individuals that entered the website and submitted responses to the survey, only 105 completed 100% of the items. Thus, only fully completed surveys were used when analyzing the submitted responses. This provided a response rate of 53%. (See Table 4)

The teacher and administrator surveys were administered to all certified personnel in Martin County. The parent and community leaders/members were randomly selected from lists of parents and community members provided from each of the schools. From these lists the MCTI leadership team randomly selected parents and business leaders to participate in the surveys as noted in the table. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from this sample population using the same survey

Table 4

Demographics of Respondents to Online Survey

	Responses to Survey	Valid Respondents	Percent of Valid
Administrators	15	13	12.4
Teachers	73	69	65.7
Parents	12	10	9.5
Community Leaders	18	13	12.4
Missing Identifier	1		
Total Respondents	119	105	

The 15 survey questions were designed to investigate if the five researched based strategies used in MCTI; district planning, analysis of data, progress monitoring, strong communication, and creating a culture of high expectations allowed the district to function as an effective school system rather than a system of individual schools. (See Table 5) The focus was on creating activities that would enable the district to function as an organized and effective system and further enable lead the district to work in a unified manner, turning-around and transforming the Martin County School District.

Table 5

Martin County Turn-around Initiative Focus Areas

	N	Range of Index	Min	Max	Mean	SD
District Planning (Statements 12-15)	105	4 - 20	10	20	16.571	3.168
Analysis of Data (Statements 10-11)	105	2 - 10	5	10	8.524	1.488
Progress Monitoring (Statements 7-9)	105	3 - 15	6	15	12.838	2.122
Strong Communication (Statements 1-4)	105	4 - 20	10	20	17.467	2.561
Culture of High Expectations (Statements 4-6)	105	3 - 15	6	15	13.095	2.031

Each survey question was framed to collect quantitative data using a Likert scale rating of Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Additionally, these same questions provided participants completing the survey an opportunity to respond to each question with open-ended responses that provided qualitative data. Table 6 provides a summary of the valid responses for each of the 15 questions for all respondents.

Table 6

Survey Responses by Category (N = 105)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean (SD)
1 The district developed a two-way feedback loop related to important events and information on school and district progress.	1 (1.0)	3 (2.9)	15 (14.3)	40 (38.1)	46 (43.8)	4.21 (.863)
2 The district created opportunities for access to information related to important events or school and district progress.	0 (0.0)	3 (2.9)	5 (4.8)	43 (41.0)	54 (51.4)	4.41 (.717)
3 The district initiated processes used to inform stakeholders of important events or school and district progress.	0 (0.0)	2 (1.9)	8 (7.6)	44 (41.9)	51 (48.6)	4.37 (.711)
4 The district ensured that high expectations were communicated on a regular basis to school employees.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.0)	9 (8.6)	34 (32.4)	61 (58.1)	4.48 (.695)
5 The district worked towards involvement in creating or ensuring high expectations established by the district.	0 (0.0)	3 (2.9)	9 (8.6)	38 (36.2)	55 (52.4)	4.38 (.764)
6 The district developed district-wide activities that demonstrated the presence of a unified vision of high expectations.	1 (1.0)	2 (1.9)	13 (12.4)	44 (41.9)	45 (42.9)	4.24 (.815)
7 The district monitored program effectiveness and school and student progress.	0 (0.0)	4 (3.8)	9 (8.6)	41 (39.0)	51 (48.6)	4.32 (.791)
8 The district formulated what kinds of data were regularly collected to determine improved outcomes.	0 (0.0)	2 (1.9)	10 (9.5)	45 (42.9)	48 (45.7)	4.32 (.727)
9 The district developed and determined what and how programs were evaluated on an on-going basis.	0 (0.0)	3 (2.9)	17 (16.2)	42 (40.0)	43 (41.0)	4.19 (.810)
10 The district created a system of how academic performance data were analyzed.	0 (0.0)	6 (5.7)	13 (12.4)	40 (38.1)	46 (43.8)	4.20 (.871)
11 The district managed how data analysis results were share with all stakeholders (staff, parents, and community).	0 (0.0)	2 (1.9)	13 (12.4)	39 (37.1)	51 (48.6)	4.32 (.766)
12 The district provided for the known activities or processes of the Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI).	1 (1.0)	5 (4.8)	36 (34.3)	22 (21.0)	41 (39.0)	3.92 (1.01)
13 The district ensured how the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan used data to drive decision-making.	1 (1.0)	1 (1.0)	20 (19.0)	34 (2.4)	49 (46.7)	4.23 (.858)
14 The district created strategies and activities that were developed by district leadership to assist in the turn-around process.	0 (0.0)	3 (2.9)	24 (22.9)	32 (30.5)	46 (43.8)	4.15 (.875)
15 As a result of the Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI), the district function as a more effective organization.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.0)	18 (17.1)	38 (36.2)	48 (45.7)	4.27 (.775)

Note: Number of responses by category (percent of total valid responses N)

District Planning

Quantitative results. Four questions provided results on the presence of a systemic structure in district planning. Responses on the four statements-12 through 15- were combined and descriptive statistics calculated for each of the stakeholders. The results are presented in Table 7. The summary data were used to test the null hypothesis: H_0 1: There is no significant difference between the stakeholders' responses for the MCTI component of District Planning.

Table 7

MCTI Focus Area: District Planning

	N	Mean	SD	Std Error
Administrators	13	17.231	3.140	.871
Teachers	69	15.957	3.141	.378
Parents	10	18.900	1.729	.547
Community Leaders	13	17.385	3.330	.923
Total	105	15.571	3.168	.309

The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated on the respondents' rating of the statements related to district planning to test the H_0 1. The analysis was significant, $F(3, 101) = 3.354$, $p < .05$. Further post hoc analysis using Tukey revealed that teachers ($M=15.957$, $SD=3.141$) give a significantly lower rating than parents ($M=18.900$, $SD=1.729$) on the impact of MCTI upon district planning. This difference might be attributed to the teachers being more critical of the process.

It can also be contributed to the terminology used in the education profession. Table 8 presents the results of the ANOVA for district planning.

Table 8

ANOVA: Respondents Rating on District Planning

	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	94.560	3	31.520	3.354	.022
Within Groups	949.154	101	9.398		
Total	1043.714	104			

Qualitative results. Respondents to the statements related to district planning provided a variety of comments related to the impact of MCTI. Qualitative data indicated that central office leaders were more keenly aware of the 15 activities developed in MCTI for the purpose of developing a more effective and organized system than teachers were. Community meetings were held that included parents, community and business leaders to assist in developing district-wide processes. Information shared at the meetings included the district comprehensive plan. Activities to improve district organization were also shared with regard to planning, collecting data, monitor progress, communication results, and creating a culture of high expectations that were the outgrowth of the initiative.

Qualitative data also stated that the implementation of the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) provided unified structure and unified language district-wide to be used when evaluating teachers and providing strategies

for professional growth. The CDIP provided the framework for the district and schools to work within a systems approach to planning and decision-making. The system approach included identifying activities and timelines with assigned leaders to each activity and each school. Teacher comments indicated there were staff and community meetings at locations throughout the district where the CDIP plans were shared. The use of data was mentioned frequently in teacher comments in the district planning process. Structure within the district plan also provided the opportunity for teachers at each school to assume a leadership role.

Qualitative data noted that teachers were aware of a number activities implemented during this initiative. Comments indicated teachers were aware that liaisons were assigned to their schools and the active participation of central office members including the superintendent during walkthroughs. Open response comments reveal teachers and community members were aware of the district initiative to create processes that make decisions transparent throughout the school and community. Data revealed that school teams or professional learning communities were a district focus along with the expectation of schools developing response to intervention programs.

Qualitative data indicated teachers were familiar with the 15 activities in MCTI and one noted “they assisted with improving the way the district solves problems”. Teacher comments indicate the schools seem to work better because of the MCTI activities. Communication appeared to show the greatest area of improvement and effectiveness. Comments revealed the district demonstrated more

follow-through on activities initiated. “Many of the 15 activities benefited our district”, “We are better informed about our students and how well they are learning.” “The availability of information to all stakeholders created a stronger support system for all concerned.” The assessment data reflected increased student performance at all levels on state and national assessments. The activities provided for a systemic approach in the Martin County School District.

Analysis of Data

Quantitative results. Two questions provided survey results on a system for analyzing data. Responses on the two statements-10 and 11- were combined and descriptive statistics calculated for each of the stakeholders. The results are presented in Table 9 and contain the descriptive statistics of the four groups of respondents related to the area of analysis of data. The summary data were used to test the null hypothesis associated with the analysis of data construct.

Table 9

MCTI Focus Area: Analysis of Data

	N	Mean	SD	Std Error
Administrators	13	8.692	1.494	.414
Teachers	69	8.275	1.474	.175
Parents	10	9.800	.633	.200
Community Leaders	13	8.692	1.601	.444
Total	105	8.524	1.488	.145

Further analysis was completed to test the null hypothesis: H_0 : There is no significant difference between the stakeholders' responses for the MCTI component of Analysis of Data. Table 10 provides the results when using a one-way ANOVA on the respondents' ratings of the impact of the MCTI upon the analysis of school and district data. The results indicated there was a statistical significance difference in the means of the four groups of respondents, $F(3, 101) = 3.430, p < .05$.

Post hoc analysis using Tukey reveals that the parents' ratings ($M = 9.800, SD = 0.633$) were statistically greater than the ratings given by teachers ($M = 8.275, SD = 1.474$). This difference can be attributed to the teachers being more critical of the process. It can also be attributed to the terminology used in the education profession.

Table 10

ANOVA: Respondents Rating on Analysis of Data

	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	21.284	3	7.095	3.430	.020
Within Groups	208.907	101	2.068		
Total	230.190	104			

Qualitative results. Respondents to the statements related to the analysis of data provided a variety of comments related to the impact of MCTI. Qualitative data indicated this was accomplished with the use of on-line testing, regular learning checks using clicker tools or similar electronic devices to track student progress. Teacher comments indicated the use of computer driven assessment data and recording systems aided in the analysis of data.

Data rooms were a requirement in each of the schools throughout the district. Teachers indicated that data was analyzed in professional learning community meetings during the school year. Open response comments revealed “every student and teacher is connected to an advisor/advisee where they regularly meet to analyze the student’s data notebook that contained results on major assessments and recommendations for improvement”. Teachers “grouped students based on data and provided targeted interventions aligned to the data”.

Data indicated the high school used a 30-60-90 day analysis plan to examine school and student progress. Data were also analyzed at the district level. Principals

met regularly with the superintendent and liaisons to discuss strengths and areas of needed improvement. Professional growth was provided to the certified staff members in the pursuit of this practice. The building and district level administrators facilitated this process.

Qualitative data also stated that the district shared results through newsletters, newspaper, the new community bulletin boards and social media. Comments indicated data results were also shared at parent/teacher conferences, literacy nights and student celebration dinners. Counselors collaborated with students and families on individual student test scores. Teachers as stakeholders analyzed data in faculty meetings, department meetings and PLCs. Family Resource Center and Title One meetings were used to facilitate the dissemination of this information as well.

Progress Monitoring

Quantitative results. Three questions provided results on a system of progress monitoring; questions 7, 8 and 9. Table 11 provides the mean and standard deviation for each of the four groups of respondents that rated the impact of MCTI upon the utilization of progress monitoring in the district. These results were used to test the null hypothesis related to progress monitoring. H_03 : There is no significant difference between the stakeholders' responses for the MCTI component of Progress Monitoring.

Table 11

MCTI Focus Area: Progress Monitoring

	N	Mean	SD	Std Error
Administrators	13	12.846	1.819	.504
Teachers	69	12.594	2.060	.248
Parents	10	13.900	1.595	.504
Community Leaders	13	13.308	2.869	.796
Total	105	12.838	2.122	.207

Table 12 provides the results from a one-way ANOVA on the respondents' ratings on this concept. The analysis, $F(3, 101) = 1.365$, $p > .05$, was not significant. The four groups of stakeholders provided similar levels of responses overall in regards to the monitoring of progress within the district.

Table 12

ANOVA: Respondents Rating on Progress Monitoring

	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.248	3	6.083	1.365	.258
Within Groups	449.999	101	4.455		
Total	468.248	104			

Qualitative results. Respondents to the statements related to monitoring of progress provided a variety of comments related to the impact of MCTI. Qualitative

data revealed that administrator meetings and progress reports were helpful and effective in monitoring progress. Site visits were also noted in the comments as help in monitoring student and school results. Follow-up reports from the site visits were sent back the buildings with suggestions for improvement and next steps. Archival data revealed sign-in sheets; agendas and minutes were kept at various meetings that included data being analyzed to determine progress being made, or the lack of progress. The creation of the data rooms at each school provided evidence of process of progress monitoring. Central office assigned liaisons to each school also facilitating discussion on progress and next steps.

Qualitative data stated that assessments played a role in the monitoring. Open response comments revealed the use of local assessments combined with standardized assessments were frequently monitored. The data room was also regularly accessed for monitoring student and school outcomes. The kinds of data analyzed included regular assessments, learning checks, MAP, KPREP, benchmark tests; end of course assessments, Plan and Explore data. Attendance and behavior data were also shared. It was an expectation in each school that follow-up data on response to interventions (RTI) on individual students were also shared.

Qualitative data also revealed evaluation of progress involved numerous stakeholders in PLC meetings, departments meetings, and administrative meetings on improvement planning. MAP data were collected three times a year. Regular assessment data were analyzed at the end of each unit and displayed in the data rooms. PLAN and EXPLORE data were collected and analyzed when available.

Strong Communication

Quantitative results. Four questions provided data on the impact of creating a system of communication; questions 1, 2, 3 and 4. Question number 4 was the one question that provided data under the two categories of communication and creating a culture of high expectations. The summary data from these four statements were used to test the null hypothesis: H_04 : There is no significant difference between the stakeholders' responses for the MCTI component of Strong Communication. Table 13 provides the descriptive statistics related to the summary data for the construct of strong communication.

Table 13

MCTI Focus Area: Strong Communication

	N	Mean	SD	Std Error
Administrators	13	18.077	2.326	.645
Teachers	69	16.942	2.479	.298
Parents	10	19.400	1.075	.340
Community Leaders	13	18.154	3.185	.883
Total	105	17.467	2.561	.250

As provided in Table 14, an ANOVA was used to determine if a significant difference existed between the four means in relation to the role MCTI had upon establishing strong communications between the various stakeholders. The results, $F(3, 101) = 3.688$, $p < .05$, indicated that a significant difference existed and warranted the rejection of the H_0 .

Post hoc analysis revealed that the teachers group ($M = 16.942$, $SD = 2.479$) gave a statistically lower rating than parents ($M = 19.400$, $SD = 1.075$) on the role MCTI had on establishing effective communications. This difference can be attributed to the teachers being more critical of the process. It can also be contributed to the terminology used in the education profession.

Table 14

ANOVA: Respondents Rating on Strong Communication

	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	67.350	3	22.450	3.688	.014
Within Groups	617.784	101	6.087		
Total	682.133	104			

Qualitative results. Respondents to the statements related to strong communication provided a variety of comments related to the impact of MCTI. Qualitative data gathered from question one revealed stakeholders were aware of a system of communication through the district newsletter, new school bulletin/messenger boards, I-chats, walk-throughs, reports given at faculty meetings, superintendent and liaison visits at faculty meetings and progress reports. Data revealed the district had in place a phone notification system to create a line of communication from school to home. The use of parent input through survey was important in gathering data and suggestions for improvement.

The newly formed district leadership committee was developed to allow teachers to have input in district-wide activities. A central office liaison was assigned to keep the district web page current and up to date. Many parents were invited and encouraged to contact teachers and provided with the proper steps. Numerous school and district reports were available electronically; school report cards school, district

web page information and school and district newsletters. The community was invited to attend public forums for informational purposes.

Qualitative data indicated that the following venues were provided that allowed everyone within the district and community access to information: social media; blogs; school calendars; Infinite Campus parent communication tool; automated calling system; newsletters; and the new bulletin boards. Parents had the option to respond back to the school and engage in the dialogue via emails, blogs, forums and parent meetings.

Qualitative data indicated the district initiated a line of communication throughout the community. District leadership informed stakeholders about processes and events of the Martin County School District. The district newsletters and billboards were cited as evidence in this category. Regular meetings with participants provided a two-way communication loop for the district. The call messenger system was used to communicate widespread information in a quick and efficient manner.

Qualitative data revealed high expectations were communicated regularly in PLC meetings, PLC meetings and at faculty meetings. Goals were set and monitored frequently. Data indicated that at the opening day of school, the focus was on high expectation for students and staff. All meetings were to be data driven and focused on school and student improvement strategies. Comments reveal there was an expectation of follow-through that had not always been a focus in the district. Central office staff had not always been involved on a personal level in the school improvement process. Central office administrators and the superintendent were now

involved in regularly scheduled site visits engaging in discussion and solution finding to areas of weakness.

Culture of High Expectations

Quantitative results. Three questions provided results on a systems to create a culture of high expectations; questions 4, 5 and 6. Question 4 reveals data in the areas of high expectations and communication. Table 15 provides the descriptive statistics related to the four stakeholder groups that were used to test the associated hypothesis.

H₀5: There is no significant difference between the stakeholders' responses for the MCTI component of Culture of High Expectations.

Table 15

MCTI Focus Area: Culture of High Expectations

	N	Mean	SD	Std Error
Administrators	13	13.077	1.977	.548
Teachers	69	12.855	2.088	.251
Parents	10	14.200	1.317	.416
Community Leaders	13	13.539	2.066	.573
Total	105	13.095	2.031	.198

A one-way ANOVA was used to investigate for a significant difference between the various combinations of means. As presented in Table 16, the results indicated that there was no difference among the means as related to the impact

MCTI had on the establishment of a culture of high expectations ($F(3, 101) = 1.538, p > .05$).

Table 16

ANOVA: Respondents Rating on Culture of High Expectation

	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.743	3	6.248	1.538	.209
Within Groups	410.305	101	4.062		
Total	429.048	104			

Qualitative results. Respondents to the statements related to culture of high expectations provided a variety of comments related to the impact of MCTI.

Qualitative data revealed high expectations were communicated regularly in PLC meetings, teacher leaders meetings and at faculty meetings. Goals were set and monitored frequently. Comments revealed that in analyzing data posted in data rooms there were the expectation to provide response to intervention to address individual student needs. For every reaction there was an action required focused on improvement. Data was also tied the professional growth and effectiveness. If data indicated areas of needed professional teacher growth, the district worked to provide the needed assistance.

Qualitative also data revealed that stakeholders were informed of expectations through the postings in the newsletters and on the billboards. District leadership informed various stakeholders through emails, meetings, public forums and hearings.

Written comments noted the use of a phone call system that provided information to stakeholders on a regular basis. The district was making strides in collaborating more with more stakeholders. Central office leaders and school leaders worked together facilitating grade level and subject level discussions.

Qualitative data comments revealed that expectations were conveyed from the opening day of school. Comments indicated high expectations were established. The avenues used to deliver the high expectations standards were during all meetings, emails, walkthroughs and the administrative team making themselves available to the stakeholders. Teacher comments reveal they continually met as a group to develop and unify curriculum maps and lesson plans. The middle schools collaborated on professional development creating a more collegial atmosphere. Goals were set for all schools and support was provided to reach these goals. Teachers indicated the district created a more unified vision of high expectations.

Summary

In summary, the survey results and open response comments provided evidence of established systems during the turn-around initiative. Archival documents were available in each school that provided data in support of a semblance of organizational systems aligned to the five content categories of district planning, analysis of data, progress monitoring, strong communication and culture of high expectations. These categories aligned with commonalities within the research of HRO, ES, ISLLC Standards and Turn-Around research.

Surveys demonstrated that a systemic process was in place for developing, implementing and monitoring the strategies and activities during the MCTI. Results indicated a systemic process was used in the development of activities and the disseminating of information to certified staff, parents and community leaders. Systemic processes were evident in the survey analysis of documents. Results indicated that the district created strategies and activities that were developed by the district leadership to assist in the turn-around process.

When comparing the five categorical areas, results indicate that MCTI systemic processes determined the following rankings. When analyzing the percent total of strongly and agree for each category, in order of highest to lowest the results are as follows: communication 88%, high expectations 87%, progress monitoring 85%, data analysis 84% and district planning 73%.

Information gathered from the quantitative and qualitative data helped to provide evidence as to the impact MCTI had on the Martin County School District's ability to operate as an effective, systemic organization. Data analysis presented in Chapter Four indicated that the district ensured that high expectations were communicated on a regular basis. The data also revealed that the district initiated processes used to inform stakeholders of important events and or school and district progress. The development of district wide activities that demonstrated the presence of a vision of high expectations was important to the process. The district managed how data analysis results were shared with all stakeholders.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

This capstone provided data on the results of a two-year initiative to improve organizational effectiveness grounded in the research on systems thinking, effective schools, high reliability organizations, Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, and turn-around research. Several commonalities of this research became the focus of this capstone that guided the organizational structure of the Martin County Turn-around Initiative; district planning, data analysis, monitoring progress, communication, and high expectations.

District Planning

A high percentage of those surveyed were in agreement that the district was successful in providing activities and processes that were a result of the Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI). The implementation and pilot of the Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) was used district-wide to improve the evaluative skills of administrators and teacher skills sets at the school level. Survey responses agreed that the district was active in using the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan as a tool in the turn-around process. The district plan was data driven and centered on the use of data across all levels. Results indicate district leadership were active partners in the process of turn-around. Central office staff realignment as school liaisons provided a sense of urgency for each affected staff member. This provided for the opportunity for the school to see that the district office was invested in their effort and improvement. The overall atmosphere

of systemic planning was conveyed throughout the district through meetings, emails and regularly scheduled walkthroughs. The district leadership team met on a consistent basis to discuss changes or improvements needed in the planning process. The formation of the team concept was instrumental in the planning, development and implementation of identifying teacher leaders at building levels. District leaders became more aware of the importance of the resources, support and planning needed to revise and establish a systemic approach.

Analysis of Data

A high percentage of those surveyed were in agreement that the district created a system of how academic performance data were analyzed. Findings indicate the district developed a system in managing how data were analyzed and shared with all stakeholders. Findings revealed the use of data were embedded in meetings, emails, billboards, newsletters and conversations with the community. As a result of systemic processes developed in MCTI, findings indicate staff members became better prepared to analyze data at the school and district level that included timelines on reporting specific data (ACT, Plan, Explore, and common assessments). The analyzed data were used to make decisions related student achievement and growth. Teachers and administrators commented that the various assessment methods made it possible to identify individual student needs that in turn provided the district with a blueprint for needed interventions and strategies. The formation of data rooms at each school enabled the district to review longitudinal data on individual students. District leaders became the role model in the process of data

analysis and therefore able to provide guidance at the school level. The superintendent was active modeling the expectation in district led meetings and on walkthroughs.

The middle schools were selected to participate in the Kentucky Middle School Initiative. The initiative was provide focus on Reading and Math for grades six through eight that included a system of professional development training and instruction on how to improve teaching and delivery methods. The high school analysis of data system included a regular review of data on the college/career readiness of graduating seniors. As a result, Martin County School District exceeded its career and college readiness goal as established by the Kentucky Department of Education.

Progress Monitoring

A high percentage of those surveyed were in agreement that the district was successful in monitoring program effectiveness and student progress. The district formulated what kinds of data were collected to determine improvement of student achievement. The district staff, students and parents became more aware of effectiveness of programs by relating them increased student growth. School liaisons were assigned to each school to provide support for teaching, learning and administration. The liaisons were responsible for reviewing school programs and progress. Findings revealed the use of walkthroughs on a scheduled basis provided immediate feedback to the classroom teacher and building administrator. The walkthrough data was reviewed at the district level and then a report was made

available detailing strengths and weaknesses observed along with suggestions. Findings show the data rooms were effective in helping teachers diagnose the individual student strengths and weaknesses in order to develop effective intervention programs. Findings indicated site visits were conducted on regular scheduled visits that involved principals, peers, administrators, liaisons and the superintendent. Interactions were established with the parents and students by the leadership team. Assessments were reviewed and analyzed throughout the entire school year.

Findings showed that the implementation of the 30-60-90 day plan was used to provide a review on short and long-term data driven plans at the high school level. These incremental reporting timeframes made analyzing the data more manageable. Findings demonstrated that the use of technology aided in the monitoring of student progress. The uses of technology for collecting and monitoring data became a part of the culture for the Martin County School District. Assessments were given using computers on a regular basis to provide feedback and monitor progress. The use of smartphones and I-pads provided immediate feedback to all stakeholders. Findings indicate progress was shared and discussed at meetings across the school, district and community.

Communication

A high percentage of those surveyed were in agreement that the district was successful in developing a two-way communication feedback loop that apprised parents, teachers and the community of important events, dates and district progress. Findings indicate numerous forms of media were used to inform and involve

stakeholders: emails, I-chats, an automatic calling system, the installation of new outdoor messenger billboards, newsletters and regularly scheduled planning and data monitoring meetings. Findings revealed district leaders were active participants in school visits and classroom walkthroughs. School and community leaders collaborated during the strategies implemented through MCTI.

Findings show numerous efforts to involve stakeholders enabled many people to be a part of the initiative and help in the transformation the Martin County School District. Forums and surveys provided an opportunity for community input. The formation of a district leadership team connected liaisons from the central office to the schools and provided needed support and resources. The district webpage allowed easy access and links to information from the schools and central office to certified and classified staff, parents and community members on school and district programs and progress.

High Expectations

A high percentage of those surveyed indicated that high expectations were conveyed to school employees on a regular basis. Findings indicate the district-conducted activities that were aimed at establishing the presence of a unified vision of high expectations through the same message being conveyed throughout the district. High expectations were conveyed through emails, meetings and the development of billboards, newsletters and expectations. The billboards were placed at strategic locations in Martin County to better inform parents in smaller communities surrounding Inez.

Findings indicate that this effort enabled a large number of people to become better informed throughout the community. The superintendent required administrators to provide a bi-monthly report detailing their practices into the improvement of the system. Data indicated that high expectations were clearly established and conveyed to all students and staff members beginning with the first day of school.

Results demonstrated that there was an emphasis on college/career readiness throughout the district. Archival data revealed the expectation of helping students at each level to increase their college and career readiness was placed in each administrator's growth plan to provide for a unified district belief. The formation of a common belief in the ability of every staff member and student was formed by daily conversations and a constant emphasis on improvement. The non-negotiable of recognizing and identifying individual students became the norm instead of the exception by reviewing all possible data. All staff members permeated high expectations throughout the school system.

Responses indicate that teachers, parents and community members involved in this study were successful in their efforts to create a better functioning organization by creating systems for working on the work. Results were close for communication, high expectations, progress monitoring and data analysis followed by district planning. Findings show there is a shared belief that the district accomplished the task it set out to do with MCTI. The strongest score was tied to developing a communication system. Since communication is "like air to an organization" and all

organizations must have it to thrive and live, MCTI helped improve the communication system that was nearly non-existence in a formal manner prior to MCTI. Finding revealed the district, although posting strong scores in the area of district planning must continue to work collaboratively with building level administrators, teachers and the community to inform and involve them in the turn-around progress and strategies for improvement.

Implications

Results from this study could be used to provide other districts with an understanding of the importance of creating systems in order to begin the process of turning around a persistently low performing district. Systemic processes are critical to the improvement of any organization. In order to produce better student outcomes, the organization must work in a systemic manner to reach that end.

Going forward, the Martin School District could benefit from building upon the strategies that worked and continue to collect longitudinal data on the impact of these strategies. A pre-MCTI survey could have better informed the author on the impact of the 15 activities implemented. Future studies would benefit from collecting pre and post-test data on initiatives.

Summary

In conclusion, MCTI led the initial efforts to transform the Martin County School District into a more effective and better functioning school system. Survey data indicated the positive impact of many of these activities and processes the organization implemented in the five categorical areas. The early stages of

implementation of MCTI indicate this initiative made improvements to the system and better enabled the district to function more effectively. Student outcome data improved during this two-year initiative that may have been an outgrowth of these organizational strategies. Student data that demonstrated growth during this initiative timeframe are noted below.

During the initiative, Sheldon Clark High School posted an increase in the Plan results. Prior to MCTI, the high school's initial Plan score was 14.9%. The score has increased to 16.3% at the end of 2013. Content scores on Plan reveal English increased to 15.2% from 14%; mathematics to 16% from 14.3 %; Reading increased to 16.2% from 14.9% and Science to 17.3% from 16%. The college and career readiness rate increased 24% during the initiative period. The CCR rate moved above the state rate of 47.2% to 58.3%. The graduation rate for the high school improved 6 % to 70.1% as compared to 63.9% prior to MCTI. The high school's proficiency rate improved from 50% to 58.2%. High school math increased to 29.4% proficient as compared to the state average of 28.7%. During the implementation of this initiative, Social Studies scores at the high school levels were higher than the state average.

The retention rate has been reduced significantly to a district average of 0.2% compared to the state average of 2.4%. The average attendance rate has increased steadily from 91.5% to 93.09% during the initiative. Language mechanics increased at the high school and in the high school level from 34.8% to 41.7%. The average ACT score for high school students made a modest gain from 16.2% to 16.9%.

The middle school gap groups showed the highest percentages of increase. The middle school reading district average increased to 34.9% proficient compared to the state average of 34.8%. Middle school math district average increased to 29.4% proficient as compared to the state average of 28.7%. Reading performance for middle school students increased in percent proficient/distinguished from 40.7% to 44.0%. MS and high school math increased to 29.4% proficient as compared to the state average of 28.7%. Language mechanics performance for middle school students increased in the percent proficient/distinguished from 29.8% to 30.7%.

Mathematics performance for elementary school students increased in the percent proficient/distinguished from 23.9% to 28.4% and in Science performance for elementary school students increased in the percent of proficient/distinguished from 61.8% to 67.9%. Elementary social studies increased to slightly above the state average. Writing performance for elementary school students increased in the percent proficient/distinguished from 25.0% to 31.3% and in the high school level from 27.7% to 33.0%.

The accountability score goal for the Martin County School District was established at 50.2%. At the beginning of the initiative the score was 49.2%. The district increased that score to 55.6%. The initial percentile rank for the district was 17%. The increase placed the district in the 52%.

The initial placement for the district was in the needs improvement category. The increase placed the district in the progressing/needs improvement category. As a result, the Martin County School District was placed in the rewards category of high

progressing districts. The Martin County School District met all goals in the areas of Annual Measureable Objectives (AMO), participation rate and graduation rate.

The MCTI initiative provided a way of working to develop a systemic approach to increase student achievement. The importance of central office/district leadership involvement in creating a clear and unified vision through district planning, data analysis, monitoring of progress, communicating to all stakeholders and creating high expectation levels is paramount to any turn-around effort. The systemic and effective strategies established in the initiative, if continued could propel the district into one of the exemplary districts in the state of Kentucky. The district must make the decision to be the “one” and not just one of the many other districts.

This capstone, in its initial stages of implementation accomplished the task of improving the organizational systems of the Martin County Schools. The 15 activities helped improve the district organizational processes for planning, analysis of data, progress monitoring communication and high expectations.

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APPENDIX A

Snapshot

Name: no name
Submitted: Not Submitted
School:

The students were:

	Observed	Not Observed
on task in challenging/engaging work	_____	_____
writing or creating original work	_____	_____
involved in an assessment activity	_____	_____
completing projects	_____	_____
completing worksheets	_____	_____
using technology	_____	_____
listening or responding	_____	_____
answering rote or knowledge-level questions	_____	_____
initiating and/or answering higher order questions	_____	_____
math assignment	_____	_____
working in groups	_____	_____
completing or correcting homework assignments	_____	_____
reading	_____	_____
speaking in front of, or presenting to, class	_____	_____
in class, downtime	_____	_____
transitioning activities	_____	_____
not in classroom	_____	_____

The teacher was:

	Observed	Not Observed
specifying expectations & desired behavior	_____	_____
lecturing or assigning to whole group	_____	_____
helping individual students	_____	_____
facilitating small groups	_____	_____
demonstrating or modeling a task	_____	_____
reading to or with students	_____	_____
using multiple questioning strategies	_____	_____
asking knowledge-level or procedural questions	_____	_____
asking higher order questions	_____	_____
using wait time effectively	_____	_____
using or modeling technology	_____	_____
circulating among students	_____	_____
sitting or standing behind desk (or podium)	_____	_____
giving direct instruction	_____	_____
in class, downtime	_____	_____
not in classroom	_____	_____
transitioning between classes or activities	_____	_____
providing math instruction	_____	_____

teacher absent & lesson plan available _____

Collaboration / Co-teaching Classroom

More than one teacher present Station teaching is occurring
 Co-teaching is occurring Collaborator teacher absent from room
 Lead and support teaching occurring

Evidence of Schoolwide & District Expectations

	Excellent	Acceptable	Needs Improvement	Not Observed
"I CAN" statements posted	_____	_____	_____	_____
Evidence of LP/CC/IC assess que	_____	_____	_____	_____
Student data posted	_____	_____	_____	_____
Critical thinking / questioning skills used	_____	_____	_____	_____
Process or strategy charts in room and used by students	_____	_____	_____	_____
Reading strategies used	_____	_____	_____	_____
Differentiation of instruction exists	_____	_____	_____	_____
Student agenda used & updated	_____	_____	_____	_____
Character initiatives / respect	_____	_____	_____	_____
Math strategies used	_____	_____	_____	_____
Curriculum integration	_____	_____	_____	_____
Evidence of accommodations / modification within lesson plan	_____	_____	_____	_____

New Group

Teacher has MAP scores for their students
 RTI grouping has occurred based on MAP scores
 RTI intervention being provided to students

APPENDIX B

Martin County Public School System
 Communications Plan
Every Student Proficient and Prepared for Success

Goal:

The Goal of this plan is to raise public confidence in the Martin County School System by educating key audiences that we have a strategic plan with proactive outcomes that will improve teaching and learning in the system.

Objectives:

- Build credibility for the Martin County School System among target audiences.
- Recruit support from the business community.
- Bring attention to student achievements and successes.

Audiences:

School officials
 Administrators
 Principals
 Teachers
 Parents
 Students
 Community Leaders
 Media
 General Public

Positioning Strategies:

- The Martin County School System is successfully working to improve the quality of education in Martin County.
- It is a responsible guardian for the children in its care.
- The school board is a responsible body working hard to improve the education system in our county.
- The school system is listening to the community and to key stakeholders.
- The system is a faithful steward of our resources.
- The system's leadership is knowledgeable about the key issues facing education today.
- The school board members are compassionate regarding the fair treatment of all stake holders.
- Martin County is a fair employer.

Tactics:

Newsletters
 Message from superintendent
 Martin County Schools Website
 Martin County Schools Facebook Page

Local media reports
School Messenger System

Teachers:

Quarterly employee newsletters
Training from principals

Parents:

Included will be a "Message from the Superintendent," available on the District website. The goal is to try and better engage parents in the school system. For the system's most successful schools, public credit should be given to the parents who are involved.

Parents will be encouraged to obtain their personal GUID login for the system's student data software (Infinite Campus). Access to Infinite Campus allows parents and guardians to be much more aware of their student's progress at school.

General media

Website/e-newsletter – We will ask parents to sign up for an e-newsletter that would give updates on the progress of the strategy.

School Messenger System

This system can be used to target specific groups of parents within the district or for everyone in the system. (Example – school cancellation would be everybody. Tryouts for elementary volleyball could be just a couple of grades and females students only.)

Students:

Morning announcements – Delivered by principals each and every morning.

Website

Essay/art contests – what does "high expectations" mean to you?

Twitter messages

Community Leaders:

Strategic Partner Program – Grass Roots efforts have always been valuable in building support for schools, business initiatives and political reform. We will develop a Strategic Partner Program led by the schools superintendent.

Strategic Partners will:

Participate in speakers' bureau. – Rotary, Kiwanis, etc. We should, at every chance, try and tailor our discussion about how education (or the lack of it) can specifically affect their group.

The communications team will send the Strategic Partners e-mails twice a month on system news and what information we need disseminated within their social and business circles.

Quarterly meetings can be held, where they can ask questions, provide suggestions and get a feel for where the system is headed and how they can help get our message out.

Suggested partners could include:

Kiwanis Member
Rotary President
Mayor(s)
CEOs of major businesses
Publishers of local newspapers
Business leaders
Community/Local Government leaders
Retired Teachers/Administrators

Brochure – A general brochure that explains in broad terms the strategic plan of the school system will be produced. This will be used by the Strategic Partners. It also will be placed in libraries, local businesses and the school board office.

Media:

Use local media to promote the school system by announcing upcoming events, sending positive achievements for publication and...

Editorial Calendar

A 12-month editorial calendar spreadsheet should be developed that lists all of our communications vehicles and the intervals that are published. This will allow us to quickly scan all of our vehicles and strategically place editorials to support message initiatives for the system and the School Board.

Other

- Phone Master System
- Parent / Community online surveys - Surveys will be conducted online through the Martin County School District. Anyone that does not have access to the internet will be provided with a hard copy upon request or will be provided with directions to locate a computer for survey completion.
- Posters will be placed in each classroom that conveys the Martin County School District Mission Statement.
- Billboards around the county highlighting student success.
- Banners with district mission statement in every school.
- Refrigerator magnets with mission statement and contact info for each school (5,000).

Teacher Association Communications

We must understand what other voices will be heard as we embark on our planning and implementation process. These include associations such as the teachers' association and other support staff groups. We also recommend developing a plan for communicating with these groups in advance to discover their issues and address them proactively, rather than working out differences in the press.

Message Strategy for Board Meetings

School Board meetings provide an opportunity to generate positive press on the system and our strategic plan. It can also be a place of disaster when discord and confusion are present.

A key message for each school board meeting should be developed and working with board members to make sure these messages are clearly conveyed to the public should be a priority.

To the greatest extent possible, we should try and use the board meetings to proactively communicate who we are as a system from a positive standpoint and to continually call on the community to support public education.

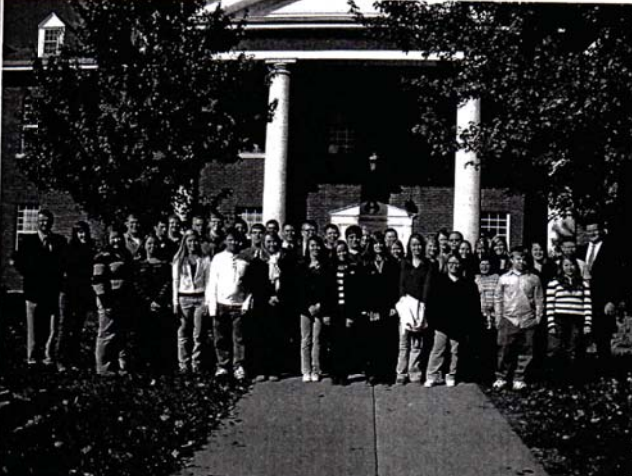
APPENDIX C

Martin County Schools

District Newsletter

*Created By the Sheldon Clark
High School Journalism Class*

Fall 2012



EVERY STUDENT PROFICIENT AND PREPARED FOR SUCCESS



Inside

- PLAN TESTING AT SC
- WES WALKING TO FRANKFORT
- IMS HERITAGE DAY
- EDEN POLITICS
- IPAD II's AT IES
- WMS

A NEW ERA IN STATE ACCOUNTABILITY

SC SCORES SHOW PROMISE

The new state accountability system has changed drastically since the old CATS model that we all have used for the past decade. The new accountability model, called K-PREP, has five distinct categories for high schools:

- **Achievement Index** - This index comes from combined scores in the areas of Algebra II, English 10, US History, Biology, On-demand Writing, and the Language Mechanics section of the PLAN test.
- **Gap Index** - This index depends on those students that are labeled as receiving free/reduced lunch services, special education services, and 504 plans as well as minority students.
- **Growth Index** - Students take the PLAN test as a sophomore, and the ACT test as a junior. Each student gets a "growth score" that measures individuals' improvement from their 10th grade to the 11th grade year.
- **Career/College Readiness Index** - In order for students to be labeled as "College Ready," they have to meet benchmarks on the ACT, COMPASS, or KYOTE exams. In order for students receive the "Career Ready" label, they have to receive an industry certification as well as pass KOSSA exams, Work Keys, and/or the ASVAB exam.
- **Graduation rate** - Currently, the graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students in a graduating class by the average of that particular classes number of students in their freshman and sophomore years.

As you can see, the new state accountability model includes a lot of different measures of success for our students.



Follow me to Page

7

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS



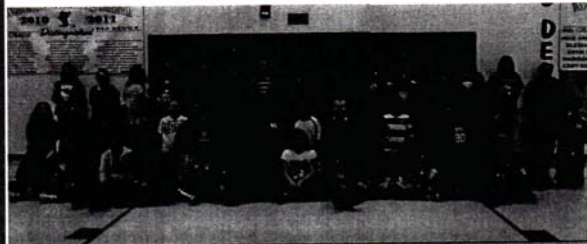
POLITICS IS ELEMENTARY AT EDEN

Eden Elementary has used this national political election as a springboard for student learning. Eden's 4th and 5th grades held class elections which included nominations, campaign slogans and signs, and even debates. Students conducted both a primary election and a general election. The classroom elections were a part of a Social Studies unit. The entire political process was studied from beginning to end. As part of this unit, students had to research a president they felt helped change the world and then write a biography about that president. For this project, a visual aid was required which could be in the form of a soda bottle person, a puppet, or a diorama. Speeches about each president researched were also given to the classes by the students.

Continued on page 6

WALKING TO FRANKFORT

The fifth grade students from Warfield Elementary with collaboration from the Martin County Health Department are promoting a healthy lifestyle by walking to Frankfort. There are 13 groups with four students per group that works together to walk one mile per week. So far, the students have walked a total of 130 miles. By the time of their annual field trip to Frankfort, the students will have walked a total of 689 miles, which is equivalent to traveling to Frankfort and back twice. The students are using pedometers provided by the Martin County Health Department to track their progress. Warfield Elementary believes that a strong mind and strong body leads to a bright future.



Career & Technical students of Martin County ATC's FBLA, HOSA and Skills USA, along with their advisors, collaborated on a monumental project that gained them first place honors at the recent Harvest Festival parade.



BRING YOUR TOOLBOX TO CLASS! "Along with your pencil, paper, textbook and dedication. A great teacher is already supplied for you."
--sign on Mr. Kevin Lowe's door.

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

WINTER 2012

INEZ MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC TEAM

The Inez Middle School Academic Team has started the season with an incredible start. With two meets under their belts so far, and two more to go until the annual Governor's Cup competition, both A and B teams have shown impressive results. Successes in Quick Recall include victories over teams from Russell, Johnson County, Floyd County, and Pike County. Scores in Written Assessment show equal success including a 1st place Social Studies finish by Colby Muncy, several Top 10 finishes in Science and Social Studies by Wesley Goble, and strong rankings in Language Arts from Carissa Sweeney.

The upcoming schedule for the team also includes the annual Kentucky Colonels 6th Grade Showcase. In this competition, limited to 6th graders, Inez Middle has good reason to be optimistic. IMS won last year's competition by a wide margin, defeating some of the regions best teams. Based on the performance of the team's 6th graders relative to their peers in meets to date, Coaches Dustin Woods and Marie Giezendanner have reason to expect good results.

The entire team has two more meets of league play and Governor's Cup on the horizon. Last year's competition saw IMS achieve a noteworthy 3rd place finish overall in our region with two students, Wesley and Shania Goble advancing to the state finals in Lexington. Bearing this precedent of success in mind and encouraged by victories in a fiercely competitive region, the IMS Academic Team enters the last half of the season with great optimism. Readers should continue to expect to see high marks from a team that is rapidly becoming one of the best in Eastern Kentucky.



SCHS JOURNALISM

The Sheldon Clark High School Journalism Class, under the direction of Mrs. Marcie Ward Hanson, is home to the SCHS newsletter, the weekly "Bird's Eye View" school news column featured in the Mountain Citizen newspaper, the school news show "SCHS Today" (ihigh.com/sheldonclarkcardinals), the Martin County District Newsletter, SCHS yearbook "Poems, Prayers and Promises," as well as all SCHS event publications. The 150 page Football and Fall Sports program and the Fast Lane Classic program were recently published.

In addition to their other duties, Journalism students will be helping Coach Frankie Smith with the production of a school sports talk show which will be aired on ihigh.com/sheldonclarkcardinals. Class members will travel to WSAZ Television 3 on Wednesday, December 12th, where they will take part in a live showing of the Midday News.

Comprising the 2012 SCHS Journalism Class are: Vincent Canterbury, Courtney Cline, Brady Cornette, Houston Dalton, Kelsey Dean, Blake Dials, Daisha Gauze, Brad Harris, Cassidy James, Kelsey Jude, JC Kirk, Joseph Little, Karlee Lowe, Cassidy May, Tyler Mills, Devon Morrison, Chase Parsley, Angeleena Staton, Sara Beth Walker, Paige Ward, Natasha Ward, and Emily White.

IPAD'S INCORPORATED INTO CLASSROOMS AT INEZ ELEMENTARY

Inez Elementary has recently introduced iPads into its classrooms. Students at Inez are using new iPads and applications to increase their learning. Apps include textbooks in reading and math, programs for social studies, science, and humanities.

This technology in the classroom enables teachers to boost student learning through enrichment, realties, and differentiated instruction that allows students to work and learn at their own pace and level. It is our goal that all students become next-generation learners and to be students that are truly Proficient and Prepared for Success.

"Success is NEVER letting failure get the best of you. It's about trying over and over until you get it right." --Senior Brittany Mills on her "Personal Definition of Success," poster as created for Mrs. Marcie Hanson's Jobs for Kentucky's Graduates class.

INEZ MIDDLE SCHOOL HERITAGE DAY

On October 3, 2012, students gathered for the annual IMS Heritage Day. Students explored their rich heritage through a variety of events and exhibits, including sampling roast pig and making their own butter. This year, students had the opportunity to be involved in the festivities in new ways, as cheerleaders dressed up like scary clowns in the haunted house and friends generously shared popcorn and ice cream with each other. Usually, a crew of three or four students traveled from booth to booth, chatting with each other while they waited for one friend to get her nails done and another to paint her face. Various volunteers also came to IMS in order to help at booths and enjoy the beautiful day outside. All in all, Heritage Day gave students an opportunity to connect with each other and their community in a fun, laid-back and yet educational way.



LEFT: Third-graders at IES use computers to work on Study Island.
RIGHT: Kindergartners in Mrs. Kayla Hale's class using technology.



SEND US YOUR STORIES!

Please send any stories or photographs of teachers and students engaged in interesting and innovative classroom activities to the SCHS Journalism Class for use in the spring edition of the Martin County Schools District Newsletter. If you are doing a classroom project, tell us all about it! Drop an email to us at schjournalism1@gmail.com. Please send photos as attachments. We are interested in the any of the following: student work samples, essays, speeches, poems, photographs of artwork and students engaged in classroom participation. At the bottom of each page of our newsletter, you will see quotations from student work teacher and administrator instructions, but we NEED MORE! If you know of an interesting, inspiring or dynamic quotation from your school that will make our newsletter shine, please forward that to us via email or tweet us. You can follow the SCHS Journalism Class on Twitter @SCHSJournalism

WARFIELD MIDDLE ON THE MOVE!

New test, KPREP, a new way to look at college and career readiness, and new common core standards, equal's new ways of learning at Warfield Middle School. WMS can attribute the overall 54.3% KPREP score to many factors, one being the individualized instruction through Response To Intervention (RTI) courses. Students are able to rotate through smaller class size RTI reading and mathematics courses throughout 9-week periods. RTI courses are data driven and individualized for each student. WMS can also attribute our success to a mainly technology driven type of instruction, allowing WMS to rank first in the district in KPREP. With technology driven instruction all types of learning styles can be met, creativity can be taken to a new level and students can literally take learning into their own hands. Last, but not least, WMS can thank the dedication of their students, staff, teachers, administrators and parents who made the 2011-2012 school year so successful. With KPREP testing attendance being 100% every day of testing, students were able to



Mrs. Collier's RTI Reading Course at Warfield Middle School

focus on the task at and came to school prepared to tackle the new test and new standards.

The new common core reading and mathematics standards were adopted throughout the 2011-2012 school year showing great results for reading at 59%, and mathematics at 56.9% proficient and distinguished. Social studies and science scores added bonus points to the over 54.3% score both having more students in the distinguished category than the novice category. WMS landed in the 50th percentile in the state showing that there is always room for improvement. Warfield Middle School takes this as a challenge to not only meet, but to surpass the state set goals in the upcoming school year. Warfield Middle will remain a data driven school with focus on the INDIVIDUAL STUDENT.

POLITICS continued from Page 2...Poetry was written on the topic of the election as well. A guest speaker was invited as part of this political unit. Robert "Mike" Duncan, the former Chairman of the Republican National Committee, met with the students and shared his wealth of knowledge and experience about the election. Mr. Duncan graciously answered student questions about the election and its process.

Eden's principal, Mrs. Preston, was very impressed with the knowledge gained through this unit and the quality of work exhibited through: research, reports, speeches, poetry, debates, and even art work. Politics can be complicated but for Eden Elementary School it's "elementary".



"Learn Like A Champion! No Excuses!" --Miss Kasey Jackson's daily classroom mantra. Students write this phrase on all assignments and when Miss Jackson says in class "Learn Like A Champion," every student zealously cheers, "No Excuses!"

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

WINTER 2012

LINKS YOUTH SERVICE CENTER

By Kelsey Jude & Blake Dials

Daniel Seddiqui, Author. *"50 Jobs in 50 States"*—New York Times Best Selling Author Daniel Seddiqui traveled to Sheldon Clark High School where he addressed students about his book, *"50 Jobs in 50 States."* Seddequi traveled from state to state, working jobs related to the state's top industry. He blogged about his experiences which later became a book. Prior to speaking with JKG, FCCLA, and MCAPC students, Seddequi did motivational speaking with First Lady Michelle Obama.



ELEVEN WITH...

Mrs. Megan Mooney Evans

Sheldon Clark High

Language Arts Instructor

By Katie White & Leena Staton



Author Daniel Seddiqui

HEALTH CAREERS EXPO—Links Youth Service Center, in conjunction with M-Powered, JKG and FCCLA took a group of students to the Southeast Ky AHEC Health Career Expo on Thursday, November 1 at the Ramada Inn in Paintsville, Kentucky. The Expo was designed for high school students to get an up-close look at what careers in healthcare are all about.



1. Hidden Talents? *Can make a four-leaf clover shape with her tongue.*
2. Catch Phrase? *Carpe diem! (Seize the day!)*
3. Something we don't know about you? *Eats cake mix combined with water as a midnight snack.*
4. Fall Plans? *"To make it through.... (P.S.: I hate fall!)"*
5. Bestfriend(s)? *Tara Preece & Mandy Lawson*
6. Craziest SCHS moment? *I did a back-handspring in the middle of class.*
7. Favorite Game? *Catch Phrase*
8. Favorite Cartoon Character? *Strawberry Shortcake.*
9. Biggest Fear? *Growing old.*
10. Biggest Accomplishment? *Being a mother.*
11. Words of Wisdom? *"They say your life flashes before your eyes when you die, so make sure it's worth watching."*



WINTER 2012

MRS. MANDY LAWSON'S SCHS

CREATIVE WRITING CLASS

By Cassidy May & Sara Walker

1

THE SEARCH

By Tristen Bowen

*As I sit here among these words on pages
Sitting among the futureless faces
I reach out with my mind trying to find
Something, anything in these empty spaces
If I don't find something soon I'll have to stop trying
For all we know, this world is dying
I keep searching these places
These increasingly dark places just looking for a light
at the end of the tunnel*

2

GOODBYE HEART

By Brooke Messer

*Goodbye to me sweet, innocent heart
For I have always loved thee
Before you came along and swept me off my feet
I went day by day with this feeling
As I was merely incomplete
Yes, I will always have my grateful mind
For what blew you on my path
And my path where you shall stay
'til forever and a day*

3

MOTHER DEER-EST

By Mckinna Osborne

*Mother "Deer"est
You fight for your life but what about mine?
That coal trucks a'comin and you're ready to be hit!
I noticed you didn't care. Didn't care what I would feel
if I was left with no choice but to lose you.
Your love is a carcass on the side of the road while I
am the splattered blood; the bits and pieces of your
hits that are left to decay in the sun.
I don't stay there long, no option but to fade away
while you're love takes days to disappear; returning...
On & off; thicker but weaker.
What is to become for you when road patrol pushes
you away - out of sight.
You're no longer in anyone's interest. Those who drive
by have forgotten you and care less about where you
have gone.
So, mother "deer"est goodbye to you
For tomorrow is a new day - brighter for me
For you have already leaped into your destiny.*

"My expectations for my class are that I EXPECT them to become successful young adults." --Wanda Kay Slone, Martin Co. ATC Business Instructor

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

Continued from page 1

Three years ago, Sheldon Clark High School was labeled as a "Persistently-Low Achieving," or PLA, school because we have consistently performed in the bottom 5% of schools in the state of Kentucky. In the recent release of data by the Kentucky Department of Education, Sheldon Clark High School has leaped ahead of 60 other schools to move to the 27th percentile. Even though we realize that scores are below the state average and continuous improvement must occur, we also realize that our students and staff have come a long way to pull out of the conversation of being one of the lowest performing schools in the state. In addition, we are one of the most improved schools that you will find in Kentucky, as evidenced by our meeting NCLB last year, and our increase in state ranking.

Here are some highlights from our state scores:

- Overall increase from the 5th percentile to the 27th percentile.
- Career and College Readiness Index was nearly 7 points higher than the state average.
- We are ranked 13th out of the 41 schools that were labeled PLA.
- U.S. History state scores were 5.9 points above state average.
- The Algebra II scores have drastically increased when compared to past mathematics scores.
- Our special needs students On-Demand Writing scores were higher than state average.
- Even though our ACT scores were low when compared to the rest of the state, those students have shown improvement when compared to their PLAN scores from a year ago.
- Our graduation rate has steadily increased over the past four years from 63.9 to 70.1.
- We outscored Belfry, Lawrence, Magoffin, Perry Central, East Ridge, Prestonsburg, West Carter, North Laurel, Powell, Bath, Knox, Letcher, Buckhorn, Harlan, Jenkins, Clay, Elliott, Breathitt, Phelps, and others.

Realistically, Sheldon Clark High School has an overall index of 50.6, which is below the state average of 54.8. This score gives a label of "Needs Improvement" from the state department along with 160 other high schools in the state. To quote Commissioner Terry Holliday, "Although more than two-thirds of schools and districts are in the Needs Improvement category, this not an indicator of failure. The Unbridled Learning model is one of continuous improvement, and schools and districts now have a wealth of data to use as they plan for improvement in student learning and achievement." Over the past three years, Sheldon Clark High School is showing continuous improvement by utilizing this student data, changing instructional practices, and raising the expectations of all SCHS students and stakeholders.

4

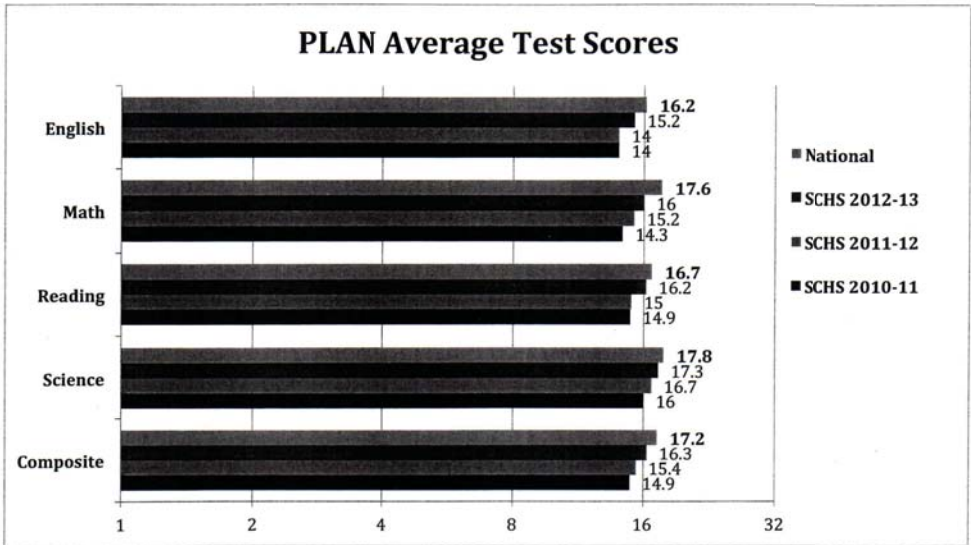
Forbidden Love By Mary Preston

*My nights are long and lonely. My days are full of dread.
I hate waking up each morning. But even worse going to bed.
My life without you in it, I don't think I can take
With each of our memories my heart only aches.
The love we have for each other, it is so hard to explain.
We can never be together, just every now and then.
I love you my darling, more than words can say.
I love you every minute of every long and lonely day.*

“PLAN-ning” Ahead – Scores on the Rise at SCHS

Recently, the state released data concerning the PLAN scores. The PLAN assessment can be considered a “pre-ACT” that is given to all sophomores in the state of Kentucky. Both tests are used as an indicator for college readiness, but the ACT has a maximum score of 36 whereas the maximum score that can be achieved on the PLAN is 32. In the new accountability model for the state of Kentucky (K-PREP accountability model), the PLAN test is used in the Growth Index for all high schools.

Even though we know that our scores are not at the national average, Sheldon Clark High School students’ PLAN scores have steadily increased over the past three years. In 2010, our composite score was 14.9. This year our score has improved to 16.3-a nice gain for our sophomore class. Furthermore, these scores are the highest in school history.



Just like the ACT, the PLAN is divided into four areas: English, Math, Reading, and Science. The following chart shows the increase in each of those areas for the past three years.

Even with this increase, our teachers are not satisfied with where we are. Each teacher has been a part of the planning process for continuing the gains in test scores. The teachers of Sheldon Clark High School have a sincere desire for each student to “BE READY” for not only state testing, but also for what comes after graduation. CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SCHS SOPHOMORE CLASS AND STAFF MEMBERS.

CONTACT OUR SCHOOLS!

Martin County Board of Education—606.298.3572 • Eden Elementary—606.298-3471
 Inez Elementary—606.298.3428 • Warfield Elementary—606.395.5121 • Inez Middle School—606.298.3264
 Warfield Middle—606.395.5900 • Martin Co. Head Start—606.298.7990
 Sheldon Clark High—606.298.3591 • Martin County Area Technology Center—606.298.3879

WINTER 2012

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR COMPETITIVE CAREERS AT THE MARTIN COUNTY AREA TECHNOLOGY CENTER

With the addition of college and career readiness to KY's accountability model, Martin County ATC is working diligently to provide additional industry certifications to their already long list of approved certifications. One of the most recent certifications added in the Office Systems Technology program is Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) 2010. Martin County ATC became a certified testing center for Certiport in February 2012. A Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification helps validate proficiency in using Microsoft Office 2010 and meets the demand for the most up-to-date skills on the latest Microsoft technologies. Candidates who pass a certification exam show that they can meet not only national but globally recognized performance standards.

"When I first began teaching at the ATC in 2005, it was a dream of mine to offer this opportunity to my students. It was a full circle moment when the first students successfully passed their exams. I don't know who was more excited, the students or myself," stated National Board Certified Office Systems Technology Instructor, Betty Hunt. "Mrs. Hunt's dedication to her students and the teaching profession have afforded Martin County students this unique opportunity.

While Mrs. Hunt had six students that successfully passed one or more sections of MOS during the spring semester of 2012, she has already had eight students that have distinguished themselves by successfully obtaining certifications in at least one section. SCHS & Martin County ATC students obtaining MOS certifications are as follows: Word 2010 - McKayla Jude, Cortney Smith, Jesse Maynard, Morgan Fannin, Matthew Toler, Nicole Perry & Jarod McCoy. Jared McCoy has also obtained a certification in Microsoft Excel 2010.

Additionally, one student, Gregory Austin Murphy has reached a milestone that few computer specialists ever obtain. In addition to passing certifications in Word 2010, Excel 2010, PowerPoint 2010 and Access 2010, he recently became a Microsoft Office 2010 Master. Achieving Master distinction gives Austin the power to market himself as an expert of the most widely used business platform in the world. To obtain this status, individuals must successfully pass Word 2010 Expert, Excel 2010 Expert, PowerPoint 2010, and Outlook or Access 2010. Martin County ATC is extremely proud of all these students for achieving this status.

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

WINTER 2012

SSEEEK ATTENDS KENTUCKY YOUTH ASSEMBLY

Recently, members of Sheldon Clark High School's S.S.E.E.E.K. club (Social Studies Explorers and Entrepreneurs of Eastern Kentucky) attended the Kentucky Youth Assembly (K.Y.A.) in Louisville from December 2nd-4th. Students had to learn Robert's Rules of Parliamentary Procedure in order to conduct themselves properly as they presented or raised technical questions, etc.

As part of their preparation for the conference, students created legislative bills (laws) to be presented before simulated House and Senate committees at the conference center. Those bills passed in committee then were taken to the Kentucky state capitol in Frankfort on Monday, December 3. Both the legislative (underclassmen) and congressional (seniors ONLY) bills involved the central issue of education. A legislative bill was authored and presented by Corey Bailey, Matthew Toler, and Ryan Lowe would have allowed students to gain credit for required courses by taking an exam to prove their competency.



If students passed the test, then they could move on to more advanced coursework. This bill did not make it out of committee. The Congressional bill, authored by Zach Johnson would have provided tax incentives to parents of students with a grade point average of 3.0 or higher (averaged if parents had multiple children). In addition, it would have provided incentive increases to those who received public assistance and whose children have a G.P.A. of 3.0 or higher. This bill made it out of committee and was read at the Capitol in Frankfort, though it did not pass in the session. Megan Stepp also participated in the Premiere Program (freshmen only) while at the conference. All students who participated had a great time and learned much about the legislative process.



SCHS JKG ATTENDS JAG NATIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARDS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Five members of Sheldon Clark High's Jobs for Kentucky's Graduates traveled to Washington, D.C., for the Jobs for America's Graduates National Leadership Awards and Student Leadership Conference November 14-18. Taking part in this event were JKG State officers Josie Jarrell, Marissa Maynard, Cassady James, Sara Beth Walker and JKG Specialist Mrs. Marcie Hanson. The JAG National Leadership Awards Luncheon held Thursday featured keynote speakers Chris Massengill, JAG president Ken Smith, as well as numerous government leaders and dignitaries.

After the awards, students embarked on the JAG Student Leadership Conference, a three-day event in which JAG members from across the nation engaged in leadership and teambuilding sessions, as well as afternoon and twilight tours of national landmarks including the FDR, Lincoln, Jefferson, Martin Luther King, Vietnam, Korean and World War II Memorials, Arlington Cemetery and the Smithsonian Museums of American and Natural History. Guest speaker at the JAG National Leadership Academy was Daniel Hernandez who spoke of how his career choices helped in saving the life of



Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. More than 65 competitors from 28 states. Josie, Marissa, Cassady and Sara received certificates of special recognition for their outstanding leadership and participation in the NSLC.

Special thanks to JAG National Board member Larry Caruso, JAG National President Ken Smith, Inez Deposit Bank, Mike and Joanne Duncan, SCHS Principal Robbie Fletcher and Martin Co. Schools Superintendent Mark Blackburn for making this trip possible.



HOMECOMING 2012

The SCHS Homecoming Game was held Friday, September 7, 2012, as the Cards took on the Panthers of Pikeville High School. At half-time, the homecoming ceremony was held. Members of the 2012 Homecoming Court are as follows: Freshman attendants--Holly Osborne and Julie Preece; Sophomore attendants--Libby Adams and Abby Reed; Junior attendants--Hope Mills and Madaline Jude; Senior Court--Megan Dials, Morgan Fannin, Ashlee Goforth, Dakota Hunt, and Violet Reed. We would like to congratulate Kandice Porter for being crowned the 2012 SCHS Homecoming Queen, 1st Runner-Up Courtney Cline, and 2nd Runner-Up Paige Kidd! Coordinating the SCHS Homecoming was Mrs. Marcie Hanson. Distributing flowers were Cassady James and Sarah Walker and crowning was Marissa Maynard and Brianna Maggard. Emcees were Josie Jarrell and Joseph Little and student coordinators were Houston Dalton, Cassidy May and Trevor Blackburn.



MARTIN COUNTY DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2012

MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to take this opportunity to express to everyone my appreciation for the people who had a hand in putting together our Martin County Newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to showcase the positive things that are happening in your schools each and everyday and most of all—our students. I do encourage the family and community members to visit our schools and become active participants in our students' educational process. I look forward to continuing to work with the students, staff, parents, community and board members in Martin County. I believe that with a combined effort, this system will be able to reach and maintain a level of proficiency in the near future.

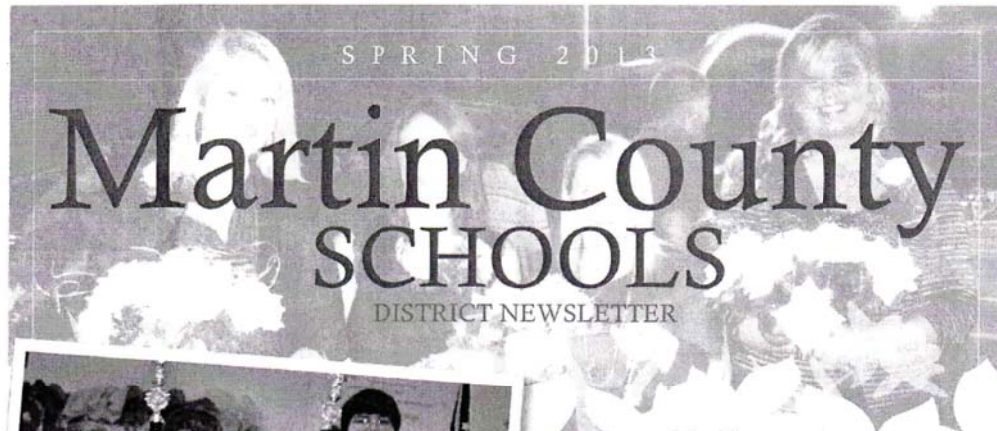
As superintendent, I am personally committed to providing our students with as many opportunities as possible to be successful. I firmly believe that this district can and will become one of the highest performing in the state of Kentucky. My expectations are high because of the many talented, caring and dedicated people in our system. I am looking forward to addressing and overcoming the many challenges we are facing. A focus on academics will be stressed at every level.

This newsletter is the beginning of what I believe will be a great venture and source of information for the community of Martin County. In future publications, I will be outlining projects that we have already completed and future projects that we will be implementing so that the students of Martin County are provided with the best opportunities to become our future leaders and community members.

My door will always be open. Keep up the good work and remember our purpose...the students of Martin County Schools.

Mark Blackburn, Superintendent





College & Career Ready At SCHS!

By Vincent Canterbury

Sheldon Clark High School is proud to count 43 students as being officially "College and Career Ready!" For a student to be considered college ready, they must have recorded an 18 on ACT English, 19 on ACT Math, and a 20 on ACT reading. To be Career Ready, a student must pass both the vocational and academic component. The vocational component is comprised of the KOSSA testing or Industry Standard test. The academic component is one of the following: (1) meeting the benchmarks on the ACT, (2) receive a Silver on WorkKeys or (3) score a 55 on ASVAB.

SCHS students achieving this recognition are: Logan Allen, Kyle Birchfield, Hannah Burkett, Kayla Cain, Corey Cassell, Andrew Chapman, Sara Chapman, Courtney Cline, Keisha Crum, Houston Dalton, Miranda Davis, Blake

Continued on Page 4

2013 Martin County Spelling Bee Held at Inez Middle School

By J.C. Kirk

Inez Middle School hosted the 2013 Martin County District Spelling Bee. Results are as follows: 1st Place—Cody Hammond, WMS; 2nd—Travis Delong, WMS; 3rd—Ethan Alexander, EES; 4th—Cameron Robinson, WES; 5th—Abigail Fletcher, IMS; 6th—Justin McKenzie, EES; 7th—Kaitlin Stepp, IMS; 8th—Wesley Goble; 9th—Sarinity Vogler, WMS; 10th—J.T. Harris, WES. Congratulations to champion Cody Hammond and all Martin County spelling team members and coaches!

Save the Date!

SC Graduation May 24, 2013

Baccalaureate will be Wednesday, May 23. Prom is Saturday, May 11 at 8 p.m. Grand March in SCHS Cafeteria at 7 p.m.

SC K-PREP Test May 1—May 7

End of Course Exams will be April 29—May 10. Scholarship Banquet is May 21st at 6. GPA Awards are May 17th.

3rd—8th K-PREP May 7—14

K-PREP will run for five consecutive days. Kindergarten Graduation on May 23rd. Fifth Grade Graduation May 24th.



MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

SPRING 2013



WMS' CODY HAMMONDS COMPETES IN STATE SPELLING BEE Places 25th out of 65

Gabriel "Cody" Hammonds, son of Joey and Tammy Hammonds, represented Martin County at the State Spelling Bee Competition Saturday March 9th in Louisville, KY. Cody is an 8th grade student at Warfield Middle School and was eager to represent his school and county in Louisville. In 2011 Cody took home the 2nd place trophy in the county spelling bee and in 2012 he brought home the 5th place trophy. This year Cody was determined to challenge himself and that he did, winning the 1st place trophy and right to compete at the state competition. Rhonda Collier, language arts teacher at Warfield Middle School, has had the privilege of not only teaching Cody but also serving as his spelling bee coach



for the last three years. Collier says, "Cody is a motivated, humorous, intelligent student who has many adventures in his future. I was honored to be part of this adventure with him in Louisville. I am so proud all my entire spelling bee team." David Nichols, principal of Warfield Middle School, says that "Cody is an asset to our school and I couldn't be more proud of his accomplishment. I am proud of all the students that participated." Cody wasn't the only Warfield Middle School student to bring a trophy home this year. Sarinity Vogler, placed 9th and Travis Delong, placed 2nd. Cody and Travis went several rounds challenging each other fighting for 1st place. Lance Tackett and Charity Burton were also part of the team that represented Warfield competition and helped to lead Cody to his victory by

Middle School in the participating in many study sessions. Warfield Middle School is proud of the entire team and all the participants that competed at the county level.

Cody went two rounds at the state spelling bee competition finishing 25th out of 65 participants. Cody says the experience was "thrilling and like nothing I have ever experienced."

IES HOSTS DISTRICT GOVERNOR'S CUP

On March 2, the District Governor's Cup Competition was held at Inez Elementary School. Winners by division are as follows: **MATHEMATICS**—1.) Ethan Alexander, EES; 2.) Cameron Robinson, WES; 3.) Nathan Frey, IES; 4.) Colin Horn, IES; 5.) Dalton Jude, EES. **SOCIAL STUDIES**—1.) Levi McCoy, EES; 2.) Trey James, IES; 3.) Haileigh Ball; 4.) Jameson Hall, IES; 5.) Dawson Jude, WES; 5.) Mallory Davis, IES. **SCIENCE**—1.) Linzie Goble, IES; 2.) Ethan Alexander, EES; 3.) Justin McKenzie, EES; 4.) Marrison Preece, WES; 5.) Zachary Gauze; **LANGUAGE ARTS**--1.) Lauren Horn, WES; 2.) Clay Parsley, EES; 3.) Levi McCoy, EES; 4.) Paige Maynard, WES; 5.) Laura Adkins, IES; **COMPOSITION**--1.) Mallory Davis, IES; 2.) Harley Spradlin, IES; 3.) Nathan Frey, IES; 4.) Kylee Borders, EES; 5.) Brendon Stevens, WES; **ARTS & HUMANANTIES**—1.) Clay Parsley, EES; 2.) Trey James, IES; 3.) Haley Sorrell, IES; 4.) Harley Spradlin,



Continued on Page 4

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

SPRING 2013



Inez Elementary Celebrates Dr. Seuss Week!

Inez Elementary School celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday and participated in "Read the Most From Coast to Coast." Students had a goal of reading and passing quizzes on 500 books. IES surpassed that goal and read a total of 897 books in one day.

The Sheldon Clark JROTC came dressed as the Grinch, Sindy Lou Who and The Cat in the Hat. These characters visited the classrooms and read to some of the students. They took time out of their busy schedule to enjoy a little lunch with the students of IES consisting of Green Eggs and Ham before heading off to Warfield Elementary School.

Mr. Cassidy would like to thank the teachers, staff and students at IES for making these two events such a success. A special thanks to Sgt. Mark Rodriguez, Sgt. John Runyon and the SCHS JROTC for helping out and Marcelli Gauze for helping out the first grade. We couldn't have done it without them!



Eden Learns History through Music

Eden Elementary's Social Studies club just completed their performance of History through Music play. The very talented group, comprised of outstanding fourth and fifth graders, made history come alive with six Famous songs! Each member dressed up based on the various historical time periods and worked very hard researching their characters and their role in American History. The Social Studies Club put on their performance for the Martin County Public Library, Historical Society, Kiwanis organization, and their school. Mrs. Trista Stafford and the club can't wait until their next performance!

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

SPRING 2013

District Governor's Cup continued IES; 5.) Justin McKenzie, EES. **FUTURE PROBLEM SOLVING**—1.) WES; 2.) EES; 3.) IES. **QUICK RECALL**—1.) EES; 2.) IES; 3.) WES. **HUME SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT**—1.) IES. **FINAL STANDINGS**—1.) IES—47;

College & Career Continued Dials, Megan Dials, Hunter Evans, Morgan Fannin, Haylie Fitch, Daisha Gauze, Ashlee Goforth, Devin Harmon, Josie Jarrell, Zachary Johnson, Kelsey Jude, Stephanie King, Chase Lafferty, Joseph Little, Jessie Maynard, Marshall Maynard, Jared McCoy, Kyle Murphy, Cody Newsome, Katelyn Newsome, Austin Preece, Violet Reed, Justin Robinson, David Slone, Glen Smith, Cameron Smith, Jared Stevens, Sarah Vickers, Natasha Ward, Emily White, and Cacee Workman.



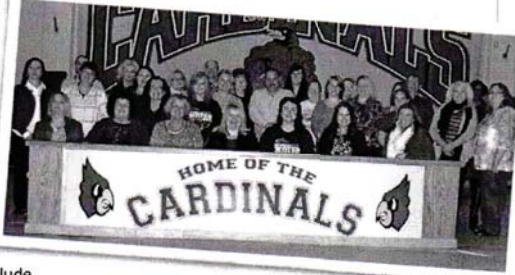
M-Power Seniors Attend MAC Workshop

Sheldon Clark M-Power seniors traveled to the Mountain Arts Center on Monday, Jan. 21, to take part in a day-long problem-solving and team-building workshop with the Life Adventure Center of the Bluegrass with other seniors from Floyd, Johnson, Magoffin, and Pike counties.

The Life Adventure Center, housed in Versailles, engaged the high school seniors in activities that compelled them to team up with students they had never met before and appointed the more reserved students as group leaders. Upon completion of such tasks as a low ropes course, which challenged participants to work together, the students related the experience school or work situations.

SC REALITY STORE BY LINKS YSC

On March 12, the LINKS Youth Service Center, in partnership with the Martin County Extension Office, held a joint activity. Operation Preparation is a joint effort of the KDE and the Dept. of Workforce Development and provides a powerful opportunity for students, parents and communities to collaborate in the process of focusing attention on the importance of planning for college and careers. The Reality Store helps give youth a glimpse of their future helping them become aware of their need for basic skills in financial planning, goal setting, decision making and career planning. Students are given an occupation based on their educational plans after high school. Plans may include completing post secondary education, not furthering their education after high school, or dropping out of school and are given an amount of money equivalent to the average monthly salary in that occupation. The students then go into a Reality Store where they spend their salary on necessities and luxuries they envision as part of the adult lifestyle. Students will visit the crystal ball to pull out a "change" card- those unexpected things that affect life daily. If for some reason a young person finds him/herself in real financial trouble, there will be help at the SOS table. Representatives from the housing industry,



utilities, grocery stores, department stores, financial institutions, auto dealerships, medical profession, child care centers, travel and entertainment and industry are present at the reality store to help the young people determine how much of their income will need to be spent in each category in order to provide their desired lifestyle. The goal of this exercise is to help youth learn whether their chosen occupation will provide the type of lifestyle they want and create a greater awareness of whether the career they are considering will support their preferred lifestyle.

The LINKS Youth Service Center would like to thank the Extension Office, Cloud 9 Cafe, the 19 community partners, and the 37 volunteers that made the Reality Store possible.

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

SPRING 2013

Run for the Roses at WES

Warfield Elementary students and WPRT welcomed Heather Hill, outreach educator from the Kentucky Derby Museum. Mrs. Hill used role-playing activities that allowed the students to become experts in the field of thoroughbred racing. Each activity is directly related to the Common Core Standards. *Mathin' Around the Track* involved the students using their math skills to calculate the distance of the racing track at Churchill Downs. Thoroughbred Care allowed the students to understand the importance of daily animal care at home and in the sport of thoroughbred racing. Volunteers demonstrated the washing, drying and the brushing process. Science on the Track allowed the students to consider basic landforms as they relate to the location of a new racetrack. The role-playing activity explained the physical and chemical weathering process. Properties of silt, sand and clay are explored and how they are used to create a safe, consistent racing surface. WES wants to thank Mrs. Hill for a fun filled educational day that made the students feel like they were really at the Kentucky Derby.



IMS STUDENTS GO FOR THE GOLD!



At IMS we believe that reading is *"More Precious than Gold!"* The Language Arts Department has created a campaign to motivate 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students to participate in the Accelerated Reading Program. The rewards are as follows: ***Main Prize**—Any student who reaches the AR point goal gets to attend a magic show with Joey Stepp, Magician, Funny-Guy and Balloon Artist. 6th grade-15pts; 7th-20pts, 8th-25pts. ***Weekly Drawings**—Each test taken and passed will earn a gold coin to be placed in the pot to be drawn for the following prizes: Gift certificate for Giovanni's 16" pizza, Shakes and Swirls Ice-cream shop, four movie passes at the Main Street Cinema, free snack for 2 weeks and your choice of prize from the office goody box. ***Immediate Reward**—for scores on test 90% or higher you'll receive a bag of Skittles so you can *"Taste the Reading Rainbow!"*

Capacity Overload in Mrs. Vanover's Class at EES!



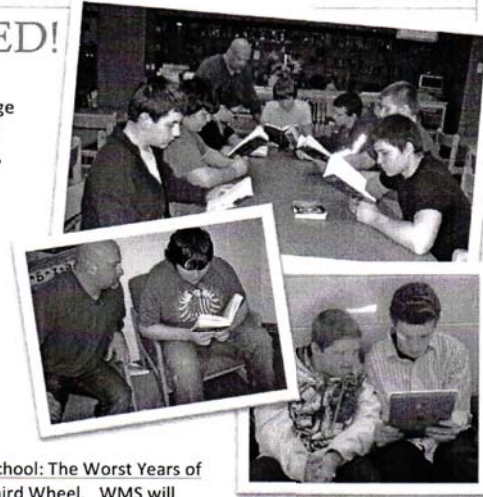
Mrs. Jennifer Vanover's third grade class at Eden Elementary investigate capacity as they try to figure out how many marshmallows will fit into their mouths!

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

SPRING 2013

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED! At Warfield Middle School

It was that time of the year, time for the Principals Book Challenge at Warfield Middle School. Each year David Nichols and Librarian Kim Morgan, along with the assistance of language arts teachers, design a book challenge for the 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. Students must read from the preselected text and pass an Accelerated Reader test with a score of 90% or above. The students were rewarded with a trip to the Roy F. Collier Community Center Main Street Cinemas to watch Jack and the Giant Slayer in 3D. This year 99 students accepted and passed the challenge and were able to watch the 3D adventure. Mr. Nichols says "The book challenge is a way that I encourage reading across all grade levels. I am so proud of the students that took part in this enrichment activity. I tried to choose books that touched on a variety of student interest and reading levels." Students were able to read from: *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire*, *Mockingjay*, *Beautiful Creatures*, *Middle School: The Worst Years of my Life* and *Get Me Out of Here* and *Dairy of a Wimpy Kid The Third Wheel*. WMS will continue to challenge their students to strive for their best everyday.



JROTC Color Guard Wins at Belfry

On Thursday, March 28, 2013, the Sheldon Clark High Color Guard competed at Belfry High School. Results are as follows: **Advanced Color Guard, 1st Place**—Neal McGinnis, Paige Kidd, Ryan Birchfield, Donny Gilliam. **Let1 Color Guard, 2nd Place**—Cacee Workman, Blake Finley, Cortland Cook, Tommy York. **Drill Team, 2nd Place**—Neal McGinnis, Paige Kidd, Donny Gilliam, Blake Finley, Ryan Birchfield, Jeanetta Patrick, Tommy York. Color Guard is under the direction of Sgt. John Runyon.

SCHS's JROTC was recognized with the Presidential Award for Community Service during a school assembly for achieving more than 1100 service hours during the fall semester.



MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

SPRING 2013

Martin Co. ATC FBLA Wins at Regional Competition

Nine FBLA students and their advisors are state bound to compete at the state leadership conference in Louisville, April 8-10th. On March 22, 26 Martin County ATC students competed at the Region 11 FBLA Conference held at Morehead State University. Eight of the students placed in the competition to earn the opportunity to compete at the state FBLA conference. Over 28 schools were represented at the regional conference. The top three students in each event qualify to compete at the state level. Martin County FBLA had its very first regional officer elected. Sophomore, McKayla Jude, daughter of Mike & Rhonda Jude, was elected region 11 secretary for 2013-14. Though only a sophomore, McKayla has already earned two Microsoft Office Specialist certifications and has met the benchmarks for college readiness. She is highly qualified to fulfill the duties of regional secretary.

Freshman Zackary Jarrett placed third in Cyber Security. Business and Health Sciences student Miranda Jude placed third in Health Care Administration. Junior, Cody Rainwater placed second in Hospitality Management. The team of Hope Maynard and Miranda Jude took second place honors in the Local Chapter Newsletter competition. Alex Mills placed third in Personal Finance. Junior Austin Murphy placed first in Technology Concepts. Austin is no stranger to FBLA competition. Last year Austin placed third at state competition in Introduction to Technology Concepts. He earned the opportunity to compete at national FBLA Leadership Conference held in Austin, TX. Senior Morgan Fannin placed first in Word Processing II. Junior, Madeline Jude also qualified to participate in a statewide contest. She submitted a design for a trading pin that will be judged to represent Kentucky at the national FBLA conference in California this summer.

Students were accompanied by their FBLA advisors, Betty J. Hunt and Wanda K. Slone, as well as principal at Martin County ATC, Martha Williams. Also attending the conference were McKayla Jude's mother, Rhonda Jude and Austin Murphy's mother, Patty Murphy. All students attending the conference enjoyed spending the day on Morehead State University campus. Following the competition, all students enjoyed dinner at Cracker Barrel.

In addition to Business Technology, Martin County ATC offers programs in Carpentry, Auto Technology, Electricity, Health Sciences and Math. Students have the opportunity to earn college credit in many of these program areas.



WorkKeys Administered at ATC

On March 6th, 2013 WorkKeys exams were administered to all seniors enrolled at the Martin County Area Technology Center. WorkKeys gives each child an opportunity to earn a nationally recognized career credential by participating in this free event. Students participated in a series of three exams: Applied Mathematics, Locating Information, and Reading for Information. These exams measure real world skills that employers believe are indicators to job success. The scores received on the exams will determine the student's potential for success. A student who meets the minimum score on the exams will receive a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). Additional, WorkKeys qualifies as the academic component for your child to achieve career readiness status.

The NCRC is a transferable credential recognized by thousands of employers and indicates the student has the essential skills to be a successful employee. The NCRC indicates the student has demonstrated foundational skills in: problem solving, critical thinking, reading and using work-related text, applying information from workplace documents to solve problems, applying mathematical reasoning to work-related problems, setting up and performing work-related mathematical calculations, locating, synthesizing, and applying information that is presented graphically, and comparing, summarizing, and analyzing information presented in multiple related graphics. You may visit the WorkKeys website at www.act.org/workkeys.



MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOLS SPRING 2012

SCHS Journalism Tours WSAZ-TV

On Wednesday, March 13, the SCHS Journalism class, along with a few members of Jobs for Kentucky's Graduates, toured WSAZ Television 3 in Huntington, WV. Students took part in question and answer sessions with production staff and on-air talent, toured the facility and viewed the news and weather filmed live at noon. Mrs. Marcie Hanson is the SCHS Journalism Advisor.

*The Martin County District Newsletter has been created for you by the Sheldon Clark High Journalism Class.
Marcie Ward Hanson, Instructor*

Be Ready! It's the Cardinal Rule!

SEND US YOUR STORIES!

Please send any stories or photographs of teachers and students engaged in interesting and innovative classroom activities to the SCHS Journalism Class for use in the summer edition of the Martin County District Newsletter. If you are doing a classroom project, tell us all about it! Drop an email to us at schsjournalism@hotmail.com. Please send photos as attachments. We are interested in any of the following: student work samples, essays, speeches, poems, photographs of artwork and students engaged in classroom participation. At the bottom of each page of our newsletter, we hope to see quotations from student work, teacher and administrator instructions, but WE NEED MORE! If you know of an interesting, inspiring or dynamic quotation from your school that will make our newsletter shine, please forward that to us via email or tweet! Please follow SCHS Journalism on Twitter @SCHSjournalism.

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MARTIN COUNTY

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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CONTACT OUR SCHOOLS!
 Eden Elementary—606.298.3471—Willa Preston, Principal
 Inez Elementary—606.298.3428—Mike Cassidy, Principal
 Warfield Elementary—606.395.5900—Michael Marcum, Principal
 Inez Middle School—606.298.3264—Brent Haney, Principal
 Warfield Middle—606.395.5900—David Nichols, Principal
 Sheldon Clark High—606.298.3591—Robbie Fletcher, Principal
 John D. Goble, Assistant Principal.
 Terry Quillen, School Culture Systems Coordinator
 Martin Co. Area Technology Center—Martha Williams, Principal

WEBSITE

www.martin.kyschools.us/martin_county.html

APPENDIX D



Martin County School District

Progress Report

Martin County School District

Supporting Documentation

School Name:	Put School Name Here:	Date Covered:
School Report: Standard 1: Curriculum	Type your comments here, box will automatically grow. If no comment, put N/A	
Standard 2: Classroom Evaluation/Assessment		
Standard 3: Instruction		
Standard 4: School Culture		
Standard 5: Student, Family and Community Support		
Standard 6: Professional Growth, Development, and Evaluation		
Standard 7: Leadership		
Standard 8: School Organization and Fiscal Resources		
Standard 9: Comprehensive and Effective Planning		
General Information		

APPENDIX E

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TURN-AROUND...

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APPENDIX E

Qualtrics Survey Software

4/2/14, 8:40 PM

Default Question Block

DIRECTIONS:

Please take 10-15 minutes to complete this survey by responding to the 15 items based upon your experiences in the Martin County School District. For the first part of each item, you are to select the response that best indicates your belief regarding each statement. The second part of each item is an open response item. Please provide your thoughts and comments regarding the statement provided. If you do not want to add a comment then simply put "No Comment" in the box. Responses will be compiled as a whole and any written comment will remain completely anonymous. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

1. The district developed a two-way feedback loop related to important events and information on school and district progress.

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe opportunities that developed a two-way feedback loop related to important events and information on school and district progress.

Open response text box for question 1.

2. The district created opportunities for access to information related to important events or school and district progress.

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TURN-AROUND...

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Qualtrics Survey Software 4/2/14, 8:40 PM

Describe opportunities for access to information related to important events or school and district progress.

3. The district initiated processes used to inform stakeholders of important events or school and district progress.

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe any processes used to inform stakeholders of important events or school and district progress.

4. The district ensured that high expectations were communicated on a regular basis to school employees.

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe how high expectations were communicated on a regular basis to school employees.

5. The district worked toward involvement in creating or ensuring high expectations established by the district.

Neither Agree nor

<https://az1.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/Ajax.php?action=GetSurveyPrintPreview&T=3x8VM> Page 2 of 7

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TURN-AROUND...

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Qualtrics Survey Software

4/2/14, 8:40 PM

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe how staff members were involved in creating or ensuring high expectations established by the district.

6. The district developed district-wide activities that demonstrated the presence of a unified vision of high expectations.

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe district-wide activities that demonstrated the presence of a unified vision of high expectations.

7. The district monitored program effectiveness and school and student progress.

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe how the district monitored program effectiveness and school and student progress.

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TURN-AROUND...

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Qualtrics Survey Software

4/2/14, 8:40 PM

8. The district formulated what kinds of data were regularly collected to determine improved outcomes.

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe what kinds of data were regularly collected to determine improved outcomes.

9. The district developed and determined what and how programs were evaluated on an on-going basis.

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe how programs were evaluated on an on-going basis.

10. The district created a system of how academic performance data were analyzed.

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe how academic performance data were analyzed.

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TURN-AROUND...

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Qualtrics Survey Software 4/2/14, 8:40 PM

11. The district managed how data analysis results were shared with all stakeholders (staff, parents and community).

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe how data analysis results were shared with all stakeholders (staff, parents and community).

12. The district provided for the known activities or processes of the Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI).

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe the known activities or processes of the Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI).

13. The district ensured how the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan used data to drive decision-making.

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

<https://a21.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/Ajax.php?action=GetSurveyPrintPreview&T=3x8VvI> Page 5 of 7

MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TURN-AROUND...

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Qualtrics Survey Software 4/2/14, 8:40 PM

Describe how the Comprehensive District Improvement Plan used data to drive decision-making.

14. The district created strategies and activities that were developed by district leadership to assist in the turn-around process.

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe strategies and activities that were developed by district leadership to assist in the turn-around process.

15. As a result of the Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI) and the 15 activities, does the district function as a more effective organization (i.e. comprehensive district plan, staff realignment, data analysis, MAP testing, KDE Audit, middle school initiative, school liaisons, walkthroughs, data room, communication plan, newsletter, school messenger, billboards, administrative progress report and professional growth and evaluation system).

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Describe the results of the Martin County Turn-around Initiative (MCTI) and describe how the district functions as a more effective organization.

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MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT TURN-AROUND...

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Qualtrics Survey Software

4/2/14, 8:40 PM

Please check your role at the time of completion of the survey:

Administrator

Teacher

Parent

Community Leader

If you checked Teacher, then please check grade level below:

Elementary School

Middle School

High School

Additional Comments:

VITA

MARK ANDREW BLACKBURN

EDUCATION

July, 1992	Bachelor of Arts Morehead State University Morehead, Kentucky
July, 1995	Masters Degree Morehead State University Morehead, Kentucky
Pending	Doctor of Education Morehead State University Morehead, Kentucky

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

1997-2005	Elementary School Principal Martin County Board Of Education Inez, Kentucky
2005-2013	Superintendent Martin County Board Of Education Inez, Kentucky

HONORS

07/01/2008	Leadership Kentucky Leadership Kentucky Organization Lexington, Kentucky
07/01/2010	Initial Doctoral Cohort Morehead State University Morehead, Kentucky