



TOP-2

District-Managed Turnaround Plan – Step 2 (TOP-2)

Gadsden County Schools
West Gadsden Middle School

Due: October 1

Form Number DMT, TOP-2, incorporated in Rule 6A-1.099811, F.A.C., effective November 2024

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 2 (TOP-2)

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to guide districts to develop a plan for implementation of a district-managed turnaround plan. The district shall provide the Department with the plan for approval by the State Board of Education (SBE).

Directions

Districts shall complete this Step 2 form for each school required to implement a district-managed turnaround plan. The district must submit this plan to the Regional Executive Director (RED) for review and feedback before submitting it to BSI. The local school board must approve the plan. This completed form must be signed by the superintendent or authorized representative and emailed to the RED and BSI@fldoe.org no later than October 1. The subject line of the email must include the district name, school name and TOP-2 (DMT).

Districts must update this Step 2 form as an addendum to the Charter School Turnaround Option Plan TOP-2 form for sustained operation of the school when a Charter School Turnaround Option Plan is selected in the TOP-1 form. The plan must be submitted following the above guidelines.

School

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

School Name/ MSID Number

West Gadsden Middle School/0052

Needs Assessment

The district is responsible for documenting a needs assessment that uses quantitative and qualitative data to identify the needs of the school system, including needs identified by families and the community.

The summary of the needs assessment results must address points of strength and opportunities for growth in the school system (at both the district and school level) in each of these three domains:

1. Transformational Leadership
2. Standards-based Instruction and Learning (for student and adult learners)
3. Positive Culture and Environment

In the box below, describe the methodology used for the needs assessment, including 3-year data trends from the state, district and school levels. Include a review of all strategies to determine which are improving the school and should be reinforced or supplemented, as well as which strategies are not resulting in improvement.

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Identify strategies that have not resulted in improvement. What will be done differently?

Identifying, recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers remains an ongoing challenge for the district. In previous years, West Gadsden Middle School had to rely on instructional coaches and substitute teachers to cover classes when certified instructors were unavailable. This lack of qualified teachers has negatively impacted student growth, as reflected in the data noted above.

To address these challenges, West Gadsden Middle School will implement several targeted adjustments. When a substitute teacher is assigned to a class, students will be temporarily reassigned to certified teachers for core instruction to ensure continuity and quality of learning. Teachers have been scheduled to teach subjects aligned with their certification areas, strengthening instructional relevance and effectiveness. Instructional coaches will continue to provide lesson modeling, direct classroom support and assistance when substitutes are needed. Furthermore, to enhance instructional delivery and build teacher capacity, the district's reading and math coaches will be assigned to West Gadsden Middle School two days each week to provide ongoing professional learning and job-embedded coaching.

Implementation Plan

Part A. Summarize the district-managed turnaround plan and describe how the needs assessment results will be addressed in each of these three domains:

1. Accountable and Shared Leadership
2. Standards-based Instruction and Learning (for student and adult learners)
3. Positive Culture and Environment.

Part B. In this plan, verify that each assurance outlined in the TOP-1 form for district-managed turnaround has been addressed.

Part A.

Accountable and Shared Leadership

A District Support Team, led by the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, will conduct weekly walkthroughs, bi-weekly leadership meetings and monthly data reviews to monitor student progress and instructional practices. Leadership responsibilities will be distributed among the school leadership team, instructional coaches and grade-level chairs to ensure that decision-making is data-driven and aligned to school goals. Leadership development will include targeted coaching and mentorship to build the principal's capacity in instructional leadership, staff supervision and effective use of progress monitoring data.

Standards-based Instruction and Learning (for student and adult learners)

Instructional priorities are anchored in the B.E.S.T. Standards and aligned to the district's adopted curricula. Teachers will receive targeted professional learning focused on literacy instruction, mathematics pedagogy and the use of assessment data to guide instruction. Instructional coaches and district reading and math specialists will provide ongoing job-embedded support through lesson modeling, co-teaching and professional learning communities (PLCs). To address low proficiency rates teachers have been reassigned to subjects aligned with their certifications and substitutes will not provide core instruction without certified teacher oversight. Intervention programs, such as, iXL, Achieve 3000 and iReady, will be implemented with fidelity to accelerate student learning. Bi-weekly progress monitoring meetings will ensure instructional adjustments are timely and data-driven.

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Describe the methodology used for needs assessment, including 3-year data trends from the state, district and school levels.

To conduct the needs assessment for West Gadsden Middle School, the district analyzed three years of trend data at the state, district and school levels. Multiple data sources were reviewed, including progress monitoring results from Renaissance STAR, FAST and i-Ready; student discipline and attendance records from FOCUS/SKYWARD; and School Climate Survey feedback. School grades from 2023 to 2025 (C, D, D) were compared with district and state averages to evaluate long-term performance. Proficiency rates in ELA and mathematics were disaggregated by grade level and benchmarked against district and state results to identify opportunities for improvement. Data was examined collaboratively by district leaders, school administrators and instructional staff to identify patterns, root causes and priority areas for improvement. This structured methodology ensured that the needs assessment was grounded in evidence from multiple levels and over multiple years, providing a strong foundation for the turnaround plan.

Identify strategies that have evidence of improvement at the school and how they will be reinforced or supplemented.

The district proposed and the Florida Department of Education approved, the appointment of Ms. Cheryl Moody as principal of West Gadsden Middle School for the 2025–2026 school year. To further enhance leadership and instructional capacity, an additional assistant principal has been appointed, bringing the total to two. The district has also hired a math coach and is actively recruiting a reading coach. These instructional leaders will provide weekly in-class support, model effective teaching practices and deliver targeted feedback to strengthen classroom instruction.

Improving instructional quality remains a central focus of the turnaround efforts. District curriculum specialists will collaborate with teachers and instructional coaches to model lessons, support planning and enhance instructional practices. Teachers will participate in weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) focused on benchmark-aligned planning, student work analysis and instructional refinement. Grade-level teams and administrators will hold monthly data chats to monitor student progress and adjust instruction accordingly.

A District Support Team, comprising the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education, Director of Professional Learning and District ELA and Math Specialists, will meet monthly with school leaders to review implementation progress, address barriers and provide targeted support. The team will conduct weekly walkthroughs and provide immediate feedback to the administrative team. They will track implementation using walkthrough tools, leadership coaching logs, data trackers and ongoing reviews aligned with school goals.

The district will provide ongoing professional learning in critical instructional areas, including the Science of Reading, explicit instruction, differentiated instruction and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). These learning opportunities will respond to staff needs and trends in data. The principal and assistant principal will attend monthly Principal and Assistant Principal Leadership Meetings, where they will engage in professional learning led by the Bureau of School Improvement (BSI), local universities, Just Read! Florida and district staff. These sessions will align with progress monitoring data to ensure targeted support and continuous leadership development.

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success, the length of time since that success, the similarity of student populations and other factors that indicate the principal's likelihood of achieving turnaround success at this school.

Educators

The district continues to review and refine its practices in hiring, recruitment, retention and reassignment of instructional personnel, with a strong priority placed on student performance data. Incentives have been implemented to strengthen recruitment efforts and attract qualified candidates.

To support equitable staffing, the district strategically assigns higher-performing teachers to School Improvement schools and closely monitors hiring practices. Instructional personnel without a state VAM rating and those who do not demonstrate evidence of increasing student achievement are not rehired at the school level.

Recognizing the ongoing teacher shortage across Florida, the district has made every effort, in accordance with section 1012.2315(2)(a), F.S., to ensure that the percentage of temporarily certified instructional personnel, personnel in need of improvement, or out-of-field instructional staff at the school does not exceed the district average.

To ensure that K–12 intensive reading instruction is provided by properly certified teachers, the district is actively participating in training programs that prepare a cadre of trainers to facilitate the reading endorsement. In addition, stipends are offered to encourage teachers to pursue and obtain reading certification or endorsement.

Explain the correlation between the School Improvement Plan (SIP, annual school plan) and this proposed district-managed turnaround plan (TOP-2, 2-year district plan). Describe how the district and school leadership team are working together to implement the plans to improve the school.

Correlation between SIP and TOP-2:

Data analysis conducted to develop the School Improvement Plan (SIP) revealed several contributing factors to the need for improvement, including inconsistent benchmark-aligned Tier 1 instruction, limited use of progress monitoring data and minimal differentiated instruction- all of which reduced instructional effectiveness. These factors serve as the foundation for the District-Managed Turnaround Plan (TOP-2).

Describe how the district and school leadership team are working together to implement the plans to improve the school.

The District is committed to providing the most effective instructional support for West Gadsden Middle School to ensure that students receive a high-quality education. To achieve this, the District will implement the following strategies:

- Host monthly leadership meetings with the school principal, focusing on attendance, behavior and course performance data.
- Monitor student performance using district assessments.
- Provide fiscal resources to recruit and retain highly effective instructional personnel.
- Offer professional learning opportunities for instructional leaders and staff.
- Deliver instructional support through ELA and Mathematics instructional specialists.
- Provide intervention and acceleration services to students based on data analysis.

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Student-Centered Learning Environment

The district will continue to strengthen positive behavior supports through the implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Monthly recognition initiatives for both students and staff, supported by community partners, will reinforce positive outcomes and celebrate success. Clear social and academic expectations will be consistently communicated through a school-wide behavior plan designed to guide student conduct and promote accountability. In addition, the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) department has assigned a dedicated team—including a program specialist, school psychologist and other support staff—to work directly with identified students to ensure their success. Classroom teachers will receive guidance and monitoring to ensure that each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) is implemented with fidelity.

Part B.

Assurance 1: District Capacity and Support

The District Executive Management Team (EMT), comprised of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, School Safety Director, Director of Human Resources, Director of Finance and Director of Federal Programs, meets weekly to analyze data, collaborate and problem-solve to address school needs. In addition, the Extended Executive Management Team (EEMT)—which includes leaders responsible for curriculum, general and special education, student services, human resources, professional learning, family and community engagement, transportation, maintenance and technology—meets monthly to plan and review progress on school and district improvement initiatives.

The Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services serves as the lead for the turnaround initiative and reports directly to the Superintendent. Supporting this effort, a district team composed of the Assistant Superintendent, the Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Director of Professional Learning and the District ELA and Math Specialists conduct weekly walkthroughs and provide immediate, actionable feedback to school leadership teams.

To support instructional decision-making, progress monitoring assessments aligned to the Florida State Academic Standards in ELA, mathematics, social studies and science are administered through the Renaissance Suite (Star Reading and Math) and curricular assessments for social studies and science. These assessments provide timely data to inform instruction, guide intervention and evaluate progress toward school improvement goals.

Assurance 2: School Capacity-Leaders and Educators

With ongoing district support and professional learning, the school principal and assistant principals are positioned to strengthen their capacity to improve student achievement.

Leaders: An annual professional development plan, as required by the Florida Department of Education, has been developed by the Director of Professional Learning in collaboration with the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, the Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Director of Federal Programs, principals and teachers. This plan outlines ongoing, tiered support designed to strengthen leadership capacity and enhance educator effectiveness.

The district has completed a Principal Verification Form for principal placement, which has been approved by the Florida Department of Education. The district assures that, upon entry into district-managed turnaround, the principal will be replaced unless recommended for retention in collaboration with the Department. This determination will be based on the individual's prior turnaround record and degree of

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- Host quarterly parent meetings to keep families informed of student progress and share information critical to student success.

District-Managed Turnaround Plan Assurances

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

Assurance 1: District Capacity and Support

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

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

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

Assurance 1: Narrative of District Capacity and Support

In the box below, the district should provide information about its systems that support school leadership teams to implement turnaround interventions, including the following: alignment and allocation of

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support and resources, policies and practices, governance systems for review and monitoring. At a minimum, the narrative shall address the following:

1. Describe the district leadership team and its role in implementing the DMT plan.
2. Explain how the district allows for flexibility in areas such as staffing, scheduling and budgeting, to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes.
3. Identify how the new or revised instructional programs align to Florida’s state academic standards for ELA, mathematics, social studies and science; the research that shows it to be effective with schools that are low-performing with students of similar demographics; and how they are different from the previous programs.
4. Describe how the instructional and intervention programs for reading are consistent with section 1001.215(8), F.S.
5. Identify progress monitoring and summative assessments aligned to Florida’s state academic standards that will be used in the school.
6. Based on the analysis of progress monitoring and summative assessment data, describe any changes that will be implemented to provide continuous support for the school.
7. Explain the district’s allocation of supports and resources and how they align to the specific needs of the school.
8. Describe how remedial and supplemental instruction resources are prioritized for K-3 students with a substantial deficiency in reading in accordance with the district’s K-12 Comprehensive Evidence-based Reading Plan and for K-4 students with a substantial deficiency in mathematics.
9. Identify and describe the district policies and practices that will need to be reviewed and changed to support the school.
10. Describe the system that the district will put in place to review and monitor the effectiveness of the support.

Assurance 1: Narrative of District Capacity and Support

Describe the district leadership team and its role in implementing the DMT plan.

The district’s leadership team—comprised of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, Assistant Superintendent of Support Services, Director of Human Resources, Director of Finance, Coordinator of Safety and the Community Affairs/Public Relations Coordinator—meets weekly to review district and state assessment data and to collaborate on problem-solving strategies. These meetings focus on supporting school success and addressing internal and external barriers that may hinder school improvement.

Explain how the district allows for flexibility in areas such as staffing, scheduling and budgeting, to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes

The Human Resources Department has prioritized the school for staffing by sending district-identified candidates to the principal for review before considering placements at other schools. Once candidates are cleared, the principal has the autonomy to make final selections. Teacher VAM data is provided to ensure that the most effective and committed teachers are placed at the school. Both voluntary and involuntary transfers are utilized strategically to strengthen instructional capacity and raise student achievement. Transfer decisions are guided by principal requests, employee requests, VAM data and principal evaluations. This approach is designed to provide the school with a fresh start, reinforce the School

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Improvement Plan and accelerate student growth. To further support instructional improvement, a highly qualified reading specialist is assigned to build teacher capacity, enhance reading performance and foster safe and positive classroom environments, while a highly qualified math specialist is assigned to strengthen mathematics instruction and student outcomes.

Identify how the new or revised instructional programs align to Florida’s state academic standards for ELA, mathematics, social studies and science; the research that shows it to be effective with schools that are low-performing with students of similar demographics; and how they are different from the previous programs.

All instructional materials in use at the school are drawn from the state-approved list of resources, ensuring alignment to Florida’s B.E.S.T. Standards in ELA, mathematics, social studies and science. Supplemental materials are only selected if they are rated “Promising” or higher on the Evidence for ESSA website, which ensures that strategies used—such as explicit instruction, targeted small-group support and content-area literacy practices—are backed by research. To maximize resources and strengthen implementation, instructional leaders are reducing the number of supplemental materials in use. This represents a shift from previous practice, where multiple resources diluted instructional focus. The streamlined approach allows educators to implement programs with fidelity, monitor effectiveness more intentionally and make adjustments based on student outcomes.

Describe how the instructional and intervention programs for reading are consistent with section 1001.215(8), F.S.

The district actively participates in all professional learning activities offered by PAEC and local universities. To build internal capacity, individuals have been identified to receive training as trainers, thereby increasing the number of teachers who hold reading endorsements. In addition, the district will utilize the expertise and support of the State Regional Literacy Director.

Students demonstrating significant reading deficiencies have been identified and the school provides targeted support through individual and small-group instruction, with a specific focus on strengthening foundational reading skills.

Identify progress monitoring and summative assessments aligned to Florida’s state academic standards that will be used in the school.

District progress monitoring is conducted quarterly, while classroom teachers use curriculum-aligned progress monitoring tools to track student growth and identify areas of need. The district administers Star Reading and Star Mathematics as part of this process. In addition, the school will participate in the progress monitoring systems provided by the Florida Department of Education.

Based on the analysis of progress monitoring and summative assessment data, describe any changes that will be implemented to provide continuous support for the school.

Based on the analysis of progress monitoring and summative assessment data, the district is implementing several changes to provide continuous support for the school. Reading and Math instructional specialists have been assigned to the school to deliver targeted coaching using a structured model of pre-planning, modeling, observing and debriefing. These specialists, in collaboration with the leadership team, will guide Professional Learning Communities and common planning sessions to ensure teachers develop standards-based lessons and incorporate differentiated strategies. Weekly data analysis by the school

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leadership team and instructional specialists will be used to assign interventions, monitor student progress and adjust instruction as needed through pull-outs and push-ins. Teachers will receive ongoing professional learning in standards-based instruction to ensure understanding of the Florida Standards and to strengthen Tier 1 instruction. Instructional support will be assigned to teachers based on data outcomes, with modeling, peer observations and coaching provided to build capacity. These changes ensure a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring and adjustment to improve student achievement.

Explain the district's allocation of supports and resources and how they align to the specific needs of the school.

The district has strategically allocated supports and resources to meet the identified needs of the school. To address low proficiency rates in reading and mathematics, instructional specialists are assigned to provide targeted coaching and support in evidence-based practices, with time shared at West Gadsden Middle School. The turnaround principal will focus on building relationships and strengthening the school environment to elevate teacher and student expectations, directly responding to the need for improved climate and accountability. Federal Title allocations, school improvement funds and FEFP resources have been prioritized for this turnaround effort, with the principal given direct access to request resources in compliance with federal and state requirements. Priority for allocations will be provided to the school to ensure the effective implementation of standards-aligned instruction, strengthened leadership and a student-centered learning environment.

Identify and describe the district policies and practices that will need to be reviewed and changed to support the school.

There are no policies or practices identified that require review or revision to support the school.

Describe the system that the district will put in place to review and monitor the effectiveness of the support.

The district will implement a multi-level monitoring system to review and ensure the effectiveness of support provided to the school. The District Support Team, led by the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, will conduct weekly classroom walkthroughs with instructional specialists and school leaders to monitor instructional delivery and provide immediate feedback. Bi-weekly data meetings will be held with the school leadership team to review student performance on progress monitoring assessments, identify trends and adjust interventions. At the district level, the Executive Management Team will review school data monthly, evaluating the impact of resources, coaching and professional learning on teacher practice and student achievement. The Extended Executive Management Team will also meet monthly to assess districtwide progress and ensure alignment of resources and supports. Effectiveness will be measured through improvements in Tier 1 instruction, fidelity of intervention implementation, student attendance and growth on both progress monitoring and summative assessments. Adjustments to the level or type of support will be made as needed to ensure continuous improvement and sustainability.

Assurance 2: School Capacity-Leaders and Educators

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

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Leaders

- The district leadership team, in collaboration with the school, shall develop an annual professional learning plan that provides ongoing tiered support to increase leadership and educator quality.
- The district shall ensure the principal has a successful record in leading a turnaround school and the qualifications to support the student population being served. The district shall complete a Principal Change Verification Form when there is a proposed principal change at the school no later than 10 days prior to the proposed principal hire date.
- The district shall ensure that the principal will be replaced, unless recommended for retention in collaboration with the Department, upon entry into district-managed turnaround based upon the individual's turnaround record and degree of success, the length of time since turnaround success, the degree of similarity in the student populations and any other factor that would indicate the principal will have turnaround success with this school.

Educators

- The district shall ensure it has reviewed practices in hiring, recruitment, retention and reassignment of instructional personnel with priority on student performance data.
- The district shall ensure the instructional staff who do not have a VAM rating and who do not show evidence of increasing student achievement are not rehired at the school.
- The district must ensure that the percentage of inexperienced teachers, instructional personnel with a VAM rating that is below Effective or out-of-field teachers assigned to the school is at least or at a minimum, not higher than the district average.
- Ensure that K-12 intensive reading instruction is provided by teachers with a reading certificate, endorsement or micro-credential.

Assurance 2: Narrative of School Capacity-Leaders

In the box below, the district must provide information about its systems to ensure the school has an effective administrator capable of leading the turnaround efforts, including desired experience and competencies, recruitment and retention incentives and operational flexibility. At a minimum, reply to the following:

1. Has the principal been retained or replaced? Include the principal's name and start date, selection process and leadership experience.
2. Provide evidence that indicates the principal has a proven record of success in turnaround schools and the qualifications to support the student population being served.
3. Will other members of the school leadership team be retained or replaced and when? Explain the team's turnaround experience.
4. Does the district offer incentives to attract and retain principals willing to lead a turnaround school?
5. How does the district build the capacity of turnaround leaders?

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6. What operational flexibility will be afforded to the principal, such as the degree of input in selecting their school leadership team and instructional staff?
7. What actions will the district take regarding the school leadership team after the first year of this plan if the school's grade does not improve?

Assurance 2: Narrative of School Capacity- Leaders

Has the principal been retained or replaced? Include the principal's name and start date, selection process and leadership experience.

The district proposed and the Florida Department of Education approved, the appointment of Ms. Cheryl Moody as principal of West Gadsden Middle School, effective July 1, 2025, for the 2025–2026 school year.

Provide evidence that indicates the principal has a proven record of success in turnaround schools and the qualifications to support the student population being served.

Ms. Cheryl Moody holds Florida certifications in Reading, Exceptional Student Education, Educational Leadership and School Principal. She has a proven record of success in turnaround schools, with experience improving student achievement, school grades and instructional practices across multiple Florida districts. At Gadsden County High School, her targeted reading instruction contributed to the school's improvement from an F to a C in two years. As Instructional Coach at West Gadsden High, she led PLCs and coached teachers, supporting increased graduation rates and learning gains. At West Gadsden Middle, she mentored teachers to achieve 87% Civics proficiency, moving the school within one point of raising its overall grade to a C.

Most recently, Ms. Moody helped Orlo Vista Elementary improve from a C to a B by strengthening Tier 2 reading interventions, enhancing planning structures, reducing behavioral disruptions and building PBIS supports. She also supported Greensboro Elementary in maintaining a B rating through PLC facilitation and classroom observations. These experiences demonstrate her qualifications to lead turnaround work and her ability to implement evidence-based strategies that improve teaching and learning for diverse student populations.

Will other members of the school leadership team be retained or replaced and when? Explain the team's turnaround experience.

The school leadership team has been strategically restructured to strengthen the school's turnaround capacity. An additional assistant principal has been added to the team, bringing the total to two. This new leader brings direct turnaround experience, having served as Assistant Principal at Gadsden County High School (2018–2021), where she played a key role in driving school improvement through instructional leadership, faculty development and data-driven decision-making. In that role, she conducted and delivered professional learning, supervised critical instructional departments including ESE, Guidance, ELA/Reading and Social Studies and ensured compliance with teacher certification and professional learning requirements. She collaborated closely with the leadership team, facilitated monthly data meetings and presented progress updates at Bureau of School Improvement (BSI) meetings in 2020, demonstrating her capacity to connect school-level practices with district and state-level accountability. Her leadership also extended to student support, including college and career readiness guidance, oversight of dual enrollment and interventions to address academic and behavioral needs.

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To further strengthen instructional capacity, the district has hired a math coach and is actively recruiting a reading coach. Additionally, all teachers with “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory” VAM scores have been replaced with educators rated Effective or Highly Effective, ensuring strong instruction in tested grades. Collectively, this restructured leadership team integrates proven turnaround expertise with instructional leadership experience to build sustainable systems for student achievement and school improvement.

Does the district offer incentives to attract and retain principals willing to lead a turnaround school?

Currently, the school only has access to funds offered through the Florida Department of Education’s UniSIG Teacher and Administrator Grant to attract and retain principals willing to lead a turnaround school.

How does the district build the capacity of turnaround leaders?

The district builds the capacity of turnaround leaders through multiple layers of professional learning, evaluation and support. Leaders are provided opportunities to participate in the Florida Collaborative Leadership for All Students’ Success Program, national and state conferences and district-sponsored institutes focused on high-poverty, at-risk and minority student populations. Each administrator is evaluated annually in three domains—Student Growth Measures, Leadership Practice and Deliberate Practice—with Individual Performance Intervention Plans (IPIPs) issued for those rated “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory.” Leadership development is strengthened through access to professional courses, collaboration with district specialists and training in standards-based instruction and feedback practices. Monthly district leadership team meetings provide principals with time to analyze data, share best practices and engage in collaborative learning. In addition, principals receive classroom observation support and are afforded operational flexibility in selecting leadership team members, instructional specialists and other staff to best meet the school’s needs.

What operational flexibility will be afforded to the principal, such as the degree of input in selecting their school leadership team and instructional staff?

The turnaround principal is afforded significant operational flexibility to ensure the success of the school. The principal has full authority to select the school leadership team, recommend staff for key positions and hire teachers who are committed to the turnaround plan. No teacher will be placed at the school without the principal’s approval and staff members who do not support the improvement plan may be removed at the principal’s request. In addition, the principal has flexibility to design the school schedule, group students, implement additional interventions and adjust instructional strategies to meet student needs. Resources, including Title I, school improvement and FEFP allocations, are prioritized for the school and made accessible to the principal, provided they comply with program requirements.

What actions will the district take regarding the school leadership team after the first year of this plan if the school’s grade does not improve?

If the school’s grade does not improve after the first year of this plan, the district will conduct a comprehensive review of the principal and leadership team’s effectiveness. Based on this review, the district will determine whether additional targeted support, coaching, or restructuring of leadership roles

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is necessary. If insufficient progress is evident, the principal will be replaced and the leadership team will be re-evaluated to ensure alignment with the needs of the incoming turnaround leader.

Assurance 2: Narrative of School Capacity- Educators

In the box below, the district must include information about its systems to ensure the school has effective educators capable of improving student achievement, including priority in hiring, recruitment and retention incentives and professional development and coaching support provided by the district. At a minimum, reply to the following:

1. What is the process for filling vacancies at this school, specifically in the core content areas? Is this school given priority in hiring? Is hiring completed at the district level so vacancies at turnaround schools are filled before other schools are permitted to hire? Is there a MOU or union agreement to this effect?
2. How does the district ensure students at this school are instructed by certified instructional personnel when unexpected vacancies arise?
3. Does the district offer bonuses and, if so, what are the qualifications and conditions (e.g., length of employment commitment, performance)? Is there a union agreement to this effect?
4. Does the district offer incentives to instructional personnel with VAM ratings of Highly Effective or Effective to reduce turnover at turnaround schools?

Assurance 2: Narrative-School Capacity- Educators

What is the process for filling vacancies at this school, specifically in the core content areas? Is this school given priority in hiring? Is hiring completed at the district level so vacancies at turnaround schools are filled before other schools are permitted to hire? Is there a MOU or union agreement to this effect?

District policies support priority hiring for turnaround schools to ensure that the most fragile schools have access to the strongest instructional staff. Because funds are not available to provide recruitment or retention bonuses, the district relies heavily on state-provided incentives to attract and retain qualified teachers in these settings. Vacancies in core content areas such as reading, mathematics, science and social studies are given first consideration and the hiring process is managed at the district level so that turnaround schools are staffed before other schools may begin filling positions. Staffing meetings with principals are conducted each spring to review projected enrollment, analyze student performance data and identify instructional needs well in advance of the new school year. Teachers with Highly Effective and Effective VAM ratings are prioritized for placement in tested grades to maximize student learning gains, while those rated Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory are not placed in turnaround schools.

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Although there is no formal MOU or union agreement governing this process, the district collaborates closely with the bargaining unit to maintain contractual compliance while ensuring that staffing decisions address the urgent instructional needs of turnaround schools.

How does the district ensure students at this school are instructed by certified instructional personnel when unexpected vacancies arise?

The school principal has the flexibility to reassign staff to ensure that students are instructed by certified instructional personnel. For additional classes, the district allows the school principal to reassign students for core classes so that instruction is provided by a highly qualified teacher. In addition, the district uses technology to allow students access to highly effective instruction while being monitored by both a substitute teacher and a paraprofessional.

Does the district offer bonuses and, if so, what are the qualifications and conditions (e.g., length of employment commitment, performance)? Is there a union agreement to this effect?

The district does not currently offer bonuses to instructional personnel. No recruitment or retention incentives tied to qualifications, performance, or length of employment have been implemented and there is no union agreement in place regarding such bonuses.

Assurance 2: Verification-School Capacity- Educators

In the box below, describe the specific actions the district has taken to recruit instructional personnel with VAM ratings of Highly Effective and Effective to this school. Describe how the district has reassigned or non-renewed instructional personnel with VAM ratings of Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory to a school not in SI and how the district filled any vacancies resulting from these reassignments with certified instructional personnel.

1. What actions have been taken to recruit with VAM ratings of Highly Effective and Effective to this school?
2. How many instructional personnel were reassigned or non-renewed due to VAM ratings of Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory?
3. Confirm that all reassigned instructional personnel were not reassigned to SI schools.
4. How did the district fill the vacancies? Have all vacancies been filled with certified instructional personnel?

What actions have been taken to recruit with VAM ratings of Highly Effective and Effective to this school?

The district has taken deliberate steps to recruit and assign teachers with Highly Effective and Effective VAM ratings to West Gadsden Middle School. VAM data is reviewed during the hiring and reassignment process to prioritize the placement of Highly Effective and Effective teachers in tested grades.

How many instructional personnel were reassigned or non-renewed due to VAM ratings of Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory?

Three instructional personnel were reassigned or not renewed based on state VAM ratings of *Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory*.

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Confirm that all reassigned instructional personnel were not reassigned to SI schools.

No instructional personnel with state VAM ratings of *Needs Improvement* or *Unsatisfactory* were reassigned to School Improvement (SI) schools.

How did the district fill the vacancies? Have all vacancies been filled with certified instructional personnel?

The district has filled all instructional vacancies with certified personnel except for one remaining Science position. This vacancy is currently being advertised through the district's system, Indeed.com and other media outlets to ensure it is filled with a qualified, certified teacher.

Fill out the table below to verify the VAM classification data.

VAM DATA – School % Compared to District and State %				
VAM Data	Highly Effective (HE)	Effective (EF)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Unsatisfactory (UN)
Number of instructional personnel	0	4	1	1
School %	0%	100%	16.67%	16.67%
District %	3.53%	60%	28.24%	8.24%
State %	11.82%	68.21%	12.29%	7.69%

Acknowledgment

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

Name and title of person responsible for completing and submitting the TOP-2
Lisa Robinson, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services
Contact information: email, phone number
robinsonl@gcpsmail.com , 850-627-9651
Date submitted to the RED and the Bureau of School Improvement (due October 1)
September 16, 2025
Superintendent signature (or authorized representative)


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 Local School Board Chair Signature (or authorized representative)
Date local school board approved
10/28/25