

## **BOARD'S THEORY OF ACTION**

### **For Improved Student Achievement: Managed Performance/Empowerment**

In order to implement the Core Beliefs and Commitments and to achieve the Vision and Mission of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the Board of Education commits to a Theory of Action for Change as its approach to a stable, long-term framework for improving student achievement. This theory will drive the Board's policies, budgets, and administrative strategies in order to transform the culture of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) into one of high performance in both academics and operations.

### **Managed Performance/Empowerment**

Management Performance/Empowerment is an approach to PreK-12 education that strikes a balance between centralized direction (Managed Instruction) and freedom for innovation in local implementation (Performance/Empowerment), with an emphasis on creating a culture of accountability throughout every level of the school district. It combines the effectiveness of a centrally managed academic program with the dynamics of a performance culture, while ensuring that freedom and flexibility (empowerment) is earned as a result of performance and improvement. District employees are responsible for effective operations and teaching that fosters learning for every student, while recognizing that learning is the responsibility of the student with support from parents and the community.

### **District and Board Responsibility**

The Board of Education and Superintendent are responsible for establishing Board policies or management directives that will:

- Establish district-wide content and performance standards across a core curriculum;
- Foster a performance culture and unleash innovation in teaching, learning and school operations;
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive system of student assessment and intervention/support;
- Continue to administer and strengthen the district's accountability system to monitor overall trends and measure individual school performance;
- Emphasize and encourage highly effective staffing and relevant professional development; and
- Provide sufficient capacity in facilities, systems and resources.

### **Decentralization**

Decentralization remains a key element in the district's framework of support. Through that operating structure the Superintendent is responsible for ensuring the implementation of Board policies and management directives that will:

- Foster effective three-way communication among central management, individual schools, and the public at large; and
- Support innovation through the sharing of best practices and effective allocation of resources.

### **School Based Responsibility and Freedom and Flexibility**

Individual school leaders are best equipped to understand the learning needs of their students. Therefore, schools will be given as much flexibility as practicable to implement effective teaching and operational methods within the standards established by the Board and Superintendent. However, increased freedom and flexibility comes with increased accountability. Therefore, freedom and flexibility will be awarded to principals and schools only after rigorous measurement and assessment of individual school performance, using the district's accountability system, in order to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.

Principals will be given as much latitude as possible to manage budgets, procurement, hiring and firing, the configuration of workforce, schedules, student affairs, extracurricular activities, and parent and community relations. Where additional training is necessary, it will be made a priority. Because principals are ultimately accountable, they must exercise executive power and have the authority to hold others responsible.

### **A Framework for Continuous Improvement**

It is the intention of the Board of Education that all district systems will be aligned with Managed Performance/Empowerment in order to provide the framework for improving student achievement in CMS. Continuous redesign will be required and the Board will develop reform policies consistent with this approach.

The Superintendent will develop and execute strategic plans based on this Theory of Action and will provide a Theory of Action Implementation/Status Report to the Board semi-annually as part of the Superintendent's evaluation process.

**STANDARDS:** Establishing district-wide content and performance standards across a core curriculum

Initiative:

**North Carolina Standard Course of Study**

Description:

The North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) provides a set of competencies for each grade and high school course in every content area. The Standard Course of Study is the district's core curriculum and the foundation of content taught in every CMS classroom.

*Ann Clark oversees this area for the district. Anna Renfro, executive director for PreK-12 Curriculum Support Programs, helps manage this initiative.*

Status:

The North Carolina Standard Course of Study continues to serve as the base curriculum for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. As part of the Accountability and Curriculum Reform Effort (ACRE) set forth by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the NCSCOS will transition into the Common Core for English Language Arts and Math, and North Carolina Essential Standards for all other curriculum areas. Occupational Course of Study curricula is currently in the adoption process by the State Board of Education. It is important to note that there will not be a transition year in which both new and current curricula are taught. Common Core and Essential Standards are scheduled for full implementation during the 2012-2013 school year. Additional information may be found on the ACRE website at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/>.

Results:

The North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) tests assess whether students have mastered state standards. The results continued a positive upward trend in CMS since 2006 in nearly all tested areas, indicating better mastery of state curricular standards. The number of CMS schools making expected or high academic growth under the ABCs of Public Education increased for the fourth year in a row. In 2005-2006, 54.3 percent of our schools met expected or high growth. In 2009-2010, 94.1 percent of CMS schools met or exceeded expected growth.

In addition, 35 of our schools went from meeting expected growth in 2008-2009 to making high growth in 2009-2010. Eleven schools moved from not making expected growth in 2008-2009 to making high growth in 2009-2010, and four schools moved from not making expected growth in 2008-2009 to meeting expected growth goals in 2009-2010. The graduation rate for CMS increased to 69.9 percent, from 66.1 percent a year earlier.

Additionally, the district had 97 schools (57.7 percent) achieve Adequate Yearly Progress, as required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Based upon this year's academic performance, CMS is no longer under the sanctions associated with Local Education Agency improvement, a status in which CMS had been since 2006.

On the VoCATS tests, given to students who are enrolled in Career and Technical Education courses, the overall proficiency was 73.8 percent, down from 79.9 a year earlier. All of these gains are substantial. However, significant achievement/performance gaps remain between socioeconomic subgroups and racial/ethnic subgroups.

Next Steps:

Administrative and instructional training in both the Common Core and Essential Standards has begun across the district through content-area alliances, principal meetings and administrative team meetings. Content-area directors are working with teams of teacher leaders to develop

rigorous and relevant alignments to support instruction. *Investigations*, our math textbook, is well aligned with the new standards. State textbook adoptions are currently under review in anticipation of the new standards. The Response to Instruction team is collaborating with the literacy team to ensure the proper alignment of support strategies for our academically fragile students.

Initiative:

### **CMS Curriculum Pacing Guides**

Description:

Pacing/alignment guides are intended to help teachers deliver academic content, rigor and performance to meet the standards of managed performance/empowerment. Curriculum pacing and alignment guides ensure that the correct scope and sequence of the curriculum is taught. North Carolina is unique in that the tests taken by students at the end of the year are aligned specifically to our curriculum. This means that when the curriculum is taught with fidelity and the most effective instructional strategies, testing results are truly reflective of student mastery of the curriculum standards. New pacing and alignment guides are currently being developed to align with and reflect the Common Core and the North Carolina Essential Standards, both of which will become the base curricula for North Carolina in the 2012-2013 school year.

*Ann Clark oversees this area for the district. Anna Renfro, executive director for PreK-12 Curriculum Support Programs, helps manage this initiative.*

Status:

Pacing guides are available to teachers via Learning Village and are updated regularly to provide timely resources to teachers. Additionally, subject-area specialists have developed alliances, regularly scheduled curriculum meetings, to provide ongoing support to teachers of all experience levels.

Results:

Pacing and alignment guides continue to be a valuable tool for teachers. They provide specific pacing strategies for new teachers and provide accurate benchmark instructional timelines. State testing results and feedback from school-based instructional staff provide the basis for modifications to these documents.

Next Steps:

Aug. 19 and 20 were designated as Central Office Professional Development days. Elementary teachers met with curriculum specialists on Aug. 19; secondary teachers met on Aug. 20. Teachers received updated pacing and alignment guides and instructional strategies specifically designed to increase rigor and increase the graduation rate.

Discovery Education, in its first year of implementation, continues to be a very good resource to our schools. Professional development has been provided to lead teachers at all schools. Additional on-site, specific professional development has been provided to schools. CMS partnered with Discovery Education to build curriculum alignment documents that identify specific Discovery Education resources that enhance instructional opportunities for our students and provide easier access to these resources for our teachers.

**PERFORMANCE:** Fostering a performance culture and unleashing innovation in teaching, learning and school operations

Initiative:

### **Race to the Top**

#### Description:

Race to the Top is a competitive, stimulus grant program for educational reform launched by the U.S. Department of Education. It is designed to encourage and reward states that are making significant reforms in four education areas. As one of 10 winning states in the second phase of Race to the Top, North Carolina will receive up to \$400 million over four years. The state will retain half this amount; the other \$200 million will be allocated to participating districts based on Title I funding formulas. The allocation for CMS is \$18.31 million over the four-year funding period, from 2010-2011 through 2013-2014. The state has allocated \$3.17 million of this amount to help cover its costs for the new NC Education Cloud Initiative, leaving the district \$15.14 million for the four-year period.

CMS will divide the money between technology necessary to meet state Race to the Top requirements with expenditures that will have immediate and direct positive impact on students and teachers. The technology demands associated with Race to the Top are enormous, particularly given state requirements that districts will administer all assessments online by 2013-2014 and ensure easy and seamless access to the NC Education Cloud for teachers, principals and other staff. This adds to our district's already substantial technology needs.

The district will also use the funding to improve standards and assessments, recruit effective teachers and administrators, provide professional development for teachers and administrators and support low-performing schools.

*This initiative is owned by Robert Avossa and managed by Karin Dancy, director of grants.*

#### Status:

As directed by the state, CMS has submitted a revised Year 1 budget for Race to the Top funding for March-June 2010 to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

#### Results:

While Year 1 Race to the Top funding only recently became available to local districts, these funds will enable CMS to hire a Race to the Top project coordinator, provide access to state-provided and similar professional development offerings for teachers and begin other key work to launch this multi-year initiative.

#### Next Steps:

The Office of Accountability is collaborating with other CMS departments to move forward on spending Year 1 Race to the Top funds by June 30, 2011. Staff also will begin working with the superintendent and executive staff to outline a detailed budget for Year 2 (2011-2012).

#### Initiative:

### **The Case for Continuous Improvement: A Comprehensive Review of CMS**

#### Description:

The original discussion of an extensive internal review began with new Board member orientation and the Board's 2010 retreat. It was discussed again during the presentation of the 10-Year Capital Needs Assessment. Additionally, we were aware of a pending shortfall in annual funding making such a review necessary. As the discussions proceeded, it became apparent that any changes would be complex, involving not only student assignment procedures and policies and the necessary capital projects, but also programs (pre-K and magnets), transportation, boundaries, projected enrollments, school start times and facility utilization. In order to do this work effectively, the Board sought community input throughout the process. We evaluated our current methods of business to verify effectiveness and efficiency. The process was more strategic (Are we using our resources to do the right things?) and less tactical (Funding is reduced, what can we do without?). *Strategic Plan 2014: Teaching Our Way to the Top* identified the goals that were most important to achieve the Board's mission, vision,

core beliefs and commitments. A key component of that work was effective teaching and leadership. This, along with good data and differentiated resources, will need to be the cornerstones of any successful plan. The Board developed a new set of guiding principles so that the staff and the public will know the basis upon which the Board will make its decisions.

*The Board of Education is leading this effort. Mike Raible is facilitating staff support.*

**Status:**

The Board launched a comprehensive review in June with a series of four community forums and four work sessions. The review was completed in November and is intended to help the Board align decision-making in multiple areas with the goals of the district's strategic plan as well as take a consistent, strategic approach to individual issues. The forums were well attended and participants were eager to share their thoughts on the guiding principles used in decisions across CMS. As a result of the information gathered from the forums and data collected through research, the staff proposed a set of recommendations that include moving some successful programs to larger facilities, changing the grade configurations for 10 schools, closing 10 schools, combining the programs at two schools into a single year-round, multi-track program and providing targeted assistance to nearly 40 other schools.

**Results:**

The Board made decisions regarding these recommendations on Nov. 9, 2010.

**Next Steps:**

Staff is working to execute the decisions.

**Initiative:**

**District Accreditation**

**Description:**

The Office of Accountability managed the district accreditation process this fall and CMS was fully accredited. CMS is reviewed every five years by the AdvanceED organization (formerly SACS). The accreditation team included more than 30 educators from across the country, including North Carolina. The team visited more than 30 schools. It also interviewed every principal in CMS and many groups of staff. Documentation required for the review took more than a year to prepare.

*This initiative is owned by Robert Avossa and managed by Jerry Winkeljohn, director of school improvement.*

**Status:**

Activities related to the accreditation process now include putting in place the few recommendations from the team, which focused on implementing the strategies in *Strategic Plan 2014*. This includes developing and implementing a comprehensive assessment system that covers all areas of the curriculum, not just those tested by the state.

**Results:**

CMS gained accreditation without caveat for the next five years. This ensures our graduates are recognized by post-secondary institutions nationally. We are reviewing the final report to help us meet the recommendations.

**Next Steps:**

The staff will ensure compliance with the recommendations and prepare for the next accreditation visit in five years.

**Initiative:**

**Freedom and Flexibility with Accountability (FFA)**

#### Description:

The Freedom and Flexibility with Accountability (FFA) initiative essentially spans both instructional management and operational management. Principals are ultimately held accountable for their schools' performance and must therefore be granted the authority to exercise executive power. CMS created the FFA initiative to give high-performing principals greater authority and flexibility. FFA is intended to give principals the decision-making authority to tailor education and school management to meet the diverse needs of their students. As an element of the district's efforts to decentralize services and authority, FFA allows principals to exercise judgment in a number of specified areas. Balancing accountability with empowerment, FFA principals may initiate programs that specifically support the needs of their students. However, regardless of a principal's FFA status, several non-negotiable expectations remain district-wide, including state standards and the district's mandated curriculum. The district has established a limited number of non-negotiable instructional and managerial non-negotiable expectations for the 2010-2011 school year.

*Ann Clark oversees this initiative.*

#### Status:

CMS selected 48 principals to receive even more autonomy as part of the Freedom and Flexibility with Accountability initiative in the 2008-2009 school year. For the 2009-2010 school year, CMS expanded the initiative to add another 13 schools. Fifty-eight additional principals earned the designation in 2010-2011.

The principals come from high schools, middle schools and elementary schools. The schools are a mix of FOCUS and Title I schools, as well as schools that do not have high poverty, and are spread across the district's five zones. Due to promotions, reassignments and retirements, the number of FFA principals is constantly changing.

#### Results:

It is too early to determine results at this stage of the initiative.

#### Next Steps:

Principals have three years to exercise the freedom, and district officials will review the first group at the end of the 2010-2011 school year. The long-range goal is to give freedom and flexibility with accountability to every principal. A review of FFA is currently under way with input from principals and zone superintendents.

#### Initiative:

### **Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) – Leadership for Educators' Advanced Performance (LEAP)**

#### Description:

The district created the Leadership for Educators' Advanced Performance (LEAP) in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education's Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF). TIF-LEAP is a five-year initiative to develop a sustainable, performance-based compensation system that increases the number of high-quality teachers and principals in order to raise student achievement. Hard-to-staff schools and subjects are an area of particular focus. TIF-LEAP is working collaboratively with teachers and linking educator pay to what students learn. TIF-LEAP began in the 2007-2008 school year and will continue through 2011-2012. The TIF grant may provide \$12 million during the grant's five-year life. The district's total five-year contribution for increasing differential compensation could reach \$9 million and will be composed of a combination of direct payments of TIF incentives and contributions from existing district programs. Because of the year-to-year nature of the grant, all funds are subject to annual evaluations.

*Ann Clark oversees this area for the district. Susan Norwood, executive director of TIF-LEAP, manages this initiative.*

#### Status:

Twenty schools are participating in this initiative: Billingsville, Shamrock Gardens, Druid Hills, Highland Renaissance, Reid Park, Berryhill and Lincoln Heights elementary schools; Martin Luther King, Jr., Sedgefield, Bishop Spaugh, Wilson and John Taylor Williams middle schools, and the five small high schools at Garinger, as well as Waddell, West Charlotte and West Mecklenburg high schools. Year 3 compensation opportunities included: merit-based bonuses for successful attainment of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs), based on tiered, performance-based rewards for high effectiveness rankings, and stipends for completing professional development related to TIF-LEAP goals/student achievement or taking on extra leadership responsibilities/duties.

#### Results:

CMS has successfully completed three years of the district's pilot, with approval from the U.S. Department of Education via annual evaluations. In Year 1 (2007-2008), the district awarded merit-based supplements totaling \$468,177. In Year 2 (2008-2009), the district awarded recruitment bonuses totaling \$489,808, professional development and leadership stipends totaling \$122,784 and merit-based supplements totaling \$829,466. Year 3 (2009-2010) differentiated compensation totaled more than \$3.1 million, including just under \$350,000 for professional development/leadership stipends and more than \$2.7 million for SLO and valued-added bonuses. Approximately \$3.7 million is budgeted for merit-based supplements in Year 4.

#### Next Steps:

In Years 4-5, the initiative will increase its focus on student growth and achievement measured at both the classroom and school levels. Key challenges moving forward include executing the district-developed growth measure; providing ongoing instructional support for teacher-designed and administrator-approved Student Learning Objectives; refining data management systems for students and teachers, and adjusting assumptions and modeling capacity for projecting long-term financial sustainability. Continued work on the TIF-LEAP pilot will provide opportunities to gather data and study effectiveness to inform the development of the district-wide pay-for-performance model outlined in *Strategic Plan 2014*. CMS applied for a second TIF grant, totaling about \$7.3 million, but was not awarded the funds to help build the information technology infrastructure.

#### Initiative:

### **Strategic Plan 2014**

#### Description:

The Board's adopted Vision, Mission, Core Beliefs and Commitments, Theory of Action and Reform Governance Policies, as well as the foundation provided in *Strategic Plan 2010* guided the development of *Strategic Plan 2014: Teaching Our Way to the Top*. Launched in November 2009, this plan sets two major goals for CMS: improving teaching and managing performance.

Improving teaching has caused a shift in emphasis within the district from qualifications to outcomes. Current research, including our own data, indicates that there is not a correlation between credentials and effectiveness. To improve teaching, we must develop reliable markers for effectiveness. We have begun research to do so.

The four keys to performance management are identifying performance goals, measuring performance against those goals, providing training to improve that performance and compensating performance. We intend to set goals for all our employees and then measure performance against those goals. We will provide targeted training to enhance performance and reward performance that exceeds those goals.

We have identified six areas of specific focus: effective teaching and leadership, performance management, increasing the graduation rate, teaching and learning through technology, environmental stewardship, and parent and community connections.

*Mike Raible manages the work of Strategic Plan 2014.*

**Status:**

The superintendent updates the Board of Education on the district's progress with the strategic plan goals on a monthly and quarterly basis. He will report the district's progress annually to the community in the CMS State of Our Schools address. Evaluations of executive staff members, including the superintendent, are aligned with the goals and objectives of the plan. The six areas of focus have been divided into nine project charters so that the work can be managed and monitored by our Plan Management Oversight Committee (PMOC). The project charters break each strategy into the specific actions and the tasks needed to achieve the overall goals. Seven of the nine project charters have been approved by PMOC. Although project development has been under way for several months, *Strategic Plan 2014* officially began July 1. Baseline measures for *Strategic Plan 2014* are being developed.

**Results:**

Since 2006, we have steadily improved student achievement and streamlined many business operations. We have met or exceeded most of the 2010 targets. Accountability for *Strategic Plan 2014* objectives began on July 1. The focus is on student achievement and growth continues. The work to develop measures of teacher effectiveness is ongoing. Some preliminary measures have been identified and we are testing those measures. A local platform for formative testing was launched this school year. Thus far, 69 schools are participating in the district's environmental stewardship program this year to increase recycling, reduce energy consumption and decrease the total waste stream.

**Next Steps:**

Strategy owners and project managers are developing the remaining two project charters for the 2014 plan. PMOC will continue to review and manage the progress toward our 2014 goals.

**Initiative:**

**Strategic Plan 2014 Scorecard**

**Description:**

A scorecard has been developed with key measures for monitoring the implementation of *Strategic Plan 2014*. This scorecard includes major measures from each of the projects in the strategic plan. It will be updated regularly as a tool for managing the projects and tactics in the plan.

*This initiative is owned by Robert Avossa and managed by Christopher Cobitz, executive director of state and federal programs.*

**Status:**

Measures have been identified. For measures currently in place, baselines and targets for 2014 have been set. Interim targets have been set for measures currently being collected. For some measures, the methods of collection are being developed.

**Results:**

The process of identifying metrics for inclusion in the scorecard had several positive unintended consequences. The first consequence was a fruitful discussion on how to identify progressive success on the charters encompassed by the plan. Additionally, a series of metrics not used before are now being collected. These will give insight into the functioning of the district.

**Next Steps:**

The district is collecting the identified measures. Ways to get timelier reporting are being investigated, as well as how to modify the Data Dashboard to accommodate the new metrics. A

report to the Board of Education on these measures will occur after the first complete cycle of data collection is complete.

Initiative:

### **Pay for Performance**

Description:

By 2014, all CMS employees will be paid a salary based on multiple measures of their performance. We will have a compensation system that boosts student achievement and treats employees as individuals. Under the new system, for example, teachers with meaningful differences in their ability to increase student achievement will have equally meaningful differences in their compensation. Our new compensation system will not depend on outside funding for its long-term sustainability. We are counting on all employees to help shape the plan.

*Ann Clark, Hugh Hattabaugh and Robert Avossa oversee areas of this initiative. Pay for performance is being managed and developed by Andy Baxter, director of the Center for Human Capital Strategies.*

Status:

Since August 2010, work on pay for performance has focused on three areas. First, we presented to the Board at its Sept. 28 meeting detailed findings on the dramatic differences among our teachers in their impact on student achievement in all End-of-Grade/End-of-Course grades and subjects. We also showed how little these differences are reflected in the teachers' compensation. This is because only five percent (on average) of the differences in teacher impacts are explained by the factors (National Board Certification, advanced degrees, experience) that dictate 100 percent of the differences in their compensation. These findings and others presented in the Sept. 28 report reflect the district's ongoing commitment to conduct the research we need to ensure that every child has a great teacher.

We have also begun an intensive campaign to share with teachers what we are learning and to learn from their responses. Since August, we have spent 45-60 minutes with faculties at 140 schools explaining our deliberate approach to measuring teacher effectiveness and answering questions about compensation reform. Our goal is to visit all 178 schools by the end of the school year. For those wanting more detail, we have posted on the CMS website a video we created to explain our approach to measuring teacher effectiveness.

Many teachers will rely upon their principals for help in understanding their effectiveness on the measures we develop. In addition to meeting with more than 70 principals, we have established a principal working group in each zone that meets regularly to review and answer questions raised by their teachers. These meetings have been well received by the principals.

Two hundred teachers have agreed to participate in one of our 11 teacher design teams that will make recommendations on what measures we should use to assess teacher effectiveness and how those measures should be linked to compensation. Design teams are looking at value-added, classroom observations, contributions to school and professional learning community, hard to staff subjects and schools, student surveys and other ideas as potential measures of teacher effectiveness. Where possible, design teams are exploring ways to integrate team or school-level versions of their measures. No single measure will be perfect. Our plan is that multiple measures can provide a well-rounded picture of a teacher's impact on students.

We are not the only district on the path toward comprehensive compensation reform, but in the last quarter we have been asked to be a thought partner with a number of other districts who heard of our work. We have consulted with districts in New York City, Charleston, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Fulton County (Ga.), Gwinnett County (Ga.), Albuquerque, N.M., Boston, Denver, Ft. Worth, Texas, Seattle and the state of New Jersey. These conversations are not just one-way; we are learning a great deal from these districts as well.

#### Results:

We are executing our plan to have intensive teacher input in the design of our measures of effective teaching through our design teams and school presentations. It is a testament to our teachers that while many have reservations about changing a compensation system that has been around since the 1920s, they are volunteering their time and wisdom to make something new possible.

#### Next Steps:

Every employee will be involved in pay for performance. We began the work with the teachers because they are closest to the students, but all employees contribute. In the next quarter, we will begin similar work with design teams for executive staff members and principals.

#### Initiative:

### **Reduction in Force**

#### Description:

The Board voted March 8 to approve the criteria for a reduction in force (RIF). The RIF is part of the district's response to an expected \$100 million reduction in funding for the 2011-2012 school year. The cuts are necessary because of anticipated declines in state and local funding – the two primary sources for the CMS operating budget.

For the third consecutive year, the reduction in force will use performance in deciding which teachers and certified personnel to dismiss. This applies to teachers with career status as well as those without it. As has been the case in previous reductions in force, the district will establish pools for elementary and secondary teachers whose positions are eliminated but who do not have performance or licensure issues. The district will use teachers in the district-wide pool to fill vacancies as they arise.

Using performance is a major shift in the field of education. Though challenging, the process is expected to help CMS move to a culture based on effectiveness and results. In using performance, we will follow a tiered approach which involves the reduction of non-career teaching positions before the reduction of career teacher positions. For example, non-career teachers will be subject to non-renewal if they received a summative evaluation with a below-standard rating, or two or more below-standard ratings within functional areas last school year.

Teachers of math, science, Exceptional Children, English as a Second Language, Montessori and foreign languages will be exempted. Also exempted are Teach for America recruits finishing the first year of a two-year commitment. The third category exempted includes teachers who are part of the district's Strategic Staffing Initiative (cohorts two, three and four).

*Hugh Hattabaugh and Kim Brazzell, executive director of Human Resources Planning and Workforce Management, oversees the RIF process.*

#### Status:

This is the third consecutive year we base RIF decisions on performance, which was foundational for our shift towards a more performance-driven culture. This year, for the first time,

CMS is using the McREL online evaluation system. Principals have been trained in how to navigate the new evaluation tool.

**Results:**

It is too early to determine results at this stage of the process.

**Next Steps:**

Moving forward, we intend to make performance a primary factor in all RIF decisions. This aligns well with our efforts to foster a performance culture in CMS.

**Initiative:**

**Increasing the Graduation Cohort Rate**

**Description:**

Our goal is to increase the number of students who graduate in four years from 66 percent to 90 percent by 2014.

Fifty years ago, a high school diploma was adequate preparation for many jobs and careers. Today, that is no longer the case. Advances in technology have shrunk the world to a global village, one in which Americans must compete with workers in other countries. To remain competitive, workers need not only a high school diploma but post-secondary training – and a high school diploma is the essential foundation for that training.

For many students, post-secondary study results in a two-year or a four-year college degree. For others, it is on-the-job training, technical study, military service or some other form of post-secondary education that brings certification. In all cases, graduation from high school is the necessary qualification.

*Ann Clark oversees this initiative. Vanessa Benton, director of Academic Services, manages this effort.*

**Status:**

We've realigned the high school math sequence; amended the current middle school and high school promotion policies and regulations, and provided credit-recovery programs in all secondary and alternative schools, with a focus on courses required for graduation. Other completed tasks include the creation of summer school sessions for seniors in June and e-learning academy for high school students; the expansion of Math Forward for Exceptional Children enrolled in high school Algebra I and increasing the number of high school students enrolled in NC Virtual Public School. The following initiatives are in progress: Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project; development of an electronic four-year plan to assess each high school student's progress toward graduation, semester by semester, expanding the No Easy Walk program and creating an extended day/evening program at the Performance Learning Center using NovaNet.

In summer 2011, the YMCA Achievers Program will be pairing three YMCA branches with three CMS high schools – Stratford Richardson YMCA with West Mecklenburg, University City YMCA with Vance and McCrorey YMCA with West Charlotte. These partnerships will help teens establish and pursue high educational and career goals in finishing high school and college. A workforce readiness program will run in conjunction with the academic school year. During the summer months, teen achievers will work side by side with adult mentors who have been identified as outstanding professionals in their field.

**Results:**

The four-year graduation rate in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools was 66.1 percent for the 2008-2009 school year. The CMS graduation rate increased nearly four percentage points to 69.9 percent in 2009-2010.

#### Next Steps:

We will complete the remaining tactics and measure results. We will also track our success by the overall graduation rate and how well we achieve the following measures:

- Percentage of students who failed a course who successfully complete credit recovery.
- Percentage of schools with a 95 percent attendance rate each day.
- Percentage of students who have more than 10 absences.
- District promotion rate.
- District average risk-factor score.

#### Initiative:

### Measures of Effective Teaching Study (MET)

#### Description:

The Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) project, sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is a two-year study of multiple measures of teacher effectiveness in at least seven school districts around the nation. It involves teachers and their students in the following courses: Math and English Language Arts in grades four through eight, Algebra I at the high school level, Biology (or its equivalent) at the high school level, and English in grade nine.

Researchers focus on six types of data:

- *Videotaped classroom observations:* Researchers will videotape four lessons each year in selected classes and subjects. These videotapes will be reviewed using several different sets of nationally recognized teaching standards.
- *Teacher reflections on their videotaped lessons:* Teachers will provide written commentary and any relevant supporting materials to provide context about the videotaped lessons, and to share their own reflections.
- *Student feedback:* All students in participating teachers' classrooms will complete surveys about experiences in the classroom and their teachers' ability to engage them in the course material. In a small number of classrooms, student work also will be collected. Researchers will review the quality and quantity of this work to assess teacher expectations and student effort.
- *Supplemental student assessments:* Many state tests assess a wide range of content but dedicate relatively few items to each individual content area. Project researchers will administer an additional test that focuses on the most important content areas for a given course of study. Use of this additional test will allow researchers to assess whether students who perform well on the broader assessment also can perform well on the conceptually deeper assessment. The test will be given during the last 30 days of each school year and will be no longer than 60 minutes per subject at the elementary/middle school level and a maximum of 90 minutes per subject at the high school level.
- *Assessment of teachers' ability to recognize and diagnose student misperceptions:* In Year 2 of the project (2010-2011), researchers will assess participating teachers' ability to recognize and diagnose common student misperceptions in their subjects and at the appropriate grade levels.
- *Teacher surveys:* All participating teachers will complete surveys asking them about the quality of working conditions within their schools and the amount of instructional support they receive.

*Ann Clark oversees this initiative. Vanessa Benton, director of Academic Services, manages this effort.*

**Status:**

CMS has completed Year 1 of the project (2009-2010), which was focused on teacher and staff recruitment and data collection.

Year 2 of the project (2010-2011) is focused on validating the most promising measures of effective teaching through a lottery process to assign participating teachers to class sections in their subject/grade combinations.

**Results:**

- Three hundred thirty-nine teachers at 48 schools are currently participating in the study.
- Fifty-nine other school-based professionals assisted with project execution.
- Teachers reviewed and commented on their videotaped lessons.

**Next Steps:**

Analysis of 13,000 classroom lessons observed will be completed. Also, a new measure that extends and refines the concept of pedagogical content knowledge for teachers, or what a teacher knows about how to teach a particular subject will be tested. These findings could have significant implications, not only for measuring effective teaching but for the training and development of teachers as well.

In late spring of 2011, a more complete report from Year 1 will be released that includes findings from the classroom observation protocols. In late summer of 2011, researchers will combine data from each of the MET project measures to form a composite indicator of effective teaching. Researchers will analyze different approaches to weighing each measure (student achievement on state and supplemental tests, classroom observations, teacher knowledge, student perceptions) when forming an overall assessment of a teacher's effectiveness. Finally, in early 2012, we will report whether those teachers who received the highest performance rating during the 2009-2010 school year actually produced larger student achievement gains than their colleagues during the 2010-2011 school year.

**ASSESSMENT/SUPPORT:** Developing and maintaining a comprehensive system of student assessment and intervention/support

**Initiative:****FOCUS Schools****Description:**

Standards demand equitable distribution of resources. The additional funding that FOCUS (Finding Opportunity; Creating Unparalleled Success) schools receive is based on each school's number of economically disadvantaged students (EDS) as an indicator of poverty. Driven by Policy ADA, which mandates that additional resources be provided to schools serving students with additional needs, FOCUS schools receive extra support including lower student/teacher ratios and additional instructional supplies.

*Ann Clark and Sheila Shirley oversee this initiative.*

**Status:**

Seventy-four schools have been designated as FOCUS schools in 2011-2012, two fewer than in the current school year. Nine schools are being removed from the list and seven will be added.

FOCUS schools were identified for 2011-2012 using EDS rates that vary by level (69 percent or higher at the PreK-8, K-8 and elementary school levels; 62 percent or higher at the K-12 and middle school levels; 50 percent or higher at the high school level and 80 percent or higher at the alternative schools).

#### Results:

The former Equity Report measured FOCUS and non-FOCUS schools against the standards outlined in Policy ADA. FOCUS and non-FOCUS schools are evaluated and compared by facilities, technology systems, audio-visual equipment, library books and media services, instructional programs, co-curricular activities, textbooks, faculty, teacher/student ratios, and per-pupil expenditures. The Equity Report was the only measure that specifically evaluated the initiatives and positions granted to FOCUS schools.

Because the Board changed Policy ADA, the above measures no longer apply.

#### Next Steps:

FOCUS schools are re-identified each year to make sure allocation of funds and resources match existing realities at the schools. FOCUS schools for the 2011-2012 school year were announced in February 2011.

Barringer, Irwin Avenue, Lincoln Heights and Pawtucket elementary schools, John Taylor Williams, Spaugh and Wilson middle schools, and E.E. Waddell and Midwood high schools are coming off the list. Eight are slated to close in June.

Seven have been added to the list: First Ward, Greenway Park, Steele Creek, Stoney Creek and Winding Springs elementary schools, Northeast Middle and the Military and Global Leadership Academy (K-12) at Marie G. Davis.

The number of elementary schools has decreased significantly as a result of creating a new category for PreK-8 and K-8 schools. Nine of our current elementary schools will be redirected to this new subgroup.

#### Initiative:

#### **State Testing – Materials Shipping**

#### Description:

The State Board of Education requires all public school students in grades 3-12 scoring Level 2 on their respective End-of-Grade (EOG) and/or End-of-Course (EOC) assessments to participate in retest 1. Parents of Level 1 students may opt to have the student retested. This increased the complexity of materials ordered and shipped to CMS schools.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provides assessment materials to each district for administration in accordance with State Policy GCS – C - 031. CMS receives materials at its testing warehouse for control and distribution to schools as needed. The two largest challenges for distribution are providing enough materials for schools to meet the requirements of separate setting accommodations and providing enough materials for the retesting.

Schools asked us to improve how we distribute materials to them so that they don't have to reorder materials for retesting. As part of the reorganization of the Office of Accountability, shipping of testing materials became a focus for improving efficient operations.

*This initiative is owned by Christopher Cobitz, executive director of state and federal programs, and managed by Joseph Wolfe, director of assessment.*

#### Status:

Several changes were made in ordering and distribution for the fall 2010 EOC tests. Our state and federal programs group created a SharePoint page during the summer to house electronic documents and communications. The page provides schools a one-stop location for updated communications as well as documents required for testing. The page also allows schools to

order materials using InfoPath forms, which are sent to the warehouse immediately, where they are processed and prepared for delivery. We also increased the amount of materials provided to the schools to give them flexibility in accommodating and retesting students.

**Results:**

In all but two instances, the new process surpassed expectations. Schools had enough materials on hand to process all accommodations groups and retest students. The only exceptions occurred when schools had low course enrollment or a larger-than-expected number of students needing retests.

Of the 36 schools participating in fall testing, none reported running short of materials during initial testing. More than 24,000 tests were administered. Only 13 schools placed EOC materials reorders for a total of 549 test booklets.

**Next Steps:**

Accountability will evaluate whether to change the amount of materials being provided to schools for the spring cycle. Factors to be considered are the increased number of EOC assessments in second semester as well as the administration of EOGs in grades three through eight. Historical retest and accommodation numbers will be used to evaluate whether sending schools 50 percent more materials than they have needed in the past will be enough.

**Initiative:**

**National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)**

**Description:**

This year, CMS will participate in the NAEP assessment and the NAEP field tests to align with the TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science) study that compares performance across nations. Ultimately, this will allow CMS to compare our students' performance to those in other countries. CMS is one of a few urban districts that are sampled independently; most NAEP testing is done on a statewide basis. This sampling provides CMS with district-level results and allows us to compare our results to North Carolina and other states, as well as other large urban districts. The complete battery of tests now includes science, reading and math in grades four and eight. Other tests are being developed.

*This initiative is owned by Christopher Cobitz, executive director of state and federal programs.*

**Status:**

NAEP testing began Jan. 24 and continues throughout most of the school year, either for the operational or field tests. Sample groups, some as small as 10 students, have been selected in some schools, with more than 60 being sampled in others. All selected schools are participating.

**Results:**

Results will not be available for approximately two years in some content areas. Recently released results show some demographic groups in CMS outperforming much of the nation. Our district average is not as high as some others whose student populations are less diverse than ours.

**Next Steps:**

Complete the required testing activities and participate in federally funded training to assist in interpreting the CMS results.

**Initiative:**

**Title VII Activities**

**Description:**

For the first time in almost 10 years, CMS has received federal Title VII funds for the improvement of American Indian education in the district. Several activities have been implemented using these targeted federal funds. Any CMS student who is eligible for Title VII

services can receive tutoring based on academic need. Also, several Saturday cultural activities have occurred and two more are planned for this academic year.

*This initiative is owned and managed by Christopher Cobitz, executive director of state and federal programs.*

**Status:**

Since receiving federal funding, the number of identified eligible students has doubled in CMS. However, the North Carolina Tribal Council estimates that approximately 1,000 CMS students are eligible for Title VII services and we have thus far identified only 120. CMS received more than \$15,000 for the 2010-2011 school year to support Title VII activities. A parent advisory council has been developed as required by the U.S. Department of Education.

**Results:**

This first CMS Title VII activity occurred at Hornets Nest Elementary on Oct. 16. The second weekend activity was at Tuckaseegee Elementary on Dec. 4. The parent advisory committee and CMS staff have participated in two additional cultural events in Mecklenburg County this school year to inform parents about the program. Students are being identified for tutoring and tutors are being paid from federal funds. The parent advisory committee met in February to plan and schedule the next two cultural events, which will be more highly publicized.

**Next Steps:**

Proposals for 2011-2012 funding were due in February and CMS applied. Since funding is based on the number of eligible students, we will continue to publicize the program both to acquire additional funding and to serve the population of eligible students better. Ultimately, the combination of academic and cultural support should improve both academic performance and graduation rate for the American Indian students.

**Initiative:**

**Title I Schools Coaching Initiative**

**Description:**

CMS has developed a rubric to guide resource distribution for LEA (Local Education Agency) Improvement. All schools were evaluated on the following: percentage of non-proficient AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) performance, the cumulative number of non-proficient AYP individual student targets, previous LEA Improvement services, superintendent's improvement initiatives, achievement gap of students with disabilities and Limited English Proficient students compared to all students' performance and zone superintendent input. All schools were ranked to identify the schools most in need of services. These schools were classified into tiers for targeted assistance LEA Improvement services, with Tier I schools receiving the most intensive services, Tier II schools receiving moderate services, and the remaining schools receiving standard services provided through the zone by local and state funds.

*Ann Clark oversees the initiative and Ron Thompson, executive director of federal, state and compliance, manages the work.*

**Status:**

Targeted assistance was provided to schools by expert coaches to raise teacher effectiveness through intentional planning, supporting the Professional Learning Community (PLC) structure and for instruction that is rigorous and relevant. There were five coaching teams: three in elementary, one in middle and one in high school. These teams were composed of literacy, math, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) and Exceptional Children (EC) coaches. The coaches participated in 11 weeks of professional development prior to the beginning of the school year to ensure that each coach was cross-trained. Coaching teams assisted schools for a total of eight weeks, with six weeks of intensive service, followed by two weeks of service after they rotated to another school.

Customized plans were created for each school receiving services. These plans were created using quantitative and qualitative data from the Data Wise process, collaboration between the zone and school, and observations. These plans were evaluated weekly to determine effectiveness and progress being made toward the goal. Schools and zones received weekly updates from coaches identifying areas of focus and the teachers who had received individualized coaching services. Upon completion of the six weeks, schools received a sustainability plan with identified owners of strategies to ensure efforts were carried out after the coaches were no longer present in the building. Coaching teams worked to identify teacher leaders in the building to become the owners of specific efforts such as SIOP, backwards lesson design and rigor.

The entire collaboration process was monitored by an outside consulting group. Work was done to align inter-rater reliability between coaching observers and administration, creation of model instruments to align with district initiatives and North Carolina standards, and follow-up observations to ensure effectiveness of coaching and sustainability follow-through.

In addition, we are using a School Improvement Grant (SIG) to help raise student achievement and the graduation rate at West Mecklenburg High. The \$3.3 million grant will be used over three years to implement the transformation model in which a targeted assistance team provides coaching to raise teacher effectiveness. In addition, the team has a social worker who works primarily with students in the McKinney-Vento program but also supports the SIG team and students in general. ARRA money was used to hire two additional McKinney-Vento social workers to serve students at Walter G. Byers and Druid Hills elementary schools and Hawthorne High.

#### Results:

With the help of the coaching team, CMS narrowed the achievement gap in the affected schools. As a result, the district was removed from the LEA Improvement sanction.

#### Next Steps:

The targeted assistance model is now being used to support Title I schools in the Central Zone. Seventeen schools are receiving services this school year.

#### Initiative:

### **Community Engagement**

#### Description:

As schools and administrators gain greater authority over site-based decisions, community involvement and engagement become an increasingly important component of school-wide success. During the past five years, CMS has dedicated significant resources to building community involvement. The district also recognizes that schools with high poverty levels typically require different resources than schools that serve neighborhoods with an abundance of resources. Efforts include significantly increased faith and business partnerships, the launch of Parent University, the growth of the School Mates program, the redesign of the district's Web site to increase its use, the strengthening of Parent Teacher Associations, and increased usage of the Connect-ED system to keep students' families informed about their schools.

*LaTarzja Henry and Ann Clark oversee this initiative.*

#### Status:

The community-engagement efforts employed by the district in the past five years have been successful and continue to gain momentum. CMS has 627 business and community partners supporting academic achievement and professional development. Volunteer leaders continue to provide literacy training to community volunteers throughout the district. This will empower the

community to better serve our students. Each semester, Parent University offers more than 50 free workshop topics to families to help them become full partners in their children's education. These workshops are held in schools, houses of worship, neighborhood centers, malls, businesses, Park and Recreation centers, apartment complexes and other locations throughout Mecklenburg County.

#### Results:

Several of the community-involvement initiatives have produced significant results. Connect-ED usage was up last school year with community outreach accounting for more than 80 percent of the messages sent. Faith-based partnerships have grown from 78 in 2006 to more than 200, with nearly all schools benefiting from a new partnership or partnerships. About 40 new business partnerships have been formed in the past year. Since the program began in fall 2008, more than 39,000 individuals have participated in Parent University workshops, activities and events. In 2009-2010, the Family and Community Services/Parent University Department participated in nearly 90 community events, festivals, fairs and information gatherings to share information and resources with parents to increase student achievement and school success during the year. Nearly \$1 million has been raised from grants, foundations and businesses to support Parent University since its inception.

#### Next Steps:

Community engagement initiatives already begun will continue to be strengthened and enhanced during the coming months.

#### Initiative:

### **Parent University**

#### Description:

Parent University is a community collaborative, led by CMS, to empower parents to become full partners in their children's education. The program offers free workshops, resources and activities to engage and empower parents to become involved at home and at school.

Each semester, Parent University offers more than 50 workshop topics nearly 200 times throughout Mecklenburg County. Most of the workshops focus on key academic areas including helping with reading, math, science, technology, and homework; assisting with transitioning to various school levels; strengthening communication between home and school; navigating through the high school process; preparing for the End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests and preparing for college. Specific workshops were developed and expanded to support the district's goal of increasing the graduation rate in CMS.

Many of the workshops are also offered in Spanish through bilingual presenters or with interpreters. Each semester, a Family Fun and Information Day is offered to provide free opportunities to families. A partnership with the Arts and Science Council on April 9 will provide an opportunity for families to enjoy the uptown arts venues.

*Jerri Haigler, executive director of Family and Community Services/Parent University, oversees this initiative.*

#### Status:

Since the launch of Parent University in fall 2008, the program has had a tremendous impact on the community and on family engagement in our schools. More than 400 volunteers have supported the program as presenters, Parent University Advisory Committee members, Curriculum Review and Development Committee members and other volunteer roles. Parent University seeks to make the offerings accessible and convenient for parents. Workshops are offered in the evening and on weekends in schools, public libraries, houses of worship, businesses, neighborhood centers, malls and other locations.

Parent University partners with agencies and organizations throughout Mecklenburg County to strengthen training for families. More than 25 curriculum partners work with Parent University to provide resources and trainings. The program partners with various agencies to offer regular weekly or monthly trainings for parents in English and Spanish.

#### Results:

Since the program launched in 2008, more than 39,000 have been impacted by the free workshops, events, and activities. More than 26,000 of that number were workshop participants. The program is certainly reaching the underserved parents in CMS with more than 16,000 of the 26,000 participants having children in CMS' Title I schools. Based on information from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Institute for Social Capital, 83 percent of the participants in 2009-2010 were female, 57 percent were African American, 19 percent were Hispanic, and 40 percent reported an income level below \$25,000. Parent University staff members have worked hard to target specific neighborhoods, partner agencies, and Title I schools to ensure that our underserved population of parents is being reached.

As a result of the workshops and the program, there has been an increase in parent-teacher conference participation and a rise in End-of-Grade and End-of-Course scores in schools where the workshops were offered.

The Family and Community Services department has developed and offered a professional development program focused on *“making your school and classroom warm, friendly, and inviting for families.”* This workshop has been offered at the Summer Teachers Institute, Bright Beginnings trainings, and is being rolled out in the zones.

Since the Parent University program began, nearly \$1 million has been raised to support the operating budget of Parent University. The support has been provided through foundations, grants and businesses.

#### Next Steps:

Parent University will continue to expand its offerings to additional venues and will offer more online courses for parents. In addition, the program will increase the number of courses that focus on key academic areas (elementary, middle and high reading/math/science/writing), as well as focusing on helping children learn. The next phase of the evaluation process with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Institute for Social Capital will involve looking at the test scores and attendance rates of students whose parents have attended Parent University courses.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Continuing to administer and strengthen the district's accountability system to monitor overall trends and measure individual school performance

#### Initiative:

### **Performance management**

#### Description:

Performance management has launched two new data tools: Managing for Performance portals and a new formative assessment system. Teacher, principal and superintendent portals are in production across the district. Formative assessments are being used in math and reading in grades PreK – 8; science in grades five and eight English I, Biology, U.S. History, Civics and Economics, and Algebra I. We have also included district-wide professional development for all Performance Management Data Tools through Data Wise training.

The Office of Accountability reorganized the performance management staff. An executive director, a director of data tools, five professional development staff, a portal programmer, a coordinator and an analyst make up the team.

*Robert Avossa and Lynne Tingle, executive director of Performance Management, are owners of performance management.*

#### Status:

Managing for Performance data portals were initially funded through a \$4.8 million grant awarded to CMS by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and the Broad Foundation. Managing for Performance teacher, principal and superintendent portals are in production across the district. In September 2010, local funds were allocated to continue work (e.g. additional reports and enhancements) on the Managing for Performance portals. Recruiting agencies were contacted in an effort to locate three individuals for one-year contracts with Microsoft SQL Server SSIS, SSRS and SharePoint experience. The teacher portal launched Aug. 25, the first day of school. The principal portal launched Nov. 1. The superintendent portal launched Nov. 23. The Managing for Performance portal webpages include: 1) a home page with announcements, student data, top 10 tardies for the week, high-risk summary, weekly attendance, formative assessment results and a calendar; 2) My Instructional Groups, where principals can form their own groups that will populate data; 3) My Students or School Roster with drill-down capabilities on every student, group performance, and group makeup by race and gender; and (4) My Reports, which includes reports that can be downloaded into Excel or printed in pdf format.

#### Results:

Through January, the portals were accessed by 5,205 distinct users: 4,337 were teachers, 153 principals and 159 assistant principals. The remainder of users were facilitators and district staff. As training has increased, so have the usage numbers. In January, the portals were accessed 16,475 times, with an average of 633 hits per day, by 2,806 distinct users.

The new formative-assessment system, which uses an online platform called Thinkgate, began at the start of the 2010-2011 school year. Its purpose is to guide curriculum and instruction decisions and to identify remediation needs. Thinkgate provides assessment results, item information and student-level key indicators to teachers, principals, zone superintendents and central office staff. The items used for the district formatives are professionally written and aligned with CMS curriculum needs and matched to objectives outlined in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. The Thinkgate platform is also used for common assessments, classroom assessments and progress monitoring.

Training for formative assessments and Managing for Performance began in July 2010. It started with principals, then school-based facilitators, then zone-level staff. In all district professional development sessions, regardless of the main focus, Data Wise elements and information about formative assessments and the portals were/are integrated into the training. School-level, site-specific trainings have begun around differentiated needs of school leaders and/or Data Wise teams as deemed appropriate by the principal. From July 2010 to January 2011, more than 3,000 contacts were made through these communication and training venues.

#### Next Steps:

The Performance Management Charter and two of five Data Tools tactics were approved by the CMS Project Management Oversight Committee on June 28, 2010; the remaining three Performance Management Data Tools tactics were finalized and presented to Executive Staff on Oct. 25, 2010.

**Initiative:**

**Formative Assessment System**

**Description:**

As an integral part of performance management in *Strategic Plan 2014*, the Office of Accountability purchased a state-of-the-art local assessment online platform and items for district assessments that are aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and the teaching and learning philosophies of the district. There is a direct benefit to instruction because teachers and principals receive individualized student information throughout the school year so they can quickly discern their students' strengths and deficiencies. Use of the data results in more efficient classroom management and supports accurate differentiated instruction. The platform has online capability for testing and scanning options. School and district office staff can see results immediately at the classroom, school and district levels. We are testing all items used in the district assessments to determine which are functioning appropriately.

CMS staff can download results and reports to populate into our data warehouse for in-house analyses. The new online platform has made internal processes more efficient by speeding up our ability to identify schools that haven't completed testing, providing real-time results and providing schools with the ability to download, manipulate and analyze their own data.

*Robert Avossa and Lynne Tingle are owners of the Formative Assessment System. Farrah Martin-Santonato, director of the Data Tools team, is the manager.*

**Status:**

The new platform was available to schools in August 2010. Leading up to the new assessment platform, during the 2008-2009 school year, the Office of Accountability assembled a 40-person formative assessment steering committee of CMS employees. This committee's work ultimately led to the selection of Thinkgate as the new online assessment system in CMS. Thinkgate sub-contracted with Measurement Incorporated to write items at varying levels of rigor and across objectives and skills. Those items were, and continue to be, downloaded into the Thinkgate system. On an ongoing basis, a team from CMS builds assessments, analyzes items and ensures that the information provided is being used in the classroom appropriately. New assessments were provided for pre-K – eighth grades in reading and math; fifth and eighth grades in science, and the tested End-of-Course subjects (English 1, Algebra 1, U.S. History, Civics and Economics and Biology).

**Results:**

The following data indicate a consistent increase in use of the platform for both district- and school-level tests.

<b>Formative Assessments and Thinkgate Summaries</b>	<b>September 2010 Total</b>	<b>January 2011 Total</b>
<b>Number of district tests created</b>	56	148
<b>Number of classroom and common assessments created by teachers</b>	442	3,028
<b>Number of district assessments taken</b>	36,784	457,642
<b>Number of classroom tests taken</b>	34	26,445
<b>Total Thinkgate transactions</b>	152,679	1,425,634
<b>Total number of Thinkgate reports created</b>	6,493	436,713

#### Next Steps:

The 2010-2011 training will focus on using the tools and translating the data into effective teaching and learning in the classroom. Data will be collected on how useful the systems are to school-level staff and to what extent data from the tools is being used to drive instructional decisions.

#### Initiative:

### Summative Assessments

#### Description:

CMS is developing objective measures of student performance this year in 52 areas that are not tested by the state. These tests will provide information on student performance that CMS can use to improve instruction and help establish pay for performance. The tests are being developed using items purchased from an item vendor. All items are being vetted with the curriculum specialist in the associated areas prior to field testing. As the initiative moves forward, other courses and areas will be included. Ultimately, almost all classes taught in CMS will have an objective summative measure of student performance. Certain courses will be unique enough and have low enough enrollment that it would not be cost effective to develop a district assessment, especially if the teacher also teaches other courses that have district assessments.

*This initiative is owned by Robert Avossa and is managed by Christopher Cobitz, executive director of state and federal programs.*

#### Status:

Items for the summative tests are being delivered and reviewed. Based on the contract with the item vendor and the performance of the vendor, there will be pilot tests for K-8 social studies, K-4 science, 6 and 7 science, K-2 math, K-2 reading, English III and IV, all high school Social Studies electives, and a wide variety of high school science and math electives this spring. We will use this year's testing as a pilot to ensure equity in final grades for high school students (so all students this year are graded on the same tests) and provide feedback to teachers and schools on the implementation of the curriculum in the non-tested areas.

#### Results:

This initiative has already had a major impact on instruction in the district. Teachers have begun to focus on the course objectives as defined in either the North Carolina Standard Course of Study or those approved by CMS for local courses.

#### Next Steps:

The new summative assessments will be field tested in March with a pilot test in May and June. The results will be shared with schools for use in instructional planning for the 2011-2012 school year. Work has begun on the summative assessments for performing arts, visual arts and healthful living curricula. We expect to launch those tests in the 2011-2012 school year.

#### Initiative:

### School Progress Reports

#### Description:

In compliance with policy ADA, the School Progress Reports were modified for the 2009-2010 school year. We are now modifying them to align with *Strategic Plan 2014*. The reports are part of the district's implementation of policy AE, the local accountability system. These reports are available electronically to the public via the CMS website.

*This initiative is owned by Robert Avossa and managed by Christopher Cobitz, executive director of state and federal programs.*

**Status:**

The 2009-2010 School Progress Reports were made available electronically in December of 2010. These reports, like all previous versions, aligned with *Strategic Plan 2010*. This year, additional measures were added in compliance with policy ADA, including a return on investment measure, detailed staffing breakdowns, expenditures per pupil and a measure of staff opinion on the school facility. We are now undertaking a comprehensive review of the measures to align the 2010-2011 reports with the new strategic plan.

**Results:**

Several adjustments have been identified to improve the reports' usefulness. We expect that the 2010-2011 reports will be closely aligned with the 2014 plan and provide a better measure of school quality.

**Next Steps:**

A new template will be developed and vetted with the executive staff and principals. Work is scheduled to begin in March to finalize the template and data needs for a timely implementation of the 2010-2011 reports.

**Initiative:**

**School Quality Review**

**Description:**

The School Quality Review (SQR) program is designed to develop a clear picture of the quality of education provided in each CMS school and establish a clear view of each school's strengths, areas of development, challenges and successes. The framework for SQR was designed to offer a rigorous process that combines third-party evaluation with the development of capacity within CMS. Schools are evaluated using a rubric that assesses achievement, curriculum, teaching and learning, leadership and management, the learning environment and parental involvement. To build internal capacity through this process, CMS has employed the expertise of Cambridge Education to provide training and technical assistance as needed.

*Robert Avossa oversees this initiative. Jerry Winklejohn, director of school improvement, manages the implementation of this effort.*

**Status:**

We reviewed 42 schools in 2007-2008, 47 schools in 2008-2009, 26 schools in 2009-2010 and 45 schools in October. Forty-five additional schools were reviewed by February 2011. By the end of the 2010-2011 school year, every school in the district will have received a review except for the two new high schools, Rocky River and Hough. In partnership with Cambridge Education, 16 administrators were trained in 2010-2011 to be reviewers.

**Results:**

By March 1, CMS had conducted 205 school reviews with 15 schools being reviewed twice and one school reviewed three times. Also, 150 administrators have been trained as reviewers. The results of those reviewed revealed a consistent need for professional development in the areas of rigor, differentiation and use of data to drive instruction. This information has led us to continue to focus our professional development on rigor and differentiation and to implement the Data Wise process. This process trains a data inquiry team at each school to use appropriate data in the collaborative development and implementation of a school-improvement action plan. We have adjusted the rubric to identify how well a school uses data to assess the effectiveness of its professional learning community. The results have also led us to embed environmental indicators within the rubric's criteria.

**Next Steps:**

The most recent results indicate a need for school support after a review. We continue to develop models that will assist schools in converting the review's recommendations into an

effective school-improvement plan. Also, we intend to expand school options to offer shorter reviews and post-review work sessions to meet different schools' needs.

Initiative:

### **School Improvement Plan Modifications**

Description:

The staff is working to make the mandated School Improvement Plans more useful and more closely aligned with Board policies and other district initiatives (such as Managing for Performance and Data Wise). The performance management team has developed an online tool that puts data into the School Improvement Plan template. This makes it easier for schools, and ultimately should help schools move from compliance with the plans to using them to drive improvement. An addition to the plans is a requirement to address the cost and source of funds for each strategy included in the plan.

*This initiative is owned by Christopher Cobitz, executive director of state and federal programs, and managed by Jerry Winkeljohn, director of school improvement.*

Status:

We have reviewed school-improvement plans from across the nation and other districts within North Carolina and are preparing a template as the basis for additional discussion.

Results:

A group of principals has reviewed some possible modifications and provided input.

Next Steps:

A new template will be developed and vetted with the executive staff, principals and the Board of Education. Training in how to develop the plan will be linked to our Data Wise initiative, as it is our method of choice for using data to improve instruction.

Initiative:

### **Data Quality Initiative**

Description:

To improve the CMS graduation rate, accurate data must be available to schools. We have initiated a data-quality initiative which regularly checks available data against state and local policies. A summary of the results is sent to zone superintendents, and the full list of issues given to each school so it can investigate and resolve them. This initiative expands, and builds upon, the lessons we have learned from auditing dropout reports.

*This initiative is owned by Ann Clark and is managed by Christopher Cobitz, executive director of state and federal programs.*

Status:

We have used an existing staff position to identify issues and provide meaningful reports. Prior to the winter break, the first report was sent to schools to validate transfer records. Recently, a second report identifying students who will likely count as non-participants for Adequate Yearly Progress purposes was sent to schools for action. We are developing three more reports on missing data elements, students in the wrong grade level and inappropriate course coding to help schools resolve these issues.

Results:

Many student records were updated to reflect the correct transfer status of the students. Other records have been updated to correct missing test records and course scheduling. The records now being identified have a direct impact on student grade level, high school graduation rate and outcomes for the students themselves.

#### Next Steps:

As the initiative progresses, we expect the backlog of data issues to decrease. When the number has stabilized, we will create web-based reports that will be available to schools and zone offices in real time, giving schools the opportunity to make corrections as the issues arise, rather than waiting for an audit.

#### Initiative:

### **Kronos Time and Attendance (MyTime)**

#### Description:

CMS is replacing our manual, paper-based timekeeping system with an electronic system called MyTime. This state-of-the-art system will help CMS eliminate manual data entry of employee time worked, reduce the time required to process payroll and cut the cost of processing payroll.

MyTime will manage time and attendance district-wide. This system will interface with the Lawson Human Capital Management system (Human Resources and payroll), providing data for payroll and leave management.

The electronic timekeeping system is the final component of CMS' multi-year effort to automate our HR-payroll functions. Our current goal is to become fully operational with electronic timekeeping for all non-exempt employees during 2011.

MyTime will allow CMS to:

- Control labor costs with a consistent application of work and pay rules
- Minimize compliance risks by enforcing and tracking complex compliance requirements, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Improve workforce productivity by reducing manual and time-consuming administrative tasks
- Eliminate the possibility of keying errors that cause mistakes in employee paychecks

Employees using the electronic timekeeping system will now be able to view their current leave-accrual balances, work schedules and hours worked on a real-time basis.

*Hugh Hattabaugh oversees this initiative. Kay Hall, director of business systems, manages this effort in the district.*

#### Status:

Phase I included planning, assessing, designing, building and testing for Auxiliary Services non-exempt staff. Implementation occurred Feb. 7 for approximately 2,500 employees. Design work has already begun on phase 2, which will cover all non-exempt staff in schools and departments.

Fair Labor Standards Act workshops have been conducted for all principals and managers to ensure that CMS continues to comply with these requirements.

#### Results:

To date, 370 Kronos terminals have been installed district-wide and training for Auxiliary Services staff has been completed. Employee meetings were held to inform staff of the new process and employees were enrolled in the MyTime system during these meetings.

The Business Systems Help Desk staff has been trained and will support this initiative.

#### Next Steps:

Training for department payroll reviewers and approvers is scheduled for the week of March 14. Departments can go online the week of March 21 to begin using the new system.

Secondary schools are scheduled for a May 2 launch and elementary schools will follow on May 16. This will complete the implementation for all non-exempt staff.

**Initiative:**

**CMS Employee Self-Service**

**Description:**

CMS Employee Self-Service is a new online system that allows employees to manage personal information in the Human Resources/Payroll portal. Employees can view electronic pay advices, change federal/state tax withholdings, check leave balances, change address and/or phone number and manage bank account and direct-deposit information.

In January, electronic W-2 forms were also made available to employees. Employees can print copies of current and previous W-2s.

*Hugh Hattabaugh oversees this initiative. Kay Hall, director of Business Systems, manages this effort.*

**Status:**

Employee Self-Service was launched for all employees in November 2010. Employees may access the system anywhere the Internet is available.

**Results:**

By giving employees the ability to manage their personal information, CMS is saving money on labor and resources. Printing costs are also reduced.

**Next Steps:**

Additional features such as tracking of education, certification, competencies and credentials for certified and non-certified staff may be added in the 2011-2012 school year. Organizational charts, personal profiles, as well as a CMS phone book will also be considered.

**STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Emphasizing and encouraging highly effective staffing and relevant professional development**

**Initiative:**

**Strategic Staffing**

**Description:**

Strategic Staffing is a school-turnaround strategy designed to place strong leaders in low-performing schools. Strategic Staffing principals can bring with them an assistant principal, an academic facilitator and a team of five teachers. These principals can select from among the most effective teachers/staff throughout the district. To be eligible for Strategic Staffing, principals/teachers must have at least a .04 average in student achievement growth, which is substantially more than a year's growth in a year's time.

Strategic Staffing is based on five tenets:

1. To turn around a low-performing school, a great leader is needed, a principal with a proven track record of success in increasing student achievement. Also, great teachers will not go to a troubled school without a great leader as principal.
2. A team needs to go to the school so a person is not alone in taking on this challenging assignment; there is strength and support in numbers.
3. Staff members who are disruptive, not supportive of reform and/or are not strong performers need to be removed from the school.
4. Principals must be given the time, authority and flexibility to reform the school.

5. Strategic Staffing also takes into consideration that not all job assignments are equal in difficulty and compensation should be varied to match.

*Ann Clark oversees the Strategic Staffing initiative.*

**Status:**

Currently, we have 24 Strategic Staffing schools in the district. The first cohort of seven Strategic Staffing principals assumed their leadership responsibilities at the start of the 2008-2009 school year. The second cohort of seven principals was announced in February 2009. Based on feedback from the first cohort, this second group of Strategic Staffing principals assumed their new leadership responsibilities a few weeks later in March. The third cohort of six schools was identified in February 2010 and principals assumed leadership in March 2010. The fourth cohort of four schools was announced in January 2011.

**Results:**

Thirteen of the 14 schools with Strategic Staffing showed substantial gains on state tests, ranging from five- to nine-point increases in student proficiency over the previous year. Reading scores improved at 13 of the 14 schools. Additionally, scores in math increased at 12 out of 14 schools. Science scores improved at all 14 schools. One school has gained more than 26 percentage points in overall scores in two years of Strategic Staffing.

**Next Steps:**

Cohort 3 of Strategic Staffing was announced in February 2010. Three elementary principals in Cohort 3 of Strategic Staffing worked with Education Resource Strategies (ERS) to develop a site-based staffing model. As we refine the model, we have found that some schools, particularly those with new leaders, may not need the full Strategic Staffing design. This has led to the development of a hybrid Strategic-Staffing model, where the present principal remains and is given the same staffing benefits, support and resource opportunities as principals in the full Strategic-Staffing model. We are also exploring a hybrid model with New Leaders for New Schools and Teach for America. Cohort 4 of Strategic Staffing is under way with four schools identified and several additional schools to be named by July 2011.

**Initiative:**

**Teaching Camps**

**Description:**

Teaching camps are being developed by the Human Resources Department as part of *Strategic Plan 2014* key strategy 1.1.3, “base teacher recruitment and selection on effectiveness, not qualifications.” The teaching camps will allow prospective teachers the opportunity to demonstrate teaching and problem-solving skills in front of a selection panel. This will enable district staff to identify and place into the hiring pool teachers who possess strong teaching and leadership skills. The selection panel (up to six members) will be comprised of various CMS employees, including zone staff, master teachers, principals and Human Resources staff.

*Hugh Hattabaugh and Ann Clark oversee this initiative. Allen Knight worked on this initiative as part of his project for the Aspiring Leaders Program.*

**Status:**

Teaching camps will help the district shift from traditional hiring practices to hiring teachers based on effectiveness. The initial design of the teaching camp initiative includes a mini-lesson, essay, role play, panel interview and evaluation of a lesson plan. It will begin in spring 2011.

**Results:**

We are in the initial design phase of this program.

**Next Steps:**

The Human Resources Department is researching other models and is putting in place systems, resources and structures to support this new initiative. The district will pilot this initiative with

elementary candidates as well as with candidates who are recruited through the new TEACH Charlotte program.

Initiative:

### **TEACH Charlotte**

Description:

The New Teacher Project (TNTP) is a national nonprofit that partners with school districts, state education agencies and charter schools to target acute human capital challenges. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is partnering with TNTP to recruit top candidates to teach in high-need subjects such as math, science, Exceptional Children and foreign languages.

TNTP and CMS are creating a comprehensive program, known as TEACH Charlotte, which will provide a pipeline of effective teachers from nontraditional backgrounds, including mid-career professionals and recent college graduates. Participants will complete requirements during their first year of teaching to earn their permanent North Carolina licensure.

*Hugh Hattabaugh and Ann Clark oversee this initiative.*

Status:

TNTP will recruit, select, train and certify between 75-100 new teachers each year to work in CMS schools. TNTP will utilize a rigorous selection process to identify individuals with strong content knowledge, verbal ability and a record of exceptional achievement. Candidates will attend a five- to six-week training program during which participants will be exposed to TNTP's strategies for effective teaching while teaching in summer school and engaging in intensive professional development sessions.

Results:

We are in the initial design phase of this program.

Next Steps:

TNTP will collect data on classroom and program performance, and only recommend participants who demonstrate effectiveness in the classroom for certification.

Initiative:

### **Professional Development Plan**

Description:

A significant tenet of managed performance/empowerment is an organization's ability to build the professional capacity of its highly qualified staff. Professional development plays a key role. The overarching goal of CMS' Teacher Professional Development Department is to provide high-quality, data-driven, research-based professional development that is tailored to the particular needs of teachers (who are grouped by experience, level, subject, specialty, etc.). Professional development sessions allow teachers to return to the field after each session, implement their new knowledge and return again to their professional group to reflect, analyze and revise in preparation for continued implementation. These designed practice-and-reflection sessions provide meaningful connections between theory and practice.

*Ann Clark oversees this initiative. Barbara Ann Temple, director of Teacher Professional Development, manages this effort.*

Status:

Under managed performance/empowerment, the district emphasizes building capacity at the individual teacher/class level. Professional development must be targeted according to needs that are identified through accurate analysis of student-achievement data. Courses and follow-up must be strategic and deliverable.

#### Results:

The CMS Summer Teacher Conference continues to be one of the largest professional development initiatives. The 2010 Summer Teacher Conference served more than 2,000 teachers and had a 5 percent increase in teacher attendance and a 10 percent increase in course offerings during the 2009 conference.

#### Next Steps:

The 2011 Summer Teacher Conference will provide CMS teachers with numerous professional development opportunities and will focus on the new North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process. Courses offered will be aligned with one or more of North Carolina's teaching standards, which call for teachers to:

- I. Demonstrate leadership
- II. Establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students
- III. Know the content they teach
- IV. Facilitate learning for their students
- V. Reflect on their practice

During the 2010-2011 school year, Teacher Professional Development has two main goals directly aligned with *Strategic Plan 2014*: 1) Teach teachers how to analyze both qualitative and quantitative data and to use that data to improve, enhance and/or remediate instruction effectively and 2) Teach teachers how to differentiate instruction in four key areas – content, product, process and learning environment. Teacher Professional Development is part of the work team for six *Strategic Plan 2014* tactic plans: Differentiation Academy, Instructional Coaching Models, Rigor, School Quality Review, Teacher Effectiveness and Virtual Learning.

#### Initiative:

#### **New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP)**

#### Description:

The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) provides teachers with three 10-hour New Teacher Academies (NTAs) targeting four tasks: solidifying the basics for effective teaching, professional networking opportunities, wellness curriculum courses, and on-the-job professional development learning labs to support beginning teachers.

*Ann Clark oversees this initiative. Barbara Ann Temple, director of Teacher Professional Development, manages this effort.*

#### Status:

In 2010-2011, the NTIP added an additional New Teacher Academy (NTA III). Development is under way of a self-directed course to begin in the fall of the 2011-2012 school year. Each academy is supported by the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Process standards. Further training and development is under way for professional development master teacher instructors preparing new courses for the wellness strand. This year, we added a mentor/mentee audience for visits to a master teacher classroom. NTIP participants are being encouraged to participate in these visits along with their mentors to facilitate deeper and continuous support long after the actual visit.

#### Results:

In 2010-2011, the NTIP added 235 PreK-12 beginning teachers with five or fewer years of experience. The current enrollment is about 788 new teachers. The program continues to use a two-day, all-inclusive course that allows us to use the master teacher learning labs as part of the academies and to hold teachers accountable for implementing new strategies in their classrooms. Participation in the academies has grown to 402 in the 2010-2011 school year.

#### Next Steps:

Beginning in October 2011, a self-directed course will be offered as well as additional wellness courses. The NTIP Wiki site, which debuted in 2010, will be upgraded to include resources for administrators and additional resources.

#### Initiative:

### **Professional Development Master Teacher (PDMT)**

#### Description:

The Professional Development Master Teacher Initiative promotes effective teaching by strengthening pedagogy and content using laboratory-based professional development. This initiative is designed to identify Professional Development Master Teachers who use best instructional practices and to have them share their expertise with other teachers.

*Ann Clark oversees this initiative. Barbara Ann Temple, director of Teacher Professional Development, manages this effort.*

#### Status:

CMS uses the classrooms of 54 master teachers at 43 schools as learning labs. This allows new and experienced teachers to see instructional strategies they've studied used in a classroom. Teachers also visit learning labs individually through the New Teacher Induction Program or at the recommendation of an administrator. Teachers who use the lab develop at least one new lesson plan based on the experience. The master teacher analyzes instructional planning and student work samples provided by the visiting teacher. Additional support for the visiting teacher is provided by mentors, improvement coaches and Lateral Entry Advancement Program staff. Fourteen of the master teachers also design and teach other courses for professional development.

#### Results:

The learning labs have been visited by 966 CMS teachers during the first semester of this year. Reaction has been positive, with 94 percent saying the lab visit was worthwhile. To date, 2,395 teachers have used learning labs.

#### Next Steps:

Teacher Professional Development plans to continue to increase utilization of the learning labs and to increase the number of online and face-to-face professional development courses designed and delivered by master teachers.

#### Initiative:

### **Charlotte Teachers Institute**

#### Description:

CTI, a partnership of UNC Charlotte, Davidson College and CMS, offers high quality, intensive professional development for public school teachers. CTI strengthens teaching and learning in Charlotte's public schools by improving teacher effectiveness and increasing teacher retention. CTI adheres to an evidence-based model begun at Yale 30 years ago. Through seminars, led by college/university faculty, teachers learn new content, work collaboratively with other teachers, and develop new curricula for their students and teachers across the country. Participating teachers receive continuing-education credits and a stipend. CTI also engages teachers and the Charlotte community at large in conversations about issues of diversity and social responsibility. CTI works with 65 schools, including all Strategically Staffed schools, employing 3,500 teachers and educating 59,000 students.

*Ann Clark oversees this initiative in the district. Molly Shaw, CTI founding director, reports to CMS, Davidson College and UNC Charlotte.*

#### Status:

Since launching in 2009, CTI has doubled its annual programming and made great strides in providing professional development opportunities for CMS teachers and garnering support from national and local community partners and foundations.

#### Results:

CTI has conducted a total of 4,500 hours of professional-development seminars for more than 120 CMS teachers who have in turn taught more than 16,000 CMS students in grades K-12. CTI has also coordinated local teachers' involvement in summer seminars at Yale University, boosting CTI's total professional development contribution to more than 5,000 hours. In 2010, 91 educators, teaching more than 12,000 students, completed CTI seminars at Davidson College, UNC Charlotte and the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art. Each teacher developed a curriculum unit for his/her classrooms, and together the cohort plans to share their curricula with more than 250 additional CMS teachers.

Additionally, with support from national and local foundations, CTI worked with community partners to present *Exploding Canons* interdisciplinary events for the public. The Bechtler Museum of Modern Art and Charlotte Symphony partnered with CTI for *Exploding Canons: The Planets in Outer Space and Beyond* which drew 250 people, including 125 CMS teachers; and the North Carolina Dance Theatre, Jerald Melberg Gallery, the Mint Museums and the Gantt Center for African American Culture + Art joined CTI in presenting *Exploding Canons: The Unexpected Impact of Romare Bearden* which was attended by more than 200 people, including 100 CMS teachers.

CTI has earned grants totaling \$365,000, including \$200,000 from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations based in Jacksonville, Fla. Additionally, The League of Teachers Institutes® continues to grow, with a presence now in Charlotte, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pa., New Haven, Conn., and New Castle, Del. The President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology recently recognized the benefits of teachers' institutes, citing them as useful resources for bridging gaps between public schools and the professional science, technology, engineering and math community.

#### Next Steps:

The Institute will enroll 100 teachers in its 2011 fall seminars. These eight seminars (four at UNC Charlotte, two at Davidson College, one at The Mint Museum and one at the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art) will cover the following topics: "The Chemistry That Surrounds Us," "States and Nations," "The Art and Life of Romare Bearden," "Math through Popular Culture," "The Body and Identity at the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art," "The Playful Response to Stories," "Exploring Big Questions," and "Sports and Physics." Additionally, CTI will host special events (open to all teachers in the district).

These will include new *Exploding Canons* presentations and a personalized tour and facilitated discussion for more than 100 CMS teachers of Discovery Place's "Race: Are We So Different?" exhibit. Finally, in 2011-2012, CTI will continue to work on its comprehensive program evaluation plan. CTI will launch the first phase of the plan, a qualitative study that will include observation of CTI seminars, interviews with teachers and CMS classroom observations.

#### Initiative:

### **Leadership Development**

#### Description:

Building leadership is one of the most critical issues facing any public school district. CMS has three programs focused on increasing leadership capacity throughout the district: New Leaders

for New Schools, Leaders for Tomorrow and Aspiring Leaders. The first of these programs is the partnership between New Leaders for New Schools (NLNS) and the district. This six-year partnership aims to recruit, select, train and support more than 50 talented and motivated new principals to lead high-need schools within the district.

The second is the district's Leaders for Tomorrow program. Founded as a partnership between CMS and Winthrop University, this initiative aims to develop select teachers, counselors and other front-line educators as future principals. This program began in the fall of 2008 with a cohort of 25 participants. Grant funding of \$75,000 from Advantage Carolina and a business-backed fund of \$20,000 from Allen Tate Realtors aided in cutting the cost of tuition for participants, who are working to earn a master's degree in educational leadership and be ready for potential administrative positions. Participants agree to remain in the district for a minimum of three years.

The third effort is the Aspiring Leaders program, in partnership with Teach For America (TFA), launched to offer a unique opportunity for teachers interested in a career in school or district leadership. This program began in summer of 2010 with a \$75,000 grant from the Wachovia Wells Fargo Foundation. The program begins with an individualized, seven-week fellowship with a member of CMS' executive staff, followed by school year leadership projects and continued mentoring and leadership training. The Aspiring Leaders program reaches teachers as they make critical career decisions and provides them with the opportunities and skills to help them grow and develop as leaders in education. The goal of the program is to increase retention of high-performing teachers within CMS and education.

*Ann Clark oversees the district's leadership development efforts. Rashidah Lopez Morgan, director of succession planning and talent development, manages the Aspiring Leaders program.*

#### Status:

The first cohort of New Leaders was comprised of nine resident principals placed in Strategic Staffing schools. The applicant process is under way for the second cohort.

Leaders for Tomorrow: The application process begins with CMS administrators nominating educators with strong leadership potential. Those recommended are encouraged to apply. Twenty-four candidates were selected for cohort 2 and will complete the program in May 2011. Funding from MeckEd has helped defray the cost of the program for candidates in cohort 2.

A dozen high-performing TFA corps members with a record of classroom success made up the first Aspiring Leaders cohort in 2010-2011. Participants will complete the program in June 2011. The application process is under way for the second cohort.

#### Results:

The New Leaders and Leaders for Tomorrow initiatives had the first cohorts completing program requirements in May 2010. CMS will potentially have 31 principal or assistant principal candidates ready to assume critical leadership roles in the district. Thus far, three New Leader resident principals and one Leader for Tomorrow have received principal appointments.

Three members of the inaugural Aspiring Leaders cohort have transitioned from the classroom to positions within the Office of Accountability, Communications and Strategic Planning and Project Management. Also, 92 percent of participants said they were more likely or significantly more likely to remain in the district longer than their peers.

#### Next Steps:

New Leaders for New Schools: 11 resident principals for cohort 2 will participate in an intensive summer training followed by a yearlong, full-time, paid residency in a leadership position within a CMS school with a carefully selected mentor principal.

Leaders for Tomorrow: The Year 2 cohort of participants began a summer internship in 2010, followed by a year-long internship during the 2010-2011 school year. Year 3 cohort participants began coursework during summer 2010.

Aspiring Leaders: The 2011-2012 cohort will consist of 12 teachers. The fellowship will include job shadowing, coaching, leadership workshops and a short-term change project.

#### Initiative:

### **SearchSoft Applicant Tracking System**

#### Description:

The SearchSoft Applicant Tracking System (ATS), now called MyApp 2.0, is a new online application tool for job applicants.

The new system allows CMS to:

- Identify highly qualified teachers
- Interface with Gallup Teacher Insight assessment for teacher candidates
- Accelerate the time to hire
- Maximize the district's ability to hire the best candidates in the pool and
- Eliminate unnecessary paper from the recruitment and hiring process

Principals and hiring managers are able to complete online forms to post vacancies and make hiring recommendations. Applicants' credentials are also available online for review prior to interviews. E-mail notifications are sent to principals and hiring managers when vacancies are posted and the recommended candidate accepts the position.

New hires receive e-mail notification with access to complete documents online to expedite the new hire process.

*Hugh Hattabaugh oversees this initiative and Jan Richardson, director of Human Resources Information System, is the project manager.*

#### Status:

MyApp 2.0 went live Oct. 5. Applications completed in the past 12 months were converted from the current MyApp system to MyApp 2.0.

#### Results:

As of Jan. 31, more than 5,000 internal and external candidates had completed applications. The Gallup Teacher Insight assessment invitation has been issued to more than 1,200 instructional candidates. More than 500 positions have been filled using MyAPP 2.0. The 2011-2012 teacher transfer process was developed in MyApp2.0 and approximately 1,500 teachers completed transfer applications to apply for next school year's vacancies.

#### Next Steps:

A principal and assistant principal pool process is being developed. Planning is under way to handle the 2011 summer school process in MyApp2.0.

Initiative:

### **Assistant Principal and Principal Talent Pools**

Description:

CMS is launching a new process called assistant principal and principal talent pools, which consist of potential candidates who have gone through a rigorous screening and selection process. CMS developed the process to ensure schools have the most effective leaders, minimize the amount of time taken to fill AP/principal positions, build a reserve of competitive talent and clarify the steps to becoming an AP/principal. Candidates for assistant principal and principal positions will be selected from the talent pools. (Current assistant principals and principals are automatically put in the pool for the jobs they hold.) Once candidates make it into the talent pool, recommended training and leadership development will be provided.

*Ann Clark oversees this initiative and Rashidah Lopez Morgan, director of succession planning and talent development, is the project manager.*

Status:

There will be four application periods in 2011: Feb. 14 - March 4, June 13 - July 1, Aug. 15 - Sept. 2 and Nov. 7-25. As a first step, candidates will be required to submit a letter of interest, resume, two administrator recommendations, last three years' performance reviews, student growth metrics and/or school performance metrics, employment application (including background check), MyPD screen (or records of professional development for external candidates), current licensure documentation (external candidates only). These materials will be screened and individuals who are invited to the second step will be required to complete an interview and a timed writing exercise. Those applying to the principal pool will also be required to complete a group case discussion.

Results:

We will evaluate metrics such as the number of candidates that apply, acceptance rates and time taken to fill AP/principal positions. The size of the talent pools will be limited.

Next Steps:

We will monitor the first application process closely and assess where improvements can be made. We will also gather data for key metrics to measure success. We also plan to roll out literacy and academic facilitator talent pools later in the year.

## **CAPACITY: Providing sufficient capacity in facilities, systems and resources**

Initiative:

### **Budget Reduction Process**

Description:

Our framework for developing the 2011-2012 budget included aligning resources to support the strategic plan, keeping a strong academic focus, data-driven decisions, and identifying reductions and redirections to pay for any new initiatives. For the third consecutive year, CMS is facing steep budget reductions in funding from all of our funding sources. The state has asked all areas, including education, to plan for a budget reduction ranging from five to 15 percent. In addition, the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding will go away in September 2012. These scenarios necessitate the need for significant budget reductions. We began our budget process early this year with a November Board of Education (BOE) work session. The goal of this session was to establish the BOE/superintendent's goals and priorities. The Budget department then shared the goals and priorities of the BOE/superintendent, outlined the current year budget process and set the budget reduction target (10 percent) by department. We set our targeted reduction amount at \$100 million. This was computed using a 10 percent reduction (\$63 million) from the state, the \$15 million ARRA cliff and \$15 million for growth and

sustaining operations. The remaining \$7 million covers any higher than expected cuts from the county or state.

Because some of the budget reduction recommendations will affect students and CMS employees, the superintendent asked the BOE to make early decisions in three major areas: weighted-student staffing (WSS), bell schedule changes and Bright Beginnings. The BOE approved the staff's recommendations to change the weighted-student staffing formula from 1.3 to 1.25 and modify bell schedules. The Board postponed a decision on Bright Beginnings until the regular budget process. The BOE asked the superintendent to prioritize the proposed \$100 million in reductions. We operationalized \$5.3 million for school closures and consolidations and identified \$10 million in operating efficiencies. We prioritized the remaining budget reductions of \$84.8 million into four tiers. If budget reductions are not as steep as anticipated, staff would add back items starting at the bottom of Tier 4. It is still very early in the 2011-2012 budget process and our work continues in developing a complete budget proposal.

*Sheila Shirley oversees the district's budget process.*

**Status:**

Governor Purdue recently released her proposed 2011-2012 budget. It calls for an overall 8.6 percent reduction in the K-12 budget, including the discretionary reduction which remains in the proposal.

**Results:**

Staff has worked to identify reductions that will have the least detrimental impact on our schools and our ability to meet strategic plan goals. Engaging the Board early in the process has allowed in depth review and discussion of some key potential reductions.

**Next Steps:**

The next step in the budget process is to continue to watch/listen as the state budget moves through the process – next through the House, then Senate. We will also continue to evaluate the impacts of each proposal to ensure we are adequately prepared for the outcome.

**Initiative:**

**Education Resource Strategies (ERS)**

**Description:**

ERS is a non-profit organization that works closely with leaders of urban public school systems in strategic analysis of school and district resources used to support improved academic performance. Jonathan Travers, a director at ERS, has been working with CMS since September 2008 to analyze how to most effectively allocate district resources. Our partnership with ERS was initially funded through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and some of the work is now funded with Title I dollars. ERS research shows that school districts must invest more in their highest-priority areas if they want to see long-term transformation of student performance – and that teacher effectiveness must be a high-priority area.

*Hugh Hattabaugh, Sheila Shirley and Ann Clark oversee various aspects of our partnership with ERS.*

**Status:**

During the past two years, ERS has supported the district in resource allocation and strategic planning, and consultants have provided training and support to Strategic Staffing principals.

Travers met with executive staff on Feb. 23 to discuss the implications a recent ERS analysis could have for the 2011-2012 budget and use of resources. Travers said recent budget cuts put CMS spending on central administration at the low end of comparison districts and, as a result, significant new savings in central office appear unlikely.

#### Results:

Through this partnership, CMS was provided useful data and information that helped us make more effective resource allocation decisions. This has been beneficial during the past three budget cycles, particularly as we used performance as the key factor in RIF decisions. Research from ERS confirmed that this strategic decision was necessary and that it would have the greatest impact on student achievement.

#### Next Steps:

This is a partnership that we value and plan to continue. As we face another difficult budget cycle, the research, information and support provided by ERS will help us identify the investments that will yield the greatest return in student learning. The reallocation options ERS presented for our current budget include: increasing class size, reducing costs of the smallest elective and non-core classes in high schools, reduce extra spending on small-scale schools, and shifting a portion of weighted-student staffing resources from additional classrooms to instructional support/expertise. In addition to working with the district on resource allocation decisions, ERS will continue providing training and support to some of our Strategic Staffing principals.

#### Initiative:

### **Ten-Year Capital Needs Assessment**

#### Description:

CMS operates and maintains a real estate portfolio comprising more than 5,000 acres and more than 20 million square feet in more than 200 facilities throughout Mecklenburg County. The Ten-Year Capital Needs Assessment expresses and substantiates the facilities needs of the school district that has grown considerably in the past decade.

*Guy Chamberlain and Mike Raible oversee this initiative.*

#### Status:

In addition to forecasting the need for permanent facilities, planners must also anticipate which existing schools will be over capacity and assess where and how many mobile classrooms will be needed. CMS uses about 600 mobile and modular classrooms to ease overcrowding. Instructional delivery and quality may be affected at schools that are over capacity. Additionally, overcrowding shortens the lifecycles of equipment and systems.

To keep up with Mecklenburg County's booming growth between 1995 and 2005, we identified the need for several new schools and an additional 7 million (net) additional square feet of capacity has been added since 1999. Two new high schools opened in 2010. Supplemental capacity can be realized through additions to existing facilities or by building relief schools. Popular magnet programs are likely to have significant waiting lists. No new administrative or support space has been built since 1992.

Underutilized and smaller schools present budgetary challenges as well. The CMS operating budget for maintenance is unable to keep pace with the cost of maintaining its aging infrastructure. As a rule of thumb, each school must receive a comprehensive renovation once every 30 years. This means that 667,000 square feet must be renewed each year. Currently, 45 percent of our schools are more than 40 years old. Some, if not all, of those buildings' systems require immediate attention. Failure to address these needs as well as those driven by growth will have both physical and fiscal consequences.

#### Results:

The analysis related to the 2009-2019 Capital Needs Assessment was presented to the Board in April 2010. During the past three years, the student population growth in the district has

slowed. There are more children per household in Mecklenburg County than the state or national average.

The district will continue efforts to eliminate the need for mobile classrooms. While providing temporary space for overcrowding, mobiles are less than optimal education environments. They are also among the most expensive classrooms to operate and maintain (not including the cost to move, set up and dismantle). We expect to take about 400 mobile classrooms out of service in 2010-2011.

#### Next Steps:

Improving facilities may be a key to improving educational outcomes. Even as the rate of student growth slows, the condition of some facilities continues to deteriorate.

It may not be earlier than 2012 before serious consideration is given to a new Capital Investment Plan. This means that any list of prioritized projects will have to be altered as growth patterns change and facility deterioration continues.

On a related matter, we have decided that nine of 11 schools we plan to close next year will be offered for lease in 2011-2012. We believe that offering organizations the opportunity to lease these buildings will allow them to continue to be a resource for community use. The leasing process will open in March with two meetings at the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center to provide information to interested organizations. We will accept bids through May 13. Staff will recommend which bids to accept and the Board of Education must approve the leases. No buildings will be available for use by leaseholders until after July 1.

This effort will not generate a significant amount of revenue for the district. CMS will not be responsible for maintenance or operations at leased buildings, so the district will not be spending money on the buildings. The facilities expected to be available for leasing are Davidson IB, Midwood High, Pawtuckett Elementary, Smith Language Academy, Amay James Pre-K, and Wilson Middle. The other facilities being closed will be used to house CMS employees and school programs. If the Board of Education votes to reduce the number of pre-kindergarten classes, Double Oaks Pre-K, Plaza Road Pre-K and Tryon Hills Pre-K will be added to the list of buildings for lease.

We will give first consideration to extensions of existing CMS programs, and we will give special consideration to bidders who plan to use the buildings for educational or community purposes. Sites will not be leased to individuals.

#### Initiative:

### **Technology Plan**

#### Description:

CMS' technology plan was developed to support *Strategic Plan 2014*. Four major tactics are under way, which will strengthen the district's alignment in technology with the strategic plan, expand student and staff use of virtual courses and continue to increase their access to services through our computing infrastructure.

*Susan Johnson oversees the district's technology plan.*

#### Status:

Major investments in the infrastructure continue to move forward, including upgrades to aged-out network devices and personal computers in our schools. To date:

- Networks in 27 elementary schools will be replaced by the end of the school year, including wireless access.
- Exceptional Children self-contained classrooms and resource teachers will have modern PCs.
- Upgraded wireless access points have been installed in mobile classrooms at 51 schools.
- The most critical systems hardware (comprising about 50 percent of the total data center) has been moved to a private sector hosting facility, relieving the cooling and electrical load in the Education Center.

CMS is being required to integrate NC WISE into the Department of Public Instruction data center. This initiative is under way and testing should begin in March. With a target date of July 2011, staff is focused on aligning the CMS version of NC WISE to that which will be hosted at the Western Data Center in Rutherfordton, NC.

#### Results:

- Rocky River and Hough high schools technology services were deployed as virtual desktops in classrooms and the media center. After the initial new technology introduction period, the technology is now yielding savings from reduction in the amount of support required by engineers and technology contacts. These two high schools also enjoy significantly greater wireless access compared with other high schools.
- 12,500 PCs were placed in all schools, reducing the overall age of PCs from more 5 years to 1.5 years.
- Employee Self Service was launched in the fall, giving all CMS employees the ability to maintain their personal information and access to their online pay advices from home. Electronic W-2s are also available in the portal. As a result, the district has significantly reduced the cost of printing and distributing pay advices.
- Teachers' ability to reach their students outside the classroom has been greatly enhanced by the introduction of Teacher Wikis. This Internet tool replaces the old CMS Pages technology, offering teachers significantly more functionality and ease of use.

#### Next Steps:

- An upgrade of the help desk application will be made, allowing CMS to deliver better help desk services.
- A new Identity Management product will be installed allowing CMS to more easily create accounts for staff and students while also providing the ability to self-manage password changes.
- E-Rate funding will continue to expand wireless access and upgrade aged-out networks.

#### Initiative:

### **Transportation**

#### Description:

The goal of the Transportation Department is to implement strategies and initiatives that result in more efficient transportation operations and lower costs while maintaining quality and safe levels of service to CMS students. In anticipation of local and state budget cuts for 2011-2012, transportation staff began assessing and recommending potential adjustments to current levels of services that would result in a reduction of daily and annual miles traveled. By reducing operating miles, there is a natural reduction for need of buses as well as decreased costs for items such as fuel, oil, tires, parts and labor hours.

In 2010-2011, Transportation implemented shuttle bus stops for 11 full magnet schools, combining services for students at multiple schools on the same buses.

The 2011-2012 approved bell schedule provides the opportunity for increased learning time in the elementary classrooms by lengthening the instructional day to seven hours.

*Guy Chamberlain oversees the district's transportation system. Carol Stamper, the executive director of Transportation, manages the district's day-to-day transportation efforts.*

**Status:**

Staff is working on implementing bell schedule changes for the 2011-2012 school year.

**Results:**

Revising morning and afternoon bell times for some schools will allow Transportation staff to further optimize the efficient use of buses and save the school district approximately \$4 million. The major factors contributing to the identified cost savings include:

- The improved AM and PM time increments between each bell tier
- The flexibility to interchange elementary and middle schools on same bell tier
- The ability to increase the number of schools a bus serves in the morning and/or afternoon
- The reduction of daily and annual miles
- The potential to increase occurrences of networking transportation for schools (may be different grade levels) in close proximity whose attending students reside in common geographical areas

Inclusive of the projected cost savings for 2011-2012, the transportation budget has experienced an aggregate reduction of about \$15 million during the past four years.

**Next Steps:**

The transportation team continues to assess the operational effectiveness and efficiency of the major business functions while transporting more than 85,000 students daily throughout Mecklenburg County.

**Initiative:**

**External Funding Sources**

**Description:**

Through grants, third-party fundraising and the generosity of corporate donors, CMS has been able to sustain many of its key reform initiatives.

*Peter Gorman is the owner of this work in the district.*

**Status:**

Mecklenburg Citizens for Public Education (MeckEd), a non-profit organization committed to engaging the community, funders, policy makers, and public and private organizations on behalf of CMS, has supported the district through targeted fundraising since 2008. The district has also gained the support of organizations and corporate sponsors who have contributed directly to the district or to the district's foundation. In January, the CMS Investment Study Group – comprised of private philanthropists and community leaders – announced a partnership with CMS.

**Results:**

Since 2008, MeckEd has raised \$2,656,860 to support initiatives like: New Leaders for New Schools, Leaders for Tomorrow and Parent University. Their top corporate sponsors include: Allen Tate, The Belk Foundation, Bank of America, Carolinas Healthcare System, CD Spangler Foundation, Duke Energy Corporation, The Leon Levine Foundation, Novant Health, Rodgers Builders, TIAA CREF, Time Warner Cable and Wachovia-Wells Fargo.

Funding has also been gained through grants and corporate gifts paid directly to the district.

We received \$4 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to partner with the Parthenon Group in developing a business plan for improving student achievement at low-performing schools. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation also awarded CMS a \$1.4 million grant to study teacher effectiveness. From the C.D. Spangler Foundation, we received a \$4 million grant to double the Teacher For America Corps and we received \$776,000 in grants to support various CMS initiatives. Additionally, CMS was awarded a \$4.88 million performance management grant by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and the Broad Foundation. We were also awarded a \$2 million federal grant to launch a pilot pay for performance program (TIF-LEAP). This was extended for an additional four years and, by the end, will provide \$11.8 million in total funding for the TIF-LEAP initiative.

The CMS Investment Study Group's program – called Project L.I.F.T. (Leadership and Investment For Transformation) – will address educational issues in the West Charlotte corridor. The program has committed to provide \$55 million in private funding, which will support additional services and educational enhancements for Charlotte-Mecklenburg students in the West Charlotte corridor, define as West Charlotte high and the middle and elementary schools that feed into it. The plan will be implemented over a five-year period.

#### Next Steps:

CMS will continue to inform the business community about its strategic priorities and academic progress and will invite their support and participation in our efforts. We will continue to partner with MeckEd and seek opportunities to garner grants and other external funding support.