

## Root Cause Analysis - Summary

### Core Questions:

- Why do we have a “Grade Gap”?
- What variables are causing it?
- What role/weight does each variable have on it?
- What can we do about it? What can we control?

### Data Sources Collected and Analyzed To Date:

- Scaled PSSA Scores – Historical look at current grade 9 class from grade three through grade 8
- PA Common core Anchor Comparison Worksheet – Each anchor, each year, where are the weak areas? How do we structure goals around those areas?
- Comparative Analysis – examining the data with like schools; schools with very similar populations and sizes
- PVAAS Growth Analysis
- PBT Rankings – 28 Overall and 3 Overachiever; High rankings when compared to similar socioeconomic groups.

### Overview

Building	Achievement	Growth
Tenth Street	Relatively High	Need to focus on assisting students with reaching full potential
Verner	High when compared to similar socioeconomic schools	Above average growth
JHSH	Low on PSSA Improving on Keystone, Gains on AP	Above average

**General Synopsis:** As students move through the system, there is a subtle decrease in growth, achievement gradually goes down until it levels off, and then achievement begins to pick back up again. More of a concern in Math than ELA.

### **Trends/Reflections from Scaled Score Analysis**

- A decline in scaled scores upon the change to the new PA Core Assessment
- Larger decline in math in scaled scores upon the change to the new PA Core Assessment
- A decrease of students at proficient and advanced from grades 3-8; this also existed with old PSSA test

### **Possible Explanations**

- In math, the standards changed in more profound ways than in ELA
- Some may not have been prepared for the change; particularly with new standards
- Some socioeconomic factors playing a role
- New students who move into the district often have gaps in their achievement levels that need remediated
- More new students in grades 1 -12; they do not start with us in kindergarten and move through our system in its entirety
- Students opting out of PSSA – in all cases, these students are either already Proficient or Advanced
- It is sometimes more difficult to grow kids who are already high achievers
- In small enrollment grade levels, 1 or 2 IEP students combined with 1 or 2 new students can represent 10% to 20% of the grade level

### **Trends/Reflections from Socioeconomic Comparisons**

- Riverview performs well when compared to other schools in similar demographics
- Overall proficiency scores, however, are still substandard. Math is a concern. ELA is not as concerning.

### **Possible Explanations**

- Riverview does more with less than other school districts
- Riverview has almost 40% of its student population below the poverty line.

### **Trends/Reflections from PA Common Core Anchor Comparison Chart**

- Some weak anchors in both math and ELA over time
- Grades 3-6 seem to show more areas of concern. Grades 7-8 still has low overall percentages
- Great variation in anchor mastery

### **Possible explanations**

- Small class sizes may overemphasize some of the results
- Some changes in placements and teacher leaves
- Possible lack of alignment to PA core standards
- Grade 3 test – less anchors assessed and more questions per anchor
- Grades 4-6 – more anchors assessed and less questions per anchor
- In small enrollment grade levels, 1 or 2 IEP students combined with 1 or 2 new students can represent 10% to 20% of the grade level

### **Trends/Reflections on PVAAS Growth Metrics**

- Growth decreases in grades 3-4 (more at Tenth Street than Verner)
- Growth continues to decline slightly in grades 3-6
- Growth maintains average rates in grades 7-8, but achievement levels drop
- Students moving at accelerated rates in grade 7 math and grade 6 reading
- This trend occurred in former and current version of PSSA test

### **Possible explanations**

- Possible false positive in grade 3 (teaching test preparation and criterion-driven content)
- Possible misalignment in the curriculum
- Possible need for additional professional development or update of primary resources

## Action Steps

### Focus Areas:

1. Awareness and Identification of the Problem
2. PA Common Core Alignment
3. Teacher Empowerment and Training
4. Data Analysis and Response
5. Individualized Student support

### Tasks Taken / Being Taken:

- Redirected leadership at the JSH to focus on Instruction (several years ago)
- Made use of middle school team to empower teachers and assist them with understanding data, monitoring student learning, and utilizing relevant instructional approaches – setting stage for trust and empowerment (a few years into this process now)
- Continue with more deliberate focus on data and data analysis
- Continue with Middle school team and administrative facilitation of it
- Deliberate alignment of PD towards more curricular and teacher driven focus
- New Reading Series was purchased and curriculum developed in K-6 over past few years – continue to monitor
- Math pathways were redone – continue to monitor
- Monitor and place teachers where talent best meets student needs
- 5-8 work with ELA and Math departments to align curriculum, resources, and teaching methodologies to the PA Core Standards
- Instructional principal with targeted focus on 5-8
- Reading Specialist
- Junior High alignment of study halls to create math and reading intervention time.
- Teacher goals targeted on weak anchor areas
- TDA training in grades 4-8 in focus areas in ELA
- New student assessment and automatic support as a part of Title I services.
- CDT training and use of data for student grouping and student metacognition
- After school enrichment at elementary grades
- Elementary enrichment targeted on PA Core content and topic extension.
- Continue to engage teachers in data analysis and empower them to create a continued plan of action