

# Building Blocks of High-Performing Schools

Research shows that high student performance is not a result of any one single action taken by schools. Rather, high-performing schools tend to have the following nine characteristics.

## 1. Clear and Shared Focus

From the board of education down to the students—everyone is focused and committed to a shared vision and agreed upon goals based on common beliefs and values. At the root of these values is the belief that all students can learn.



## 2. High Standards and Expectations for all Students

Teachers and staff believe that all students can learn and meet high standards. Although it's recognized that some students have certain barriers to overcome, the barriers are not seen as insurmountable. Students are offered an ambitious and rigorous course of study.



## 3. Effective School Leadership

Effective instructional and administrative leadership promotes excellence, quality and professional growth, and steadfastly supports people, programs, services and activities that lead to the accomplishment of district goals.

## 4. High Levels of Collaboration and Communication

High-performing schools encompass a community of learners. There is strong teamwork among teachers across all grades and with other staff. All members of the learning community, including students, parents and members of the community work together to create a supportive learning environment and to actively solve problems and create solutions.

## 5. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Aligned With Standards

High-performing schools have aligned curriculum with the state standards that staff implements using research-based teaching and learning strategies. Staff understand the role of classroom and state assessments, what the assessments measure and how student work is evaluated.



## 6. Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

Teaching is adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. Assessment results are used to improve student performance and improve instructional programs.

## 7. Focused Professional Development

Professional development is based on needs assessment and sustained over time. Deliberate decisions are made to support professional development that is aligned with the school district vision and goals.



## 8. Supportive Learning Environment

The school has a safe, civil, healthy, and intellectually stimulating and personalized learning environment. Students feel respected and connected with the staff and are engaged in learning.

## 9. High Level of Parent & Community Involvement

Parents and community members understand and support the basic mission of the school and have an important role in achieving that mission.

