A VISION FOR 2021 AND BEYOND

Nance Elementary School

Tyler A. Archer, Ed.D.

Interim Principal

Overview

Dear Nance Family,

It is an honor to have been selected to serve the Nance community as interim principal, where students are empowered to be change agents. This year we have kept the theme of **NANCE STRONG** as our core philosophy as we have navigated the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. I am proud of the work of our students, teachers, staff, parents, families, and partners as we have adapted to new realities along the way.

As a part of my introduction to the Nance community, I have made it a priority to learn about your individual and collective plans, dreams, and expectations, and what you see as the promise for our school's future in transforming the lives of our children. I believe in collaborative and reflective leadership, and over the past several months I have worked to earn your trust so that together we can collectively support things that are working within the school for our children, and plan to change what is not.

Beginning in July 2020, I worked transparently with the Nance community to develop an entry plan that reflects a shared understanding of where we have been, where we are, and what we want for our students in the future. My goal has been to engage our community in an inquiry process that helps me to better understand the culture of the school, current practices, and the ways that I can best serve Nance as a new leader.

As part of this planning process, I met with students, held several optional individual and small group meetings with stakeholders, visited and observed classrooms, reviewed the implementation of our comprehensive school improvement plan as well as other school data, engaged with community partners, and sought support from district leaders. I am sharing my findings of this process so that we can work together to set a direction for the future that keeps empowerment of our students at the center of our work.

I hope you will review my findings from this process, as well as my recommendation of priorities and next steps for how we will continue to move our school forward. I believe it is critical to unify the school community through shared values and common goals, in turn motivating us to work together for the betterment of every child at Nance.

I look forward to your feedback and partnership in 2021 and beyond!

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Entry Planning Process and Activities

As a new principal, my purpose for implementing an entry plan has been as follows:

- Get to know the school community as fully as possible outside of day-to-day interactions;

- Examine collaboratively key issues to understand how and why the organization works as it does;

- Use collective knowledge and understanding to identify shared goals;

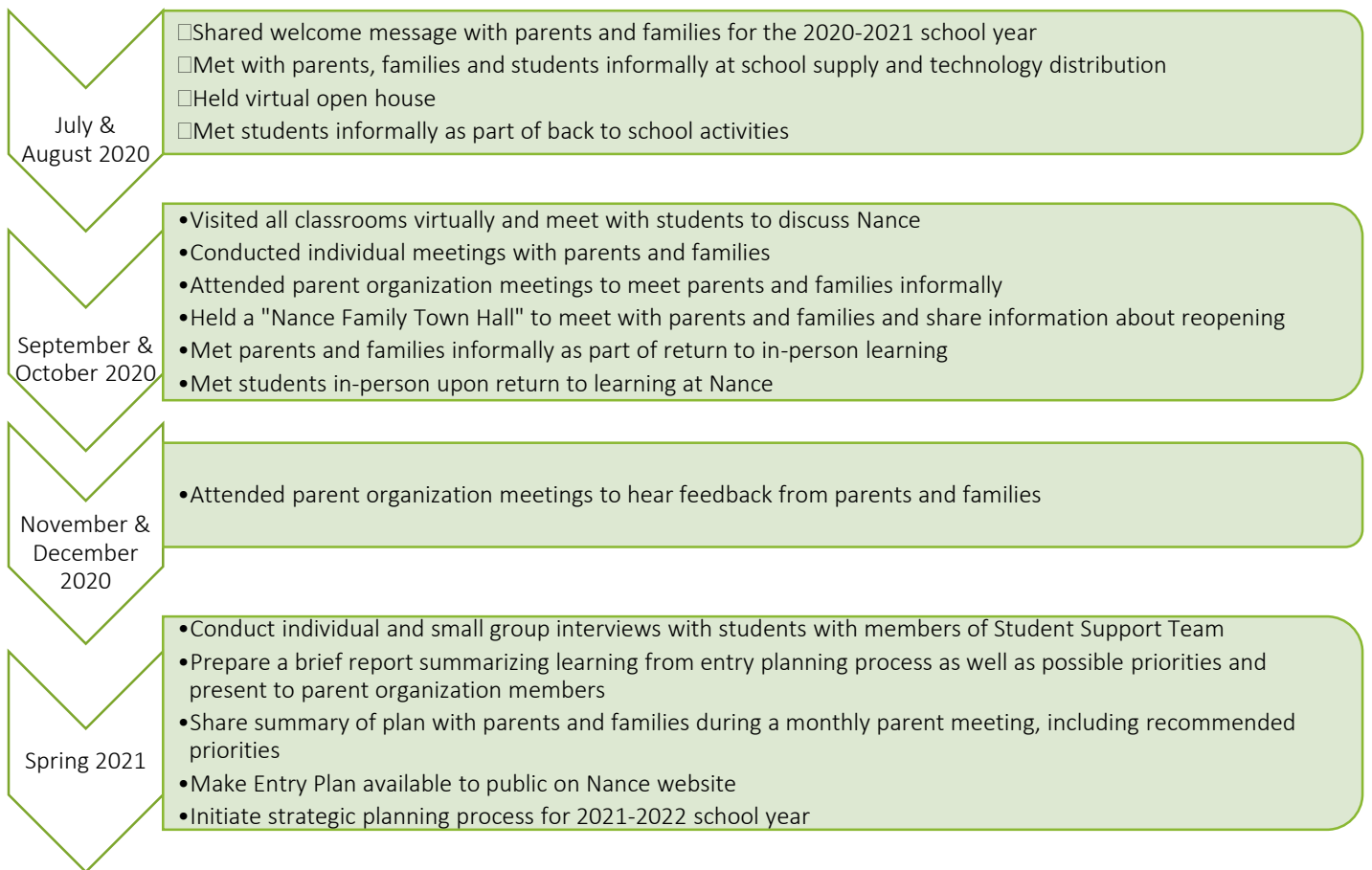- Establish a plan for how these goals will be accomplished in the future.

During my various individual and group meetings with stakeholders, I sought input in several general areas. Although specific questions and focuses differed in conversations with specific stakeholders, the same themes were addressed to help me gather a full understanding of the school community:

- Strengths: What do you love about Nance? What makes our school community unique?

- Belonging: Is Nance a school community to which you feel a sense of connection or belonging?

- Goals: Are we aimed in the right direction and pursuing our goals in the right way?

- Challenges: What are some of the biggest challenges at Nance right now?

- Teaching and Learning: Does teaching and learning at Nance align to our core values and expectations?

- Decision-making: How are decisions made within the school community?

- Principal Leadership: What do I need to know as a new leader to best serve the Nance community?
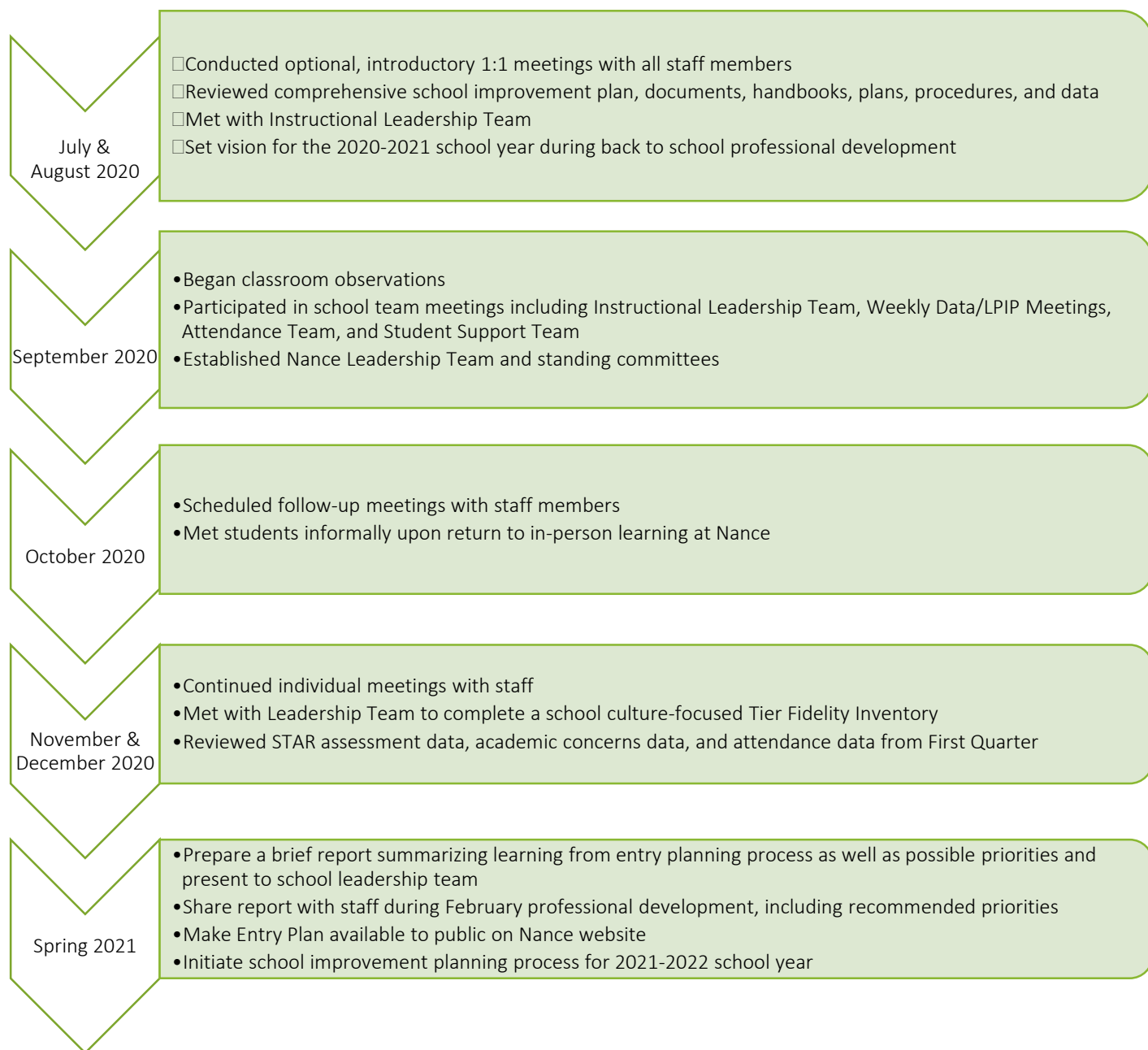
The graphics below summarize the entry planning activities that have been undertaken since July. The activities are divided by stakeholder group and include activities that are ongoing and planned for the coming months. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, adjustments have been made to these activities with most being conducted virtually.

Students and Families

July & August 2020
- Shared welcome message with parents and families for the 2020-2021 school year
- Met with parents, families and students informally at school supply and technology distribution
- Held virtual open house
- Met students informally as part of back to school activities

September & October 2020
- Visited all classrooms virtually and meet with students to discuss Nance
- Conducted individual meetings with parents and families
- Attended parent organization meetings to meet parents and families informally
- Held a "Nance Family Town Hall" to meet with parents and families and share information about reopening
- Met parents and families informally as part of return to in-person learning
- Met students in-person upon return to learning at Nance

November & December 2020
- Attended parent organization meetings to hear feedback from parents and families

Spring 2021
- Conduct individual and small group interviews with students with members of Student Support Team
- Prepare a brief report summarizing learning from entry planning process as well as possible priorities and present to parent organization members
- Share summary of plan with parents and families during a monthly parent meeting, including recommended priorities
- Make Entry Plan available to public on Nance website
- Initiate strategic planning process for 2021-2022 school year

Staff

July & August 2020
- Conducted optional, introductory 1:1 meetings with all staff members
- Reviewed comprehensive school improvement plan, documents, handbooks, plans, procedures, and data
- Met with Instructional Leadership Team
- Set vision for the 2020-2021 school year during back to school professional development

September 2020
- Began classroom observations
- Participated in school team meetings including Instructional Leadership Team, Weekly Data/LPIP Meetings, Attendance Team, and Student Support Team
- Established Nance Leadership Team and standing committees

October 2020
- Scheduled follow-up meetings with staff members
- Met students informally upon return to in-person learning at Nance

November & December 2020
- Continued individual meetings with staff
- Met with Leadership Team to complete a school culture-focused Tier Fidelity Inventory
- Reviewed STAR assessment data, academic concerns data, and attendance data from First Quarter

Spring 2021
- Prepare a brief report summarizing learning from entry planning process as well as possible priorities and present to school leadership team
- Share report with staff during February professional development, including recommended priorities
- Make Entry Plan available to public on Nance website
- Initiate school improvement planning process for 2021-2022 school year

Community Partners

July & August 2020
- Met with members of the Nance Collaborative, community partners, congregation partner, and district partner liaison
- Reviewed comprehensive school improvement plan, documents, plans, MOUs, and data related to partner engagement

September & October 2020
- Conducted individual meetings with community partner representatives
- Discussed Entry Plan at regularly scheduled Nance Collaborative meeting

November & December 2020
- Completed individual meetings with community partner representatives

Spring 2021
- Prepare a brief report summarizing learning from entry planning process as well as possible priorities and present to Nance Collaborative
- Make Entry Plan available to public on Nance website
- Initiate school improvement planning process for 2021-2022 school year

Feedback Themes

In conversations and discussions with stakeholders, the following five themes emerged as crucial for the success of our students and focus areas for the coming years. These themes were consistently articulated in conversations with students, families, staff, and partners.

➢ **Student ownership and empowerment is essential to ensure students enjoy coming to school each day.**
  ➢ Most students are excited about school and students want to come to Nance.
  ➢ Students love learning and rise to the challenge of rigorous tasks when they are presented to them.
  ➢ Students want to see more opportunities for science and the arts in their learning.
  ➢ Efforts are made to plan activities to engage and excite students to be involved in the school community.
  ➢ Students need more opportunities to be recognized demonstrating school values to create more positive student culture.
  ➢ Social and emotional learning should be emphasized throughout the school as a way of addressing the needs of all students.
  ➢ A concerted effort should be made to create a climate of restorative practices in terms of discipline.
  ➢ New traditions and programs that promote an inviting school climate are welcomed.

➢ **The community takes pride in our school and is invested in the success of Nance students.**
  ➢ Parents and families are involved in their child's education and build relationships with school staff.
  ➢ Being a neighborhood school creates a more cohesive community. Families seek out our school as an educational option for their children.
  ➢ School partners are involved and focus on ways to support families and meet their needs.
  ➢ The community takes pride in the school facility because it is welcoming and inviting.
  ➢ The surrounding community has many challenges, but the school plays a crucial leadership role within the community and can help assist the broader needs of the neighborhood.

➢ **There is a positive staff culture at Nance and staff are committed to supporting our students.**
  ➢ There is a positive atmosphere among staff in the building.
  ➢ Parents believe teachers and staff work hard and are willing and able to support students and their needs.
  ➢ Staff works together and there is a strong sense of community and camaraderie.
  ➢ Teachers are passionate about the work they do, what they teach, and are willing to help and collaborate with others.
  ➢ Despite the challenges of COVID-19, staff have worked hard to make virtual learning effective.
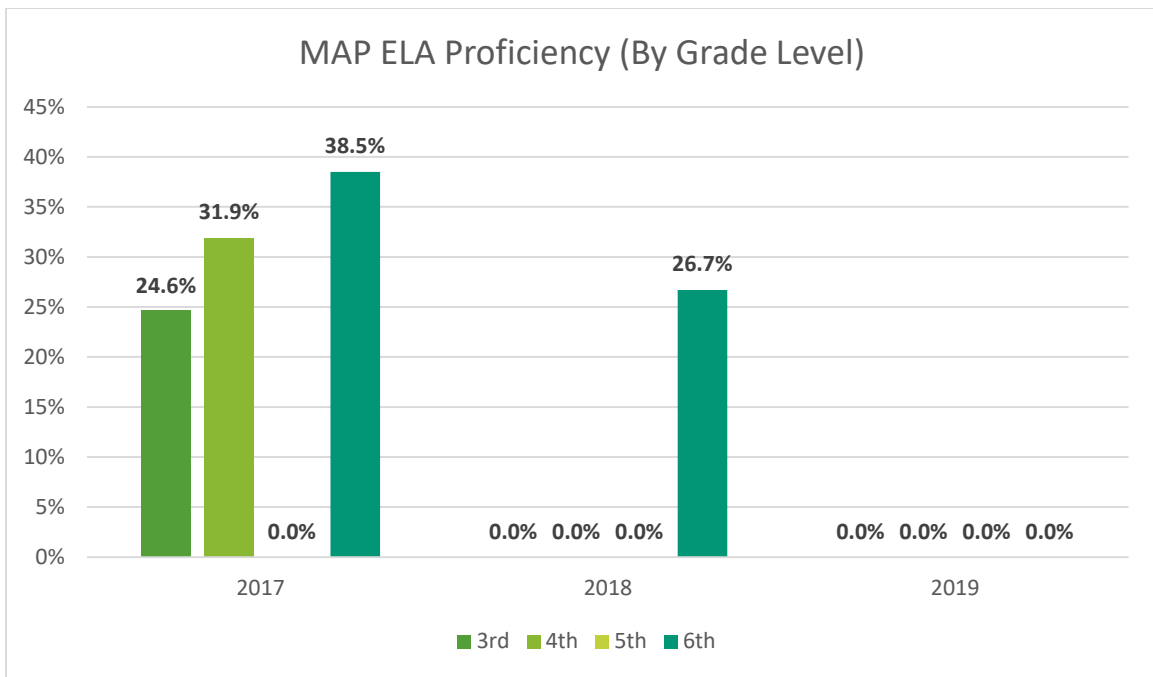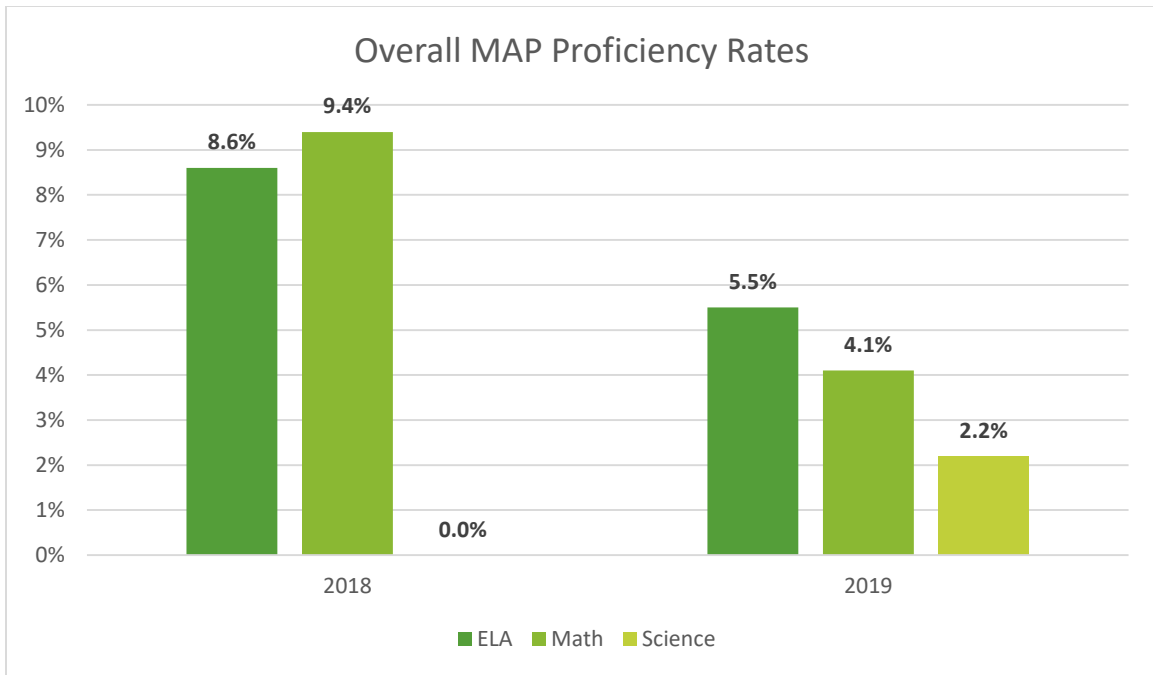 ➢ It is important for staff to have a voice in decision making when possible.

- ➤ Instructional rigor and high expectations for students is essential to ensuring all students receive a high-quality education.
  - ➤ There is an understanding among staff of the importance of challenging systemic racism and inequity through education.
  - ➤ There is an academic atmosphere in the school as well as a focus on equity and high expectations for all students.
  - ➤ Teachers are invested in making learning rigorous.
  - ➤ The adoption of the Engage ELA/CKLA curriculum program has helped improve literacy instruction. Envision provides a strong foundation for student learning in mathematics.
  - ➤ Opportunities for lesson plan internalization, coaching, and feedback are recognized as critical for supporting student learning.
  - ➤ Structures for professional development supporting teacher learning are established.
  - ➤ There is a focus on closing the literacy gap and creating a culture of literacy.
  - ➤ 1:1 technology provides a crucial resource for students and promote equity for all students.

- ➤ Consistency and communication in all areas across the school is critical to promote and maintain a positive school climate.
  - ➤ Class Dojo is used as the primary communication method for families which engages families consistently.
  - ➤ Teachers work to build positive relationships with families and support their needs.
  - ➤ There is a focus on supporting families through the student support team and attendance team.
  - ➤ Structures and processes for communicating with stakeholders should be refined and improved.
  - ➤ Hiring staff that are aligned to school values is critical for maintaining high-quality instruction.
  - ➤ PBIS, behavior interventions, and school discipline should be implemented more consistently throughout the entire school.
  - ➤ Nance lacks a social media presence to promote the school to the broader community.
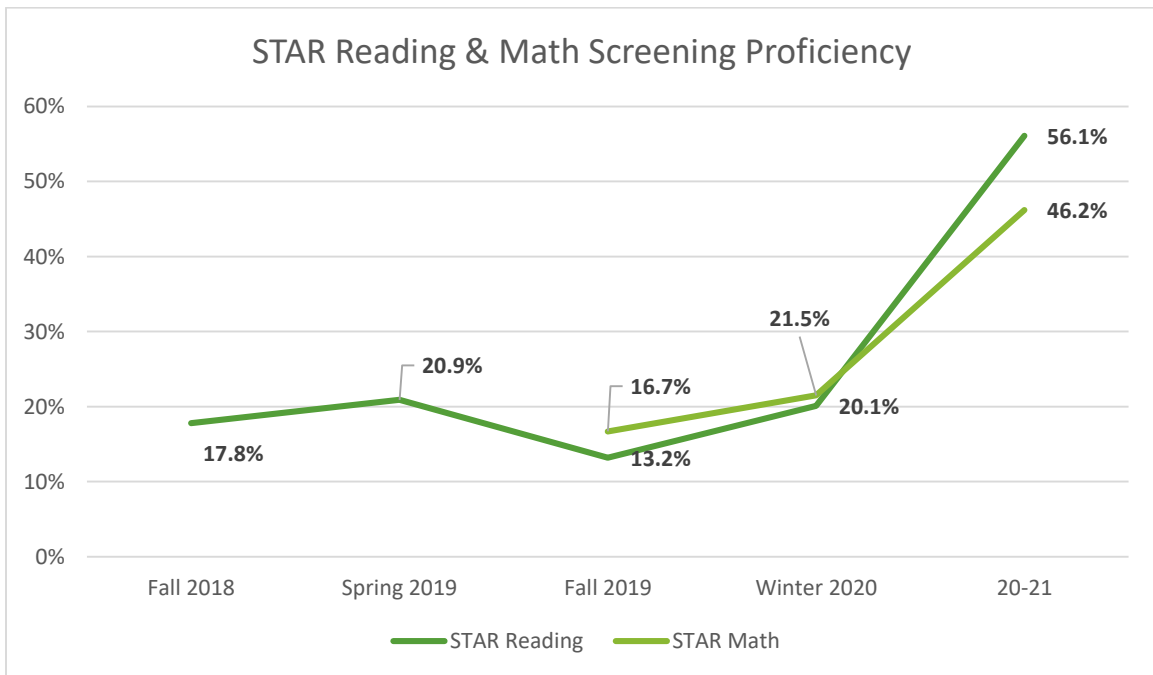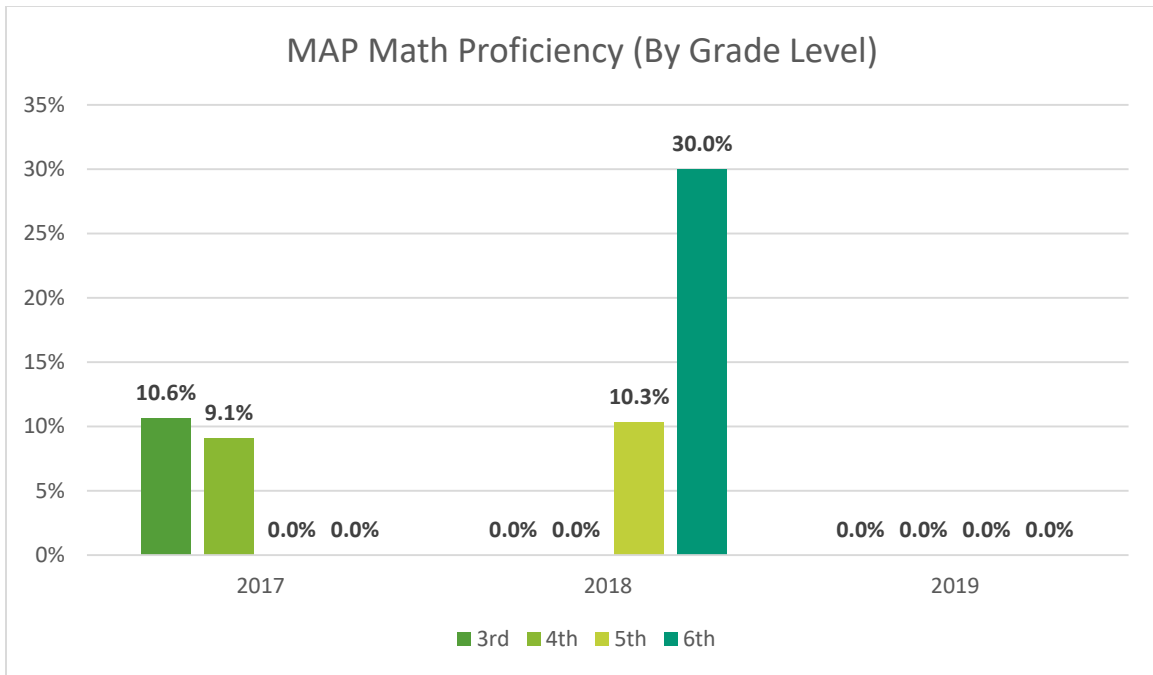
School Data

In addition to feedback shared by school stakeholders, the following data from the 2016-2017 school year through the 2019-2020 school year was utilized to assess the status of building initiatives and plan for the future.

Note: As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, MAP data is not available from the 2019-2020 school year.
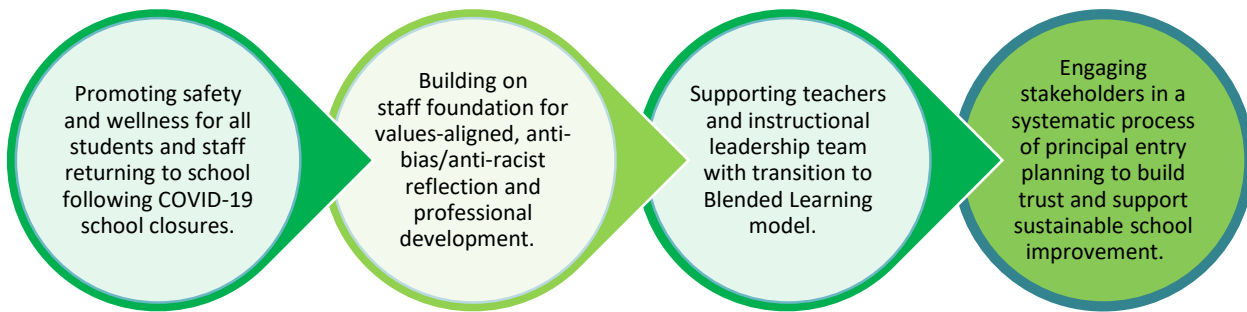
Enrollment

Year	K-12 Enrollment	Total Enrollment
2017	274	299
2018	312	337
2019	324	351
2020	279	302

Proportional Attendance Rate (90/90)

Year	90/90 %
2017	82.6%
2018	81.9%
2019	60.3%
2020	66.4%

Overall MAP Proficiency Rates

	2018	2019
ELA	8.6%	5.5%
Math	9.4%	4.1%
Science	0.0%	2.2%

MAP ELA Proficiency (By Grade Level)

	2017	2018	2019
3rd	24.6%	0.0%	0.0%
4th	31.9%	0.0%	0.0%
5th	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
6th	38.5%	26.7%	0.0%

MAP Math Proficiency (By Grade Level)

- 2017: 3rd 10.6%, 4th 9.1%, 5th 0.0%, 6th 0.0%
- 2018: 3rd 0.0%, 4th 0.0%, 5th 10.3%, 6th 30.0%
- 2019: 0.0%, 0.0%, 0.0%, 0.0%

Legend: ■ 3rd ■ 4th ■ 5th ■ 6th

STAR Reading & Math Screening Proficiency

- Fall 2018: 17.8%
- Spring 2019: 20.9%
- Fall 2019: 16.7% / 13.2%
- Winter 2020: 21.5% / 20.1%
- 20-21: 56.1% / 46.2%

Legend: — STAR Reading — STAR Math

Principal Leadership Focus & Initial Action Steps

The 2020-2021 school year has presented a series of unique challenges, but also opportunities to transform education and schools. The graphic below outlines the four areas that have served as my principal leadership focus during the 2020-2021 school year:

Promoting safety and wellness for all students and staff returning to school following COVID-19 school closures.

Building on staff foundation for values-aligned, anti-bias/anti-racist reflection and professional development.

Supporting teachers and instructional leadership team with transition to Blended Learning model.

Engaging stakeholders in a systematic process of principal entry planning to build trust and support sustainable school improvement.

In response to feedback from stakeholders, the changing nature of education amid a global pandemic, and need to best serve students and families, the following initial action steps have been taken this school year:

- Establish school Leadership Team & staff committees
- Focus teacher professional learning on rigorous instruction, strategies for engaging students virtually, and lesson plan internalization
- Refine procedures and processes for attendance and student support efforts
- Revisit grading policies and procedures to promote equity in the hybrid learning environment
- Streamline communication with staff via *Nance News*
- Initiate professional development with staff focused on purpose, core values, and reflection
- Promote participation in monthly virtual parent meetings and improve ongoing communication through the *Knights Parent and Family* newsletter

Transforming the Future of Our Community

Nance Elementary serves a pivotal role within the broader community. As a school, it is our responsibility to provide students with robust opportunities that will have a transformational impact on their future, as well as meet the immediate needs of students and families to provide equitable opportunities for learning. In any comprehensive planning effort, the mission, vision, and values of the school must be considered when establishing guiding principles for next steps:

- **Our Mission:** The mission of Earl Nance Sr. Elementary School is to empower students to have a voice within our community. Each student will achieve success through literacy, innovation, and having culturally responsive classrooms.
- **Our Vision:** *Nance Elementary students will be empowered as global leaders to make a positive impact on the world.*

To empower our students as global leaders, we must first prepare our students to transform the future of our community. ***At Nance Elementary, we will transform the future of our community by:***

- ➤ *Creating a positive environment where every child belongs, humanity is valued, and joy is evident.*
- ➤ *Providing high-quality, rigorous, culturally responsive instruction to every student, every day.*
- ➤ *Supporting students and families by meeting needs that impact their ability to succeed.*
- ➤ *Connecting our students to opportunities that prepare them for the future and broaden their horizons.*
- ➤ *Challenging systemic racism and inequities by constantly reflecting on policies and practices that disadvantage students of color.*

Proposed Priorities and Action Steps

The following proposed priorities and action steps are aligned to the guiding principles and reflect the needs, desires, and expectations of Nance stakeholders.

Climate and Culture

Goal: All students will experience a school culture that emphasizes high expectations, is culturally-responsive, trauma informed, and promotes student success, culminating in national school of character recognition by the conclusion of the 2023-2024 school year.

- Emphasize student voice in staff decision making
- Focus on the implementation of restorative practices to build community and restore harm
- Refine school culture plan by focusing on implementation of PBIS matrix, consistent approach to behavior management, incentives, and interventions
- Provide regular social-emotional instruction to students aligned to core values
- Implement and refine procedures in place for Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavior interventions
- Develop a school commitment to anti-bias, anti-racist (ABAR) practices

Literacy

Goal: By the end of each school year, STAR Reading assessment data will show that 50% of students in grades 2-6 are reading at/above grade level.

- Emphasize a culture and climate of reading that promotes high engagement in literacy among students
- Support teachers with best practice implementation for district core ELA curriculum
- Implement building-wide guided reading aligned to Fountas & Pinnell model
- Develop a model for small group reading intervention

Engaging Community

Goal: *Nance will be recognized as a neighborhood school of choice in SLPS and the broader region, growing enrollment to 400 students by end of 2022-2023 school year.*

- Provide parents with resources and support to develop a greater understanding of academic learning
- Organize a resource room within the building in partnership with Urban League Mentors and create additional opportunities for parent and family engagement with partners
- Form a collaborative of school partners focused on STEAM initiatives
- Open a community garden and outdoor classroom
- Develop a comprehensive marketing plan for the school

People Development

Goal: *School leaders will retain at least 80% of teachers rated proficient or distinguished; at least 90% of first-year teachers; and at least 90% of non-certified staff rated excellent or outstanding each year.*

- Refine school core values and set a vision for these values in action
- Build capacity for teachers to implement equitable, standards-based grading practices
- Define team roles and norms for school leadership team
- Form a school hiring committee consisting of a variety of stakeholders
- Provide high-quality professional development to all staff in the areas of high-expectations, equity, and culturally responsive practices
- Formalize process for onboarding new staff