

**PSC School: Nimitz Middle School**

**PSC 4.0 Evaluation Rubric  
Superintendent’s Review Panel**

Section of Proposal	Characteristics of an Exemplary Response	Comments <i>What were the strengths of the plan? Concerns or areas of weakness?</i>	Follow Up Questions
<b>A. Vision and Instructional Philosophy</b>	<p>The vision statement communicates the school's fundamental beliefs about student learning and high expectations/rigorous standards for both students and adults. The vision statement and explanation of the vision provides a clear statement of values that will lead to the success of the school's future graduates. The key priorities of the school are meaningful, measurable, ambitious yet attainable, and appropriate for the target student population, as are the instructional strategies.</p>	<p><b>Strengths:</b> Nimitz' plan hones in on core principles. The planning team does this with the ANCHORS that serve to unify the document. The planning team calls out models they plan to use, such as UbD and Jupiter grades. The planning team intentionally makes community engagement a part of their ANCHORS.</p> <p><b>Concerns:</b> The vision is not clear; it seems very generic. There is nothing original called out in the vision; it sounds like what the school should be doing anyway. The planning team would benefit from including a narrative about a student's day that provides the reader with a visual experience. The vision needs to be more descriptive by naming specific research-driven models and including details. The instructional philosophy is not clear or defined enough; there are few details to support it. The planning team does not address a broader audience. The use of acronyms without a clear explanation (eg., A-G and AVID) assumes the reader knows the educational lingo, which is not necessarily the case. The planning team uses the right reform catch phrases or language but does not include concrete examples of how these reforms translate into their school experience.</p>	
<b>B. School Data Profile/ Analysis</b>	<p>A wide range of data is used to conduct a thorough, in-depth analysis—at a minimum the review must discuss (a) areas of strengths and concerns; (b) areas of improvement over recent years; (c) both positive and negative trends over the past few years; and (d) underlying root causes of persistent trends.</p> <p>The data analysis conveys a highly complex and profound understanding of the school community and whole student, including physical, emotional, social, and academic needs. The application focuses in on three to five critical issues that are highly relevant to the school and will have far-reaching impacts when improved upon. The issues identified cover instructional, behavioral, and operational needs, rather than focusing solely on one area.</p>	<p><b>Strengths:</b> The Nimitz planning team provides a good narrative account and analysis of the leadership turnover. They realize they do not have a stable leader. The planning team uses CST data and discusses demographics. They are conscious of the district's expectations for student achievement and clearly understand where they should be. The planning team expresses a desire to meet/exceed the district expectations. The plan includes an in-depth description of the School for Advanced Studies that comprises 1/3 of the student population. The planning team breaks down the math results and point out that their students are not ready for algebra in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Additionally, the team highlights the gap between English language learners and general education students. The plan identifies increased parent engagement as a school priority.</p> <p><b>Concerns:</b> The writing style of the section itself is declarative. It is difficult to follow the sheer amount of data collected and documented; the facts and figures start to run together and lose their meaning. The planning team describes school programs but does not disaggregate the school data by program, i.e. SAS, AVID, Magnet. The planning team does not use qualitative data that might shed an awareness of the social emotional needs of the</p>	<p>When you disaggregate your school data by program, what does it tell you about how each group is progressing?</p> <p>Is the overall school growth due to the achievement of one key group of students?</p> <p>Did you survey the parents to see how they perceive the school?</p> <p>What are the district-mandated performance</p>

**PSC School: Nimitz Middle School**

		<p>students, or to highlight what they consider broken, ineffective or not working on their campus. While the planning team mentions teacher feedback, there is no reference to exactly what input they received.</p> <p>The reflection/interpretation of the data lacks depth and complexity. The planning team does not explore cause and effect or underlying reasons for the school's current state. The planning team does not provide an analysis of their prediction of how students will fare or whether students will be prepared for a high school's college preparatory curriculum. There is no description of what the planning team did not find in the classroom, e.g. what pedagogical practices are implemented well or not implemented at all. There is no data on the impact of the school's current intervention programs or AVID on student achievement. The planning team does not accept ownership of the students' lack of achievement. In the section that discusses the special education program, the planning team implies that the special needs population is the cause of the low scores.</p>	<p>meter targets and SMART goals the school identified this fall?</p> <p>How do you address the historical administrative turnover?</p> <p>Going forward, how do you ensure consistent leadership?</p>
<p><b>C. School Turnaround</b></p>	<p>Overall, the strategies, practices, programs, and policies identified in this section are linked to the vision statement of the school and the results of the team's data analysis—it is clear that when the strategies are fully, effectively implemented, the priority area will be addressed. The plan is clear, concise, and provides evidence that the school will accelerate student achievement fairly quickly, over the next few years.</p> <p>Evidence is provided to show that the strategies for turning around the school culture, into one that promotes the intellectual and social development of all students, are effective as well as realistic given the context of the school. Systems and structures will be established to support the transition to a culture/climate that supports the vision of the school and success of each future graduate.</p> <p>The plan demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the current school community and its stakeholders, including staff, students, parents and community members. This knowledge was used to develop thoughtful, tailored strategies to share, communicate and generate interest and create excitement for the school turnaround plan. The plan recognizes the need for a differentiated approach in order to fully engage each of the</p>	<p><b>Strengths:</b> The Nimitz team states that the school wants to implement vertical articulation through personalized learning environments (PLEs). They are examining the bell schedule and the teacher teams responsible for specific groups of students. There is a direct link back to the ANCHORS in their vision. The planning team envisions college and career ready themes for their PLEs, which are aligned to district priorities. The planning team identifies Understanding by Design (UbD) to focus their curriculum development. If the school teams embrace the UbD philosophy, then this will begin to help them to align their curriculum to student learning. The planning team also identifies direct curricular alignment the common core state standards (CCSS). The planning team indicates they have SMART goals tied to student learning in PLEs, and plan to chart student growth towards their targets within PLEs. Everyone is collectively working towards a goal; they expect students to take ownership of the learning targets. The learning objectives will be student-friendly. The planning team states that they want to phase in project-based or inquiry-based learning; they are not trying to get all teachers to use it right away. The phase in is realistic. The planning team states they plan to implement an inclusion model for special needs students</p> <p><b>Concerns:</b> The planning team does not discuss the types of supports special needs students will need in an inclusion setting. Much of what the planning team identifies is what the district is already mandating that schools put in place to improve student learning. In order to turn the school around, the planning team needs to go beyond what the district is already asking the school to do. The planning team needs to address what they are currently doing that is not working and how this turnaround plan will radically change their students' daily educational experiences. There is a sense that teachers are just going to collaborate without any deep or meaningful shift in their core beliefs about teaching and learning.</p> <p>Overall the turnaround plan lacks benchmarks for progress. The section lacks research-</p>	<p>How are district compliance issues going to potentially disrupt what they are planning to do?</p> <p>Where are the growth targets attached to special education section?</p> <p>Did the planning team give serious analysis to the programs and pedagogical practices identified?</p> <p>Does PBL refer to the Buck Institute's Project Based Learning, or just to performance-based assessment?</p>

**PSC School: Nimitz Middle School**

	<p>various stakeholder groups</p>	<p>based evidence on why the school is using each of the programs or the pedagogical practices identified. Overall, the plan does not reflect a true understanding of Nimitz students' needs. The plan reads like a list of programs and practices that are included because the district expects to see them herein, without a clear articulation of what implementation will look like or entail. The plan states a curriculum, instruction and assessment focus, while implying an interpretation by the staff of teaching to the standards through "drill and kill". The planning team meshes PBL and UBD together as interchangeable programs, which they are not. This seems to imply a lack of deep understanding of the programs the school plans to implement. The plan states that the school is using these two programs simultaneously. Each program has its own design principles and it does not make sense to implement two similar planning programs to reach the same goal.</p> <p>The planning team would benefit from more specificity in this section. The planning team would benefit from providing a sample unit of study that shows the type of teaching and learning they intend for students.</p>	
<p><b>D. Implementa- tion</b></p>	<p>The benchmarks for determining progress are clearly articulated and will provide an accurate measure of whether or not the strategies, practices, programs, policies are having the intended impact. The timeline and process for measuring progress will be frequent and regular, enough to ensure that the team can spot trouble areas immediately and make mid-course corrections as necessary.</p> <p>There is a clear understanding of the realistic challenges that the school may face in turning around the school. The ideas for counteracting these challenges are thoughtful, applicable, creative, and within reason.</p>	<p><b>Strengths:</b> The Nimitz plan identifies a planned summer learning institute; an oath that shows buy-in for the plan; and the Porthole into the Classroom model that supports peer observations as three planned policies that indicate an understanding of the immediate need to change school culture. The planning team calls out the Teaching &amp; Learning framework; this demonstrates that the school is thinking ahead and aligning its practices in the district's planned future direction. The implementation section refers to a two-hour teacher commitment to after school intervention for students, as well as model classrooms that are tied to specific strategies. The planning team unequivocally identifies their school administrators' dislike to participating in professional development. The implementation section sets expectations for administrators to participate in the PLEs, be attached to departments, and there be mutual accountability. Teachers will evaluate administrators within their respective department. The planning team anticipates the challenges to getting buy-in to the school vision as well as measuring teacher success.</p> <p><b>Concerns:</b> The implementation plan lacks benchmarks. The planning team needs to start thinking about the realistic implementation of their plan and how they will measure progress. The plan lacks an analysis of the research to show why the school selected specific strategies and how they can be successfully implemented at their school site. The planned after school intervention program does not contain any details.</p>	<p>What kinds of support structures will be in place for teachers who are struggling?</p> <p>How are you going to evaluate teachers?</p> <p>How are compliance issues going to be addressed that might disrupt the PD plan?</p> <p>How can you capture the successful instructional strategies implemented in the SAS program (e.g. Depth and Complexity Icons), and share them with your other school programs so that all students can be pushed to think critically?</p>

**PSC School: Nimitz Middle School**

<p><b>E. Alternative Governance Models &amp; Autonomies</b></p>	<p>The plan presents a clear rationale for the chosen alternative governance model as well as any requested autonomies and how these elements fully support the school's vision and instructional philosophy. A thorough explanation is provided for how the selected model will allow for high levels of academic achievement among the target population of students. Plan provides a thoughtful, comprehensive rationale for why each requested autonomy is necessary to support student achievement at the school.</p> <p>The plan explains what steps the school will take to ensure that a culture of shared leadership and decision-making focused on high student performance is in place to effectively implement the governance model and requested autonomies. Where applicable, evidence of staff input from UTLA members (e.g., petition, vote tally) is attached to the plan.</p> <p><i>Governing School Council (pilot schools only):</i> Composition of the Governing School Council is in compliance with state regulations. Membership selection process is fair, equitable and also in compliance with state regulations. Roles and responsibilities of governing council is clearly articulated and broader than School Leadership Council. A draft of the Elect to Work agreement is attached. <i>NOTE: All pilot school applications will also be reviewed by the Pilot School Steering Committee.</i></p>	<p><b>Strengths:</b> The school site held an election. The planning team engaged the staff in the process. There is overwhelming support for ESBMM. Each teacher is required to sit on a committee focused on monitoring the progress of programs and initiatives. This requirement can potentially meet the Teaching &amp; Learning framework's expectation for teachers to make other contributions to the school community. The Autonomies and rationale are tied to the proposed programs. The planning team is strategic about the periodic assessment waivers.</p> <p><b>Concerns:</b> The rationales are very brief. The planning teams need to ensure that the rationales are tied to their plan of action. The autonomies are not tied to student achievement outcomes. The governance section states what the school wants but not why they want it. Why is a particular autonomy important to their successfully implementing their plan?</p>	<p>What will the bell schedule look like at the school site?</p> <p>What is the meeting schedule? What are the term limits for committee members?</p> <p>How will you rotate roles?</p> <p>Why did you pick ESBMM?</p>
<p><b>F. School Planning Team</b></p>	<p>Members of the school planning team were identified by a fair, equitable, transparent process; the team is diverse and representative of the entire school community, including faculty, staff, students, parents, and community members. All members, including the leader, fully participated and actively contributed to the plan development/writing process. Member contribution is noticeable and extended beyond those typically attributed to them (e.g., parents contributed in more ways than in discussions solely related to parent engagement). Parents and students were specifically engaged as plan writing/developing members and as leaders in</p>	<p><b>Strengths:</b> Various stakeholders are represented on the team, including teachers, consultants, parents, community members and administrators. Parents were informed of the process and extended an invitation to participate through written communication home. The team members have a wide range of levels of experience and a broad range of perspectives. The sub-committee approach allows people to work in small groups to tackle specific issues.</p> <p><b>Concerns:</b> It is woefully apparent that the planning team divided the writing responsibilities. Overall, the plan lacks logical flow, does not directly connect back to the school's vision, does not appear to have cohesion, and reads like a fragmented document. The planning team would benefit from assigning the revision to a key group so that it becomes a clear, cohesive plan</p>	<p>It seems like the school values community partnerships and parent engagement. What community partnerships do they hope to have to support this work?</p> <p>Can you elaborate on the consensus process used during the planning process and how the</p>

**PSC School: Nimitz Middle School**

<p>the process. The process of developing the plan included equitable delegation of work and responsibilities, a comprehensive communication strategy to ensure all members are fully informed of decisions, and a conscious effort to regularly update the school's community-at-large (beyond the members of the school planning team).</p>	<p>aligned to the school's mission and vision. The plan would benefit from a narrative that helps the reader visualize the Nimitz experience and ties everything together. The turnaround and data sub-committees need to closely analyze the weaknesses in the school. The school will need to establish strong community partnerships to support the work of engaging parents.</p>	<p>writing of the plan was reviewed by the team?</p>
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**School Visits**

Did your Review Team conduct a School Visit? (circle one) YES / NO

**Planning Team Interviews**

Did your Review Team conduct a Planning Team Interview? (circle one) YES / NO

**Final Recommendation to the Superintendent**

**Overall Rating:** (circle one)      Beginning      **Developing**      Well-Developed      Exemplary

**Overall Comments:**

Nimitz MS has written a promising school plan. Nimitz MS is commended for recognizing the need for community engagement and the outreach done during the plan-writing process. It has ideas and programs that are proposed to turn around their school. Their goals are realistic and initiatives are tangible, however, the school plan lacks thorough analytical and reflective writing utilizing current research-based practices to become a high achieving middle school. Nimitz MS would benefit from describing its core educational beliefs and elaborating on how this will prepare their students to be successful in college preparatory coursework in high school. The research and initiatives that are proposed are not tied to the turnaround they hope to see at their school. The plan needs to explicitly state how their strategies and programs proposed will improve student achievement through their targeted priorities. In addition, the school plan would be strengthened by outlining clear benchmarks that will indicate success for students, staff, and community. The Nimitz MS school plan would benefit from a cohesive thread which highlights the Nimitz experience as seen through the eyes of students and teachers at the school. This would allow the reader to connect the school's vision and instructional philosophy to each section of the plan.

**Recommendation:**

- Need to bring a core team together to work on the cohesion of the plan.
- Need to provide more details in the form of a narrative addressing what teachers' and students' experiences at the school are.
- The master schedule would help to paint the picture of learning for students.