



TOP-2

District-Managed Turnaround Plan – Step 2 (TOP-2)

Gadsden
James A. Shanks Middle School

Due-October 1

Form Number DMT, TOP-2, incorporated in Rule 6A-1.099811, F.A.C., effective August 2023

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 2 (TOP-2)

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to guide districts to develop a plan for implementation of a district-managed turnaround plan. The district shall provide the Department with the plan for approval by the State Board of Education (SBE).

Directions

Districts shall complete this Step 2 form for each school that is required to implement a district-managed turnaround plan. This plan must be submitted by the district to the Regional Executive Director (RED) for review and feedback before submitting it to BSI. The plan must be approved by the local school board. This completed form must be signed by the superintendent or authorized representative and emailed to BSI@fldoe.org no later than October 1. The subject line of the email must include district name, school name and TOP-2.

School

In the box below identify the name and MSID number of the school that will be supported through the district-managed turnaround plan.

School Name/ MSID Number

James A. Shanks Middle School/0211

Needs Assessment

The district is responsible for documenting a needs assessment that uses quantitative and qualitative data to identify the needs of the school system, including needs identified by families and the community.

The summary of the needs assessment results must address points of strength and opportunities for growth in the school system (at both the district and school level) in each of these three domains:

1. Transformational Leadership
2. Standards-based Instruction and Learning (for student and adult learners)
3. Positive Culture and Environment

In the box below, describe the methodology used for the needs assessment, including 3-year data trends from the state, district, and school levels. Include a review of all strategies to determine which are improving the school and should be reinforced or supplemented, as well as which strategies are not resulting in improvement.

Describe the methodology used for needs assessment, including 3-year data trends from the state, district, and school levels.

The school data analyzed to determine goals for school improvement at James A. Shanks Middle School (SMS) included progress monitoring data, student discipline data, student attendance data, and teacher certification data. Table 1 indicates the grade assignment as reported by Florida's Accountability System.

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Table 1. School Grade

	2023	2022	2021
School Grade	D	I	D

The learning loss precipitated by the Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact students enrolled at James A. Shanks Middle School. The significant challenges are evidenced through student performance data noted in Table 2. Student performance data at SMS was well below the district's percent scoring at proficiency on both the English Language Arts and Mathematics subtests. Further, as Table 2 demonstrates, performance at grades 4, 5 and 6 indicate a deficit requiring immediate action.

Table 2. Rates of Proficiency

	Percent Scoring At/Above Proficiency [School]	Percent Scoring At/Above Proficiency [District]
English Language Arts	22%	31%
Mathematics	14%	36%
English Language Arts {Grd 4}	10%	28%
English Language Arts {Grd 5}	9%	22%
Mathematics {Grd 5}	9%	27%
Mathematics {Grd 6}	8%	29%

The review and analysis of the student performance data from the annual state assessment supports the need to provide continuous support and professional learning to the teachers at SMS.

Identify strategies that have evidence of improvement at the school and how they will be reinforced or supplemented.

Gadsden County School District identified and assigned school administrators to schools based on the administrators' experience and evidence of progress. James A. Shanks Middle School has experienced an unstable workforce which impacted student performance, culture and climate. Effective leadership requires school leaders to step out of their zones of comfort, accept new challenges based on their strengths and become a driving force for school improvement. To this end, the Gadsden County School District identified and assigned a new administrative team to serve as instructional leaders at SMS for the 2024-2025 school year. Successful strategies that will be reinforced or supplemented include:

- *Provide support to new and beginning teachers through mentors and ongoing professional development in (1) pedagogy, (2) classroom management, (3) progress monitoring, and (4) building student resilience*
- *Provide ongoing professional development in instructional strategies based on the science of reading*
- *Provide ongoing support and professional learning for all instructional staff and leadership in high quality Tier I instruction supporting best possible student outcomes*
- *Secure additional human resources and professional learning to support Tier II and Tier III interventions and acceleration to address instruction provided to all subgroups, with increased emphasis on Students with Disabilities (SWD) and English Language Learners (ELL).*
- *Provide ongoing guidance and support to school administrators focused on leading a school in turnaround status*

Identify strategies that have not resulted in improvement. What will be done differently?

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Identifying, recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers continues to be an ongoing challenge that the school district faces. In prior years, the school has utilized instructional coaches and substitute teachers to cover classes when there is no instructor. The failure to provide qualified instructors has negatively impact student growth as aforementioned data demonstrates. SMS will make the following adjustments:

- *For core instruction, if a substitute is covering a class, the students will be temporarily assigned to certificated teachers for core instruction, specifically, the reading block.*
- *To facilitate improved classroom instruction, teachers have been assigned to areas/subjects most aligned with their areas of certification.*
- *To build capacity and support quality instruction, instructional coaches support instruction, provide modeling and support classrooms when substitute teachers are necessary.*

To facilitate improved instructional delivery and build teacher capacity, the district's reading and math coaches are assigned to SMS two days a week for ongoing professional development and coaching.

Implementation Plan

Part A. Summarize the district-managed turnaround plan and describe how the needs assessment results will be addressed in each of these three domains:

1. Accountable and Shared Leadership
2. Standards-based Instruction and Learning (for student and adult learners)
3. Positive Culture and Environment.

Part B. In this plan, verify that each assurance outlined in the TOP-1 form for district-managed turnaround has been addressed.

Part A.

Accountability and Shared Leadership

The GCSD has elected to implement the District-managed Turnaround Option. The District's Educational Management Team will receive bi-weekly updates on the status of the relative to attendance (teacher and student), behavior and course performance. The school principal will provide updates during monthly Principal Leadership Team Meetings (PLTM) to demonstrate school-level leadership and collaboration. All meetings will be documented by meeting agenda, attendance and notes.

Standards-based Instruction and Learning

The Directors of Elementary and Secondary Instruction and district instructional specialists for ELA and Mathematics, will collaborate with the school leadership team to support instruction. Weekly learning walks will be conducted to support and or model standards-based instruction. Instructional resources for core instruction, supplemental support and enrichment will be purchased so that students can benefit. Professional learning opportunities will be ongoing for all teachers. The district's evaluation system will serve as a tool to improve instruction, and training is scheduled throughout the school year.

Research indicates that students who struggle with reading at Grade 3 are more likely to drop out of high school. To this end, the district has redirected its focus on building the foundation skills by ensuring that students in grades prekindergarten through second receive immediate interventions when reading deficiencies are noted. At James A. Shanks Middle School, which is the receiving school for many of the fragile learners, supplemental funding will support acceleration and intervention services during the school

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day. The instructional leaders at SMS have elected to infuse tutoring and additional support within the school hours as research indicates that high-impact tutoring occurs when relationships are established, and tutoring occurs when students are present (Sparks, 2023). Funds will be used to offer after school and summer instructional programs. Push-in and pull-out support, provided by trained personnel will be available during the school day. Specifically, James A. Shanks Middle School will receive additional support provided the district's instructional specialists and retired educators. Parents will receive access to information that will assist them in supporting their children at home through community trainings/meetings.

Positive Culture and Environment

The school district will continue to promote positive behavior support through the implementation of the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). Student and staff recognition efforts, supported by community partners will be instituted monthly. Expectations, both social and academic, will be communicated through a school-wide behavior modification plan. The district's Exceptional Student Education program has assigned a team comprised of a program specialist, school psychologist, and other support to work specifically with identified students for their success. The department will ensure that classroom teachers are aware of and follow each child's Individual Education Plan with fidelity.

Part B.

Assurance 1: District Capacity and Support

The district leadership team, which includes the superintendent, assistant superintendent for academic services, assistant superintendent for support services, school safety director, director of human resources and director of finance meet weekly to analyze data, collaborate and problem solve to address the needs of the schools. The Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services serves as the lead of the turnaround effort and reports directly to the superintendent. Monthly, the Extended Educational Management Team which includes those in charge of curriculum, general and special education, student services, human resources, professional development and family and community engagement meet to plan and review progress on school and district improvement.

Progress monitoring assessments that are aligned to Florida's State Academic Standards in ELA, mathematics, social studies and science are administered using the Renaissance suite (Star Early Literacy, Star Reading, Star Math, curricular assessments for social studies and science).

Assurance 2: School Capacity – Leaders and Educators

The school principal and assistant principal have previously demonstrated the capacity to improve student achievement.

Leaders: An annual professional development plan, as required by Florida Department of Education, has been developed by the director of professional learning in collaboration with the teachers and leaders at the schools. The plan provides ongoing tiered support to increase leadership and educator quality.

The school principal and assistant principal have previously demonstrated the capacity to improve student achievement. The district completed a Principal Change Verification Form for principal placement and the Florida Department of Education approved the request.

The district assures that the principal will be replaced, unless recommended for retention in collaboration with the Department, upon entry into district-managed turnaround based upon the individual's turnaround record and degree of success, the length of time since turnaround success, the degree of similarity in the

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student populations and any other factors that would indicate the principal will have turnaround success with this school.

Educators

The district continues the review of practices in hiring, recruitment, retention and reassignment of instructional personnel with priority on student performance data. An effort to recruit teachers has been incentivized.

The district continues to leverage personnel to ensure that higher performing teachers are assigned to Schools Improvement schools.

The district continues to monitor hiring, to ensure that the instructional personnel who do not have a state VAM rating and who do not show evidence of increasing student achievement are not rehired at the school.

While there continues to be a shortage of qualified teachers in education across Florida, the district has made every effort, pursuant to section 1012.2315(2)(a), F.S., to ensure that the percentage of temporarily certified instructional personnel, instructional personnel in need of improvement or out-of-field instructional personnel assigned to the school is not higher than the district average.

To ensure that K-12 intensive reading instruction is provided by teachers certified or endorsed in reading, the district is participating in trainings that will provide a cadre of trainers to facilitate reading endorsement. In addition, the district continues to include stipends to encourage teachers to obtain reading certification and or endorsement.

Explain the correlation between the School Improvement Plan (SIP, annual school plan) and this proposed district-managed turnaround plan (TOP-2, 2-year district plan). Describe how the district and school leadership team are working together to implement the plans to improve the school.

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Correlation between SIP and TOP-2:

Data analysis conducted to build the SIP indicated that the contributing factors to the need for improvement include: (1) instructors' lack of appropriate instructional strategies to meet the needs of fragile learners with adverse childhood experiences, (2) learners' lack of foundational skills required to read, understand and comprehend grade level text, (3) lack of consistency of effective instructional staff, (4) excessive absenteeism, and (5) lack of support for ESE students. The contributing factors serve as the basis for the TOP-2.

Describe how the district and school leadership team are working together to implement the plans to improve the school.

The District is committed to providing the most effective instructional support for James A. Shanks Middle School to ensure that students receive a quality education. The District will institute the following strategies:

- Host monthly leadership meetings with school principal with focus on attendance, behavior and course performance data.
- Monitor student performance using district assessments.
- Provide fiscal resources to recruit and retain highly effective instructional personnel.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for instructional leaders and staff.
- Provide instructional support through ELA and Mathematics instructional specialists
- Provide intervention and acceleration instructional services to scholars based on data analysis.
- Host quarterly parent meetings to keep parents informed of student progress and provide information pertinent to student success.

District-Managed Turnaround Plan Assurances

The district must agree to ALL of the following assurances by checking the boxes below.

Assurance 1: District Capacity and Support

The district shall ensure the district leadership team, which includes the superintendent and district leadership, has an integral role in school improvement. This team may include those in charge of curriculum, general and special education, student services, human resources, professional learning and other areas relevant to school improvement. The district leadership team shall develop and implement the district-managed turnaround plan. The district shall dedicate a position to lead the turnaround effort at the district level. The selected employee shall report directly to the superintendent and support the principal.

The district shall ensure that instructional programs align to Florida's state academic standards for English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, social studies and science. The district shall provide the evidence that shows instructional programs to be effective with schools that are low-performing with students of similar demographics, how they are different from the previous programs, how the instructional and intervention programs are consistent with s. 1001.215(8), as well as how remedial and supplemental instruction resources are prioritized for K-3 students with a substantial deficiency in reading. The district shall demonstrate alignment of Florida's state academic standards across grade levels to improve background knowledge in social studies, science and the arts.

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☒ The district shall prescribe and require progress monitoring assessments that are aligned to Florida's state academic standards in ELA, mathematics, social studies and science for all students. The district shall ensure that its progress monitoring assessments are predictive of statewide assessment outcomes and provide valid data to support intervention and acceleration for students.

Assurance 1: Narrative of District Capacity and Support

In the box below, the district should provide information about its systems that support school leadership teams to implement turnaround interventions, including the following: alignment and allocation of support and resources, policies and practices, governance systems for review and monitoring. At a minimum, the narrative shall address the following:

1. Describe the district leadership team and its role in implementing the DMT plan.
2. Explain how the district allows for flexibility in areas such as staffing, scheduling and budgeting, to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes.
3. Identify how the new or revised instructional programs align to Florida's state academic standards for ELA, mathematics, social studies and science; the research that shows it to be effective with schools that are low-performing with students of similar demographics; and how they are different from the previous programs.
4. Describe how the instructional and intervention programs for reading are consistent with s. 1001.215(8).
5. Identify progress monitoring and summative assessments aligned to Florida's state academic standards that will be used in the school.
6. Based on the analysis of progress monitoring and summative assessment data, describe any changes that will be implemented to provide continuous support for the school.
7. Explain the district's allocation of supports and resources and how they align to the specific needs of the school.
8. Describe how remedial and supplemental instruction resources are prioritized for K-3 students with a substantial deficiency in reading in accordance with the district's K-12 Comprehensive Evidence-based Reading Plan.
9. Identify and describe the district policies and practices that will need to be reviewed and changed to support the school.
10. Describe the system that the district will put in place to review and monitor the effectiveness of the support.

Assurance 1: Narrative of District Capacity and Support

Describe the district leadership team and its role in implementing the DMT plan.

The district's leadership team which is comprised of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, Assistant Superintendent of Support Services, Director of Human Resources, Director of Finance, Coordinator of Safety and the Community Affairs/Public Relations coordinator, meets weekly to review district and state assessments and problem solve collectively to support the school's success and to overcome internal and external barriers that could impede school improvement.

Explain how the district allows for flexibility in areas such as staffing, scheduling and budgeting, to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student achievement outcomes.

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The Human Resources Department has prioritized the school for staffing by sending candidates identified by the district to the principal for review before other schools. Once candidates are cleared by the district, the principal has the autonomy to select teachers based on their discretion. Teacher VAM data is accessible to the principal to ensure the most committed and highest performing teachers serve students at the school. Voluntary and involuntary transfers are completed to effectively raise student achievement. Transfer requests are approved based on principals' requests, employee requests, VAM data and principal evaluations. This strategy is applied to give the school a new start and to strengthen the school improvement plan and improve student achievement. A highly qualified and highly effective reading specialist supports the school to improve reading performance and to assist teachers with maintaining safe and positive classroom and school environments. A highly qualified and highly effective math specialist is assigned to the school to improve math performance.

Identify how the new or revised instructional programs align to Florida's Standards for ELA, mathematics, social studies and science; the research that shows it to be effective with high-poverty, at-risk students; and how they are different from the previous programs.

The district adopted a new curriculum in reading and mathematics. The adoption was informed by members of the school's instructional materials review team. All instructional materials being used by the school are on the state-approved list of instructional materials. As the school's leadership team worked to identify supplemental materials, they were required to only consider materials identified as "promising" and higher from the Evidence for ESSA website. To maximize resources, ensure authentic implementation and verify effectiveness of supplemental resources, the instructional leaders are expected to reduce the number of supplemental resources. This practice will allow educators to determine effectiveness through intentional implementation and evaluation.

Describe how the instructional and intervention programs for reading are consistent with s. 1001.215(8).

The district is taking part in all professional learning activities provided by PAEC and local universities. The district has identified individuals who will become trained as trainers in order to build capacity to increase the number of teachers with reading endorsement. The district will access the support of our State Regional Literacy Director.

Students with significant reading deficiencies have been identified and the school provides individual and small group instruction, specifically in foundational reading skills.

Identify progress monitoring and summative assessments aligned to Florida's Standards that will be used in the school.

District progress monitoring occurs quarterly, and classroom teachers utilize curriculum-aligned progress monitoring to track student improvement or needs. The district will use Star Reading (Grades 4 - 8) and Star Mathematics (Grades 4 - 8). The school will also take part in the progress monitoring systems provided by the Florida Department of Education.

Based on the analysis of progress monitoring and summative assessment data, describe any changes that will be implemented to provide continuous support for the school.

There will be instructional specialists in Reading and Math assigned to the school. They will be assigned to James A. Shanks Middle School for 40% of their week. The specialists will provide specific and targeted support to the school. The coaching model (pre-planning, modeling, observing, and debriefing) is used to support teachers in effective evidenced-based instructional strategies that improve students' academic performance. The instructional specialists assist and provide support to teachers in the

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development of standard-based lessons via Professional Learning Communities and effective common planning. Instructional leaders at the district work with instructional specialists continuously to build and develop the skills necessary to successfully support classroom teachers in the areas of planning, delivery of instruction, differentiated instruction, data analysis, and digital fluency. The instructional specialists, in concert with the school leadership team, will facilitate the common planning process, in which teachers will jointly plan, observe, analyze, debrief and refine classroom lessons to improve student outcomes. In addition, the team will facilitate effective professional learning for principals, teachers, and interventionists at the site. Teachers are given an opportunity during faculty meetings to share instructional best practices. A part of the school's culture is to also provide opportunities for teachers to serve as models for specific content areas. Teachers are provided opportunities to observe colleague teachers during classroom instruction to acquire innovative instructional delivery through feedback and collaboration. Professional Learning Communities are also job-embedded to develop a culture of continuous improvement throughout the school. All teachers attend common planning prepared to discuss best practices in lesson delivery as well as developing and selecting higher level questions to incorporate into lessons for the week. Standards clarifications are reviewed to ensure targeted skills are addressed for each standard and are following district pacing guides. In efforts to close the achievement gaps, interventions are provided daily to all learners. From the data, the interventions are tiered to support the students. Assessment data will be collected and analyzed weekly by the school leadership team. The school leadership team, in collaboration with the instructional specialist and classroom teacher will determine appropriate interventions to be differentiated based on student need. Interventions and acceleration services take place throughout the day through pull-outs and push-ins. The students' progress will be closely monitored by instructional specialists and the school leadership team and additional adjustments will be made to instruction as needed and recommended by instructional specialists to ensure ongoing progress and acceleration. Classroom teachers that may need support with specific standards and/or skills are also identified through this data analysis. Instructional support is assigned by the principal to support specific teachers based on the data outcomes. The leadership team closely monitors weekly student products to ensure the instruction is aligned to the standards. The administrative team develops "look-fors" to facilitate instructional walk-throughs. One of the root causes of low proficiency can be attributed to teachers' limited understanding of the Florida State Academic Standards and the lack of standards-aligned instruction. To continuously assist teachers with Standards Mastery, the district will provide Standards Based Instruction professional learning. Implementation will be done by the district Director of Professional Learning. Instructional specialists will continue to build capacity through modeling lessons for teachers, conferencing with teachers and facilitating teachers observing other teachers to strengthen areas of weaknesses. All instructional staff are required to integrate research-based strategies within their respective areas to support and improve academic achievement. The district is committed to providing every student with a world-class education that prepares them for college and careers in the 21st century. To accomplish this, it is imperative that the highest qualified teachers and staff are recruited and retained for sustainability. As a district, Gadsden County seeks teachers who are dedicated to the success of all students, particularly those in fragile schools; committed to producing quantifiable student achievement gains; and a willingness to persevere using the problem-solving model and turning challenges into opportunities.

Explain the district's allocation of supports and resources and how they align to the specific needs of the school.

There will be instructional specialists in Reading and Math assigned to the school. They will be assigned to James A. Shanks Middle School for 40% of their week. The primary focus of the turnaround principal is ensuring instruction aligned to the Florida State Academic Standards while simultaneously strengthening relationships and facilitating a positive change in school culture to build both teacher and

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student expectations. Resources that support the turnaround school include federal Title allocations, school improvement funds, and school-shares of resources funded through the FEFP. Human resources, specifically our district reading and math specialists, are assigned to support the school at the school site two days per week. The specialists provide support to teachers in planning and delivering instruction. The specialists also provide small group instruction to students. The turnaround principal will be afforded access to these resources, in compliance with any funding limitations by program requirements (i.e., rank and serve for Title I; supplement not supplant requirements; specific allocations through school improvement grants). Instructional materials and supplies needed to deliver instruction are secured immediately. Having immediate access to instructional resources will reduce barriers that may impede learning.

The turnaround principal's requests will be prioritized, if there are not funding or compliance limitations that would be breached with the approval of the request (i.e., rank and serve for Title I, limitations of budget line items, allowability, supplement not supplant, federal requirements, etc.). Priority for allocations will be provided to the school.

Describe how remedial and supplemental instruction resources are prioritized for K-3 students with a substantial deficiency in reading in accordance with the district's K-12 Comprehensive Evidence-based Reading Plan.

The Gadsden County School District recognizes that the foundational skills of early learners are vital to the success of students as they matriculate through middle and high schools. Research shows that students who struggle with reading at Grade 3 are more likely to drop out of high school. To this end, the district has redirected its focus on building the foundation skills by ensuring that students in grades prekindergarten through second receive immediate interventions when reading deficiencies are noted. Supplemental funding will support after school and summer instructional programs. Push-in and pull-out support, provided by trained personnel, will be available during the school day. Parents will receive access to information that will assist them in supporting their children at home through community trainings. Funds through the K12 CERP clearly indicate the district's focus on primary education, with specific funding for additional support of students with reading deficiencies.

Identify and describe the district policies and practices that will need to be reviewed and changed to support the school.

At present, there are no policies or practices that will need to be reviewed and changed to support the school.

Assurance 2: School Capacity-Leaders and Educators

The district shall ensure the school has effective leaders and educators capable of improving student achievement.

Leaders

The district leadership team, in collaboration with the school, shall develop an annual professional learning plan that provides ongoing tiered support to increase leadership and educator quality.

The district shall ensure the principal has a successful record in leading a turnaround school and the qualifications to support the student population being served. The district shall complete

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a Principal Change Verification Form when there is a proposed principal change at the school no later than 10 days prior to the proposed principal hire date.

The district shall ensure that the principal will be replaced, unless recommended for retention in collaboration with the Department, upon entry into district-managed turnaround based upon the individual's turnaround record and degree of success, the length of time since turnaround success, the degree of similarity in the student populations and any other factor that would indicate the principal will have turnaround success with this school.

Educators

The district shall ensure it has reviewed practices in hiring, recruitment, retention and reassignment of instructional personnel with priority on student performance data.

For districts with more than five schools, the district shall ensure that the percentage of instructional personnel assigned to a School Improvement (SI) school with a VAM rating that is below effective is less than the district average. For districts with five or fewer schools, the district shall ensure that the percentage of instructional personnel assigned to a SI school with a VAM rating that is below effective is less than the state average.

The district shall ensure the instructional staff who do not have a VAM rating and who do not show evidence of increasing student achievement are not rehired at the school.

Pursuant to section 1012.2315(2)(a), F.S., the district must ensure that the percentage of temporarily certified teachers, teachers in need of improvement or out-of-field teachers assigned to the school is not higher than the district average.

Ensure that K-12 intensive reading instruction is provided by teachers with a reading certificate, endorsement or micro-credential .

Assurance 2: Narrative of School Capacity-Leaders

In the box below, the district must provide information about its systems to ensure the school has an effective administrator capable of leading the turnaround efforts, including desired experience and competencies, recruitment and retention incentives and operational flexibility. At a minimum, reply to the following:

1. Has the principal been retained or replaced? Include the principal's name and start date, selection process and leadership experience.
2. Provide evidence that indicates the principal has a proven record of success in turnaround schools and the qualifications to support the student population being served.
3. Will other members of the school leadership team be retained or replaced and when? Explain the team's turnaround experience.
4. Does the district offer incentives to attract and retain principals willing to lead a turnaround school?
5. How does the district build the capacity of turnaround leaders?
6. What operational flexibility will be afforded to the principal, such as the degree of input in selecting their school leadership team and instructional staff?
7. What actions will the district take regarding the school leadership team after the first year of this plan if the school's grade does not improve?

Assurance 2: Narrative of School Capacity- Leaders

Has the principal been retained or replaced? Include the principal's name and start date, selection process and leadership experience.

The district proposed and has been approved by the Florida Department of Education to assign Ms. Camry S. Floyd as principal of James A. Shanks Middle School. Her start date was July 1, 2024.

Gadsden County School District identified and assigned school administrators to schools based on the administrators' experience. The principal is well-respected throughout the community by students, parents and community agencies. Upon her last assignment, she was able to create an environment that engaged the entire school community in school improvement efforts.

Provide evidence that indicates the principal and assistant principal have a proven record of success in turnaround schools and the qualifications to support the community served.

Miss Camry S. Floyd holds a Master of Science Degree in Educational Leadership, with certifications in General Science (5-9), Biology (6-12), Educational Leadership (All Levels), School Principal and Reading. She has demonstrated effectiveness in working with students in Title I schools through her service as a classroom teacher, interventionist, assistant principal, and principal. Her curricular expertise has been demonstrated through her students' performance in Science and Biology. At her former school, student performance in science for 2022-2023 was the highest in the district, with 50% of the students scoring at proficiency. Principal Floyd's approach to improving student performance is further proven through her dedication to a sustainable, positive school culture and climate. She is highly visible throughout the county, fostering youth development and facilitating productive engagement activities that allow students and their families to grow. Her steadfast, yet pleasant personality, acts as a magnet that draws the entire community. In one year, school partnerships increased drastically, to include partnerships with local faith-based organizations, city and county agencies, local businesses and parents. This healthy culture continues to nurture positive relationships among staff and students and has led to increased collaboration, morale and job satisfaction.

Will other members of the school leadership team be retained or replaced and when? Explain the team's turnaround experience.

The district has advertised for an assistant principal and currently employs a teacher on special assignment and a dean of students. The dean of students is a returning member of the leadership team; however, the teacher on special assignment is new to the school. The principal has experience in leading school turn-around efforts as her prior assignment was in a high-performing Title I school in the district that consistently demonstrated student performance.

Does the district offer incentives to attract and retain principals willing to lead a turnaround school?

Currently, the school only has access to funds offered through the Florida Department of Education's UniSIG Teacher and Administrator Grant to attract and retain principals willing to lead a turnaround school.

How does the district build the capacity of turnaround leaders?

The district offers opportunities to become part of the Florida Collaborative Leadership for All Students' Success Program and opportunities to attend National and State Conferences featuring expert sessions about High Poverty, At Risk, Minority, and other related issues that align with and are comparable to the challenges in the turnaround school they lead. Every year, the performance of each school administrator is

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evaluated in three domains: 1. Student Growth Measures 2. Leadership Practice 3. Deliberate Practice, to ensure continuous improvement. A school leader who receives a rating of “Needs Improvement” or “Unsatisfactory” is issued an Individual Performance Intervention Plan (IPIP) to appropriately support the leader in specified areas of need. Through Leadership Development programs, school site administrators are provided opportunities to participate in college level and professional level courses/training to strengthen their professional skills; and opportunities to meet with district leadership and instructional specialists to gain a deeper understanding of the standards and learn instructional best practices on how to provide appropriate feedback and support to teachers based on the identified needs. In addition, administrators are provided opportunities to participate in district and educational organization sponsored learning institutes and leadership conferences. District Leadership Teams (consisting of district leaders, instructional leaders, and school administrators) are held monthly and provide an opportunity for the school principal to share best practices, analyze data, reflect, do book studies, and collaborate with their colleagues. The purpose of this group is to build the principal’s capacity as an instructional leader. Classroom observations support the principal in analyzing classroom instruction and defining structures of support. The principal has been afforded operational flexibility on the selection of members of the leadership team, site-based lead teachers, instructional specialists, community involvement members, and behavior specialists. The principal has the flexibility to hold interviews for vacant positions within his school and hire candidates that best meet the needs of the school and who are a good fit for the school culture.

What operational flexibility will be afforded to the principal, such as the degree of input in selecting their school leadership team and instructional staff?

The responsibility of implementing a school-level turnaround plan is a collaborative effort between the school’s principal and leadership team, the staff and district leadership. The principal is given the authority to implement a reform plan that is specific to the needs of the school and its students that is aligned to the District’s Strategic Continuous Improvement Plan. The principal can select the school leadership team and recommend other leadership staff for key positions. The principal is given the flexibility to hire staff and develop a team of teachers who are committed to positively affecting school improvement. No teacher will be placed at the school that has not met with the approval of the turnaround principal and other committed staff members who form the school leadership team. The principal will decide if a staff member is not supportive of her improvement plan to implement turnaround strategies. Staff members who are not supportive of the plan will be removed from the school at the principal’s request. The district leadership team, with school leader input, select district-wide initiatives to be used in every school. However, the principal at the turnaround school has flexibility to decide the school schedule, student groupings, additional interventions that support the district initiatives, and other instructional strategies. The primary focus of the turnaround principal is on building relationships and changing the school culture to build both teacher and student expectations. Resources that support the turnaround school include federal Title allocations, entitlement school improvement funds, and school-shares of resources funded through the FEFP. The turnaround principal will be afforded access to these resources, in compliance with any funding limitations by program requirements (i.e., rank and serve for Title I; supplement not supplant requirements; specific allocations through school improvement grants). The turnaround principal’s requests will be prioritized, if there are not funding or compliance limitations that would be breached with the approval of the request (i.e., rank and serve for Title I, limitations of budget line items, allowability, supplement not supplant, federal requirements, etc.)

What actions will the district take regarding the school leadership team after the first year of this plan if the school’s grade does not improve?

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 2 (TOP-2)

The district will allow the principal a maximum of three years to improve the school culture and student academic proficiency. After that point, the school leader will be replaced, and the leadership team will be evaluated to determine if they are a good fit for the incoming turnaround leader.

Assurance 2: Narrative of School Capacity- Educators

In the box below, the district must include information about its systems to ensure the school has effective educators capable of improving student achievement, including priority in hiring, recruitment and retention incentives and professional development and coaching support provided by the district. At a minimum, reply to the following:

1. What is the process for filling vacancies at this school, specifically in the core content areas? Is this school given priority in hiring? Is hiring completed at the district level so vacancies at turnaround schools are filled before other schools are permitted to hire? Is there a MOU or union agreement to this effect?
2. How does the district ensure students at this school are instructed by certified instructional personnel when unexpected vacancies arise?
3. Does the district offer bonuses and, if so, what are the qualifications and conditions (e.g., length of employment commitment, performance)? Is there a union agreement to this effect?
4. Does the district offer incentives to instructional personnel with VAM ratings of Highly Effective or Effective instructional personnel to reduce turnover at turnaround schools?

Assurance 2: Narrative-School Capacity- Educators

What is the process for filling vacancies at this school, specifically in the core content areas? Is this school given priority in hiring? Is hiring completed at the district level so vacancies at turnaround schools are filled before other schools are permitted to hire? Is there an MOU or union agreement to this effect?

District policies support priority hiring in turnaround schools. The Superintendent has pledged that if a candidate, especially in reading, can demonstrate highly effective VAM scores then the starting salary schedule can be exceeded to a maximum of ten steps above starting level as an incentive to attract the highest qualified candidates and/or retain highly qualified teachers. Highly effective candidates are prioritized to the turnaround school, if they are highly certificated.

Staffing meetings are held with each principal beginning in March of the year before an upcoming school year to identify staffing needs based on student enrollments so that they can be fully staffed with highly qualified staff by the first day of school. After analyzing preliminary assessment data, district leadership assesses the qualifications of the sitting principals to maintain a high level of academic achievement. Once a turnaround school is identified, the principal leader is named and is allowed to immediately identify and/or advertise for staff to follow him/her to the turnaround school. This may be done earlier than the typical March start of staff planning, or it may happen later in the semester, as the critical need is identified based on progress monitoring and assessment scores.

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 2 (TOP-2)

The hiring process for critical need staff is a collaborative arrangement previously agreed upon with the union prior to MOU requirements. These processes are already in place between the bargaining unit and the Superintendent. Criteria for changes to school board polices and MOUs with the union will be proposed, negotiated then presented for required approval, upon need. Meanwhile, the Superintendent has pledged that if a candidate, can demonstrate highly effective VAM scores, specifically in reading, then a recruitment bonus of up to \$5,000 is offered as an incentive to attract the highest qualified candidates and/or retain highly qualified teachers, pending School Board approval.

How does the district ensure students at this school are instructed by certified instructional personnel when unexpected vacancies arise?

The school principal has the flexibility to reassign staff to ensure that students are instructed by certified instructional personnel. For additional classes, the district allows the school principal to reassign students for core classes so that instruction is provided by a highly qualified teacher. In addition, the district uses technology to allow students access to highly effective instruction while being monitored by both a substitute teacher and a paraprofessional.

Does the district offer incentives to Highly Effective or Effective state VAM instructional personnel to reduce turnover at turnaround schools?

The Superintendent has pledged that if a candidate, can demonstrate highly effective VAM scores, specifically in reading, then a recruitment bonus of up to \$5,000 is offered as an incentive to attract the highest qualified candidates and/or retain highly qualified teachers, pending School Board approval.

Assurance 2: Verification-School Capacity- Educators

In the box below, describe the specific actions the district has taken to recruit instructional personnel with VAM ratings of Highly Effective and Effective to this school. Describe how the district has reassigned or non-renewed instructional personnel with VAM ratings of Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory to a school not in SI and how the district filled any vacancies resulting from these reassignments with certified instructional personnel.

1. What actions have been taken to recruit with VAM ratings of Highly Effective and Effective to this school?
2. How many instructional personnel were reassigned or non-renewed due to VAM ratings of Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory?
3. Confirm that all reassigned instructional personnel were not reassigned to SI schools.
4. How did the district fill the vacancies? Have all vacancies been filled with certified instructional personnel?

What actions have been taken to recruit with state VAM ratings of Highly Effective and Effective to this school?

The superintendent has pledged to provide a financial incentive to highly effective, in-field teachers who choose to serve at schools in need of improvement. The proposal was approved in July 2024.

How many instructional personnel were reassigned or non-renewed due to state VAM ratings of Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory?

There were no instructional personnel reassigned or non-renewed due to state VAM ratings of Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory.

Confirm that all reassigned instructional personnel were not reassigned to SI schools.

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 2 (TOP-2)

There were no instructional personnel reassigned or non-renewed due to state VAM ratings of Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory.

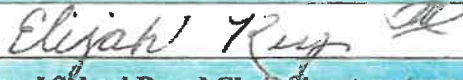
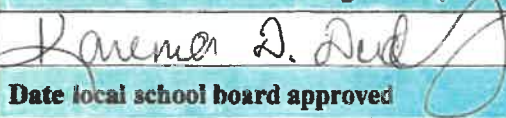
How did the district fill the vacancies? Have all vacancies been filled with certified instructional personnel?

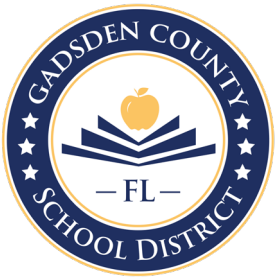
There are three instructional vacancies: two (2) ELA and one ESE. The positions are being advertised via the district’s system, on Indeed.com and other media outlets.

Fill out the table below to verify the VAM classification data.

VAM DATA- School % Compared to District and State%				
VAM Data	Highly Effective (HE)	Effective (EF)	Needs Improvement (NI)	Unsatisfactory (UN)
Number of instructional personnel	0	15	1	2
School %	0%	71%	14%	14%
District %	3%	62%	17%	17%
State %	10%	67%	14%	9%

District-Managed Turnaround Plan—Step 2 (TOP-2)

Name and title of person responsible for completing and submission of the TOP-2
Tammy McGriff, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services
Contact information: email, phone number
mcgriff@gcpsmail.com ; 850-627-9651
Date submitted to the Bureau of School Improvement (due October 1)
October 1, 2024
Superintendent signature (or authorized representative)

Local School Board Chair Signature (or authorized representative)

Date local school board approved
October 28 2024



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TURNAROUND OPTION PLAN (TOP) ADDENDUM JAMES A. SHANKS MIDDLE SCHOOL

CONDITION 1: The district will provide a plan to prioritize placing teachers with a Highly Effective or Effective VAM rating at James A. Shanks Middle School, first, and then within the Gadsden County School District, prior to the November State Board of Education meeting.

DISTRICT PLAN

- Incentivize the transfer/assignment at James A. Shanks Middle School. The School District offered a financial incentive for teachers who volunteered or accepted assignments at the TOP school. To recruit highly effective and effective instructional personnel to James A. Shanks Middle School, the district offered a one-time \$10,000 incentive to teachers who met all certification requirements as defined by the Florida Department of Education. The School District continues to offer a one-time incentive as we attempt to recruit teachers with a Highly Effective or Effective VAM rating.
- The Superintendent will visit the Colleges of Education at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Florida State University and Tallahassee State College to address students and share employment opportunities. District staff has contacted each of the universities and colleges to calendarize the visits. We are scheduled to meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Associate Dean for Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagements in November to extend our collaboration so that we can share employment opportunities with students.
- To improve the recruitment process, school and district administrators will regularly review the Teacher Candidate Contact information provided by Florida Department of Education's Educator Recruitment Team, Division of Public Schools and actively reach out to potential candidates who may be willing to accept a teaching position at TOP and BSI schools.
- The Human Resource Department will host a job fair in November and December on or near the college and university campuses, to recruit graduates. A virtual job fair with Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University is scheduled for November 13, 2024. We are looking to host the December fair at Florida State University.
- To improve the recruitment process, the Human Resources Department will require employees slated to retire June 30 to submit notification by February 28 so that positions can be immediately advertised. Priority recruitment will be given to TOP and BSI schools.
- To improve the recruitment process, the Office of Professional Learning, in collaboration with the Human Resources Department, will collaborate with Colleges of Education at the universities to establish a protocol, as shown below, where students who obtain a minimum of a bachelor's degree and are eligible for a Florida Department of Education Teaching Certificate, will have the opportunity to:
 - Notify the Director of Human Resources when they have applied.
 - The Director of Professional Learning will provide support to the applicant in obtaining certification, preparing for an interview and building a resume.
 - The principal of the TOP school will receive the first opportunity to interview and hire the applicant. Priority will then follow the other schools that need improvement (BSI schools).
 - Applicants hired will be eligible for a \$1,500.00 recruitment incentive, minus required deductions, paid within 45 days of hire.



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CONDITION 2: The district must comply with the School Improvement Rule to ensure that the percentage of Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory teachers at James A. Shanks Middle School is below the district average.

DISTRICT PLAN

For the 2024-2025 school year, district and school administrators hosted job fairs and reached out to individuals with ‘Highly Effective’ and ‘Effective’ VAM ratings, who were previously employed by the District, in an attempt to recruit them back. Recruitment incentives in the amount of \$5,000 were offered. The district plans to continue to offer the recruitment incentive to increase the number of highly effective and effective instructors across the district. The strategies outlined in our plan to address teacher placement align with our plan to comply with the School Improvement Rule regarding staffing for TOP schools. Partnerships with local colleges and universities will aid the district in informing students of job opportunities in the district.

When it comes to students’ academic performance, teacher quality is one of the most impactful factors in the students’ success. **Table 1** indicates that the percentage of Needs Improvement and Unsatisfactory teachers at James A. Shanks Middle School after corrective measures were taken to address compliance to the School Improvement Rule.

The Superintendent has acted aggressively to reduce the percentage of teachers whose VAM ratings are ‘Needs Improvement’ or ‘Unsatisfactory’. Three employees with a VAM rating of ‘Needs Improvement’ or ‘Unsatisfactory’ are no longer employed at the school. The intentional recruitment strategies, as described in the Plan under Condition #1, being implemented will aid the District in recruiting educators to work in the district.

Table 1

VAM DATA: School % Compared to District %					
	% Highly Effective (HE)	% Effective (EF)	% Needs Improvement (NI)	% Unsatisfactory (UN)	% NI & U
SCHOOL	0%	71%	14%	14%	28%
DISTRICT	3%	62%	17%	17%	34.8%



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CONDITION 3: The district will implement a comprehensive plan to address teacher and student attendance at James A. Shanks middle School, given the high rates of absenteeism in the Gadsden County School District.

DISTRICT PLAN

Research indicates that high teacher absenteeism has a significant impact on student performance. Teacher absences can create an interruption in learning for students. Further, colleagues of absent teachers may experience strain having to assume additional duties due to the absences. **Table 2** reflects teacher attendance for the first quarter of the 2024-2025 school year.

Table 2.

	# OF POSITIONS	# OF ABSENCES	TARGETS		
			Q1	Q2	Q3
GRADE 5	4	8	6	4	2
GRADE 6	6	14	12	10	7
GRADE 7	4	7	5	3	2
GRADE 8	4	14	12	10	7
MULTIPLE GRADE	9	29	26	20	13

The school is implementing intervention strategies to encourage teacher attendance.

- ❖ Attendance is documented through the district’s sign-in portal. Requests for leave must be submitted electronically and approved by the principal. The use of a district-wide system that documents attendance will provide more accurate data that administrators can use to monitor attendance and proactively address potential chronic teacher absences.
- ❖ The principal conducts one-to-one meetings monthly with all staff members. These meetings have created an environment that facilitates trust and have resulted in improved communication among the staff members and administrators. This strategy helps strengthen relationships between staff and administrators and allows administrators the opportunity to provide support for instructors.
- ❖ Attendance challenges are being held to promote improved attendance. Community members and agencies provide incentives for winning teams.
- ❖ Activities that engage adults, such as attire uniformity and weekly announcements promote engagement and encourage attendance.

To positively influence **attendance and behavior**, there has been a significant shift in expectations of students, staff and families at James A. Shanks Middle School. As research notes, clearly communicating expectations to students and families is critical for student success. Research further demonstrates that



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problem behavior can be reduced by establishing, teaching and reinforcing expectations. An environment that this safe and engaging facilitates attendance.

Table 3 indicates the average daily attendance (ADA) goals for the 2024-2025 school year at James A. Shanks Middle School. Average daily attendance targets have been established to promote a school-wide effort to encourage attendance. Recent data shows that 6.61% (29) of students grades 5 through 8, are chronically absent. The goal is to reduce that percentage to 3.3% by the end of the 2024-2025 school year. The Gadsden County School District will further strengthen our strategies and interventions to improve attendance. The comprehensive plan includes the following strategies and interventions.

- (1) Monitoring student attendance data. Teachers are expected to take attendance daily so that we have an accurate account of attendance using FOCUS and will collaborate with the school counselor to provide support when necessary. Teachers, student services professionals and district personnel will monitor student attendance data. Quarterly attendance data for students will be displayed to motivate grade levels through friendly competitions. Teachers and student services personnel will contact parents of students with persistent or chronic absenteeism. As outline below, the school will engage in the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process to support the students and families. Improved student attendance will be incentivized quarterly.

School administrators will monitor teacher attendance data. Teachers will be required to request leave through the district's online system. Staff members are implementing a schoolwide plan to motivate all staff and create a sense of unity. The plan includes creative activities such as uniformed color days. Teacher attendance will be incentivized.

- (2) Engaging students, families and the community. There will be consistent monitoring of student attendance by the student services professionals at both the school and district levels. Schools will engage the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) to provide appropriate support and engage families to ensure student success.
- (3) Recognizing good attendance. Schools and the district will publicly recognize good attendance through positive reinforcement. Community partners and the Education Foundation will support the effort.
- (4) Providing timely outreach when monitoring of attendance data indicates attendance challenges. The District will utilize the notification system to notify parents of students' absences. Assigned personnel will follow up with parents on absences and provide school administrators with their findings. The school administrators at James A. Shanks have begun a mentoring campaign that partners students exhibiting behaviors that impede academic achievement with community members. Mentors include members of Pi Psi Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha, Inc., Tau Theta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc, the Boys and Girls Club of the Big Bend, Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners. The mentors visit campus at least bi-weekly. Community partners provide incentives such as gift certificates for meals, clothes for the clothes closet, funding for staff socials, and other incentives that fall outside of allowable costs, such as trophies, certificates and ribbons.



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Table 3.

GRADE	MEMBERSHIP	# PRESENT	# ABSENT	ADA	FALL TARGET	SPRING TARGET
05	75	63	12	84%	86%	92%
06	117	111	6	94.87%	95%	97%
07	114	108	6	94.74%	95%	97%
08	133	128	5	96.24%	97%	98%
TOTAL	439	410	29	93.39%	94%	96%

At the core of a successful learning environment are genuine relationships among the entire school community. To this end, James A. Shanks Middle School is working to institutionalize a comprehensive and consistent plan that includes the strategies outlined below. The strategies and interventions will facilitate a safe and secure environment that encourages and supports academic engagement. The authentic involvement from community members will help students learn how they are contributors to civic life. Further, community involvement will allow for real-world learning opportunities.

- ❖ **Safety:** Monitoring assignments are established for all personnel to promote consistent supervision.
- ❖ **Resiliency and Mental Health:** Consistent monitoring of student attendance by the school counselor in collaboration with the student services professionals and district Family and Community Engagement office.
- ❖ **Relationships:** Immediate follow-up with families when scholars' absences exceed five (5) days.
- ❖ **Genuine Connections:** Community mentors (Fraternities, Sororities, Community Leaders) assigned to connect with students who exhibit behaviors that may impede learning (frequent or chronic absences, out of school suspensions, poor academic performance)
- ❖ **Academic Challenge:** Competitions for teachers and grade levels with rewards for meeting and exceeding the established goals.
- ❖ **Academic & Social Engagement:** Established clubs that not only support the BEST standards but also meet the interests of the students, with meeting times during the regular school day. The implementation will fulfill scholars' interests and offer real-world experiences for them.
- ❖ **Academic Support:** Recruitment of retired educators, college students and subject matter experts to provide academic support during the regular school day so that students experience success.
- ❖ **Physical Support:** Established a "resource closet" that offers clothing to help students remain in compliance with the district's Code of Student Conduct specific to attire, bookbags and other areas that previously resulted in out of school suspensions. (All items are donated.)
- ❖ **Counseling:** Small group and individual counseling provided through the school's participation in the School Climate Grant, partnership with The Boys and Girls Club of the Big Bend.