# Hodgkins Elementary School
System Assessment Executive Summary Report

The following system assessment feedback report was developed for Hodgkins Elementary School, LaGrange District 105 by the System Assessment Review Team of the Consortium for Educational Change.

Using the best practice criteria of a correlation between the Baldrige Performance Excellence Education Criteria and the Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities as a lens, the System Assessment Review Team reviewed information provided by the school and interviewed administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents in order to identify strengths and opportunities for system improvement.
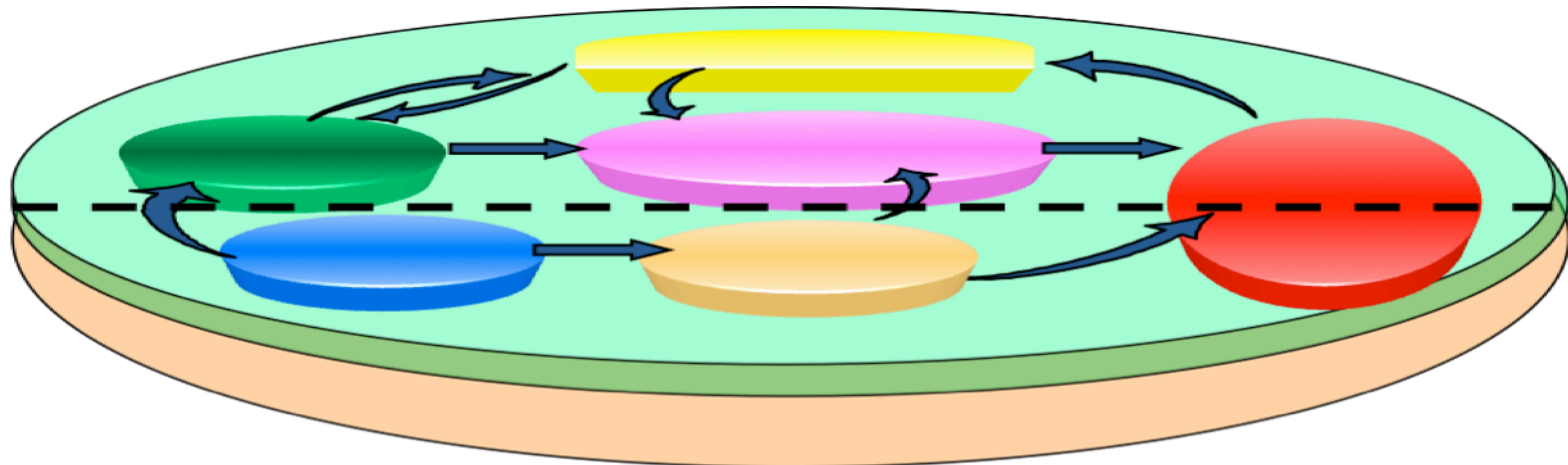
This feedback report was developed reflecting on the indicators described on the next few pages. It is a response to written information provided by the school as well as from information gathered from interviews. It is not intended to represent the perspective of all school administrators, faculty, staff, students, and parents. Its accuracy is dependent on the information presented and discussed. The criteria around which we conducted our visit are listed below. It is a synthesis of the research from the Baldrige Performance Excellence Criteria, the Correlates of Effective Schools, the Characteristics of Professional Learning Communities, and Standard Bearer. They represent the four best practice, continuous improvement frameworks. This school uses the Professional Learning Community Framework as its format.

Focus on Learning: We acknowledge that the fundamental purpose of our district is to help all students achieve high levels of learning and therefore we are willing to examine all of our practices in light of their impact on learning.

A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

A.	***Establishing the Curriculum:*** We set student learning outcomes across all schools and classrooms to build shared knowledge regarding common core state standards, district curriculum guides, trends in student achievement and outcomes for the next course or grade.
B.	***Executing the Curriculum:*** We expect that each teacher give priority to the identified learning outcomes in every unit of instruction to guarantee that each student has equal access to those learning outcomes in all classrooms for the grade level or course.
C.	***Clarifying and Communicating the Curriculum:*** We expect that every teacher is able to assist each student and their parents (families) know the essential learning outcomes so they can assist in monitoring performance in relationship to those outcomes.

Formative and Summative System of Assessments

D.	***Defining the Assessment System:*** We ensure there is alignment and balance between common, formative assessment data to guide instruction and learning; and common, summative assessment data to reflect on teaching, programs, interventions, and periodic student progress reporting.
E.	***Assessing What Each Student Knows and Needs to Learn Next:*** We expect each teacher to monitor the learning of all students, aligned to the learning outcomes per unit, to identify what each student knows, is able to do, and needs to learn next.
F.	**Providing *Frequent and Timely Descriptive Assessment Feedback:*** We ensure there is frequent and timely feedback regarding the performance of our students on classroom, team, school, district, and state assessments.
G.	***Using Assessment Data and Information to Drive Instruction:*** We expect teachers to use assessment data aligned to student learning outcomes per unit to differentiate instruction and respond to students when they either demonstrate they have not learned or are ready for more challenge.
H.	***Using Assessment Data and Information to Recognize Growth and Achievement.*** We regularly recognize and celebrate individual and collective student growth, mastery, and success aligned to appropriate unit learning outcomes.

Differentiation: Instruction, Interventions and Enrichments

I.	***Differentiating Instruction:*** We expect Instructional activities are engaging and differentiated to meet individual and small group needs within the classroom.
J.	***Aligning Interventions:*** We ensure a system of interventions that guarantees each student will receive additional time and support for learning if he/she has not demonstrated mastery of grade level or course unit learning outcomes.
K.	***Aligning Enrichments:*** We ensure teachers extend and enrich the learning of students who have mastered common learning targets so every student is challenged.

Ensuring a Focus on Learning

L.	***Providing Conditions for an Optimal Learning Environment:*** We expect all learning environments to be safe, respectful, and engaging while supporting a climate of high expectations for social emotional learning.
M.	***Examining Learning Practices:*** We provide opportunities for teachers to examine homework, grading, report cards, etc. to ensure there is clarity and consistency across all classrooms, teams and schools.
N.	***Judging Quality Work:*** We expect all teachers to clarify the criteria by which they will judge the quality of student work and practice applying those criteria until they can do so consistently.
O.	***Providing Training and Support:*** We provide sufficient training and follow-up support to assist teachers with expectations in the alignment of assessments, and instruction within a standards-driven curriculum.
P.	***Organizing and Allocating Resources:*** We organize and allocate resources of people, time and money with a focus on learning as opposed to a focus on teaching.

	Focus on Collaboration: We are committed to working together to achieve our collective purpose of learning for all students. We cultivate a collaborative culture through the development of high performing teams.
	Building Shared Knowledge and Leadership: Mission, Vision, Values, Goals and Strategies
A.	***Clarifying the "Big Picture":*** We have developed and deployed mission, vision, values (collective commitments) and goals to establish clear direction.
B.	***Communicating the "Big Picture":*** We set clear direction by communicating a "Big Picture" so that everyone sees how current and new initiatives connect to that direction and how those initiatives align with district and school direction.
C.	***Reinforcing the "Big Picture":*** We expect that common behaviors and actions of all staff support the vision, mission, values, goals and strategies of both the school and the district.
D.	***Living the "Big Picture":*** We set strategies & action plans to describe the steps to be taken toward attainment of goals. The improvement planning process serves as the centerpiece for examining how the organization performs.
	Enabling High Performing, Collaborative Teams
E.	***Setting Expectations for Team Function:*** We expect work to be done through collaborative teams in which members work together interdependently to achieve common goals.
F.	***Providing Time & Purpose for Teams to Meet:*** We provide time during the contractual day and school year for teams to meet. Team meetings always focus on improving student learning.
G.	***Determining Accountability Criteria for Teams:*** We expect teams to be accountable for the decisions they make and the results they achieve.
	Creating a Culture of Intentional Collaboration
H.	***Implementing a High Performance Culture:*** We promote a culture/teaching environment of personal growth and high performance.
I.	***Providing a Safe Data Culture for Effective Team Function:*** We create a safe environment to report and compare data so as to learn from one another and share effective practices.
J.	***Providing a Culture of Collective Inquiry & Learning:*** We expect team time to be used engage in collective inquiry on questions specifically linked to gains in student achievement.
	Fostering Strong Partnerships
K.	***Fostering Collaborative Internal Staff Partnerships:*** We foster collaborative staff partnerships between and across all organizational levels to ensure decisions are made in the best interests of students.
L.	***Fostering Collaborative External Family Partnerships:*** We foster collaborative partnerships with parents (families) to engage them in decisions about the progress of school, school and student goal attainment.
M.	***Fostering Collaborative External Community Partnerships:*** We foster collaborative partnerships with the community to engage them in decisions about the progress of school, school and student goal attainment.
	Ensuring a Focus on Collaboration
O.	***Providing Meaningful, Aligned Evaluation Systems:*** We enforce district job expectations and provide meaningful evaluation systems.
P	***Providing Job-embedded Training:*** We ensure professional development is job-embedded and ongoing.
Q.	***Organizing and Allocating Resources:*** We organize and allocate resources of people, time and money with a focus on collaboration.

Focus on Results: We assess our effectiveness on the basis of results rather than intentions. Individuals, teams and schools seek relevant data and information and use that information to promote continuous improvement.

Data Transparency and Efficacy: Measuring What Matters Most

A.	*Measuring What Matters:* We align key data indicators, measures, and targets throughout the system—district to school to grade level team/department to individual--- to establish effective ways to monitor and report progress.
B.	*Setting SMART Goals:* District, school, team, and individual staff goals are specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and timely (SMART). They address gaps identified through key data sources that focus improvement efforts.
C.	*Aligning Leader Performance Evaluation:* Administrative performance goals align with the district and/or school improvement plan.
D.	*Aligning Teacher Performance Evaluation:* Teacher performance goals align with district, school, and/or team improvement plans.
E.	*Aligning Student Performance Evaluation:* Student performance goals align with unit plan learning outcomes and other assessment data and information.

Creating a Results Orientation

F.	*Using Data Effectively:* We expect all staff to use assessment data to: a) identify students who need additional time and support for learning; b) discover strengths and weaknesses in their own job performance; c) measure and report progress toward goals, and d) define action plans.
G.	*Inspiring Shared Accountability:* We create a safe data culture so students and staff feel comfortable sharing their results in an effort to learn from others and improve results.
H.	*Monitoring and Reporting Progress:* We view, monitor, and report progress to all stakeholders on a regular basis to identify what to celebrate and what to focus on next in terms of improvement.
I.	*Promoting Student Responsibility for Their Own Learning*: We expect staff to assist students take responsibility for their own learning by collecting data to monitor and track their performance compared to high expectations and performance results of others.
J.	*Reporting and Acting on Satisfaction Data:* We collect, analyze, prioritize, and act upon student, parent, and staff satisfaction data to be certain it is addressing the needs and requirements of our stakeholders..

A Data-Based Picture of Results

K.	*Examining Trend Data:* We have evidence to show our trend achievement results are improving compared to the past. Our achievement results include measures of growth.
L.	*Examining Cohort Data:* We have evidence to show our student cohort achievement results are improving from grade to grade. Our achievement results include measures of growth.
M.	*Examining Comparative Data:* We have evidence to show our achievement results are improving compared to others (state and other benchmark districts).
N.	*Closing Achievement Gaps*: We have evidence to show our results have narrowed or closed achievement gaps between groups of students.
O.	*Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress*: We meet adequate yearly progress requirements as defined by federal and state legislation. Our students are ready for the next level. (elementary to middle, middle to high school, high school to college/career readiness)

Ensuring a Focus on Results

P.	*Managing Data:* We examine policies and processes related to data collection, management and analysis to be certain they are effective and efficient. Data is easily accessible and user-friendly in its format.
Q.	*Providing Training and Support:* We provide sufficient training and follow-up support to assist teachers with expectations in the alignment of assessments, and instruction within a standards-driven curriculum.
R.	*Organizing and Allocating Resources:* We organize and allocate our resources of people, time and money with a focus on results.

SYSTEM ASSESSMENT SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:

The school responded to a set of questions aligned to the three criteria research best practice areas listed above.   The external team reviewed the Professional Learning Community effective practices and identified school strengths and opportunities for improvement. The school self-assessed itself as to where they viewed their progress toward implementation of the criteria.   The purpose of the visit was to provide the school with gap information in areas where the external team did not agree with the school self-assessment.

The Review Team examined the information and data prior to the site visit. They developed a list of questions to explore as part of the site visit. The Review Team interviewed all stakeholder groups.
On the first day the Team interviewed:
- Principal
- Self Study Team
- Parent Organization Leaders
- Association Leaders
- Instructional Support Team- paraprofessionals
- Problem Solving/RtI Team/Student Support Team
- Specialists- Reading, Math, English Language Learners, Special Education, Library Media
- Art, Music, Physical Education
- Non-instructional Support Team
- CCSS Black Belt Team

On the second day, the Team interviewed:
- Parents
- Students
- Teachers

Team members conducted classroom visits to interview students about ownership of their learning.

The schedule was set by school leaders.   Representatives interviewed reflected the demographics of the school. Approximately 185 stakeholders were interviewed.

Following interviews, the Team reviewed its findings and prepared an oral report to give the school a preview of overall strengths and opportunities for improvement aligned to the framework and criteria.
The week following the visit, the Team communicated electronically to prepare the final written feedback report. This final report was sent to the school within seven days of the visit.

CEC is available to assist the school in any way it chooses to follow up with suggested next steps. The school has committed to use the information to update its improvement plans. It also has committed to allow staff members to serve on a Review Team for another school's system assessment visit.

System Assessment team members.

Hodgkins Elementary System Assessment Team		
Member	**Organization**	**Email**
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This report summarizes the strengths and opportunities aligned to the continuous improvement criteria.

SUMMARY OF OVERALL STRENGTHS

Among all of the strengths within each category and for all core values, the assessment team finds these strengths to be highest in priority. It is hoped that recognizing and celebrating these strengths will showcase past investment of resources in improving performance results.

Focus on Learning Strengths:

+ **Hodgkins Elementary is a student-centered school focused on the needs of all students.**

+ **The district teacher grade level team representatives are creating common unit plans with pre- and post- assessments to establish common expectations of what students must know and be able to do for English language arts and mathematics.**

+ **Priority Common Core State Standards have been identified for each unit of instruction. Pacing guides are in place for each trimester.**

+ **Teachers are creating common formative assessments to be used during unit instruction. Formative assessment data are used to plan instruction, re-teaching and for flexible grouping.**

+ **Teachers have common "have to" plan time at each grade to discuss data results and unit plans. Support specialists join grade level teams when appropriate.**

+ **There are trimester progress reports in all grades that communicate to parents**

progress toward mastery of the most important learning outcomes. In addition, in grades 3-6 there is a grading report card system.

+ NWEA-Map is administered three times a year in Kindergarten through Grade 6 in reading and math and is used to guide Tier I, Tier II and Tier III decisions as well as monitor overall achievement and growth. Next Step is administered three times a year and is used to guide flexible grouping decisions within the classroom.

+ Teachers have common "have to" plan time at each grade to discuss data results and unit plans. Support specialists join grade level teams when appropriate.

+ The support specialist team provides great assistance to classroom teachers and students within and outside the classroom. Push-in opportunities for English language learners, students with disabilities, students who need rigor and challenge, as well as students who are struggling in reading serves the needs of all learners well.

+ Class size is very small. The school embraces diversity.

Focus on Collaboration Strengths:

+ Hodgkins School has a personal size, personal care culture. Stakeholders report a "family feel" fostering a nurturing, supportive, safe, healthy environment. As one teacher said, "Our school is a diamond in the rough."

+ Staff morale continues to be very positive. Staff realizes high trust and respect for

one another.   Collaboration is a hallmark of the school.

+ **The BIG PICTURE direction is clear to staff. All staff members are doing their best to support that direction. There is a high degree of engagement in implementing improvement plans.**

+ **All of the components of a highly collaborative learning organization are present.**

+ **Hodgkins' staff has a great, trusting relationship with building and district leaders. Staff is passionate and dedicated to student growth and learning.**

+ **The principal is visible and has an open door policy. He is very approachable, is a good listener, and he is responsive.**

+ **Collaboration time is productive and teachers are always looking for ways to increase the amount of collaboration time.**

+ **Academies offer an opportunity once a month for three hours of additional collaboration time to further develop assessments and work on unit plan design and instruction.**

+ **Action plans are developed by each grade level aligned to the grade level's greatest area need. School improvement efforts are tied directly to the work teachers and grade level teams feel needs to be addressed.**

+ **Staff expects students to make substantial learning growth each year.**

+ **Parents have a high trust and respect for the school and its staff.**

+ **Students enjoy coming to school and realize the care and concern of adults for their needs and requirements.**

+ **There is a great sense of community with agencies throughout the Hodgkins' neighborhood. (Library, police, park, village hall, businesses, etc.)**

Focus on Results Strengths:

+ **School Improvement Goals are aligned to District improvement goals and have key indicators and measures with targets. School goals are SMART. (specific, measurable, actionable, results-oriented and timebound).**

+ **Staff members review key indicators and measures when determining greatest area needs and establishing SMART Goals. They review MAP data three times a year and consider each student's progress in making adjustments to action plans, interventions and enrichments. In between those data days, staff members progress monitor intervention and enrichment success for participating students.**

+ **The district and school dashboards and action plans are updated and refined. The district establishes targets for improvement goals.**

+ **Students set goals using the MAP assessment in both growth and achievement.**

+ **Team members learn from one another by sharing challenges, ideas, goal setting resources and effective teaching strategies. There is a safe data culture.**

+ **The school is making AYP in reading and mathematics based on ISAT spring 2014 results. Overall MAP Cohort data shows achievement results are increasing the past three years in both math and reading.**

+ **Student, Parent and Staff satisfaction data is high.**

+ **Spring MAP data shows the performance of the school is well above MAP's virtual benchmark school.**

+ **People resources have increased to address the uniqueness of Hodgkins School: resource teacher, bilingual teacher, ELA specialist, math specialist, speech therapist and substitutes for special area teachers during assessment windows to maintain consistency for small group instruction.**

SUMMARY OF OVERALL OPPORTUNITIES

Among all of the opportunities for improvement within each category and for all core values, the assessment team finds these opportunities to be highest in priority. It is hoped that addressing these opportunities will yield a high future return on investment of resources in improving performance results.

Focus on Learning Opportunities for Improvement:

△ **Unit plans have begun, but are incomplete. Teachers are spending much time getting ready for units that are coming later in the year   That task is taking time away from executing the current unit they are teaching. Some teams are struggling with writing accurate and reliable assessments. Other teams are struggling with finding resources to teach the priority learning outcomes.**

△ **The curriculum needs clarity and alignment across grade levels and from grade to grade.   Priority standards have not been clearly unpacked to formulate clear student-friendly learning outcomes for each unit.**

△ **There are inconsistent practices for how to communicate the learning outcomes for each unit to students and their families.**

△ **There are inconsistent practices for establishing consistent criteria for mastery to include grading.   Some teachers are struggling with the alignment of two**

progress reports each trimester. It is not clear to teachers what criteria they should be using related to the standards-based report to determine the grade for the subject.

△ There are no clear expectations for teachers to use in empowering students to take responsibility for their own learning. There are some great examples of student ownership but expectations vary from teacher to teacher, grade to grade.

△ Currently there is not a consistent process for reporting student progress on learning outcomes at the end of each unit. Progress is only report at the end of the trimester.

△ Teachers feel they are over-assessing. Assessment may be given too close together and multiple assessments are given at the same time. (Example: at the beginning of the year, students were taking the MAP fall assessment, the Next Step fall assessment along with pre-assessments for the first unit.)

△ Even though there are district guidelines for homework, homework and grading practices are not being consistently followed. (Example: some teachers allow for re-takes, others do not.)

△ Staff recognizes a need for further differentiation training, especially in math

△ There are inconsistent practices in utilizing technology to enhance teacher and learning.

△ **MAP data instead of unit assessment data aligned to student learning outcomes is used to determine which students receive interventions for Tier II and Tier II.**

Focus on Collaboration Opportunities for Improvement:

△ **Staff is stressed due in part to the many professional responsibilities and initiatives continuing to increase. Many staff members report feeling overwhelmed, scattered, and spread too thin. Many new initiatives have proven to be a challenge. There is a sense of confusion as changes are being made at a faster rate than teachers can adapt to. This has also resulted in inconsistencies across the district. Staff feel are not given sufficient time and follow-up support to execute with confidence and fidelity one initiative before moving on to the next.**

△ **Staff feels they are not performing at their highest level.**

△ **There is currently insufficient collaboration time to complete the multitude of initiatives and tasks identified.**

△ **Teams are not assessing their performance to become more effective and efficient. No team reflection data was presented.**

△ **Teacher Academies are invitational. Even though staff is paid, there are competing family needs that make it impossible for all staff to attend. Staff who are not attending are feeling self-imposed pressure.**

△ **Parents are not actively involved in decision-making with the school to insure their student's needs are being met.**

△ **There is a need to increase the send of security, engagement and participation of Spanish speaking families.**

△ **Staff feel parents need computer training, ESL training, and in some cases parenting training.**

△ **Goal-setting and action planning is not aligned to teacher evaluation. Not all teachers are comfortable including student learning results as part of their annual evaluation.**

Focus on Results Opportunities for Improvement:

△ **Little formal training has been provided to assist stakeholders with the school improvement/continuous improvement process. Only a few teachers have had training with SMART Goals.**

△ **There are no consistent procedure for teachers to set goals with students. Most teachers are not action planning with students. Few student goals are tied to classroom learning outcomes. Clear teacher expectations for student ownership of student learning have not been established.**

△ **There is a need to insure meaningful and purposeful data is used to make decisions that align with classroom instruction: differentiation, interventions and enrichments.**

△ **Overall MAP Cohort data shows progress data has not increased the past three years in both math and reading.**

△ **The school does not consistently benchmark schools outside the district who have similar size and demographics to compare academic growth and achievement assessments other than MAP's virtual school.**

△ **There are achievement gaps: English Language Learners and Low-Income students.**

△ **No student behavior data was presented.**

△ **The district is planning to form a study group to prepare for addressing the student growth mandated requirements by 2016-2017.**

NEXT STEPS

While this report is not intended to be prescriptive, this section provides some suggestions for addressing key opportunities for improvement. It provides suggestions that could serve as next steps. The strengths and areas of opportunity are based on set criteria framed by continuous improvement research. The priorities are not listed in any order.   Each is equally important. Next Steps are framed by the experiences and opinions of the assessment team.

Priority: Focus on Learning

Continue the journey of common unit plan instruction.
- ✓ Clarify the curriculum with student-friendly learning outcomes aligned to the priority standards for each unit of instruction. Continue with ELA and mathematics. Then journey to science.
- ✓ Align pre- and post-assessments to the unit learning outcomes.
- ✓ Develop further formative assessments to be used by students and grade level teachers to progress monitor student mastery and growth of the learning outcomes.
- ✓ Use all unit assessment data to guide instruction: differentiation, interventions and enrichments.
- ✓ Continue to use support services to meet the needs of all students. Use push-in, co-teaching, and flexible grouping to address Tier I. Use support services to address Tier II and Tier III.
- ✓ Continue to close achievement gaps of English language learners and low-income population. Understand that to change results means to have to do things differently than you are now doing.

Priority: Collaborative Culture

Establish clear expectations for how parent can partner with the school to improve student learning.
- ✓ Clarify and communicate unit student learning outcomes with parents so they know what their child is expected to know and be able to do.
- ✓ Assist parents with weekly assessment information so that they are able to identify what their

child knows and needs to learn next in relation to the unit learning outcomes.
- ✓ Assist parents to understand their child's goal--set around what their child needs to learn next.
- ✓ Assist students to track and monitor through a student data folder system so they can report their accomplishments and address what still needs to be learned.
- ✓ Assist parents with a better understanding of the purpose of MAP assessment and how to track MAP progress throughout the year. Be sure they understand the relationship between MAP and PARCC (college and career readiness)
- ✓ Assist parents to understand the performance of the school and district through engagement in parent events and communications.

Priority: Results Orientation

Establish and implement with fidelity clear expectations for assisting students to take responsibility for their own learning.

- ✓ Clarify and communicate unit student learning outcomes to students so they know what they are expected to know and be able to do.
- ✓ Assist students to progress monitor by providing feedback and assessment systems to be able to identify what they know and need to learn next in relation to the unit learning outcomes.
- ✓ Assist students to goal-set around what they need to learn next and to develop an action plan for what they are going to do to grow and improve in their learning.
- ✓ Assist students to track and monitor their performance through a student data folder or comparable system so they can report their accomplishments and address what still needs to be learned.
- ✓ Provide a standards-based reporting system aligned to the unit learning outcomes and priority standards.
- ✓ Be certain students are aware that mastery of the unit learning outcomes means they are prepared to move successfully to the next grade level and that they are on target to be college and career ready.
- ✓ Be certain students monitor both progress and achievement.

✓ **Celebrate success.**