A partnership of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and the University of Virginia Turnaround Program
What is the Beacon Initiative?

Sustaining a school turnaround has been a pervasive issue around the nation. This turnaround model is designed to provide individualized support for schools to accelerate academic outcomes for students and effectively and positively sustain the results.

The initiative, named The Beacon Initiative to provide a constant guiding light and continuous hope for the students that attend these 14 schools, will build this model by working collaboratively with district and school specialists and nationally recognized experts to differentiate tailored professional development, support and coaching to best meet the needs in each school.

“I love CMS because it truly is one of the nation’s most exemplary urban school districts. It has taken a forward-thinking approach to finding ways to give every child the best possible education, regardless of zip code or socio-economic status.”

~James Ford, 2014 NC Teacher of the Year
History Teacher at Garinger High School
A Beacon Initiative School
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools will increase academic achievement at the 14 Beacon Initiative schools. The district strategically partnered with the University of Virginia to provide professional development to district and school leaders around four key turnaround levers: leadership, instructional infrastructure, differentiated support and accountability, and talent management. As part of the turnaround process, the district and each school took part in a rigorous readiness assessment and principals participated in a leadership competency interview, both of which will drive tailored professional development to areas of need.
Beacon Initiative Schools

* Albemarle Road Elementary
* Briarwood Elementary
* Bruns Academy
* Druid Hills Academy
* Garinger High
* Harding University High
* James Martin Middle

* Martin Luther King Jr. Middle
* Nations Ford Elementary
* Reid Park Academy
* Vance High
* Westerly Hills Academy
* Whitewater Middle
* Winterfield Elementary
Beacon Vision

The vision of the Beacon Initiative is to create sustainable systems and processes that result in accelerated academic outcomes for all students.

Beacon Purpose

The purpose of the Beacon Initiative is to collaboratively leverage school and district resources to increase academic achievement and prepare students for college and career through strategic planning, professional development and individualized support.
CMS district leaders and principals have outlined proactive steps that will drive substantive and sustainable change in each school.
The Benefits of Beacon

- Opportunities for leadership development and coaching of district leaders, principals, administrators, and teacher leaders
- School-turnaround leadership opportunities
- Exposure to learn and implement strategies that successfully turn around schools
- Flexibility and Innovation
- Ongoing, research-based professional development
- Leading experts and data-proven approaches to professional development
- Professional Learning Community (PLC) coaching and training
- Performance-based incentive pay
- Hands-on support from community superintendents with meaningful weekly visits focused on school and leader needs
- Participation in a cohort of turnaround schools
The Beacon Initiative Plan

Beacon is a three-year initiative. After completing the first three years, we will look at extending what we have learned in our Beacon schools to other schools in the district.

The first year (2014-2015) is a planning year. As part of the planning, we have conducted a district-wide assessment, as well as readiness assessments and leadership interviews at the 14 Beacon schools.

In the second and third years of Beacon, we will put into practice individualized changes and tailored supports at each school and for the leaders at each school that are based on what we have learned throughout the planning year.
The planning year: 2014-2015

- Our lead Beacon partner, the University of Virginia, completed a District Readiness Assessment in the fall. This thorough review established that CMS had the capacity to undertake this kind of turnaround work, and set some parameters around the work.
- The University of Virginia subcontracted two other partners: SchoolWorks and Clearview.
- SchoolWorks conducted School Readiness Assessments at each of the Beacon schools.
- ClearView interviewed all of the Beacon principals to assess their strengths and areas of development, using seven leadership competencies.
- Based on the information gathered by SchoolWorks and ClearView, the school leadership teams will develop 90-day plans and leaders will receive personalized professional development and coaching on researched-based turnaround practices and processes.
- The district’s accountability department will create a tool that will quantitatively and qualitatively measure the success of the initiative.
Implementation years: 2015-2017

Our focus is to create and define systems and structures that build systemic instructional capacity that sustains transformative efforts. In the planning year, we will focus on establishing and strengthening structures and systems around these three key focus areas which can be modified for years two and three. Multiple data points will be used to monitor and inform practices within these structures in order to be effective and gain required results.

- Instructional Culture
- Student Culture
- Evidence-Informed Culture

These may look different in each school. Their 90-day plan may focus on one of these.
Instructional culture

We will use the district’s teaching and learning framework. It will help us to:

• Understand standards, data, and strategies to maximize student growth
• Plan a framework to impact practice
• Provide collaborative coaching to follow through on practice (observation and feedback which drives quality instruction)
Student culture

We will create clear expectations and provide needed support for students, including:

• Expectations and procedures for structured and non-structured time (ie. transitions, tardies, class-time, lunchroom)
• Systematic response for acute student needs
• Provide appropriate academic and behavioral interventions with MTSS- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
Evidence-informed culture

We will make decisions based on data. To do this, we will create:

• Systems to understand student needs
• Systems to adapt instruction based on evidence of learning
• Capacity-building aligned to learning needs (professional development)
Measuring our progress

We will use a qualitative and quantitative evaluation tool that collects multiple formative, diagnostic, and summative data points, several times throughout the course of a year and over the course of several years. Each data point will be connected to at least one key focus area (Talent Management/Teaching & Learning/ Culture/Time) in order to inform the growth of the initiative. Data collected could include, but not limited to, instructional observations, district surveys, end of year assessment data, growth data, graduation rates, and/or professional development outcomes.
Essential District Structures
that require differentiation to support Beacon Initiative schools:

• Human Resources
• Teaching & Learning
• Leadership
• Culture
# Differentiated Support

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Structures</th>
<th>Beacon Support</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Human Resources (HR)</strong></td>
<td>Early and aggressive recruiting for highly-effective leadership and proven-successful teachers</td>
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<td>Interview protocols</td>
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<td>Staff retention through coaching, professional development, and incentives</td>
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<td><strong>Teaching &amp; Learning</strong></td>
<td>Increased observation/feedback cycle</td>
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<td>Differentiated staffing that intensively supports teachers</td>
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<td>Support for performance evaluations</td>
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<td>Learning frameworks are defined and shortened learning cycle</td>
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<td>Concentrated supports for student needs</td>
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<td>Anywhere, anytime learning</td>
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<td><strong>Leadership</strong></td>
<td>Nationally recognized professional development</td>
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<td>Individualized coaching to advance capacity for administration and teacher leaders</td>
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<td>Broadening school structures for shared leadership and decision making school-wide (seven turnaround leadership competencies)</td>
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<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
<td>Integrate key systems, structures, policies, and practices that inform a restorative and accountable approach to discipline and student support within a multi-tiered system of promotion, prevention, and intervention</td>
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<td>Support academic achievement and responsible behavior through improving social and emotional learning practices</td>
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Internal Support

District Level-
Specialized support teams created to support district focus areas and make decisions that will positively impact and support Beacon Initiative schools

Learning Community-
Roles and responsibilities for support staff established to support individual school and leader needs

Beacon Team-
Garner support and partnerships with local and national leaders to train and coach administrators and teacher leaders in turnaround competencies. Work collaboratively with district and school leaders to support and coach principals in the turnaround process.

Steering Committee-
Members will advise on best professional development and newest and innovative trends that will support growth in Beacon Initiative schools, create small pilots to test new approaches, and support schools by providing (or deploying) professional development and individualized coaching in their specialty area.
Resources & Information

LiveBinder:
http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1579558

Website:
http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsschools/beacon/Pages/default.aspx
Questions?

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