

**REPORT TO THE  
ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
11500 193<sup>rd</sup> AVENUE NW  
ELK RIVER, MN 55330  
763-241-3400**

**AUDIT OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS  
DISTRICT LEVEL RESULTS**

**CONDUCTED BY  
H. DALE HOLDEN, ED.D.  
H. DALE HOLDEN & ASSOCIATES  
132 RUNNING FOX ROAD  
COLUMBIA, SC 29223**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

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The question of whether demographics differentiate student achievement is now a settled question for most researchers. The most influential study in this field is “Equality of Educational Opportunity,” a study conducted by James Coleman, Johns Hopkins University, 1966. The Study clearly established that student achievement, and other school results, is strongly correlated to family economic status. A more recent study by Sean F. Reardon, “The Widening Academic Achievement Gap between Rich and Poor,” concluded that the relationship between family socioeconomic characteristics and academic achievement has widened: “As the income gap between high-and-low income families has widened, the achievement gap has widened.” The Study also concluded that school results, especially achievement, also correlate with the level of family education.

The “Audit of Educational Effectiveness” compares school districts and schools to a national sample of school district populations that are similar in family socioeconomic status and family education level. One cannot compare a school district with very few poor children with a school district that has 50% of the children living in poverty conditions. Achievement, and other school district results, is strongly correlated to both socioeconomic conditions and educational level of parents, especially the mother.

Although attempts have been made to reduce the gap (A Nation at Risk, No Child left Behind, Race to the Top, Common Core, Vouchers, Charters and a variety of parent choice strategies) the gap not only remains, but it has also widened. In recent years two movements seem to be effective in reducing the gap: early education for young children and educating poor children in classes of 10-12. In the area of early education, the most important study was conducted in 2010. The “Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Early Education Interventions on Cognitive and Social Development” examined 123 studies of early education interventions. The conclusion was that quality early education produced positive effects “for cognitive outcomes.” Additional evidence for the benefits of early childhood education is stated in a recent (2015) book by Bruce Bradbury, et al: “Too Many Children Left Behind.”

A basic principle of fairness is that school district effectiveness be evaluated based on comparability to a high achieving, demographically similar national student population. The Audit of Educational Effectiveness establishes two levels of effectiveness: Expected Level and Standards, which is one standard deviation above the Expected Level. Achieving above the Expected Level usually requires specific school district adjustments. School district conditions that support high results for districts and schools are:

1. A School Board that speaks well of the district and respects its employees;
2. Learning strategies that center on group learning and active student participation;
3. Accountability for achieving specific school and student achievement results;
4. Teacher evaluation programs which include peers in the process;
5. Student participation in the arts, extracurricular activities and interest groups;
6. Flexible schedules for students who work; and
7. Substantial involvement of parents and community in school affairs.

## **II. DISTRICT LEVEL RESULTS**

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Over the course of the last twelve years, the Elk River School District has conducted a comprehensive results-based analysis of the district. The Audit of Educational Effectiveness has been one of the vehicles used for this analysis and has provided the district with targeted commendations and recommendations related to the results areas for the district.

The section that follows includes a chart for the district showing the Variables (results areas), the Current Levels of attainment as well as the Expected Levels and the Standards. Also included is a summary of the commendations and recommendations related to the Variables.

## DISTRICT LEVEL RESULTS

<b>ELK RIVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT – GRADES PK-12</b>			
VARIABLES	CURRENT LEVEL	EXPECTED LEVEL	STANDARD <sup>1</sup>
STUDENT ATTENDANCE	95.10%	93.00%	96.00%
TEACHER ABSENCE INDEX <sup>2</sup>	6.82	6.50	4.50
CRT <sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 3 READING*	71.41%	62.84%	66.01%
CRT <sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 3 MATH*	82.71%	77.20%	81.74%
CRT <sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 4 READING*	67.10%	64.38%	68.14%
CRT <sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 4 MATH*	81.98%	75.43%	79.79%
CRT <sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 5 READING*	78.26%	73.91%	77.12%
CRT <sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 5 MATH*	68.40%	65.94%	70.36%
CRT <sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 5 SCIENCE*	71.26%	68.62%	73.01%
CRT <sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 6 READING*	68.48%	70.70%	74.34%
CRT <sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 6 MATH*	72.95%	63.13%	67.07%
CRT <sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 7 READING*	67.40%	63.50%	66.52%
CRT <sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 7 MATH*	73.20%	61.99%	65.52%

**ENROLLMENT – 13,219\*\* (K-12)**

**SCHOOL YEAR 2016-2017**

**\*PERCENT PROFICIENT**

**\*\*INCLUDES ALL DISTRICT SITES & PROGRAMS**

<sup>1</sup> The STANDARD is established at one standard deviation more effective than the EXPECTED LEVEL or average of the mean-matched population. The STANDARDS for the MCA-III tests are established at one-half of a standard deviation above the EXPECTED LEVELS.

<sup>2</sup> TEACHER ABSENCE INDEX is the average number of days of absence per professional staff member during a full school year. This does not include long-term illness, professional leave, military leave, or jury duty.

<sup>3</sup> CRT - Criterion-referenced test which in MN is the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-III) – administered in the spring of 2017.

<b>E L K R I V E R A R E A S C H O O L D I S T R I C T – G R A D E S K - 1 2</b>			
<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>CURRENT LEVEL</b>	<b>EXPECTED LEVEL</b>	<b>STANDARD<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>CRT<sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 8 READING*</b>	<b>69.60%</b>	<b>65.86%</b>	<b>69.43%</b>
<b>CRT<sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 8 MATH*</b>	<b>80.08%</b>	<b>65.35%</b>	<b>69.03%</b>
<b>CRT<sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 8 SCIENCE*</b>	<b>60.84%</b>	<b>54.94%</b>	<b>59.56%</b>
<b>CRT<sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 10 READING*</b>	<b>63.88%</b>	<b>66.32%</b>	<b>69.32%</b>
<b>CRT<sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR 11 MATH*</b>	<b>62.13%</b>	<b>55.22%</b>	<b>58.66%</b>
<b>CRT<sup>3</sup> MCA-III GR HS SCIENCE*</b>	<b>61.34%</b>	<b>65.81%</b>	<b>70.69%</b>
<b>AP<sup>4</sup> PERCENT OF GR 11-12 IN AP COURSES</b>	<b>34.88%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>
<b>AP PERCENT OF EXAMS SCORED 3 AND ABOVE</b>	<b>64.13%</b>	<b>64.00%</b>	<b>74.00%</b>
<b>COLLEGE IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM PARTICIPATION - GRADES 11&amp;12</b>	<b>50.61%</b>	<b>50.00%</b>	<b>55.00%</b>
<b>MEAN ACT<sup>5</sup> SCORES</b>	<b>21.90</b>	<b>20.00</b>	<b>22.00</b>
<b>ACT PERCENT OF GR 11&amp;12 STUDENTS TAKING TEST</b>	<b>90.01%</b>	<b>60.00%</b>	<b>65.00%</b>
<b>CUMULATIVE GPA<sup>6</sup> GR 12 HIGH SCHOOL</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>2.60</b>
<b>DROP-OUT RATE</b>	<b>3.40%</b>	<b>5.00%</b>	<b>3.00%</b>
<b>GRADUATION RATE</b>	<b>88.90%</b>	<b>92.00%</b>	<b>94.00%</b>

**\*PERCENT PROFICIENT**

**SCHOOL YEAR 2016-2017**

<sup>1</sup> The STANDARD is established at one standard deviation more effective than the EXPECTED LEVEL or average of the mean-matched population. The STANDARDS for the MCA-III tests are established at one-half of a standard deviation above the EXPECTED LEVELS.

<sup>3</sup> CRT – Criterion-referenced test which in MN is the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-III) – administered in the spring of 2017.

<sup>4</sup> AP – Advanced Placement Test

<sup>5</sup> ACT – American College Test – Based on total enrollment in AP courses.

<sup>6</sup> GRADE POINT AVERAGE – A higher figure usually indicates grade inflation, which is associated with less effective teaching.

### **III. CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS**

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Included as part of the Audit of Educational Effectiveness are the results of a survey that was completed by Elk River Area School District administrators, teachers, parents, and school staff. The seven survey areas and the accompanying statements are linked to the Effective Schools Correlates and represent what are considered to be strong indicators of effective schools and school districts.

The survey was completed by a total of 321 people from throughout the district with the results broken into three main categories: Administration (ADMIN), Classified Staff (CLASS) and licensed staff (LICENSE). The perception data were then carefully reviewed and analyzed to determine the extent of agreement among the groups being surveyed. The greater the agreement, as indicated by higher average scores, the greater the degree of common understanding of the district's goals. Conversely, the greater the disagreement, as indicated by lower average scores, the greater the probability of confusion or misunderstanding regarding the district's goals.

The data obtained from the administration of the survey were used to establish the degree to which the Effective School Correlates are perceived by each group individually and as a whole. In addition, combined averages were calculated for each group of respondents and are shown at the bottom of each chart. The survey statements were linked to a four point Likert Scale which asked the respondents to indicate their level of agreement with each statement.

4 - Indicates strong agreement with the statement

3 - Indicates agreement with the statement

2 - Indicates disagreement with the statement

1 - Indicates strong disagreement with the statement

A standard of 3.0 or higher is necessary to validate the perception that the elements are perceived to be established in the district. Items highlighted in green indicate Correlates of Effectiveness that are well-established, and typically fall at or above 3.20. Correlates that are perceived to be at or below the 2.50 standard are highlighted in yellow and need further attention.

It should be noted that perceptions can be improved when behaviors associated with the Effective Schools Correlates are established (i.e., the behaviors are performed and are noticeable by the school personnel).



CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS DISTRICT SURVEY 2016-2017		RESULTS			
AREA	STATEMENTS	ADMIN	CLASS	LICENSE	AVG
<b>SAFE AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT</b>	1. Physical facilities are kept clean/neat.	3.41	3.37	3.25	3.29
	2. Crisis counseling is available for students with pressing problems.	3.52	3.17	3.26	3.27
	3. There are clearly stated school rules defining expectations of student behavior.	3.50	3.13	3.29	3.27
	4. Discipline is applied equitably to all students by all staff members.	3.29	2.64	2.56	2.65
	5. Organized efforts are made to orient new students to the school and classes.	3.28	3.23	3.21	3.22
	6. Top priority is placed on student safety and security.	3.78	3.36	3.39	3.42
	7. Students are safe from physical harm from other students in the school.	3.42	3.04	3.11	3.13
	8. Students demonstrate respect for each other.	3.19	2.73	2.82	2.84
	9. Staff members are accessible to students. (e.g., Before or after school, between classes, and/or during preparation periods.)	3.27	3.10	3.29	3.25
	10. Staff members know a large percentage of the student body by name.	3.32	3.08	3.15	3.15
	<b>SAFE &amp; ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT - OVERALL</b>	<b>3.40</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>3.15</b>

CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS DISTRICT SURVEY 2016-2017		RESULTS			
AREA	STATEMENTS	ADMIN	CLASS	LICENSE	AVG
<b>CLEAR AND FOCUSED MISSION</b>	11. This district has a clearly stated mission statement focused on learning by all students.	3.85	3.30	3.54	3.52
	12. The mission statement was developed with input from parents, staff, and the community.	3.73	3.26	3.44	3.44
	13. The district mission statement serves as the basis for important actions and decisions related to the educational program.	3.59	3.19	3.22	3.26
	14. A district-wide "Strategic Plan" was developed from the mission statement and is revised as needed.	3.70	3.03	3.31	3.31
	15. The mission states that all children can learn the adopted curriculum.	3.30	3.05	3.28	3.25
	16. Staff attention is distributed equally between high and low achieving students.	2.76	2.60	2.47	2.52
	17. The mission statement is demonstrated through the day-to-day behaviors of staff and students.	3.31	2.98	3.04	3.06
	18. There is a high commitment by all school staff to achieve the district's mission.	3.31	3.09	3.14	3.15
	<b>CLEAR &amp; FOCUSED MISSION - OVERALL</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>3.19</b>

CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS DISTRICT SURVEY 2016-2017		RESULTS			
AREA	STATEMENTS	ADMIN	CLASS	LICENSE	AVG
FREQUENT MONITORING/PROGRESS	19. Student attendance records are monitored to assure students are in class to learn.	3.52	3.06	3.31	3.30
	20. Student attendance concerns are reviewed quickly with parents.	3.36	2.71	3.09	3.08
	21. Student assessments are based on defined curriculum standards and objectives.	3.40	3.06	3.22	3.22
	22. Evaluation measures are aligned to curriculum standards/objectives.	3.28	2.96	3.20	3.18
	23. Teachers use a data management system to monitor student academic progress.	3.12	3.13	3.27	3.23
	24. Students are given regular feedback (daily, weekly) on academic progress.	3.29	2.87	3.18	3.15
	25. Student achievement records are provided to and reviewed with parents regularly.	3.33	2.74	3.11	3.09
	26. A variety of tests/procedures are used to evaluate student learning.	3.19	3.08	3.17	3.16
	27. Central office administrators regularly discuss student progress on curriculum standards with teachers.	3.04	3.08	2.63	2.71
	28. School achievement information is publicized for all members of the community.	3.33	2.88	3.03	3.06
	29. Student achievement records are utilized to focus instructional efforts.	3.42	3.00	3.21	3.21
<b>FREQUENT MONITORING - OVERALL</b>		<b>3.30</b>	<b>2.96</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>3.13</b>

CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS DISTRICT SURVEY 2016-2017		RESULTS			
AREA	STATEMENTS	ADMIN	CLASS	LICENSE	AVG
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP	30. District administrators are highly visible throughout the district.	3.11	2.38	2.54	2.58
	31. District administration utilizes personnel effectively.	3.35	2.80	2.73	2.82
	32. The district administrative staff supports teachers in instructional efforts.	3.48	3.14	2.88	2.99
	33. The district administration provides instructional leadership.	3.50	2.96	2.89	2.98
	34. The district administration facilitates change.	3.56	2.74	3.01	3.04
	35. District administrators serve as resources for district staff.	3.52	2.89	2.96	3.02
	36. There is a high degree of cooperation between district administration and staff.	3.38	2.62	2.70	2.77
	37. District administration involves faculty, parents, and staff in decision making.	3.28	2.71	2.69	2.77
	38. District administrators visit schools/classrooms regularly.	2.96	2.22	2.28	2.36
	39. District administration discusses instructional matters with teachers frequently.	3.00	2.90	2.42	2.53
	40. There is support throughout the district for staff development activities aimed at improving teaching.	3.48	2.85	3.04	3.07
	41. Evaluation procedures measuring progress toward school objectives are established.	3.26	3.00	3.08	3.10
	42. District administrators have procedures to evaluate building personnel using the learning goals outlined in the district's strategic plan and/or the building's school improvement plan.	3.37	2.94	3.17	3.18
	43. District administration is viewed as communicating effectively.	3.19	2.43	2.61	2.66
	44. District administrators promote parent involvement in the school.	3.26	2.81	2.76	2.84
	45. District administrators are consistent in carrying out school district policy.	3.35	2.62	2.91	2.93
<b>INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP - OVERALL</b>		<b>3.32</b>	<b>2.75</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>2.85</b>

CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS DISTRICT SURVEY 2016-2017		RESULTS			
AREA	STATEMENTS	ADMIN	CLASS	LICENSE	AVG
HIGH EXPECTATIONS	46. All district schools promote a climate emphasizing academic learning.	3.41	3.11	3.24	3.24
	47. Teachers and administrators meet to discuss achievement test results.	3.36	3.17	3.14	3.17
	48. There is a district-wide homework policy.	2.96	2.75	2.44	2.54
	49. The district systematically and publicly recognizes student academic success.	3.30	2.84	2.85	2.91
	50. The district systematically and publicly recognizes student academic improvement.	3.15	2.73	2.62	2.71
	51. District schools provide an environment promoting student self-esteem.	3.23	2.97	2.93	2.98
	52. Conferences with parents and appropriate school/district personnel are held regularly to improve student learning.	3.35	3.11	3.15	3.16
	53. Students are taught how to evaluate their own performance.	3.04	2.73	2.91	2.90
	54. Students are responsible for completing assigned work on time.	3.28	3.00	2.97	3.01
	55. Students are expected to be fully prepared for their classes.	3.31	3.02	3.09	3.11
	56. Students are expected to be in their classes - on time, every day.	3.37	3.02	3.10	3.12
	57. Teachers have high expectations for all children regardless of their backgrounds.	3.33	3.00	3.25	3.21
	58. Teachers appropriately praise students for outstanding performance.	3.38	3.08	3.26	3.25
	59. Teachers place an emphasis on students learning academic content.	3.42	3.18	3.34	3.32
<b>HIGH EXPECTATIONS - OVERALL</b>		<b>3.28</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>3.03</b>

CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS DISTRICT SURVEY 2016-2017		RESULTS			
AREA	STATEMENTS	ADMIN	CLASS	LICENSE	AVG
MAXIMIZE LEARNING	60. The district places major emphasis on student learning.	3.65	3.14	3.30	3.31
	61. Clear learning objectives exist throughout the curriculum.	3.32	3.03	3.17	3.17
	62. The percentage of minority students in the upper level academic classes increases each year toward parity with their % in the school population as a whole.	2.74	3.00	2.73	2.76
	63. Frequent communication occurs between special program teachers and teachers of regular classes, and between counselors and teachers.	3.08	2.78	2.80	2.83
	64. Distractions and interruptions of classroom learning activities are minimized.	3.15	2.69	2.67	2.73
	65. The instructional materials center is open for students throughout the year.	3.17	3.23	3.26	3.25
	66. Teachers select materials based upon students' instructional needs.	3.25	3.12	3.21	3.20
	67. District schools use community resources to support school goals and programs.	3.16	3.00	2.89	2.94
	68. The school/district provides students with opportunities for learning beyond minimum classroom requirements.	3.27	2.89	2.83	2.90
	69. Classroom learning activities and materials are demanding; e.g., the activities require such thinking skills as analysis, generalization, and evaluation.	3.20	2.97	3.06	3.06
	70. The faculty takes collective responsibility for academic achievement regardless of family background.	3.12	3.00	3.09	3.08
	71. Students are given the time, help, and encouragement necessary to learn.	3.24	3.03	3.10	3.10
	72. Occupational preparation or career awareness courses exist.	3.04	2.86	2.82	2.86
	73. Remedial programs exist.	3.19	3.03	3.08	3.09
	74. Programs exist for the academically talented and/or gifted students.	2.81	2.76	2.54	2.61
	75. Teachers provide students with individual assistance throughout the day.	3.24	2.94	3.24	3.19
	76. Teachers keep non-instructional time to a minimum.	3.20	2.93	3.23	3.18
	77. Students are actively engaged in learning during most of their class time.	3.23	3.03	3.19	3.17
<b>MAXIMIZE LEARNING - OVERALL</b>		<b>3.17</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>3.02</b>

CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS DISTRICT SURVEY 2016-2017		RESULTS			
AREA	STATEMENTS	ADMIN	CLASS	LICENSE	AVG
POSITIVE COMMUNICATION	78. Student participation in special programs is communicated to parents.	3.28	3.15	3.20	3.21
	79. Staff/school accomplishments are regularly communicated to parents.	3.24	3.04	3.01	3.05
	80. Student accomplishments are regularly shared with parents.	3.36	3.00	3.08	3.10
	81. The district's academic standards are shared with parents and students.	3.27	2.96	3.04	3.07
	82. Parents are given opportunities to discuss areas of concern, such as the school mission, goals, or reporting systems.	3.23	2.76	2.94	2.96
	83. District leaders seriously consider the opinions and reactions of parents and/or community members in their decision making.	3.35	2.65	2.81	2.87
	84. The school/district has a positive image in the local media and community.	3.33	2.79	2.94	2.97
	85. Parent communications emphasize positive statements concerning student accomplishments more than disciplinary issues.	3.20	2.79	2.92	2.94
	86. District employees work with parents to build a respectful climate for all.	3.38	3.11	3.10	3.13
	87. The community provides parent representation to the building leadership (school improvement) team.	3.17	2.88	2.82	2.88
	88. District leaders work with parents to establish procedures guiding parent involvement.	3.22	2.59	2.86	2.89
	89. Parents have opportunities to learn processes to help their children be successful in school.	3.00	2.83	2.92	2.92
	90. Teachers are trained to work with parents to help children learn.	2.69	2.89	2.58	2.63
	91. Parents support the district's instructional efforts.	3.20	2.81	2.87	2.91
	92. Parent and community volunteers play an active role in the district's program.	3.19	2.85	2.82	2.88
	93. The district has a system which encourages citizens and businesses to work actively with each school.	2.96	2.75	2.68	2.73
	94. Parent volunteers contribute widely in the functioning of the school/district.	3.15	2.91	2.90	2.93
	95. District-wide there is a high level of school and home cooperation.	3.25	2.77	2.80	2.86
	<b>POSITIVE COMMUNICATION - OVERALL</b>		<b>3.19</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>2.91</b>

<b>CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS DISTRICT SURVEY RESULTS 2016-2017 – ALL AREAS</b>	<b>3.28</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>3.02</b>
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**CORRELATES OF EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS - COMPARISON OF SURVEY RESULTS BY YEAR**

STATEMENTS	ADMINISTRATORS					CLASSIFIED					LICENSED				
	2008	2011	2015	2017	CHG	2008	2011	2015	2017	CHG	2008	2011	2015	2017	CHG
SAFE AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT	3.07	3.18	3.25	3.40	0.33	3.00	3.08	3.25	3.09	0.08	3.06	3.16	3.18	3.13	0.07
CLEAR AND FOCUSED MISSION	2.84	3.16	3.37	3.44	0.60	2.83	3.00	3.22	3.06	0.23	2.85	3.13	3.13	3.18	0.33
FREQUENT MONITORING OF PROGRESS	2.97	3.08	3.15	3.30	0.33	3.04	3.02	3.27	2.96	-0.07	3.07	3.17	3.11	3.13	0.06
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP	2.90	2.96	3.17	3.32	0.42	2.50	2.73	2.98	2.75	0.25	2.41	2.72	2.70	2.79	0.39
HIGH EXPECTATIONS	2.91	3.05	3.12	3.28	0.37	2.94	2.99	3.20	2.98	0.04	2.98	3.09	3.06	3.02	0.04
MAXIMIZE LEARNING	2.87	2.92	3.21	3.17	0.30	2.88	2.91	3.17	2.97	0.08	2.96	3.06	3.05	3.01	0.05
POSITIVE COMMUNICATION	2.87	2.98	3.21	3.19	0.32	2.82	2.89	3.12	2.86	0.05	2.81	2.97	2.94	2.91	0.09
ALL CORRELATES	2.91	3.02	3.21	3.28	0.37	2.84	2.92	3.17	2.93	0.09	2.86	3.02	3.01	3.00	0.14

CORRELATES INCREASING MORE THAN .1 BETWEEN 2008 AND 2017 ARE SHADED GREEN

STATEMENTS	OVERALL AVERAGE				
	2008	2011	2015	2017	CHG
SAFE AND ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT	3.05	3.15	3.20	3.15	0.10
CLEAR AND FOCUSED MISSION	2.85	3.11	3.17	3.19	0.34
FREQUENT MONITORING OF PROGRESS	3.06	3.14	3.14	3.13	0.07
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP	2.45	2.75	2.77	2.85	0.40
HIGH EXPECTATIONS	2.97	3.07	3.09	3.04	0.07
MAXIMIZE LEARNING	2.95	3.03	3.08	3.02	0.08
POSITIVE COMMUNICATION	2.82	2.96	2.99	2.94	0.12
ALL CORRELATES	2.86	3.00	3.05	3.02	0.16

CORRELATES INCREASING MORE THAN .1 BETWEEN 2008 AND 2017 ARE SHADED GREEN



#### **IV. COMMENDATIONS**

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The Elk River School District does an outstanding job of utilizing the Audit of Educational Effectiveness to analyze its yearly progress in meeting both district and school level performance targets. Their efforts are well-organized, thorough and focused not only on areas that are improving, but also on those that still need attention.

Based on the results data used for the Audit of Educational Effectiveness, the Elk River Area School District continues to meet or exceed the Expected Levels in many areas. The district has also made progress in a number of other areas since the last Audit of Educational Effectiveness was conducted in 2015.

The results data are indicative of a district that is well-governed with strong central and school level leadership and dedicated employees. These are conditions that are found in effective school districts. Shown below are specific areas in which the district meets or exceeds the Expected Levels.

1. The average daily student attendance (ADA) of 95.10 percent for the district is above the Expected Level of 93.00 percent. The district average is supported by high individual school averages that exceed the Expected Levels. The consistency of the average daily attendance throughout the district is not only highly commendable, but it is also at a level not usually found among similar school districts.
2. The district's MCA-III reading scores exceed the Expected Levels at every grade where the test is administered with the exception of grades six and ten. In addition, the percent proficient is above the Standard for grades 3, 5, 7, and 8, which is a remarkable accomplishment for the district's instructional program.
3. The district's MCA-III math scores exceed the Expected Levels at every grade where the test is administered. With the exception of grade five, the test results are also above the Standard at all other grade levels. This is indicative of a consistently strong instructional program in a critical area and represents a marked increase in the percent of test results above the Standard since the 2015 Audit.
4. The district's MCA-III science scores exceed the Expected Level in grades 5 and are above the Expected Level and the Standard for grade 8. The tests are currently administered in grades 5 and 8, as well as at the high school level. Overall, the results indicate that the district is continuing to perform well in this area.
5. The percent of students in grades 11 and 12 enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses is 34.88 percent. This is an increase of 7.07 percent when compared to the program participation results reported in the 2015

Audit. These results are well above both the Expected Level of 14.00 percent and the Standard of 16.00 percent. It is also commendable that the district's 64.13 percent of AP exams scored 3 and above now exceeds the Expected Level 64.00 percent and represents a 5.47 percent increase over what was reported in the 2015 Audit..

6. In addition to the Advanced Placement program, the district also offers students an opportunity to take college level courses through its College in Schools program. Currently, 50.61 percent of the students in grades 11 and 12 are enrolled in these courses. This places the overall percent of students enrolled above the Expected Level of 50.00 percent.
7. The mean American College Test (ACT) composite score of 21.90 is well above the Expected Level of 20.00 and just below the Standard of 22.00. The district has demonstrated a high degree of consistency in this area over the past several years with average composite scores that exceed both the state and the national averages. This is once again the case for 2016-2017, where the national composite score was 21.0 and the state composite score was 21.5.
8. The percent of students taking the American College Test (ACT) is 90.01 percent which is above the Expected Level of 60.00 percent as well as the Standard of 65.00 percent. Because the ACT is now offered to high school juniors for free, the percent of students taking the test has increased by 21.02 percent over the figure reported in the previous Audit of Educational Effectiveness.
9. The four-year drop-out rate for the district, based on 2015-2016 data, is 3.40 percent which is below the Expected Level of 5.00 percent. Please note that this figure includes all of the district's secondary level students.
10. The district exceeds the Expected Levels for 21 out of the 27 variables that were examined as part of the Audit of Educational Effectiveness. This is highly commendable and represents a substantial improvement over the 2015 Audit where 16 out of the 26 variables were above the Expected Level.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

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Although the Elk River Area School District has demonstrated that it is effective in many of the results areas, there is still need for improvement in several areas. Listed below are the areas which are currently not at the Expected Levels. While the Expected Level can be achieved in some of these areas with little effort, others will require additional commitment, time and resources over the course of the next 2-3 years. This is particularly important since these are some the same areas that were recommended for improvement in the last Audit of Educational Effectiveness.

1. The teacher absence index (TAI) of 6.82 for the district is slightly above the Expected Level of 6.50 days. The number of days of short-term absence related to personal illness, family illness, as well as personal and emergency leave, has improved significantly from what was reported in previous Audits of Educational Effectiveness. The current average is nearly two days less than the 8.68 reported in the 2015 Audit. This is important because the average number of days of teacher absence not only impacts the quality of classroom instruction, but it also increases the amount of money needed to pay substitute teachers.
2. The district is not meeting the Expected Levels on the MCA-III test in reading at grades six and ten. Since these are the only grades where the district is not meeting the Expected Levels in reading, consideration needs to be given to the development of instructional strategies that would enable the district to perform at or above the Expected Levels.
3. The results of the MCA-III test in science at the high school are below the Expected Level. This is in contrast to the fact that the science test results at both grades 5 and 8 exceed the Expected Levels.
4. The cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.94 is slightly higher than the Expected Level of 2.80. This is often indicative of mild grade inflation, a lack of instructional rigor and, in some cases, less effective teaching. The analysis of the grade distributions at the high schools can help to determine if this is an isolated situation or one that is more pervasive.
5. The graduation rate of 88.90 percent for the district is 3.10 percent below the Expected Level of 92.00 percent and 1.18 percent below the 90.08 percent that was reported in the 2015 Audit. Please note that this is a composite percentage drawn from data across all of the district's high school graduates.