Vernon Hill Elementary School
Sustainable Improvement Plan – 2021-22 School Year
Executive Summary

Vernon Hill School serves 453 students in grades preK through 6. We are privileged to serve a diverse community and student body. Over 46% of our students are English Language Learners, 71% of our students are economically disadvantaged, and 20% of our students receive special education support and services.

During the 2020-2021 school year Vernon Hill staff and students persevered through the challenges put forth during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instruction took place virtually for all students through March when the choice of a hybrid learning model or a remote learning model was offered by the district. In early May the hybrid model was discontinued and students attended school either full in-person or full remote. Approximately 50% of our student population participated in either hybrid or full in-person learning. Due to these circumstances there were multiple strategies identified in our Sustainable Improvement Plan that we were unable to put into action. We were able to build capacity in the areas of technology use, establishing strong partnerships between teachers and caregivers, and leadership providing teachers with an increased amount of timely actionable feedback.

In March of this year, we received a Targeted Site Visit from SchoolWorks. Feedback from the visit included the identification of a strong instructional focus in literacy, specifically through the use of Leveled Literacy Intervention as a strength. The team made recommendations that while some leadership opportunities were in place the role of the ILT had not been fully established and therefore had not yet begun to impact student success. Following this feedback the leadership team conducted a renorming of the ILT, which led to the establishment of clearly defined and agreed upon roles and responsibilities and a rededication by members to engage in school improvement. To further the development of the leadership within the school, ILT meetings were facilitated by members of INSTL during May and June. During these meetings teachers were engaged in using research-based methods around lesson planning, setting the groundwork for further work to be completed by the ILT during the summer.

Turnaround Practice One
Our first area of improvement will be to strengthen our approach to Leadership, Shared Responsibility and Professional Collaboration through increasing the leadership role and capacity of our Instructional Leadership Team.

- **We will increase the responsibility of the ILT members at PLC/data meetings.** We will provide additional support resources to ILT members to increase their ability to fulfill leadership roles during these meetings.
- **We will create a role for the School Adjustment Counselor within the ILT to create a bridge of communication and action between the work of the Targeted Team and the ILT.** There will be designated time during ILT meetings for the SAC to share the work of the targeted team as well as SEL supports and strategies that can be used to increase student success in the classroom.
- **The ILT will become firmly established as the mechanism that drives the identification of research-based practices for developing improvement strategies, implementing these strategies and monitoring their effectiveness as the agenda items during each ILT meeting.** The ILT will be organized into sub-committees which will focus on academic and non-academic (SEL) areas of improvement.
Sustainable Improvement Plan: 2021-22 SY

Turnaround Practice Two
Our second area of improvement will focus on the development of Intentional Practices for Improving Instruction through the development of a well-defined system of observation and providing timely, actionable feedback on instruction. Staff will be supported in actively using the Vernon Hill Lesson Plan Template including guiding questions and regular use of student data to inform instruction. We will institute a shared system for collecting and analyzing data to support teacher planning.

- We will create a data collection system to be used to share student data among staff members to inform teachers when planning lessons as well as interventions. An assessment guide will be created and shared with staff that provides guidance on the assessments that should be given, the frequency and the benchmarks to determine progress monitoring. Teachers will establish a shared responsibility of data collection and progress monitoring by reviewing data at bi-weekly data meetings.
- **Vernon Hill will use a research-based approach to plan focused high quality student centered instruction.** The ILT will create a roll-out plan for staff to gradually adopt the use of the Vernon Hill lesson plan template (modified backwards design) including lesson planning guiding questions (Wiggins and McTighe). The leadership team will provide continued support and feedback to teachers throughout the year.
- **The ILT will create a Vernon Hill Walkthrough Tool that will provide staff with clear expectations regarding planning, instruction and assessment.** The Walkthrough tool will be used by the leadership team to provide teachers with timely, actionable feedback as well as to identify school-wide areas of growth and professional development needs.

Turnaround Practice Three
Our third area of improvement will be to design a systemic approach to instruction through a multi-tiered system of support that provides student-specific supports and interventions informed by data and the identification of student specific needs.

- **Vernon Hill will adopt a new approach to the organization of their literacy block in order to provide targeted interventions.** Following the collection of student data using the Benchmark Assessment System in September, literacy block schedules will be created to meet the literacy needs of the students in each class. The Fountas and Pinnell Level Literacy Intervention System will be used as a primary intervention. Continued professional development and support in the implementation of this program will be offered to all staff and the ILT will monitor the impact of LLI to assess implementation and impact.
- **Vernon Hill will increase the capacity of staff by providing ongoing professional development on foundations of reading and reading interventions.** Staff will be offered professional development through a Summer Literacy Training session using Lexia Academy and DESE Mass Literacy Resources, on multi-sensory reading intervention strategies from the Orton-Gillingham program and from LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling).

Turnaround Practice Four
Our fourth area of improvement will be to build School Culture and Climate through the consistent use of Vernon Hill’s behavior management system, increasing students’ social and self-regulation skills through the implementation of the Second Step curriculum and increasing the number of opportunities for families to be involved at Vernon Hill.
● **We will build teacher capacity to use common behavioral expectations and strategies supported by administrative capacities and systems.** Vernon Hill will continue to use the “Wolfpack Way” behavior management system, which focuses on using positive reinforcement. The behavioral expectations of this system will be identified and communicated to all staff, students and families, and reinforced throughout the year. The frequency and value of the positive rewards for students in grades three through six will be emphasized, to increase buy-in from students and build student agency and ownership of their learning. Vernon Hill will engage in professional development on Collaborative Problem Solving as a method to be adopted for supporting students experiencing difficulties compiling with behavioral expectations. The Student Support Process will be utilized as a method for creating supports for students experiencing difficulty managing behaviors as well as monitoring the effectiveness of those supports.

● **Vernon Hill will support the social-emotional development of students through the implementation of the Second Step Curriculum for students in grades kindergarten through six.** Teachers will have a weekly designated block in their schedule for the implementation of the program. Teachers will receive ongoing support from the School Adjustment Counselor and School Psychologist in the implementation of the program.

● **We will increase family involvement at Vernon Hill by offering opportunities for families and caregivers to be involved in academic and social events held during and outside of school hours.** Vernon Hill will create a committee of stakeholders, led by a member of the administration and the School Adjustment Counselor that will organize bi-monthly family involvement events held outside of school. We will continue to invite parents to quarterly “Triple A” awards to recognize student achievement in the areas of academics, attendance and attitude. Teachers will plan quarterly curriculum events during the school day to showcase the academic work of their students which families will be invited to attend.
### Turnaround Practice #1: Leadership, shared responsibility, and professional collaboration

The school has established a community of practice through leadership, shared responsibility for all students, and professional collaboration.

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<tr>
<th>Our Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Key Areas for Improvement</th>
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<td>We will increase leadership capacity of staff through the shared ownership of efforts to improve student achievement.</td>
<td>1. Strengthen the ILT in terms of increasing the leadership role and building capacity within its members</td>
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<td>2. Create a culture within the ILT that is committed to adopting research based instructional practices measured through student success and achievement</td>
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#### Strategies and Actions (specific and timebound)

1. **Increase the responsibility of the ILT members at PLC/data meetings**
   - Provide additional resources, support and professional development to ILT members for the purpose of facilitating and participating in PLC/data meetings to increase their ability to fulfill a leadership role during these meetings. (September)
   - Leadership team will work individually with ILT members to support their facilitation of PLC/data meetings (ongoing throughout the year)

2. **Create a role for the School Adjustment Counselor within ILT to create a bridge of communication and action between the work of the targeted team and the work of the ILT.**
   - Invite SAC to participate in ILT meetings, clarifying her role (July)
   - Designate time during each ILT meeting for the SAC to share the work of the targeted team (September)
   - Provide opportunities during ILT meetings for SAC to present/share SEL supports and strategies to ILT members that will then be shared back to grade level teams (ongoing throughout the year)

3. **Firmly establish the ILT as the mechanism that drives the identification of research-based practices for developing improvement strategies, implementing these strategies and monitoring their effectiveness as the agenda items during each ILT meeting.**
   - Create sub-committees within the ILT to work on specific areas of school improvement
     - Instructional Improvement: Lesson planning, Walkthrough tool and Assessment and Student Support: academic, non-academic and SEL (January)
## Turnaround Practice #2: Intentional practices for improving instruction

The school employs intentional practices for improving teacher-specific and student-responsive instruction.

### Our Strategic Objective

To improve the quality of standards-based lesson planning and classroom instruction by developing a well-defined system of observation and providing timely, actionable feedback that includes continuous monitoring of classroom instruction and student work using the Vernon Hill Walkthrough tool.

Teacher’s planning and implementation of standards-based instruction will be informed by a highly organized system of data collection and lesson plan guidance (Wiggins & McTighe).

### Key Areas for Improvement

1. To improve teacher capacity, use a variety of data to assess students and improve instruction
2. To improve teachers’ purposeful design of lessons and focus on implementing the instructional core
3. To improve our system of walkthroughs, observation and feedback

### Strategies and Actions (specific and timebound)

#### 2.1 Creation of a Data Collection System with equitable access to staff

- Create master spreadsheet for each grade level which identifies required assessments (August)
- Create an Assessment Guide which contains guidance regarding the frequency assessments are given and the benchmarks to determine progress monitoring (August)
- Teachers will establish shared responsibility of data collection by reviewing data at bi-weekly data meetings (ongoing throughout the year)

#### 2.2 Staff will utilize Vernon Hill Lesson Plan Template (modified backwards design) and Lesson Plan Guiding Questions (from Wiggins and McTighe) to plan focused, high quality student centered instruction.

- ILT members will present Vernon Hill Lesson Plan Template and Lesson Plan Guidance Questions including summary of work done during Spring ILT meetings with INSTL and lead their grade level/department in creating a lesson plan for the following week (August)
- Staff will engage in a gradual utilization of the template during the first four weeks of the school year. (August-September)
- Feedback will be given to staff following the first two weeks of use. (September)
- Leadership team will provide office hours to support staff in the implementation of the lesson plan template. (September)
- Weekly opportunities for lesson planning support will be offered before and after school by the Leadership team.
- Provide staff with professional development to deepen their understanding of math standards.

#### 2.3 Develop a Vernon Hill Walkthrough tool (to be used in conjunction with district walkthrough tool) that provides staff with clear expectations regarding planning, instruction and assessment. The Walkthrough tool will be used to provide teachers with timely, actionable feedback.

- Provide staff with professional development to deepen their understanding of math standards.
- During ILT Summer Sessions members will create the Vernon Hill Walkthrough Tool. (July-August)
- ILT will participate in instructional rounds using the Vernon Hill Walkthrough Tool to identify areas of growth and professional development needs. (November)
**Turnaround Practice #3: Student-specific supports and instruction to all students**

The school is able to provide student-specific supports and interventions informed by data and the identification of student-specific needs.

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<td>We will implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support to provide all students with appropriate classroom-based instruction and tiered academic and non-academic support. The Data teams will frequently monitor data to refine classroom-based instruction and targeted interventions.</td>
<td>1. To improve how we provide targeted interventions to students, especially in literacy and our use of the literacy block.</td>
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<td>2. Lesson planning that is focused and detailed and is created using specific student data.</td>
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**Strategies and Actions (specific and timebound)**

3.1 **Design/develop a new approach to the literacy block**

- Identify students requiring intervention using BAS (September)
- Create Literacy block schedules to support the identified needs of each classroom/grade level.
- Use Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System with fidelity as part of a MTSS for lowest achieving students.
- Train new staff to use Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention System as well as provide continued support for returning staff.
- Require bi-weekly parent/teacher communication for students receiving intervention; ensure parents are informed and equipped with strategies and materials to support their student’s progress at home.

3.2 **Creation of a data collection system with equitable access to staff (same as TP #2): Alignment of Assessments**

- See 2.1 for Strategies

3.3 **Provide staff ongoing professional development on foundations of reading and reading interventions**

- Summer Literacy training using Lexia Academy and DESE Mass Literacy Resources (August)
- Professional Development provided to all staff by teacher of Moderate Special Needs on multi-sensory reading intervention strategies from Orton-Gillingham program that can be utilized in the classroom (October)
- Professional Development using LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) (September-June)
Turnaround Practice #4: School Culture and Climate
A safe, orderly, and respectful environment for students and a collegial and collaborative culture among teachers.

Our Strategic Objective
We will create a school community that promotes practices to reflect and reinforce positive behaviors through the use of common language and expectations.

Key Areas for Improvement
1. To increase parent/family involvement in academics and social events
2. To build teacher capacity to use common behavioral expectations and strategies supported by administrative capacity and systems

Strategies and Actions (specific and timebound)
4.1 Increase family/school involvement by offering opportunities for families to be involved in academic and social events held during and outside of school hours.
   - Create a committee of stakeholders led by Administration and School Adjustment Counselor to plan bi-monthly family involvement events held outside of school hours (September)
   - Continue to invite parents to attend “Triple A Awards” to recognize students in the areas of attendance, attitude and academics
   - Invite parents to attend quarterly curriculum activities in each classroom in grades K-6

4.2 Implement Second Step Curriculum in K-6 classrooms on a weekly basis
   - School Adjustment Counselor (SAC), School Psychologist and STEP Clinician will provide PD on Second Step to new staff members (September)
   - Designate a 40 minute block in weekly schedules to be used for implementation of lessons starting (September)
   - Utilize SAC and School Psychologist as supports for teachers during first quarter implementation
   - SAC and School Psychologist will use Observational Walkthrough tool to ensure the program is implemented with fidelity and to provide feedback and support to classroom teachers.

4.3 Continue development of Vernon Hill Behavior System: expectations and implementation; school-wide consistent use of “Wolfpack Way” (admin, teachers, IAs); Accountability of use of system
   - Consistent use of “wolfpack cards” to reinforce positive behaviors by all staff throughout the school day in all environments.
   - “Wolfpack Way” behavioral expectations will be identified and communicated to staff and students.
   - Increase frequency and value of positive behavior rewards for students in grades 3-6.
   - Continue to use “Fun Friday” activities for students in grades K-2; encourage specials teachers to increase creativity in activities and increase the amount of time scheduled for activities.
   - School Adjustment Counselor with support from Administration will continue to provide professional development on Collaborative Problem Solving (Think: Kids) including opportunities to practice collaborative problem solving in small groups using case studies during staff meetings.
   - Encourage teachers to submit SSP paperwork for students struggling to manage behaviors. Use the SSP process to create behavioral supports for students, collect data on effectiveness of supports, and hold progress meetings often.
Benchmarks

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**Academic Targets**

List your Academic and Non-Academic Targets for 2020-21. The primary (and required) academic target is growth on MCAS scaled scores in Math and ELA.