Human Performance Improvement Report

Client Organization: Cherokee Bluff Middle School in Flowery Branch, GA

SPED Department Teachers

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Do not delete this text until you submit Assignment 4

Your instructors will make comments directly on this document throughout the assignment! **Do not delete/resolve these comments.** You should incorporate this feedback into your assignment as you move from section to section (i.e., feedback made to Assignment 2 should be incorporated into your project before you complete Assignment 3). As you prepare your Assignment 4, you will be responsible for responding to the comments informing the instructors of the changes you made to your assignment.

Remember, if you have a question regarding a comment, don't reply and ask your question, but instead email the instructors.

Executive Summary

Complete this section as the final component before you turn in Assignment 4! In this section, you will essentially summarize the entire report below in no more than 2 pages. This condensed report should synthesize each of the below components (the other deliverables in this assignment). We recommend using the following outline/format:
- Paragraph 1 - Description of the performance problem your project investigated
- Paragraph 2 - Description of the data you collected and why it was important
- Paragraph 3 - Description of the performance gap and the potential causes of the problem
- Paragraph 4 - Description of the proposed solutions and how they address the causes

Performance Systems Analysis Alignment Tables

Data Collection Alignment Table

	Data		
Problem Statement	**For quantifying the performance gap (e.g., Current and Ideal Performances)**	**For understanding the context or environment**	**For identifying potential causes to the problem**
Special education teachers are unable to adequately complete Individual Education Plan (IEP) paperwork by annual review dates.	Infinite Campus generated reports provide basic data on whether or not the required documents have been created.	A review of current resource documentation will determine what materials are available for training/knowledge review and their accessibility.	Checking student files will provide data as to whether the required documentation has been completed correctly.
	Checking student files will provide data as to whether the required documentation has been completed correctly.	The administrator interviews will provide information on resources, actual performance, preferred performance, and other organizational issues.	The administrator interviews will provide information on resources, actual performance, preferred performance, and other organizational issues.
	The administrator interviews will provide information on resources, actual performance, preferred performance, and other organizational issues.	The SPED teacher survey will collect information on current knowledge, abilities, and perceived resources and barriers.	The SPED teacher survey will collect information on current knowledge, abilities, and perceived resources and barriers.

In the following table, provide a high level overview of the HPI process. You will complete the following sections along with the corresponding assignments as listed below.

- Problem Statement with Assignment 1
- Performance Gaps and Identified Causes with Assignment 3
- Proposed Intervention with Assignment 4

Solution Alignment Table

Problem Statement	Performance Gaps	Identified Causes	Proposed Intervention(s)
Include your performance problem statement. Special education teachers are unable to adequately complete Individual Education Plan (IEP) paperwork by annual review dates.	Include the first of your identified gaps from your Gap Analysis. (Note: Add more rows as needed for additional gaps.)	Identify the first potential cause of your performance gap.	Identify the proposed intervention that directly targets the causes.

Assignment 1:Identified Performance Problem - Module 1

Organization Description

Mission and Purpose

The Hall County School District (HCSD) emphasizes four cornerstones of learning (W. Schofield, personal communication, 2018). The district's motto is "Character, Competency, Rigor, for All" (Hall County School District [HCSD], 2021). In addition, as noted on the homepage of the Hall County website), the mission statement for HCSD is as follows:

> With foundational philosophies of continuous improvement and leading by example, we commit to utilize all of our abilities to accomplish the task before us. Additionally, it will take our entire community working together to create an environment where boys and girls, our most precious resource, can begin to realize their potential. We believe our role is to fully support local families on this most important journey. (HCSD, 2021, Who We Are section, para. 1)

Cherokee Bluff Middle School (CBMS) has a personalized mission and value statement specifically created for the school. The Mission and Value Statement for CBMS is posted on the school website (2021) as the philosophy of the school and is as follows:

> At Cherokee Bluff we are a community....a family. We support, encourage and celebrate one another in success and lock arms and persevere together as we build and develop character, integrity and honesty within ourselves, our students, our classrooms and programs.
>
> Our atmosphere is safe and welcoming; where each person's story matters,

everyone belongs, and all of us find purpose. We challenge ourselves each day to

serve others within our walls and out in our community.

We believe in making an impact in the present and future culture by instilling

values, ownership, and responsibility in our staff and students that they will carry

with them wherever they go.

A first class education is a cornerstone in the foundation here at Cherokee Bluff as

we strive each day to leave our legacy of hope, service and innovation. (Mission,

Philosophy and Bear Values section, para. 1-4)

The motto for the school as written on the homepage of the website is "Innovation, Rigor

and Relevance for All" (Cherokee Bluff Middle School [CBMS], 2021). In addition, CBMS has

also identified core values for the school. Each student and faculty member is to strive to

represent the school by living out the following core values:

Be innovative

Every Person's Story Matters

Act with Integrity

Be Respectful and Responsible

Serve your Community (CBMS, 2021, Mission, Philosophy and Bear Values

section, para.5)

Physical Setup, Location, and Context

The physical location of Cherokee Bluff Middle is a school within a school. There is one building that houses both the middle school and the high school. The middle school classrooms are located on one side of the building with the high school located on the opposite side. Due to the age differences between the students, there are a limited number of shared spaces. The learning commons and the cafeteria are shared commons areas. The learning commons is divided into a middle school side and a high school side. The cafeteria is utilized by both schools and operates with the two groups assigned to a designated time to occupy the lunchroom. There are some cases in which a teacher is shared between the two schools. This is only true for a few connection classes. There are a few other cases in which classified or other certified support personnel have shared responsibilities.

The school is located in Flowery Branch, GA (Hall County). Hall County is north of Atlanta and borders Gwinnett County. It is often considered a metro-Atlanta county but contains many rural areas. Hall County's 2019 population is estimated to be 204,441 according to the United States Census Bureau (2020).

There are several contextual factors that affect the educational environment of the school. In 2019, Cherokee Bluff Middle School had 241 students that were identified as economically disadvantaged (United States Department of Education [US DOE], 2021). This equates to approximately 30% of the student body (US DOE, 2021).

Although CBMS was established three years ago in 2018, the circumstances surrounding the opening were unique. The middle/high school combination had originally been slated to open around 2007-2008. The school was built for this shared building concept. However, due to the economic downturn and recession that soon followed, these plans were put on hold. Instead of

hiring additional employees to staff a new school, entire school populations were shifted into existing school buildings with larger capacities. Schools with smaller enrollments traded places with those with larger numbers of students. As the economy recovered, plans for the new staff and school were revived. However, this displaced the schools that had previously occupied the space originally intended for Cherokee Bluff. The schools that had previously shifted to larger buildings were now returned to their original schools as numbers were adjusted based on the redistricting for the new school. This created animosity and resentment among numerous groups of parents, teachers, students and the community. As shown on the school website, teachers were hired from over 10 different schools, many of which were out of district (CBMS, 2021). Students were redistricted and found themselves separated from their peers and long time friends. They arrived from many different locations and many were initially frustrated and angry about the division. This created a strain on the culture and learning environment of the new school. In some cases, it became an us-against-them mentality. The faculty and staff have worked tirelessly to create a family atmosphere. This can be seen in multiple areas with #OneBearNation being displayed throughout the school and community (CBMS, 2021).

Employees and Clients

The faculty of Cherokee Bluff is composed of administration, educators and support staff. There are three administrators; two male and one female (Governor's Office of Student Achievement [GOSA], 2020). They are white with experience of 10-19 years (one) and 21-30 years (two) (GOSA, 2020). The total staff is made up of 33 female and 14 male employees for a total of 47 teachers (GOSA, 2020). The level of education of the teachers on staff can be found in the chart below (GOSA, 2020).

Table 1 Education Level of Faculty

Level of Education	Number of Faculty
Bachelor's Degree	17
Master's Degree	17
Specialist Degree	11
Doctorate Degree	2

There is a wide range of experience among the teachers. Twenty teachers have 1-10 years experience, 17 have 11-20 years of experience, nine have 21-30 years of experience, and one has more than 30 (GOSA, 2020). Of those teachers, there are 43 white teachers, 3 hispanic teachers and 1 multi-racial teacher (GOSA, 2020). There are three support personnel serving at CBMS and their race is white (GOSA, 2020). Three of the support personnel have obtained Master's degrees and one has a Specialist degree (GOSA, 2020). They consist of three females and one male according to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (2020). In addition, three have experience that falls between 1-10 years and one has served between 11- 20 years (GOSA, 2020).

Cherokee Bluff consists of students in 6th - 8th grades. Demographic information is found in reports compiled by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (2020). According to the report (GOSA, 2020) the school had a total of 752 students enrolled. The ethnicities consist of 66% white, 25% Hispanic, 5% African American, 4% multi-racial, and 1% Asian students (Governing, 2020). The population of limited English proficient learners was 14% (Governing, 2020). The student body is composed of 16.6% gifted students, 14% students with disabilities, and ESOL students make up 4.7% of the Cherokee Bluff students (GOSA, 2020). In

addition, 30% of students are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program (US DOE, 2021). Further, the distribution of gender is 49% female and 51% male according to the National Center for Educational Statistics (2019).

Problem Description

Current Performance

Special Education teachers are unable to adequately complete Individual Education Plans (IEP) paperwork by annual review dates.

Cherokee Bluff Middle School began its inaugural school year in 2018. Hall County redistricted some of the surrounding schools and many students were forced to leave their native schools and embark on a journey that would require them to be in a building with unfamiliar surroundings, classmates, and staff. In essence, it was a whole new world for the students. The teachers charged with launching this new school were from various schools across the county and some from beyond county lines. Teachers with differing opinions and experiences were asked to come together to form relationships with students, and this notion would become the primary focus as they struggled to unite as a functioning school body. Vague and undefined expectations led to teaching philosophies that were inefficient and unsalable. As such, details, structure, and formalities were not at the forefront of concern for the lackadaisical administration charged with leading all departments including Special Education. In addition, Cherokee Bluff has endured multiple changes in the Assistant Principal position, Director of Special Education, and county Special Education Coordinator. Special Education teachers were plagued with teaching multiple subjects at various grade levels all while attending to full caseloads of Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Many factors contributed to the school climate. Timid processes and procedures wavered as the climate was challenging for stakeholders. Thus, efficacy was lagging as individuals were not provided adequate and necessary support to fulfill all the needs of typical and atypical learners. A former Special Education teacher that has been promoted to Assistant Principal shared he believes there are many factors mentioned within that contributed to the inability for caseload workers to fulfill their lawful obligations to IEP's. He believes that the attitudes and leadership styles of previous administrators has had a direct impact on the lack of performance from the Special Education teachers. He desires to implement interventions at some level to improve the paperwork compliance rate of Cherokee Bluffs IEP's.

Problem Identification

The Special Education Director is experiencing difficulty with Case Managers overseeing Individual Education Plans (IEP), executing annual review processes in an ethical and timely manner, and operating in alignment with best practices set forth by the district. Full Time Equivalent and discrepancy reports indicated deficits in compliance. In addition, case load audits were also used to identify the performance gaps.

Parties Affected by the Problem

Administrators, general education teachers, special education teachers, students, and parents are impacted by this problem. The administrative staff is responsible for maintaining a positive work environment at the school. When there is a positive work environment, teacher morale will be high and they are less likely to want to transfer their employment to another school. The administrative staff is also responsible for all IEP paperwork being in compliance with the State Department of Education. Any paperwork that does not meet legal compliance has

to be addressed immediately. General education teachers encounter issues when trying to meet all the accommodations and modifications that are required in the IEP. Changes often occur with IEP's and the general education teacher is not made aware of these changes. This could lead to the IEP being out of compliance. Special education teachers are impacted by this problem when federal and state compliance laws change, the school district's system changes, and deadlines change. Special education teachers also have to work with the general education teacher, student, and parent to make sure that IEP accommodations are meeting the needs of the student.

Students are impacted by this problem because they may not receive the services that are listed in their IEPs. A student receiving inadequate services from the general and special education teachers leads to that student not reaching their full potential. Parents are impacted by this problem when they are not involved in the IEP process. The lack of parental involvement may lead to a student not receiving services that will be beneficial to their growth and development.

This problem must be addressed to ensure compliance with Student IEPs have to be in compliance with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) laws. These laws ensure that students with disabilities are provided with an appropriate public education that addresses their needs. The purpose of an IEP is to make sure that students receive the necessary services to reach their full potential. Failure to meet the requirements of these laws can result in the lack of student achievement, teacher termination and legal issues. When special education teachers do not complete paperwork for IEPs to meet compliance, they could face job termination and the parents can seek legal actions against the teacher and the school district. At minimum, each IEP undergoes an annual review where information is updated and all parties are informed of the

progress made (or not made) in the last year. For the purpose of this performance improvement project, a complete IEP is defined by including the five following documents: signed meeting notice, sent to parents to inform them of the date of the annual review meeting and signed to show that they received it; the IEP document itself; the IEP signature page to show that the required parties attended the meeting; Extended School Year (ESY) documentation; and Due Process documentation.

Assignment 2: Data Collection Plan - Module 2

Special Education teachers are unable to adequately complete Individual Education Plans (IEP)

paperwork by annual review dates.

Data Source	Type of Data	Method of Data Collection	Rationale for Data Collection	Data Collection Purpose	Data Collection Completion Date*
Infinite Campus generated reports	Quant	Organizational records	Infinite Campus (IC) is an online student information system with a component for special education documents. Administrators can run multiple reports which will show which documents have been created for which student. However, these reports provide only surface level information and do not report on whether the documentation has been completed correctly. This data collection method is being used because these reports can be quickly and can easily be generated and provide the ability to view large-scale trends.	Quantifying Current Performance	06/21/2021
Student files	Mixed	Organizational Records	Each student with an IEP has a case file with all relevant paperwork. 105 students receive services so there are a total of 105 student files. A case audit checks that all the paperwork is present and done correctly. This data collection method is more	Quantifying Current Performance Identifying Potential Causes	6/25/2021

			time-consuming than an IC report but gives better feedback on the types of mistakes being committed and thus can give both unbiased quantitative and qualitative data.		
Current resource documentation	Qual	Organizational Records	This record review will look for current IEP environmental resources available to teachers such as checklists, professional learning material, best-practice documentation, etc. This data collection method allows for the consolidations and categorization of a variety of resources.	Understanding the Context or Environment	06/25/2021
Admin	Qual	Interviews	The current assistant principal used to be a SPED teacher before becoming an administrator, and thus is a particularly knowledgeable person in terms of both overall organizational needs and the demands on SPED teachers. The data will be collected via a combination interview compromising a list of specific questions but also allowing for the director to speak on different topics if need be. This type of data collection is best because of the very small number of people and the ability to get specific information on a variety of topics such as morale, difficulties, workflow and procedures, ideal performance,	Quantifying Current Performance Quantifying Ideal Performance Identifying Potential Causes Understanding the Context or Environment	06/21/2021

			and organizational expectations. Sample questions will include: ● What paperwork should be included in a complete IEP? ● What training is provided for new special education teachers? ● What is your current success rate for paperwork completion? ● What incentives are available for good performance?		
SPED teachers N = 8	Mixed	Survey	All of the SPED teachers will be sent an anonymous Google Forms survey. A survey is the most appropriate data collection instrument because it allows for confidential input from multiple people not in centralized location (teachers at home during the summer) and will collect information on current knowledge, abilities, and perceived resources and barriers. Sample questions will include: ● What paperwork should be included in a complete IEP ● Where would you go if you had a question about paperwork? ● What issues do you face in terms of IEP completion?	Identifying Potential Causes Understanding the Context or Environment	06/27/2021

			● What would help you complete your job?		

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