

Root Cause Analysis & Accountability Recovery Plan

Arkansas Connections Academy | Charter Authorizing Panel | November 19, 2026

Our results fell short, and leadership owns the response

Our 2025–26 accountability results are not where we expect them to be. We recognize that the most significant decline occurred in student growth, and we are continuing to strengthen the instructional systems, monitoring practices, and leadership follow-through necessary to improve these outcomes.

F

ACTION REQUIRED

2025–26 Letter Grade

Accountability Status

306.04

2025–26 School Rating Index

Decline from 364.42 in 2024–25

Growth

Where the decline was largest

Drove ~90% of total index loss

LEADERSHIP ACCOUNTABILITY & SYSTEM RECOVERY FOCUS AREAS

01

Instructional Systems

Strengthening core teaching frameworks and standards alignment across all subjects.

02

Monitoring Practices

Establishing routine student growth checkpoints and early indicator tracking.

03

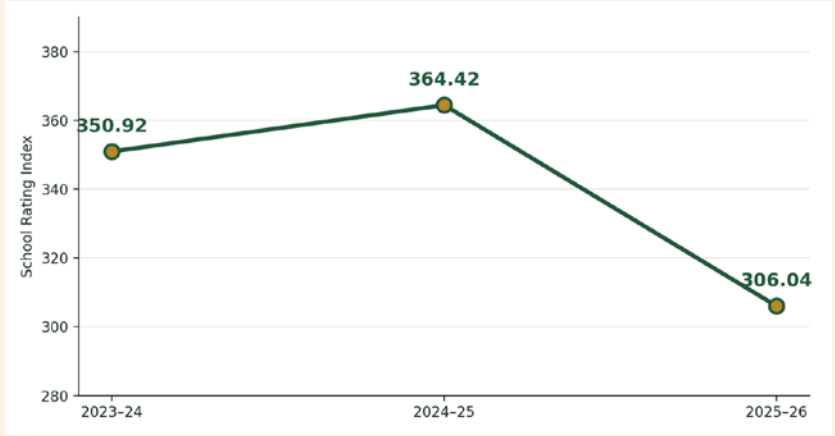
Leadership Follow-Through

Ensuring administrative oversight, targeted intervention, and rapid feedback loops.

Three-year performance — the break came in 2025–26

The index rose 13.50 points in 2024–25, to 364.42, then fell 58.38 points in 2025–26 to 306.04, an F rating. Growth fell in every subject in 2025–26, while achievement was mixed — ELA and Science fell, Math rose.

Measure	2023–24	2024–25	2025–26
School Rating Index	350.92 (sim. D)	364.42 (D)	306.04 (F)
ELA achievement	25.90%	24.30%	23.20%
Math achievement	12.63%	18.73%	19.70%
Science achievement	30.27%	33.03%	28.65%
ELA growth	54.88%	46.65%	35.75%
Math growth	41.72%	44.42%	35.53%
Science growth	54.15%	52.44%	34.56%
Lowest 25% growth — ELA	57.92%	55.19%	40.28%
Lowest 25% growth — Math	50.73%	58.43%	45.29%
Lowest 25% growth — Science	64.41%	59.08%	42.00%
4-year graduation rate	67.76%	78.35%	79.07%
Merit / Distinction progress	5.92%	8.93%	7.06%



23-24 index is simulated for comparison

Growth drove about 90% of the decline

Accountability component	2024–25	2025–26	Point change
All-student growth	143.51	105.83	**–37.68**
Lowest 25% growth	57.57	42.52	**–15.05**
Achievement	76.06	71.56	–4.50
Merit / Distinction	8.93	7.06	–1.87
Graduation rate	78.35	79.07	+0.72
TOTAL	364.42	306.04	**–58.38**

- All-student growth was the largest loss (-37.68), followed by lowest 25% growth (-15.05)
- Achievement (-4.50) and Merit / Distinction (-1.87) fell by smaller amounts
- Graduation contributed +0.72 points, partly offsetting the losses
- Students in the lowest 25% count in both growth measures — these are overlapping indicators, not separate populations

Growth declined in every subject while achievement changes were smaller than the growth decline — in ELA, mathematics, and science alike. The decline across all three subjects indicates that we need to examine schoolwide instructional practices, student support systems, and the consistency of our monitoring and response.

35.75

ELA growth, 2025–26

35.53

Math growth, 2025–26

34.56

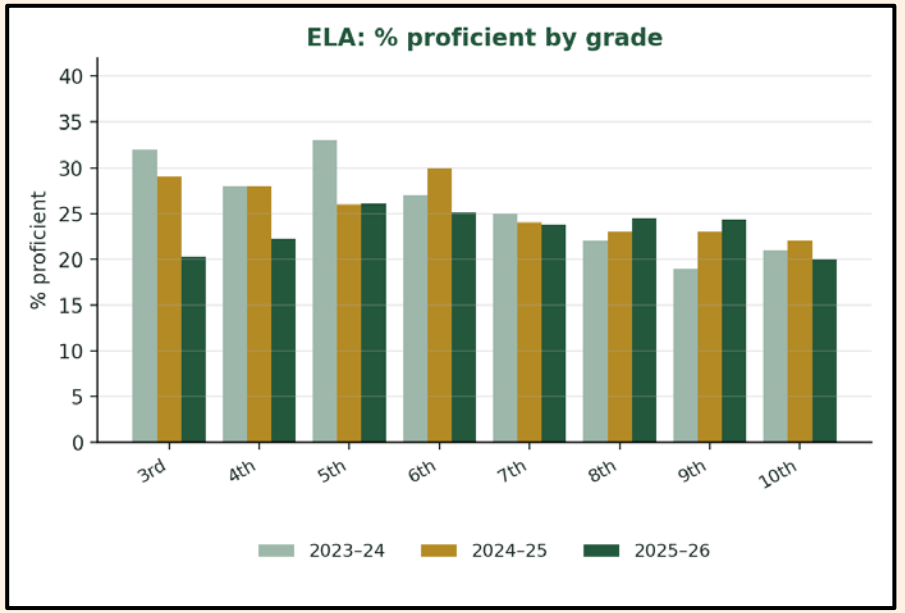
Science growth, 2025–26

ELA proficiency drifted down; growth fell in every grade

Average proficiency across Grades 3–10 was 25.9% in 2023–24, 25.6% in 2024–25, and 23.3% in 2025–26. The share of students showing growth fell from 38.8% to 31.1% on the same cross-grade average.

Priority: elementary literacy foundations and Grade 10 language/writing standards; maintain support across all tested grades.

Grade	23–24 prof.	24–25 prof.	25–26 prof.	24–25 growth	25–26 growth
3rd	32%	29%	20.3%	28%	25.2%
4th	28%	28%	22.2%	25%	22.8%
5th	33%	26%	26.0%	32%	26.6%
6th	27%	30%	25.1%	38%	37.1%
7th	25%	24%	23.8%	44%	31.7%
8th	22%	23%	24.5%	45%	36.4%
9th	19%	23%	24.4%	47%	36.5%
10th	21%	22%	20.0%	51%	32.7%

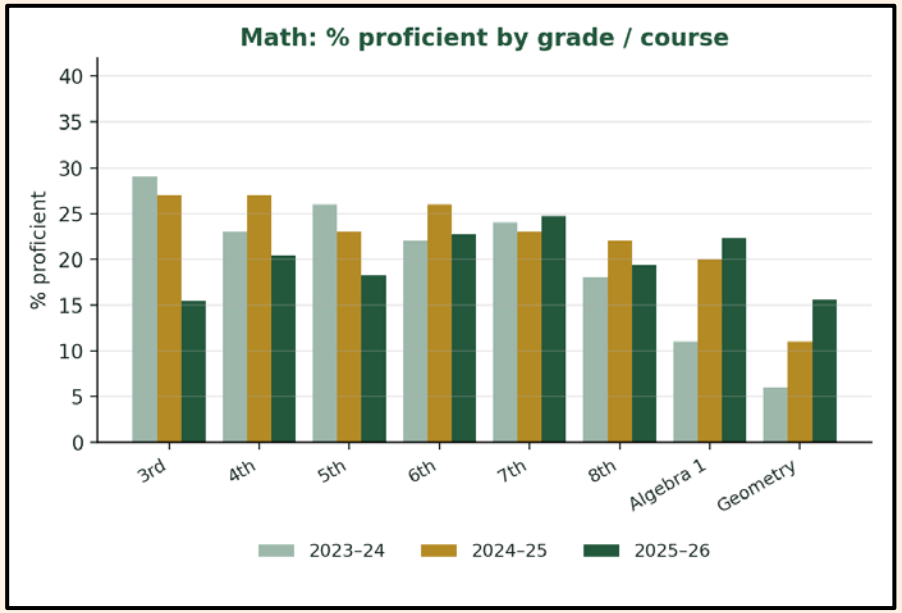


Elementary Math Proficiency Declined, with Continued Gaps in Secondary Courses

Across Grades 3–8, average proficiency was 23.7% in 2023–24, 24.7% in 2024–25, and 20.2% in 2025–26, while the share showing growth fell from 32.2% to 25.9%. Algebra I and Geometry proficiency rose over the same period.

Priorities: Grades 3–5, Grade 8, Algebra I, and Geometry; growth data are not provided for high-school courses.

Grade	23–24 prof.	24–25 prof.	25–26 prof.	24–25 growth	25–26 growth
3rd	29%	27%	15.4%	19%	17.1%
4th	23%	27%	20.5%	28%	22.8%
5th	26%	23%	18.2%	33%	24.5%
6th	22%	26%	22.7%	35%	35.8%
7th	24%	23%	24.7%	41%	28.6%
8th	18%	22%	19.4%	37%	26.4%
Algebra 1	11%	20%	22.3%	—	—
Geometry	6%	11%	15.6%	—	—

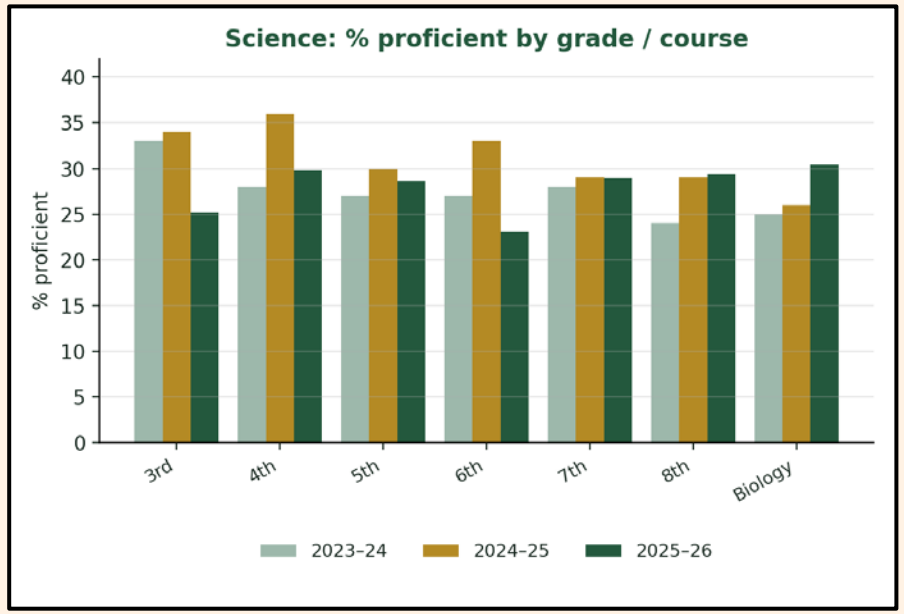


Science gave back its 2024–25 gains; growth fell in every tested grade

Average proficiency was 27.4% in 2023–24, 31.0% in 2024–25, and 27.9% in 2025–26. In Grades 4–8, the only grades with growth reported in both years, the share showing growth fell from 46.2% to 27.7%.

Priorities: Grade 6 science, other low-growth tested grades, and Biology proficiency.

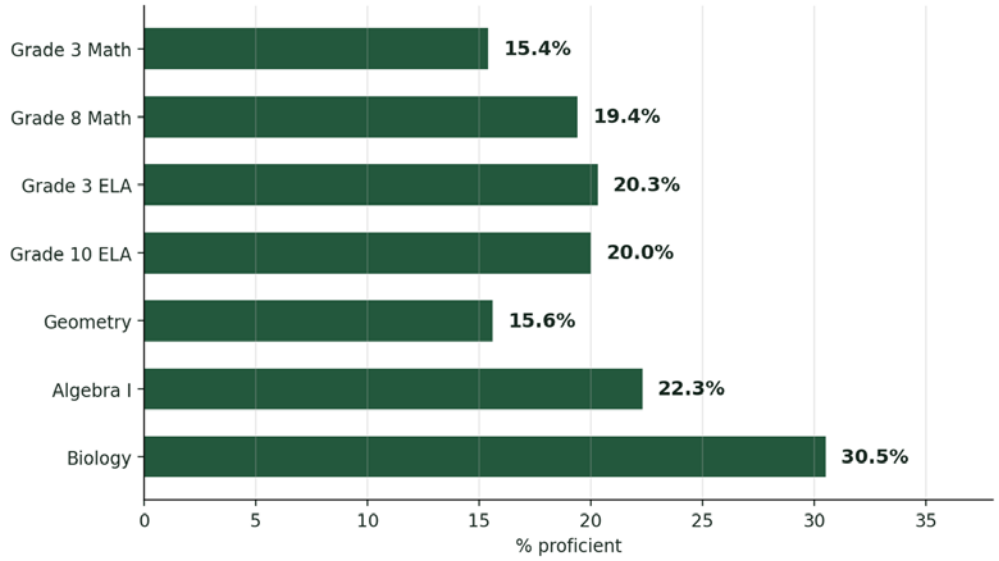
Grade	23–24 prof.	24–25 prof.	25–26 prof.	24–25 growth	25–26 growth
3rd	33%	34%	25.2%	—	—
4th	28%	36%	29.8%	39%	26.9%
5th	27%	30%	28.6%	42%	25.0%
6th	27%	33%	23.1%	48%	26.5%
7th	28%	29%	29.0%	45%	27.9%
8th	24%	29%	29.5%	57%	32.0%
Biology	25%	26%	30.5%	—	—



The struggle is specific — by grade and by course

Key Priority Mandate: Priorities are therefore elementary foundations, Grade 8 math, Grade 10 ELA, and named high school courses — not Grades 6–8 alone.

Proficiency Rates (% Proficient)



Elementary foundations

Grade 3 Math: 15.4% proficient and 17.1 growth.

Grades 3–5 ELA, Math, and Science require intensified support.

Middle grades

Grade 8 Math: 19.4% proficient.

Grade 6 Science: 23.1% proficient.

High-school courses

Grade 10 ELA: 20.0% | **Algebra I:** 22.3%

Geometry: 15.6% | **Biology:** 30.5%

The breakdown names three focal grades — and what is changing for each

Instructional causes must be supported by documented curriculum reviews, walkthroughs and student-work analysis.

Grade 10 ELA

20.0% proficient

NEED

Language standards and writing; growth fell from 51% to 32.7%.

RESPONSE

Targeted standards-based intervention, close reading and writing across content areas.

Key Focus Indicator

32.7% (Fell from 51)

Student growth baseline

Grade 3 Math

15.4% proficient, 17.1% growth

NEED

Computation and algebraic reasoning; growth 17.1%.

RESPONSE

Review Arkansas standards alignment, strengthen core instruction, and differentiate intervention.

Key Focus Indicator

15.4% Proficiency

17.1% Growth recorded

Grade 6 Science

23.1% proficient

NEED

Life Science and standards-based assessment; growth 26.5%.

RESPONSE

Align assessments/interventions and use appropriate science simulations.

Key Focus Indicator

23.1% Proficiency

26.5 Growth

Lowest 25% Growth: Identifying Gaps Across Subjects

This analysis examines growth among students in the lowest-performing 25%, disaggregated by student group and subject, to identify where additional instructional support is needed.

Student group	Lowest 25% Growth 2025 (ELA/Math/Science)	Lowest 25% Growth 2026 (ELA/Math/Science)
Students with disabilities (IEP)	51% / 50% / 52%	37% / 43% / 36%
English learners	60% / 49% / 70%	33% / 38% / 42%
Economically disadvantaged (FARM)	48% / 53% / 52%	40% / 43% / 38%
Black / African American	45% / 62% / 55%	43% / 49% / 41%

What the Data Reveals

Growth declined across all four student groups shown in each of the three subjects, with particularly significant decreases among English learners and students with disabilities. These results highlight the need for more targeted, differentiated instructional support.

Our Response

ARCA is strengthening subgroup-level data reviews, targeted interventions, and progress monitoring to identify learning gaps earlier and adjust instruction based on individual student needs. Leadership will monitor growth by student group and subject to ensure interventions are producing measurable improvement.

Root cause 1: Tier 1 instruction was inconsistent

What happened
CAUSE ANALYSIS

Inconsistent instructional rigor, curriculum alignment, walkthroughs, and coaching produced uneven student learning across grades and courses.

Evidence
DATA SOURCES

Walkthrough trends, standards-alignment reviews, teacher coaching records, and the low-performing grades and courses named earlier.

Response
STRATEGIC ACTION

Consistent standards-aligned Tier 1 instruction, with HQIM integrated with the Pearson core curriculum.

Follow-through
ACCOUNTABILITY

Walkthrough and coaching cycles leaders actually complete and review, so alignment is verified, not assumed.

Currently: We have done walkthroughs on use of clear learning targets. 60% of our teachers are utilizing clear learning targets effectively.

Root cause 2: PLCs existed, but the full cycle did not

What happened
CAUSE ANALYSIS

Standards analysis, common assessment, data review, reteaching, and follow-up were not consistently completed.

Evidence
DATA SOURCES

Estimated PLC cycle fidelity baseline: about 40%.

70% Fall / 85% Winter / 100% Spring Target

Response
STRATEGIC ACTION

Structured protocols and biweekly reviews.

Follow-through
ACCOUNTABILITY

Instructional adjustments documented, with leadership accountability for completion.

Currently: We have documented cycles that the PLC hinges on Tier I intervention data. Every teacher is responsible for providing their student data at every PLC.

Root cause 3: Intervention did not respond fast enough

CAUSE ANALYSIS

What happened

CORE ISSUE

Support structures were in place, but identification, placement, and progress monitoring were inconsistent.

DATA SOURCES

Evidence

~35%

SUFFICIENT GROWTH

Only about 35% of students receiving intervention demonstrated sufficient growth.

STRATEGIC ACTION

Response

1. Clearer Grouping

2. Attendance Monitoring

3. 6 Week Intervention Cycle with 3 Week Mid-Cycle Review

Targeted action steps established to ensure immediate intervention responsiveness and tracking.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Follow-through

CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION

Beginning this school year, students were placed in interventions using summative assessment results and diagnostic screeners.

Common formative assessments were also incorporated to monitor mastery of essential standards and identify students needing additional support.

Targeted Growth Goals: Measurable Improvement by Spring 2027

Based on our Root Cause Analysis, ARCA has established targeted growth goals for priority grade levels and the lowest-performing 25% of students, with a commitment to increase each measure by 10 percentage points.

Subject	2025–26 baseline	Spring 2027 target
Grade 3 Math growth	17.1%	27.1%
Grade 10 ELA growth	32.7%	42.7%
Grade 6 Science growth	26.5%	36.5%
Lowest 25% ELA growth	40.28%	50.28%
Lowest 25% Math growth	45.29%	55.29%
Lowest 25% Science growth	42.00%	52.00%

10-Percentage-Point Growth Target

Each identified measure has a Spring 2027 target that is 10 percentage points above its 2025–26 baseline.

Priority Grades and Courses

ELA: Grade 10

Math: Grades 3

Science: Grade 6

Focus on Our Lowest-Performing Students

Increase growth for the lowest 25% in ELA, Math, and Science through targeted instruction, intervention, and consistent progress monitoring.

Our Accountability Recovery Path: From an F Toward a C

Recovering lost growth points is our immediate priority, while sustained improvement across accountability measures will move ARCA toward a C and beyond.

2025–26 INDEX
306.04
Current: F

D CUT SCORE
348.90
+42.86 points

C CUT SCORE
385.96
+79.92 points

Illustrative scenarios — not guaranteed accountability outcomes.

Accountability measure	2025–26 index points	Potential 2026–27	Potential 2027–28
All-student growth	105.84	143.51	143.51
Lowest 25% growth	42.52	57.57	57.57
Achievement	71.55	77	91.06
Success Ready	86.13	99.07	114.07
Total index	**306.04**	**377.15**	**406.21**

Potential scenarios, not forecasts. 2026–27: growth returns to 2024–25 levels, achievement improves, and Success Ready (graduation + Merit/Distinction) increases by 12.94 additional points, for 377.15 — this puts us back at a D but just under the C threshold (385.96). 2027–28: growth holds, achievement improves, and Success Ready reaches 27.94 points, for 406.21, moving us into the C range.
Success Ready projections reflect anticipated Merit/Distinction points from lagging graduating cohorts; graduation-rate points are held constant.

Two Stages of Accountability Recovery

2026–27: Recover Lost Ground
Restore student growth toward previous performance levels and strengthen other accountability outcomes.

2027–28: Build on Improvement
Sustain growth gains while increasing achievement and other applicable accountability measures.

What is different in 2026–27: a closed monitoring cycle

01

1 · Identify

Data & Assessments

Assessments and student-level data, including Interim 1 and Interim 2 reviews.

02

2 · Respond

Targeted Changes

Instruction, PLCs, and interventions change in response to that data.

03

3 · Monitor

Regular Reviews

Biweekly and monthly leadership reviews, PLC artifact reviews, and six week intervention cycles with three week mid-cycle review.

04

4 · Adjust

Accountability & Support

Coaching, regrouping, and resources — documented in the cycle tracker with owners and follow-up dates, and reported quarterly to the Board.

From Root Causes to Action: Progress Already Underway

01

1 · Action Implemented

PLC Expectations
Strengthened PLC expectations & frameworks
Student Interventions
Targeted student interventions & support
Walkthroughs & Coaching
Instructional walkthroughs and dedicated coaching
Data Reviews
Structured leadership data reviews

02

2 · Evidence of Implementation

Protocols & Artifacts
PLC protocols, meeting artifacts & instructional planning
Placement & Monitoring
Student placement, attendance & progress monitoring
Records & Feedback
Walkthrough records, feedback & coaching follow-up
Results & Trackers
Interim results, documented decisions & follow-up tracker

03

3 · Early Progress

Consistency Evidence
PLC protocols established; teachers now bring student-performance data to each PLC to guide instructional decisions.
Eng 9 & 10 Interim Growth
402 / 602 students-
showed overall score improvement from summative to interim benchmarks.
Walkthrough & Targeted PD
Completed Cycle 1 walkthrough, identified key improvements, and delivered targeted professional development.

Three decisions frame this recovery

01

FIRST MILESTONE

1 · A credible first milestone

Recover out of the F rating first, while building the systems for sustained improvement.

KEY FOCUS
Stabilize foundational performance to exit the F rating cleanly.

02

TARGETED FOCUS

2 · Refined priorities

Use grade-level, course-level and subgroup evidence to prioritize resources beyond the original Grades 6–8 focus.

KEY FOCUS
Deploy targeted support precisely where data shows the largest gaps.

03

LONG-TERM ALIGNMENT

3 · Separate time horizons

Maintain graduation and Merit/Distinction work to increase on-time graduation and increase our pathway completion.

KEY FOCUS
Protect high-value outcomes while verifying cohort math accurately.

Our Improvement Priorities: Targeted Goals & Leadership Accountability

01

1 · ELA

Target Growth

Increase Grade 10 ELA growth from 32.7% to 42.7% and lowest-25% ELA growth from 40.28% to 50.28%, while maintaining targeted support in Grades 3–5.

02

2 · Math

Foundational Skills

Increase Grade 3 Math growth from 17.1% to 27.1% and lowest-25% Math growth from 45.29% to 55.29%, with continued focus on Grades 4–5, Grade 8, Algebra I, and Geometry.

03

3 · Science

Standards-Aligned Instruction

Increase Grade 6 Science growth from 26.5% to 36.5% and lowest-25% Science growth from 42.00% to 52.00%, while addressing identified gaps in Biology.

04

4 · Monitoring

Leadership Accountability

Monitor grade-level, course-level, and student-group performance through regular data reviews, targeted instructional adjustments, and documented leadership follow-through.

SIP Alignment

Following the CAP presentation, ARCA will update its 2026–27 School Improvement Plan to reflect the refined priorities, measurable targets, and monitoring expectations established through this Root Cause Analysis.

Sustained improvement in student learning — not just a better letter grade

01

DIAGNOSTIC PHASE

1 · Data & Diagnosis

ARCA understands where performance declined, including the specific grades, courses, and student populations most affected.

CORE OBJECTIVE

Pinpoint exact root causes across specific grades, courses & subgroups.

02

ACTION PHASE

2 · Targeted Action

Leadership has identified the execution gaps that contributed to those outcomes and is implementing targeted corrective actions.

KEY FOCUS

Strengthen instruction, PLCs, intervention, and leadership execution.

03

TRACKING PHASE

3 · Benchmark Tracking

Progress will be monitored against defined benchmarks, with documented adjustments when results are off track.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Continuous monitoring with documented course corrections when off track.