

**New York State Education Department  
Audit of the Written, Taught, and  
Tested Curriculum**

**Community School District 6  
Final Report**

**June 2007**

**Submitted to  
Community School District 6**

**Submitted by  
Learning Point Associates**



1120 East Diehl Road, Suite 200  
Naperville, IL 60563-1486  
800-356-2735 • 630-649-6500  
[www.learningpt.org](http://www.learningpt.org)

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## **Introduction**

This final report is the result of an audit of the written, taught, and tested curriculum of Community School District 6 by Learning Point Associates. In 2006, 10 school districts and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) commissioned this audit to fulfill an accountability requirement of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act for local education agencies (LEAs) identified as districts in need of corrective action. These LEAs agreed, with the consent of NYSED, to collaborate on the implementation of this audit, which was intended to identify areas of concern and make recommendations to assist districts in their improvement efforts.

The focus of the audit was on the English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics curricula for all students, including Students with Disabilities (SWDs) and English Language Learners (ELLs). The audit examined the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment as well as other key areas—such as professional development and school and district supports—through multiple lenses of data collection and analysis. These findings acted as a starting point to facilitate conversations in the district in order to identify areas for improvement, probable causes, and ways to generate plans for improvement.

This report contains an outline of the process, data, and methods used as well as the key findings from the data collection. Finally, the Recommendations for Action Planning section provides suggestions as well as more specific advice to consider in the action planning process. Districts are required to incorporate recommendations from the audit in their District Comprehensive Education Plan.

# District Background

## Overview

### Geographic Background

Community School District 6 is one of four districts in Region 10 of New York City Public Schools. The region consists of the Upper West Side, Harlem, and Washington Heights neighborhoods in northern Manhattan. District 6 is primarily situated within the Washington Heights neighborhood.

### Student Population

According to the 2004–05 district report card<sup>1</sup>, the total enrollment for the district was 31,319 students in 2005. Of these students, 83 percent were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and 11 percent had recently immigrated (less than 3 years previously) to the United States.

### Demographics

The majority of students in District 6 are Hispanic (88 percent). This number is 2.25 times higher than city average of 39 percent. Of the remaining students, 9 percent are black, 1.7 percent are white, and 1.3 percent are Asian, American Indian, or other. The district consists of 51.4 percent males and 48.6 percent females.

### Student Academic Performance

The district has not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) consistently for the subgroups of SWDs and ELLs in ELA, at all grade levels, for the last three years (most recent data are from 2004–05). Although the district did make AYP at the elementary level in mathematics in 2003–04, the other grade levels have not made AYP consistently for the subgroups of SWDs and ELLs in mathematics for the last three years (most recent data are from 2004–05). Additionally, at the elementary level, SWDs did not meet AYP in 2002–03 or 2004–05 and ELLs did not make AYP in 2002–03.

District 6 is cited for corrective action for not making AYP for at least three years in a row for the subjects of mathematics *and* ELA between the academic years of 2002–03 and 2004–05.

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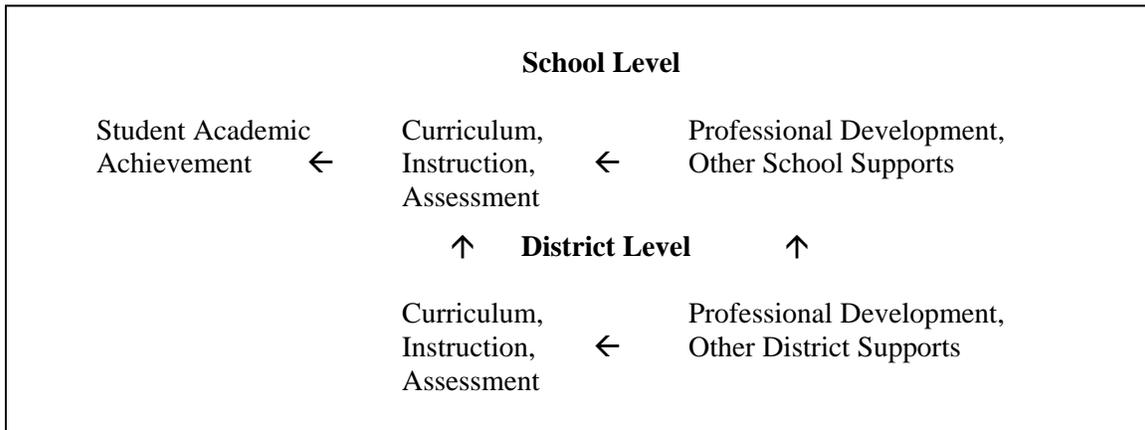
<sup>1</sup> All demographic data are from the *2004–2005 Annual District Report: District 6*, produced by New York City Public Schools, and available online at <http://schools.nyc.gov/daa/SchoolReports/05asr/906999.PDF>.

## Theory of Action

The theory of action starts from student academic achievement in relation to the New York State Learning Standards of the audited districts and their schools. Specifically, student academic achievement outcomes are related directly to curriculum, instruction, and assessment activities within the classroom. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment at the school level are supported and influenced by professional development and other supports at the school level and by curriculum, instruction, and assessment at the district level. Finally, school-level professional development and other supports are supported and influenced by their district-level counterparts.

The theory of action reviewed in the co-interpretation<sup>SM</sup> meeting indicates that change (i.e., actions needed to improve student achievement) occurs at both the school and the district levels. Therefore, the audit gathered information at both levels. A graphic representation of the theory of action dynamic is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Theory of Action**



## Guiding Questions for the Audit

To address both the needs of individual districts and the requirements of the audit, Learning Point Associates identified the following 16 essential questions for the focus of the audit:

1. Where is the district struggling most in terms of content areas and demographic groups over time?
2. Are teachers teaching the written curriculum in their classrooms?
3. Does the district provide materials that support the implementation of the written curriculum, and are the materials used?
4. Are the teachers teaching to the state standards?
5. Is the taught curriculum aligned with the state assessments?
6. Is the written curriculum aligned with the state standards?
7. Do all students have access to a rigorous and challenging curriculum?
8. What does the district/school do for students who are not scoring at proficient levels according to NCLB (within and outside the school day)?
9. Does classroom instruction maximize the use of best practices and research-based practices?
10. Do teachers identify and provide appropriate additional instruction for students who are not proficient?
11. Do teachers use assessment data to inform instruction (monitoring, diagnosis, reteaching)? Are data accessible?
12. Is there a process in place within the district to monitor the effectiveness of instructional programs?
13. Is the professional development (regional, district, school) of high quality and focused on the content/pedagogical areas of need?
14. Are teachers translating professional development into effective classroom practice?
15. Are there sufficient supports in place for new teachers?
16. Do district and school plans prioritize the needs identified by NCLB?

## **Audit Process Overview**

The audit process follows four phases, as outlined in the Learning Point Associates proposal application: planning, data collection and analysis, co-interpretation of findings, and action planning. This report comes at or near the end of the co-interpretation phase. A description of each phase follows.

### **Phase 1: Planning**

The purpose of planning was to develop a shared understanding of the theory of action and guiding questions for the audit. This phase also included reviewing the project plan, timeline, and expectations, and planning and delivering communications about the audit to the district's key stakeholders.

### **Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis**

To conduct this audit, Learning Point Associates examined district issues from multiple angles, gathering a wide range of data and using the guiding questions to focus on factors that affect curriculum, instruction, assessment, and other school supports. All of these data sources work together to bring focus and clarity to the main factors contributing to the districts' corrective-action status. Broadly categorized, information sources include student achievement data, the *Surveys of Enacted Curriculum*, observations of instruction, interviews, review of key district documents, and curriculum alignment review. Parent and community focus groups also were included in the Special Education and ELL audits.

#### **Student Achievement Data**

Current student achievement data were not available to Learning Point Associates at the time of co-interpretation. As such, NCLB accountability data was compiled for the most recent three years available to provide the district with an overview of student achievement trends.

#### **Surveys of Enacted Curriculum**

To examine whether instruction was aligned to the New York state standards and assessments, teachers in the district completed the *Surveys of Enacted Curriculum* (SEC). Based on two decades of research funded by the National Science Foundation, the SEC are designed to facilitate the comparison of enacted (taught) curriculum to standards (intended) and assessed curriculum (state tests), using teachers' self-assessments. The data for each teacher consist of more than 500 responses. The disciplinary topic by cognitive-level matrix is presented in graphic form, which creates a common language for comparison and a common metric to maintain comparison objectivity.

#### **Observations of Instruction**

To examine instruction in the classrooms, the School Observation Measure (SOM) was used to capture classroom observation data for the district audit. The SOM was developed by the Center

for Research in Educational Policy at the University of Memphis. It groups 24 classroom strategies into six categories: instructional orientation, classroom organization, instructional strategies, student activities, technology use, and assessment.

The observations were collected from a representative sample of schools in the district in order to get a “snapshot” of the instructional practices being used. These observations were not individually prescheduled but instead involved observing multiple classes, primarily in the identified subject areas (ELA, mathematics, or both), during a three-hour block of time for each subject. The observations were conducted on three different days for each school during the 2006–07 school year. While in schools, observers visited eight to 12 classrooms within this block of time, spending 15 minutes observing each classroom. This approach resulted in conducting approximately 300 classroom observations across the district.

## **Interviews**

To garner additional data concerning the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum, Learning Point Associates engaged school and district personnel in semistructured interviews. These interviews were based on predeveloped protocols that were designed to be approximately 60 minutes in length. The protocols were developed to specifically address the guiding questions and to be comparable across the different types of interviews. As a result, the protocols covered the same topics; when appropriate, the same questions were asked on teacher, principal, content coach, and district personnel protocols.

The teacher interviews were tightly structured, primarily to elicit short responses that could be readily compared within schools and between schools. Principal and coach interviews had more questions designed to elicit longer, more elaborate responses. District personnel interviews were even more open-ended. When agreed to by the interviewee, interviews were taped and transcribed. Interview records, both notes and transcriptions, were imported into NVivo software, which supports the coding and analysis of interview data.

## **District Document Review**

A district’s formal documents (e.g., district improvement plan, professional development plan) demonstrate its official goals and priorities. To identify the priorities and strategies to which the district has committed, a structured analysis of key district documents was completed.

A document review scoring rubric was developed and used to synthesize document information against a subset of the audit’s guiding questions. The rubric was designed to measure whether each submitted group of documents contained sufficient evidence of district plans and/or policies, implementation of those plans/policies, and evaluation of the implementation in support of each identified question. The degree to which each respective document addressed the relevant question was evaluated by four Learning Point Associates analysts to ensure multiple perspectives during the process. The district was given a 0–3 rating on each question, based on the depth of coverage within the documents provided. After ratings were completed, a consensus meeting was held and a report was generated by all reviewers.

## **Curriculum Alignment Review**

A district's written curriculum demonstrates its program of ELA and/or mathematics studies for students. The curriculum alignment process was used to examine both the vertical and horizontal alignment of the written curriculum to the New York state standards. *Vertical alignment* examines the match of curriculum and standards between grade levels. *Horizontal alignment* is defined as the breadth and depth of the curriculum. In addition, it is important to examine the depth of understanding for the topics addressed in each subject. Cognitive demand categories provide a structure to measure the depth of understanding for each topic.

The ELA curriculum alignment process was developed using the literacy competencies from the New York state standards. All written curriculum materials submitted at Grades 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 were scored by looking for a match to the content topic and cognitive demand level.

The mathematics curriculum alignment process was developed using the mathematics performance indicators that the New York state standards expect students to master (e.g., the content topics and cognitive demands). All written curriculum materials submitted by the district were examined at Grades 2, 4, 6, 8 and High School level for their alignment against both process and content strands.

## **Special Education Review**

The purpose of the Special Education review was to provide information to districts regarding the curriculum, instruction, assessment, and improvement planning practices related to their Special Education program. Data collection activities that informed the Special Education review included the following: district/regional staff interviews; teacher interviews (including self-contained, Collaborative Team Teaching [CTT], Special Education Teacher Support Services [SETSS], and general education teachers who serve SWDs); school administrator interviews (including principals, assistant principals, and/or IEP teachers); classroom observations utilizing the Total School Environment Protocol; focus groups with parents of SWDs; a review of approximately 50 redacted IEPs; and a review of formal district documents to provide insight into the policies, plans, and procedures that the district has developed to ensure services to SWDs, as identified under the 16 guiding questions developed for the audit.

The sample of schools for this portion of the audit was drawn by Learning Point Associates using a stratified random sampling procedure. This sample was drawn to include district schools with low, moderate, and high levels of student achievement, and to ensure the inclusion of at least one intermediate school and one high school.

## **English Language Learner Review**

The purpose of the ELL review was to provide a districtwide synthesis of data from multiple perspectives on the district's curriculum, instruction, assessment and student supports as they impact ELLs. Data collection activities that informed the ELL review included the following: district/regional staff interviews; teacher interviews—including ELL teachers (English as a Second Language, Transitional Bilingual Education, and/or dual language) and monolingual

general education teachers who serve ELLs; classroom observations; focus groups with parents of ELLs and members of community-based organizations serving ELLs; and a review of formal district documents to provide insight into the policies, plans, and procedures that the district has developed to ensure services to ELLs, as identified under the 16 guiding questions developed for the audit.

The sample of schools for this portion of the audit was drawn by Learning Point Associates using a stratified random-selection procedure. This sample was drawn to include district schools with low, moderate, and high proportions of ELL enrollments as well as low, moderate, and high levels of student achievement, and to ensure the inclusion of at least one intermediate school and one high school.

Table 1 lists the key data sources and how they were used to review the district during the co-interpretation process.

**Table 1. Alignment of Data Sources With Guiding Questions**

<b>Guiding Questions</b>	<b>Student Achievement Data</b>	<b>Surveys of Enacted Curriculum</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Document Review</b>	<b>Curriculum Alignment Review</b>	<b>Special Education Review</b>	<b>ELL Review</b>
1. Where is the district struggling most in terms of content areas and demographic groups over time?	X							
2. Are teachers teaching the written curriculum in their classrooms?		X		X	X		X	X
3. Does the district provide materials that support the implementation of the written curriculum, and are they used?				X	X	X	X	X
4. Are the teachers teaching to the state standards?		X				X		
5. Is the taught curriculum aligned with the state assessments?		X						
6. Is the written curriculum aligned with the state standards?					X	X	X	X
7. Do all students have access to a rigorous and challenging curriculum?			X	X		X	X	X
8. What does the district or school do for students who are not scoring at proficient levels according to NCLB (within and outside the school day)?				X	X	X	X	X
9. Does classroom instruction maximize the use of best practices and research-		X	X	X	X		X	X

<b>Guiding Questions</b>	<b>Student Achievement Data</b>	<b>Surveys of Enacted Curriculum</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Document Review</b>	<b>Curriculum Alignment Review</b>	<b>Special Education Review</b>	<b>ELL Review</b>
based practices?								
10. Do teachers identify and provide appropriate additional instruction for students who are not proficient?			X	X			X	X
11. Do teachers use assessment data to inform instruction (monitoring, diagnosis, reteaching)? Are data accessible?				X	X		X	X
12. Is there a process in place within the district to monitor the effectiveness of instructional programs?				X	X			
13. Is the professional development (regional, district, school) of high quality and focused on the content or pedagogical areas of need?		X		X	X		X	X
14. Are teachers translating professional development into effective classroom practice?		X		X				
15. Are there sufficient supports in place for new teachers?				X				
16. Do district and school plans prioritize the needs identified by NCLB?				X	X		X	X

### **Phase 3: Co-Interpretation of Findings**

The purpose of co-interpretation was to interpret the data collected, which were grouped into four priority areas: standards and curriculum, instruction and assessment, planning and accountability, and professional development.

The co-interpretation process consisted of several steps, starting with the interpretation of the data, continuing with the identification of key findings, and concluding with the identification of hypotheses specific to each key finding. These steps occurred in a two-day meeting with key school and district staff. Because this process was critical in identifying the priority areas for district improvement, the detailed approach is outlined here.

#### **Interpretation of the Data**

The co-interpretation process began with the study of the individual data reports—student achievement, SEC data, classroom observation, interview data, document review, curriculum alignment, and special populations (SWDs and ELLs)—to do the following:

- Select findings.
- Categorize or cluster and agree upon the critical findings.
- Group findings across reports according to guiding question or focus area.
- Present and defend key findings.
- Respond to clarifying questions.
- Refine and reach consensus on key findings.

### **Identification of Key Findings**

As the investigative groups presented their findings to the whole group during the co-interpretation meeting for District 6, some natural combining and winnowing of results occurred. From various data sources, the participants used the method of triangulation to provide support for combining and subsuming some of the findings. The group then used a rating process to prioritize the findings. Participants were instructed to rate the findings based on the following criteria:

- Is the key finding identified one of the most critical problems faced by the district and addressed by the audit?
- If resolved, would student achievement improve sufficiently to move the district out of corrective action?
- If resolved, will there be a measurable, positive impact systemwide?

From this process, which required considerable thought and discussion, key findings emerged. These findings are discussed in the Key Findings section of this report.

### **Identification of Hypotheses**

Identification of hypotheses occurred next. In this stage, participants performed the following steps:

- Identify a set of hypotheses supported by evidence for each high-priority finding.
- Reach consensus on a set of hypotheses for each high-priority finding.

### **Phase 4: Action Planning**

The last step in the audit process is action planning. This year, given the reorganization of the New York City Department of Education, Learning Point Associates will work with the NYCDOE on a central-level action planning process during the months of July and August. District-level action planning will not take place until November or December, and will integrate action planning steps generated by district schools during the months of September and October. School-level actions will be integrated into each school's Comprehensive Education Plan, and

the district-level action plan will be integrated into the District Comprehensive Education Plan addendum.

The action planning process entails initial goal and strategy setting by a core district team, followed by planning meetings with groups or departments in the district to determine action steps and associated financial implications and timelines for implementation.

## Key Findings

As illustrated in the description process for Phase 3 (co-interpretation of findings), each key finding statement was generated through the co-interpretation process. In a facilitated process, groups of district administrators and staff identified key findings across multiple data sets. The supporting findings and hypotheses, which also can be mapped back to the original data sets, are included in the data maps in the Appendix.

After a review of multiple data documents, participants in the co-interpretation meetings in District 6 generated a list of key findings. These key findings were prioritized and are included below, along with district-generated hypotheses

### Key Finding 1

**Teachers have adequate materials to implement curricula, except where bilingual and ELLs are concerned.**

The Interview Report stated that in nearly all schools, respondents for both ELA and mathematics instruction indicated that they were provided with an adequate amount of instructional materials. Results from the SEC further support that teachers are using a variety of materials in their instructional practices. However, the Interview Report also indicated that there are some specific materials that teachers lack, such as instructional materials in Spanish and materials that are interesting and at the level of students who are far below grade level. In summary, teachers indicated that they need more high-interest materials for students reading below grade level and more materials in Spanish for ELL students.

The ELL Report, however, indicated that specialized materials are made available to schools through the district. For every professional development activity, there is a folder of materials to use as follow-up. Supplementary manuals, charts, and graphic organizers, as well as materials from New York City Department of Education headquarters, also are readily accessible. Bilingual books for children and book lists as well as audiobooks and specialized software often are used as supplements.

Furthermore, the Special Education Report stated that almost without exception, the interviewed teachers believed that the materials that were available to them did fit the needs of their students. Some indicated that they modified materials to address student's needs. One teacher indicated that "yes" she had appropriate materials but added that she wished there were more low-level books that were "cool" and age appropriate for her middle-level students. Another wished for more "good" computers.

### Hypotheses

Participants at the co-interpretation suggested a few possible hypotheses for the conflicting data. Some thought that resources were not easily accessible and available across the board, while others thought materials were purchased but not distributed to the appropriate people for the children's learning. Most agreed, however, that the likeliest causes for the conflicting data were

that monolingual teachers are not aware of bilingual resources for the ELLs in their classrooms, administrators are not aware of the bilingual resources that are available, and finally, lack of money was the most likely reason that materials for bilingual and ELL students are inadequate.

## **Key Finding 2**

**The city’s ELA curriculum is not aligned to state standards. According to the more detailed grade-level curriculum alignment summaries, there are large curriculum gaps—at some grades more than others.**

The ELA Curriculum Alignment Report (both the overall and grade-level summaries) reveals that based on the submitted documents (*A Comprehensive Approach to Balanced Literacy: Handbook for Educators K–6* and *Grade 6 to High School; Planning Units of Study in Reading and Writing Workshops*), the New York City ELA written curriculum is not completely aligned to state standards. In general, as documented in the overall summary of the ELA Curriculum Alignment Report, across all of the areas of ELA (reading, writing, and listening and speaking), the alignment of the curriculum to state standards revealed gaps between the curriculum and the standards. Furthermore, according to the detailed grade-level summaries, curriculum alignment for both Grades 6 and 10 demonstrates the large gaps in alignment between state standards and the written curriculum across all ELA areas (reading, writing, and listening and speaking).

## **Hypotheses**

Participants at the co-interpretation suggested a few possible hypotheses for this finding. Most participants agreed that the likeliest cause for the ELA curriculum not being aligned to standards was that there might be insufficient awareness of the state standards. In addition, many participants thought there is a lack of higher levels of articulation between grade bands. Participants also indicated that school teams do not engage in comprehensive curriculum planning that utilizes state and city standards and assessment of their student needs.

District 6 submitted additional curriculum documents for review specific to the district. Although the units were focused on ELA, many were supplemental instructional resources (i.e., not required) and none included student outcomes. This absence of student outcomes prevented Learning Point Associates from performing an alignment of these additional materials to the New York state standards. This finding, therefore, remains accurate.

## **Key Finding 3**

**Instruction at all levels relies mostly on direct instruction. There is a relative lack of student discussion, project-based learning, individualized instruction, cooperative learning, hands-on learning, and use of technology.**

The School Observation Measure (SOM) Report, which focused on instruction during classroom observations, provides substantial evidence that the ELA and mathematics lessons being taught throughout District 6 rely mostly on direct instruction. Instruction that expects students to use a variety of cognitive demands (such as student discussion, project-based learning, individualized

instruction, cooperative learning, hands-on learning, and use of technology) were observed less frequently if at all during three rounds of observations in randomly sampled schools in the district. For example, one finding in the SOM Report is that project-based learning was not seen in any of the 27 observed ELA classrooms in Grades K–8. Similarly, in terms of mathematics instruction, in the 21 observed mathematics classrooms in Grades K–8 grade, student discussion was seen only in one out of every 10 observed classes.

However, all 21 mathematics teachers who participated in the *Surveys of Enacted Curriculum* indicated that they utilize instructional strategies such as cooperative learning and mathematics portfolios to teach a lesson. Therefore, what was reported by teachers does not match with what was observed during three rounds of classroom visits in both ELA and mathematics classrooms across the district. Moreover, the Document Review Report revealed that teachers use best practices and research-based practices inconsistently in their instruction.

## **Hypotheses**

Participants at the co-interpretation suggested a few possible hypotheses for this finding. Some believe that the scheduling and the logistics for professional development focusing in this area is the reason for a lack of diversity in instructional strategies. Again, with a focus on professional development about instructional strategies, some participants believe that there is a lack of capacity building in this area and on how to use the strategies, which leads to teachers rarely implementing the methods.

In addition, co-interpretation meeting participants indicated their belief that college courses are not preparing teachers well for actual classroom instruction. Others indicated that teachers throughout the district utilize direct instruction to teach their contents because that is the way they were taught when they were students. A few participants voiced that there is a lack of diversity in the instructional methods because the School Leadership Team does not relay this message about instruction to the teachers. Most agreed, however, that the likeliest reason that District 6 teachers rely heavily on direct instruction is a lack of training and professional development on how to design and implement standards-based instruction in mathematics.

## **Key Finding 4**

**Teachers who teach SWDs have a thorough understanding of testing accommodations but do not have the same understanding for day-to-day instruction.**

Within the context of Guiding Question 10 (“Do teachers identify and provide appropriate instruction for students who are not proficient?”), teachers were asked about implementing accommodations and modifications for SWDs. Although teachers seemed to have a thorough understanding of utilizing accommodations and modifications for testing SWDs, many did not have the same understanding of utilizing accommodations and modifications for SWDs for day-to-day instruction within the classroom.

Teacher interview data in the Special Education Report indicates that there seems to be confusion about the “process of developing and implementing student accommodations and

modifications.” The majority of interviewed teachers responded to this question with respect to testing and assessment accommodations rather than for day-to-day instruction. Several general education teachers said that they made instructional accommodations as they felt such accommodations were needed. Other teachers mentioned using differentiated instruction for the class as a whole but did not seem to be familiar with individual student needs for specific accommodations and modifications.

In the document review of 51 IEPs, only eight IEPs had clear accommodations outlined—even though the description of present levels of performance, the specific disability, and placement for some or all of the day in a general education classroom would suggest that accommodations would be supportive of the student’s learning. The majority of IEPs did not list any needed accommodations or modifications for students in academics, in the academic environment, or for behavior.

Several teachers mentioned that they are given page 9 of the IEP, which lists the following information for a student: (1) participation in school activities, (2) related service recommendations, (3) participation in assessments, and (4) promotion criteria. However, a student’s present levels of performance and academic and social/emotional management needs that are critical in identifying appropriate accommodations and modifications are described on pages 3 and 4 of the IEP. No interviewed teachers mentioned using those areas in planning and providing instruction for SWDs.

## **Hypotheses**

Participants at the co-interpretation suggested a few possible hypotheses for this finding. Most believe that there is a lack of articulation time among general education teachers, Special Education teachers, and service providers. Participants also indicated that teachers are not receiving adequate training in interpreting, analyzing, and implementing IEP provisions. In addition, participants believe that professional development is not inclusive of all teachers—general education, Special Education, ESL, ELL, and administrators. Finally, some participants suggested that there is a lack of appropriate materials and knowledge to accommodate SWDs in day-to-day instruction.

## **Key Finding 5**

**The region/district provides valuable support and professional development in the use of formative assessments for both teachers and administrators; however, there is insufficient support to ensure alignment of instruction to meet the needs of all students, including SWDs and ELLs.**

Within the context of Guiding Question 11 (“Do teachers use assessment data to inform instruction?”), reviewers found that there are strengths and challenges related to this topic. District interviews revealed that the region promotes assessment use by both teachers and administrators and that the region/district provides valuable assistance in selecting formative assessments. The SEC Report indicated that all teachers state that utilizing diagnostic or classroom assessment results in ELA have had a positive or “strong” positive influence on their

teaching. The Special Education Report indicated that teachers use classroom assessment data to inform instruction of all students, including SWDs. Further, the ELL Report showed that many teachers have received professional development regarding the information contained in the New York State English as a Second Language Test (NYSESLAT) and use these scores to determine or plan instruction.

However, teacher interviews revealed that in only a few schools do administrators communicate to teachers how they use assessment data. Teachers believe that data are used to check student progress and school trends, refer students to interventions, and determine school resource needs.

The Special Education Report indicates that several teachers mentioned that they are given page 9 of the IEP, which lists the following information for a student: (1) participation in school activities, (2) related service recommendations, (3) participation in assessments, and (4) promotion criteria. However, a student's present levels of performance and academic and social/emotional management needs that are critical in identifying appropriate accommodations and modifications are described on pages 3 and 4 of the IEP. No teachers interviewed mentioned using those areas in planning and providing instruction for SWDs.

The ELL Report explains that most bilingual teachers said that they were given school scores for the standardized tests and NYSESLAT results for ELLs, but they were not given the data in a form that identified who was teaching the student or what program the student was in. General education teachers also are given the results of tests not broken down by program.

## **Hypotheses**

Participants at the co-interpretation suggested a few possible hypotheses for this finding. Many thought that school teams do not consistently engage in analyzing student work, student data, and student progress to plan appropriate and effective instruction. Many participants also indicated that there is a lack of training on scaffolding for general education teachers and literacy training for ESL staff. Participants also explained that schools do not know how to align assessments with instruction for all students. Finally, some participants thought that the distinction between formative and summative is blurred.

## **Key Finding 6**

### **Support and supervision at the school level from administration for teachers regarding IEP implementation is inadequate.**

In response to Guiding Question 12 ("Is there a process in place within the district to monitor the effectiveness of instructional programs?"), participants turned to the teacher interview data and IEP review in the Special Education Report as evidence of confusion across the district about the process of developing, implementing, and monitoring student accommodations and modifications.

According to teacher interview data in the Special Education Report, several general education teachers said that they made instructional accommodations as they felt such accommodations were needed. Other teachers talked about using differentiated instruction for the class as a whole,

but they did not seem to be familiar with individual student needs for specific accommodations or modifications. When asked how the district ensures that IEP implementation is monitored, seven teachers said that they did not know. For others, there were a variety of responses but all referred to procedural concerns such as dates of annual reviews, reports to be sent to the district office, or someone from the district office dropping by and randomly reading a few IEPs. No one spoke to oversight of the actual implementation of the goals, objectives, modifications, accommodations, service delivery, and strategies.

Similarly, in a review of 51 sample IEPs, only eight had clear accommodations and modifications outlined even though the description of present levels of performance, the specific disability, and placement for some or all of the day in a general education classroom would suggest that accommodations would be supportive of the student's learning. The majority of IEPs did not list any needed accommodations or modifications for students in academics, in the academic environment, or for behavior.

## **Hypotheses**

Participants at the co-interpretation suggested a few possible hypotheses for this finding. Some thought there is a lack of set school structure and dedicated time to manage IEPs, while others thought that changes in the Special Education supervision structure are to blame. Most agreed, however, that the likeliest cause is that there is not enough professional development for either teachers or administrators on IEPs as well as instructional adaptation and modification.

## **Key Finding 7**

### **Loss of the Special Education Supervisors diminished special education expertise.**

Interview data in the Special Education Report shows that both teachers and building-level administrators commented on the impact of losing the Special Education Supervisors during the reorganization a few years ago. Generally, the impact of this loss is felt as confusion about the district policies and structures that provide support and guidance relating to IEP implementation and monitoring.

Many questions on the teacher interview protocol asked about district policies or practices. Most teachers could respond to the questions with respect to their school, but they were unclear or simply did not know what the district practice was. Some building-designated Special Education administrators said they did not feel that they knew as much as about Special Education as they would like in order to support and supervise the school's Special Education programs and SWDs. In other cases, they or the principal reported having a great deal of special education knowledge and experience and felt very comfortable in ensuring both procedural and instructional implementation of IEPs.

One district level administrator explained that the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of IEPs is in the job description of the Instructional Support Specialist (ISS), along with the Local Instructional Superintendent. Another described a process that takes place prior to the

opening of school in August with training on IEP implementation and use of a system to make sure that each school has the appropriate IEPs for all incoming students.

## **Hypotheses**

Participants at the co-interpretation suggested a single hypothesis as to the cause of diminished special education expertise after the loss of Special Education Supervisors: There was an assumption that other administrators could be trained to perform the same responsibilities as Special Education Supervisors, but supervisory performance is inconsistent across the district.

## **Additional Finding**

One additional finding was raised in multiple teacher and administrator interviews but was not included as a key finding. However, Learning Point Associates staff members believe it is an important finding that requires inclusion in the report.

### **There is a high rate of teacher turnover, resulting in a larger than average number of untenured and inexperienced teachers.**

The interviews with teachers in District 6 (described in the Interview Report) indicated shared concerns in five schools were personnel issues, teacher turnover, and staff shortages. Teacher turnover and a high proportion of new teachers were difficult challenges for schools. Unfilled staff positions were usually nonteaching positions: paraprofessionals and librarians. Again, this situation was perceived to be a problem in a number of the elementary schools.

Interviews with administrators indicated similar concerns. A major challenge in maintaining the benchmark of highly qualified teachers is the high teacher turnover experienced in the district and the large number of new teachers in the district. One administrator said, “If you train somebody for two years and they start getting good their third year and then they take off, you’ve got another first-year teacher in her place. You can’t ever catch up.” New teachers, administrators argue, require a great deal more support than those with several years of experience. One respondent pointed out that new teachers receive guidance regarding the professional development opportunities they should pursue.

In summary, a major area of concern shared by the region/district and the schools is maintaining a qualified teacher force in light of teacher resignation and turnover. Both school and the region/district respondents said new-teacher support is essential and demanding. The effort, at times, has had only temporary benefits, as many new teachers leave the district within two to three years and are replaced by other new teachers. The region/district respondents also were concerned about turnover among school administrators, the number of new principals, and the fact that the newer principals did not have as much teaching experience as their predecessors. The region/district has provided high amounts of professional development to principals as well as opportunities for principals to learn from one another.

## Positive Findings

A series of positive findings also emerged from the co-interpretation process in District 6, as follows:

- In teacher and district interviews, the perception is that the ELA and mathematics curricula are of high quality and are aligned with standards and assessments. Implementation of the curricula is supported through pacing calendars and in school monitoring.
- In spite of lower ELL graduation rate, ELL classrooms show evidence of research-based practices at a relatively high rate. Specifically, ELL classrooms have small class size and strong classroom environments are cited.
- Most teachers are using assessment data to inform instruction, monitor student progress, diagnose student needs, and make instructional decisions (e.g., reteaching when appropriate).
- Teachers receive professional development opportunities and participate in diverse methods of professional development.
- Mathematics teachers report that professional development translates into classroom practices.
- There is a commitment to improve the achievement of SWDs.

## **Recommendations for Action Planning**

In this section, the key findings—along with research and best practice in the appropriate areas—are used to make recommendations for the district’s efforts during the next three years.

The key findings that arose out of co-interpretation with District 6 led Learning Point Associates to make four recommendations.

It is important to note that a one-to-one connection between key findings and recommendations does not exist. Rather, Learning Point Associates has identified the areas that are believed to be the most critical for the district. Further, the order of listing does not reflect a ranking or prioritization of the recommendations. For each recommendation, additional information is provided on specific actions the district may consider during the action planning process. The diversity and complexity of each recommendation places limits on the extent to which Learning Point Associates can discern its relative impact on the district’s improvement process. For this reason, recommendations are firm but the associated actions or strategies to implement the recommendations should be considered points of reference for consideration.

### **Recommendation 1**

**Design and implement a systemic plan for supporting and monitoring Special Education throughout the district.**

#### **Link to Findings**

Key Findings 6 and 7 and their associated findings address the issue of there being a lack of district-level mechanisms for IEP implementation and Special Education supervision. Since the elimination of the Special Education Supervisor positions throughout the district, IEP monitoring appears to be somewhat hit-or-miss across the district.

Many questions on the Special Education teacher interview asked about district policies or practices. Most teachers could respond to the questions with respect to their school, but they were unclear or simply did not know what the district practice was. Some building-designated Special Education administrators said that they did not feel that they knew as much as about special education as they would like in order to support and supervise the school’s Special Education programs and SWDs. In other cases, they or the principal reported having a great deal of special education knowledge and experience and felt very comfortable in ensuring both procedural and instructional implementation of IEPs. The results of both administrator and teacher interview data indicate confusion across the district related to IEP monitoring policies and procedures.

It stands to reason that districtwide confusion would result in inconsistencies in IEPs themselves. In fact, a review of 51 sample IEPs revealed that the majority of IEPs did not list any needed accommodations or modifications for students in academics, in the academic environment, or for behavior. Only eight outlined clear accommodations and modifications even though the description of present levels of performance, the specific disability, and placement for some or

all of the day in a general education classroom would suggest that accommodations would be supportive of the student's learning. Data sources indicate a gap in procedure and oversight of IEP implementation that may hinder opportunities for all students to learn.

In the current supervisory model in place in District 6, principals and building-level administrators are key in the Special Education monitoring process. However, the Special Education Report and administrator interviews indicate that building-level administrators may not have the time or content knowledge to effectively monitor IEP implementation or individualized instruction beyond testing accommodations. Although the principal does not need to be the only figure in IEP monitoring, the principal does need to set the standard of continued progress toward higher student achievement and improved instructional practices for all students. While teachers are learning and trying different strategies, they need support from building and district-level leaders.

### **Link to Research**

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) identifies six core tasks of instructional leaders: (1) focusing on student and adult learning, (2) holding high performance expectations, (3) helping teachers understand the value of standards, (4) fostering professional collegiality and culture, (5) using data to guide decisions, and (6) tapping into community resources to improve school functioning. Although instructional leadership typically is principal centered or principal motivated, tasks associated with instructional leadership should be dispersed among school-site staff (Elmore, 2000). This approach does not mean that specific people have specific unrelated instructional tasks to complete in isolation; rather, strong instructional leadership depends upon interrelated activities, such as involving teachers in mentoring or professional development presentations (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2000). In other words, instructional monitoring involves the principal working in conjunction with site instructional staff.

Many models exist to promote district emphasis on instructional leadership—including structured classroom walk-throughs, principal support groups, and principal peer observations. What is most important, though, is that the district models to site leaders (and site leaders model to teachers) the importance of good instruction (Blase & Blase, 2000, Fuchs & Fuchs, 2005).

### **Step to Consider**

- Provide building-level leaders with a comprehensive support system for their responsibility for supervising special education and also for IEP review, implementation, and monitoring.

Interview data in the Special Education Report shows both teachers and building-level administrators commented on the impact of losing the Special Education Supervisors during the reorganization a few years ago. Generally, the impact of this loss is felt as confusion about the district policies and structures that provide support and guidance around IEP implementation and monitoring. Review of this decision and its impact on district policy and procedure is recommended to ensure that the budgetary, staffing, and procedural changes that were made are fulfilling their original goals and if, not, they are modified to better fulfill those goals.

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## **Recommendation 2**

**Increase professional development opportunities to help teachers in District 6 meet the needs of diverse learners by:**

- **Providing general education teachers with strategies to help meet the needs of SWDs and ELLs in their classrooms.**
- **Training general education teachers on making accommodations for SWDs as required by IEPs.**

### **Link to Findings**

A general trend through Key Findings 4, 6, and 7 shows inconsistency in the knowledge and understanding of instruction for SWDs and IEP implementation. Teachers may not be receiving adequate training or information (e.g., lack of instructional accommodations in IEPs, and teachers receiving only part of IEP documents). These findings all suggest that increased professional development for teachers on accommodations and meeting the needs of diverse students would increase teachers' abilities to serve their students. These findings also point to inconsistencies in the abilities of school Special Education Supervisors. During co-interpretation, participants from District 6 cited the loss of Special Education Supervisors as a key reason for the loss of expertise. The district also agreed that this situation was out of its control and that steps should be taken to ensure that staff who now assume those responsibilities are properly trained and given the time to fill these responsibilities.

Key Findings 1 and 5 include the need for more support relating to serving students with diverse needs. During the co-interpretation, District 6 participants suggested that teachers and administrators are not aware of the resources that are available. Participants also suggested that teachers have not received enough training on scaffolding. One additional Key Finding that the group did not include for the report emphasizes the inconsistencies in teacher and administrator abilities to meet student needs. District 6 co-interpretation participants also indicated that general education teachers are not receiving professional development regarding subgroup populations; they specifically indicated that general education teachers are not included in professional development for ELL teachers and that interviews showed most teachers do not receive their knowledge of ELL instruction from professional development. Additional, effective professional development for general education teachers on accommodations for meeting the needs of their SWDs and ELLs is necessary to ensure the success of *all* the district's students.

### **Link to Research**

Classroom teachers are the central figure in a child's education and have ongoing knowledge and access to information regarding the student's achievement in relation to standards, needed accommodations, and specific curricular implications for achievement and instruction (DeStefano, Shriner, & Lloyd, 2001). With increases in the numbers of ELL students and SWDs being included in regular classrooms, professional development related to these topics is imperative for *all* teachers, and the administrators who support them as well. Teachers, administrators, and staff cannot be expected to do what they have not been trained to do

(Whitworth, 1999). In a recent Center on Instruction report, Francis, Lesaux, Kiefer, and Rivera (2006) identified six instructional approaches in reading and three instructional approaches in mathematics that are critical for teachers to understand for the instruction and academic interventions for ELL. General education teachers need effective and consistent professional development on language acquisition—specifically, a strong grasp on acquiring academic language.

Research indicates that the most successful professional development efforts are those that provide regular opportunities for participants to share perspectives and seek solutions to common problems in an atmosphere of collegiality and professional respect (Little, 1982). Collaboration in professional development is especially useful for increasing the capacity to meet the needs of special populations, given that a history of sorting and separating both diverse students and classroom teachers has resulted in very little common ground (Ferguson, 2005). Classroom teachers are specialists in curriculum; special education and ELL teachers are specialists in the unique learning and behavior needs of students. Each specialist learns skills from the others, with all students being the ultimate beneficiaries (Beckman, 2001).

General education teachers learning to support the needs of SWDs in their classrooms report that the most useful professional development provides them with specific skills they can immediately use and implement in the classroom. In addition to hands-on skills training, classroom observations and/or videotapes of successfully inclusive classes, and situation-specific problem-solving sessions over the course of the school year were key to providing a frame of reference for these teachers (Whitworth, 1999). In order for teachers to provide high-quality differentiation to their students, they must understand both the theory and related practice as well as develop those skills (Hedrick, 2005). Staff developers who are effective in teaching differentiation will help instructors use differentiation in their classroom effectively.

Teaching students who are learning English as an additional language is an especially complex task requiring knowledge of linguistics, culture, and curriculum. Classroom teachers need to understand the basic constructs of bilingualism and second-language development, the nature of language proficiency, the role of the first language and culture in learning, and the demands that mainstream education places on culturally diverse students (Clair, 1993). Further, classroom teachers need a “vision of students as capable individuals for whom limited English proficiency does not signify deficiency, and for whom limited academic skills do not represent an incurable situation” (Walqui, 1999, page 3).

Research on effective professional development (Snow-Renner & Lauer, 2005) shows that professional development that has a positive impact on teacher instruction is of considerable duration, concentrates on specific content areas and/or instructional strategies, requires a collective participation of educators (grade-level or school-level teams), has coherent organization, and is infused with active learning rather than the “stand-and-deliver” model.

Porter, Garet, Desimone, Yoon, and Birman (2000) identify the following strategies to increase the effectiveness of a professional development experience:

- Active learning and coherence in professional development will significantly increase the use of active, project-centered activities in classroom instruction.

- Professional development that includes specific, higher-order teaching strategies will increase the teacher's use of those strategies in classroom instruction.
- The use of collective participation, active learning, and coherence in professional development will increase the impact of activities that focus on specific, higher-order teaching strategies.

### Steps to Consider

- Continue to provide professional development for ELL, Special Education, and general education teachers to help meet the needs of diverse learners.
- Strengthen policies on monitoring IEPs, and provide teachers with strategies to meet these students' needs.

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### **Recommendation 3**

**Revise the District 6 ELA curriculum so that it meets the breath and depth of the New York state standards mapped at all grade levels and is articulated and explicit enough for teachers to implement consistently.**

#### **Link to Findings**

Both the overall summary and separate grade-level summaries in the ELA Curriculum Alignment Report reveal that the district's adopted ELA written curriculum is not aligned to all the ELA state standards. Furthermore, according to the detailed grade-level summaries, curriculum alignment for both Grades 6 and 10 in particular demonstrate the greatest gaps in alignment. Participants at the co-interpretation suggested a few possible hypotheses for this key finding. Most agreed that the likeliest cause for the ELA curriculum not being aligned to the standards was that there might be insufficient awareness of the state standards. In addition, many thought there is a lack of higher levels of articulation between grade bands. Participants also indicated that school teams do not engage in comprehensive curriculum planning utilizing state and city standards and assessment of their student needs.

#### **Link to Research**

Aligning a curriculum to a state's content standards is an important educational practice. Academic standards are intended to create more intellectually demanding content and pedagogy, thereby improving the quality of education for all students. By establishing a uniform curriculum schools are one step closer to producing greater equality in students' academic achievement (Sandholtz, Ogawa & Scribner, 2004). A fully articulated and aligned curriculum with specific performance indicators, assessments, and strategies provides teachers with a common set of expectations. When the curriculum materials, programs, and assessments are aligned, student progress can be monitored throughout the year (Porter, 2002).

Curriculum alignment must extend beyond the written curriculum to be most effective. It should include the curriculum that is actually taught, the manner in which it is taught, and classroom assessments that are utilized (Holcomb, 1999). More than curricular topics should align to the state standards. If both the content of the standards and the content of the curriculum match, student performance will still lag if the level of cognitive demand required by the standards differs from the cognitive demands reflected in classroom instruction and/or assessment (Corallo & McDonald, 2002). Therefore, it is vital to align the ELA curriculum to the state standards both in terms of content topics addressed in the curriculum (the breath) and the level of cognitive demand required to meet expectations (the depth).

Research shows that curriculum is one of the factors contributing to student achievement. Marzano's (2003) review of research in this area found that having a viable and guaranteed curriculum is one of the strongest indicators of improving student performance. Curriculum alignment can be a very powerful factor in improving schools. The research literature has found a link between assessments and the curriculum. If used wisely, curriculum alignment that coordinates the written, taught, and tested curriculum can effectively help teachers develop units

that will interest students and enable them to perform well on high-stakes tests (Glatthorn, 1999). Schools would also benefit from a comprehensive school organization that utilizes a coordinated approach to setting goals, curriculum development, and testing, rather than have these factors addressed as three separate elements (Crowell & Tissot, 1986).

### **Steps to Consider**

In order to revise the ELA curriculum so that it meets the breath and depth of the New York state standards mapped at all grade levels and is articulated and explicit enough for teachers to implement consistently, District 6 needs to do the following:

- Communicate to administrators and teaching staff which instructional resources (e.g., Accelerated Literacy Learning binders and/or Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Project resources) they should be draw on and how to utilize these materials when teaching ELA.
- Articulate student expectations per grade level for the various instructional resources (Accelerated Literacy Learning binders and/or Teacher’s College Reading and Writing Project resources) adopted by District 6 to strengthen the ELA curriculum.
- Revisit or revise the city’s current ELA curriculum map, benchmarks, and/or scope and sequence to examine the alignment gaps between the written curriculum and the state standards. Grade-level committees may work together to address gaps found in the curriculum.
- During District 6 co-interpretation, participants voiced concerns that there might be a lack of awareness of the ELA standards at the school-level. Providing training for school administrators and teachers on the topic of the New York standards and their alignment to the adopted ELA curriculum addresses this concern.
- Provide teachers instructing the same grade level with common planning periods to develop common understanding among teachers and allow them to create similar lesson plans supporting consistent curriculum implementation.

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## **Recommendation 4**

**Create structures and processes to improve the knowledge and practice of instruction in ELA and mathematics for all teachers through the following ways:**

- **Ensure that teachers receive training on research-based instructional strategies.**
- **Ensure that general education teachers, Special Education teachers, and teachers of students learning English as a second language are provided with materials and that the materials are implemented as designed.**

### **Link to Findings (ELA and Mathematics)**

Data reviewed at co-interpretation found that direct instruction was the primary instructional strategy utilized in classrooms throughout the district. For all grade levels, instruction expecting students to use a variety of cognitive demands—such as student discussion, project-based learning, individualized instruction, cooperative learning, hands-on learning, and use of technology—were observed less frequently if at all in classrooms. At the high school level in both ELA and mathematics, project-based learning was present in less than 83 percent of the observed classrooms and use of technology was not seen at all. However, teachers self-reported using a variety of strategies and documentation provided by the district to ensure that “best practices” in instruction is a policy being implemented in classrooms across the region and district. The same document review, while showing policy, also stated that teachers use these practices inconsistently.

Other data showed an additional area of concern in instruction: the lack of availability of materials for ELL and bilingual students. High-interest reading materials are needed for ELL students, bilingual students, low-skilled readers, and SWDs who are reading at low levels. Participants felt that the main causes of this issue were lack of money for materials as well as poor communication with classroom teachers regarding what materials are available.

Implementation of this recommendation is critical because although direct instruction can be an effective instructional strategy, using a variety of strategies, including those that encourage higher level thinking and discussion, are likely to be more effective for various students. Ensuring that students who struggle either with language or with a disability have adequate and quality materials is yet another way to improve instruction.

### **Links to Research (ELA)**

The National Reading Panel (2000) identified five areas of reading in which readers need instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The amount of instructional time in each of the five areas varies depending on the knowledge and ability of the reader. As instructional time decreases in phonemic awareness and phonics, instructional time in comprehension increases. Comprehension is the construction of meaning between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 2005). Successful readers use multiple strategies flexibly to construct meaning as they read. There are scientifically based reading strategies for instruction in the multiple areas of comprehension (e.g., inferencing, summarizing) (National Reading Panel,

2000). Choosing a number of strategies allows students to use these same approaches in multiple situations over time. Research has shown that the most effective instructional model includes teacher modeling and practice, including discussion and feedback during the process (Roller et al., 1987).

Middle and high school students need to use the multiple comprehension strategies across the content areas as well as in ELA classes. Teaching reading comprehension in all content areas is most effective if it is embedded into the content itself, providing a context for understanding that is dependent on the concepts. Too often, students are asked to absorb content information without having learned the strategies for planning, organizing, and synthesizing the material (Langer, 2001). Practicing these strategies will help readers develop these skills and strategies and eventually allow them to apply these skills independently across all content areas.

With the increased national interest in accountability, high-stakes exams often influence the selection of curriculum and learning activities. Higher performing schools integrate the essential skills measured by high-stakes tests into classroom instruction as a means to boost student performance on state assessments. The underlying skills and knowledge required to take the tests are examined by teachers, principals, and district-level administration; subsequently, strategies are developed for teaching and learning these skills and incorporated into the curriculum (Langer, 2001).

In addition, by aligning the language arts curriculum to professional development, staff development can become more focused. Moreover, professional development that is tied to student learning allows all stakeholders to have a clear understanding of the instructional goals (Guskey, 2000). Teachers need support as they begin to make changes in their instruction. School leadership plays a large part in reinforcing best practices in schools. School administrators who consistently emphasize, provide training for, and reinforce best instructional practices are able to increase their teachers' confidence in supporting and embracing state assessments as being the driving force behind each student's success (Kaplan & Owings, 2001).

### **Steps to Consider (ELA)**

- Continue to focus professional development in ELA on the literacy skills students need to acquire and the implementation of research-based instructional strategies in the classroom.
- Purchase, distribute, and train teachers on use of materials containing research-based practices for ELLs and SWDs.

### **Links to Research (Mathematics)**

A review of key district documents shows substantial evidence that required mathematics instructional materials (*Everyday Mathematics* [K–5], *Impact Mathematics* [6–8], and NYC Math A and B [8–12]) are aligned with the New York State Content Strands but not to the New York State Process Strands for mathematics. The New York State Learning Standard for Mathematics (New York State Department of Education, 2005) indicates the following:

The process strands (Problem Solving, Reasoning and Proof, Communication, Connections, and Representation) highlight ways of acquiring and using content knowledge. These process strands help to give meaning to mathematics and help students to see mathematics as a discipline rather than a set of isolated skills. Student engagement in mathematical content is accomplished through these process strands. Students will gain a better understanding of mathematics and have longer retention of mathematical knowledge as they solve problems, reason mathematically, prove mathematical relationships, participate in mathematical discourse, make mathematical connections, and model and represent mathematical ideas in a variety of ways.

The standards-based mathematics programs reflect the six central characteristics of “standards-based” mathematics materials (Trafton, Reys, & Wasman, 2001). Standards-based materials (1) are comprehensive, (2) are coherent, (3) develop ideas in depth, (4) promote sense-making, (5) engage students, and (6) motivate learning. Data collected indicated that regional professional development offerings for teachers, the school-level mathematics coach position, and other supports are intended to reinforce the use of these materials.

However, observation data examined during the audit process and discussed at the co-interpretation indicate that alignment with the content strands did not guarantee that the standards are being adequately taught and learned in District 6 classrooms. Specifically, teachers at all levels rely heavily on direct instruction as the primary instructional strategy.

The lack of precise alignment to the process strands in the curriculum guides relinquishes explicit alignment of the curriculum to the process strands to the interpretation of the teachers and the level of fidelity to program implementation. It is possible that there is a disconnect between what is expected of teachers from the curriculum materials and what teachers know and are comfortable teaching (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) (2000) acknowledges this difference in its *Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics*:

The kind of teaching envisioned in these standards is significantly different from what many teachers themselves have experienced as students in mathematics classes. Because teachers need time to learn and develop this kind of teaching practice, appropriate and ongoing professional development is crucial.... For teachers to be able to change their role and the nature of their classroom environment, administrators, supervisors, and parents must expect, encourage, support, and reward the kind of teaching described in this set of standards (pp. 2–3).

The academic success of students in District 6 depends on a high degree of alignment between classroom instruction and state standards in mathematics. In District 6, one way that alignment can be achieved is through the informed and consistent use of a variety of instructional strategies as well as the instructional materials selected. The instructional materials used in mathematics instruction in District 6 make heavy use of higher level instructional strategies, and teachers self-report using them. However, without specific alignment to the process strands, sufficient monitoring, and high teacher comfort (through training, coaching, adaptation of the strategy in their classroom and critical feedback), these strategies will continue to go unused.

Achieving alignment between instruction and standards will require change to occur not only at the classroom level but at the building and district level as well. “Instructional materials have a particularly important role in making these changes happen for they affect the mathematics the students encounter and how they encounter it, the processes students use, the way teachers teach, and what is assessed. They are also important because of their central place in American education” (Trafton et al., 2001). As Ball and Cohen (1996, p. 6) note, “Unlike frameworks, objectives, assessments, and other mechanisms that seek to guide curriculum, instructional materials are concrete and [used] daily. They are the stuff of lessons and units, of what teachers and students do.”

School and district administrators need to systemically support the use of these materials and related strategies to ensure that such use becomes institutionalized. This approach includes ensuring that adequate time is allocated for mathematics instruction on a weekly basis; once teachers are committed to using the instructional materials, they will need sufficient time to implement them.

Another key component of institutionalizing curriculum and solid instructional techniques is job-embedded support for teachers. In this case, District 6 uses school-level coaches. There is evidence that when implemented, coach support of teachers improves. Currently, there is an expectation that every school employ a mathematics coach; however, it is clear that the quality of the coach determines the quality of teacher support and therefore instruction, as teachers report through interviews that they receive the most professional development and meaningful support through their coaches. Ensuring the continuation of the coach role as well as monitoring the quality of the coaches would be a way to provide meaningful teacher support.

### **Steps to Consider (Mathematics)**

- Update the mathematics curriculum guides for each grade level to provide explicit alignment to the Process Strands for the New York State Learning Standards for Mathematics.
- Continue to focus professional development in mathematics on both the proper use and implementation of the selected mathematics materials and the implementation of a variety of instructional strategies.
- Continue to train mathematics coaches and other building leadership positions to monitor classrooms for proper use of required materials as well as a variety of instructional strategies.

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## Appendix. Data Maps

### District 6 Co-Interpretation Key Findings and Hypotheses

During the co-interpretation process, participants analyzed the following nine individual reports (data sets). The abbreviation of each report is included in capital letters.

- Curriculum Alignment – CA
- District Interviews – DI
- Document Review – DR
- English Language Learners – ELL
- Observations – OBS
- School Interviews – SI
- Special Education – SE
- Student Achievement – SA
- Surveys of Enacted Curriculum – SEC

Participants identified findings from across the data sets under each of the areas examined through the audit. They worked together to identify which findings were most significant. The participants also articulated hypotheses on the root cause of each key finding. The charts in the two data maps document the results of this co-interpretation process.

#### Data Map I. Key Findings

Data Map I contains all the key findings by guiding questions. Each key finding is embedded in a chart containing three sections. The left section of each chart is the statement of the key finding and how it was prioritized. Key findings were voted on using a three-tier system. The first tier was for findings that were positive, the second was for findings that were cautions, and the third was for findings that were an immediate concern. The number of caution and concern votes were totaled and weighted (with “immediate concern” receiving a higher weight); next, they were prioritized (with 1 being the highest priority). Each key finding then received a rating based on that priority. The number of votes and the final status of the key finding are indicated at the bottom of the left section.

The top right section of each chart contains the supporting findings. The right column of this section indicates the report source and page number.

The bottom right section of each chart contains the hypotheses for the cause of the key finding and a rating on how likely a cause it is. The two right columns in this section indicate (1) the number of votes received and (2) information relating to the following questions: Can the district control this? Will it affect change? Do the data exist or can data be collected to support this? For each question that was answered “yes,” the hypothesis received a “+” symbol; for each that was answered “no,” the hypothesis received a “-” symbol. Only key findings that were prioritized and moved to the hypothesis phase (shown here as final) received hypotheses.

#### Data Map II. Other Findings

Data Map II contains findings that were not tied to key findings. It also is organized by guiding question, although some questions were not relevant and do not include findings.

## Data Map I. Key Findings

### 1. Where is the district struggling most in terms of content areas and demographic groups over time?

<p>District 6 has struggled to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for several years in the areas of ELA and mathematics for the English Language Learner (ELL) and Students With Disabilities (SWDs) subgroups.</p> <p>In 2005–06, the district made AYP in mathematics for all subgroups.</p>	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	Every teacher indicated that while the same standards apply, ELLs do not meet them in the amount of time allotted for the curriculum.	ELL 10		
		District accountability status moved from “district in need of improvement, Year 1” to “corrective action” in three years, in ELA-Elementary.	SA 4		
		District accountability status moved from “district in need of improvement, Year 1” to “corrective action” in three years, in Math-Elementary.	SA 4		
		The district is not meeting AYP in mathematics for SWDs across all grade levels.	DR1-4		
		The district is not making AYP in mathematics for ELL students at the middle school and high school levels.	SA 1-4		
		Teachers reported that meeting the needs of ELL students is a concern.	SI 10		
		Respondents in many of the schools do not think they are effective in meeting the needs of students with special needs.	SI 10		
		According to student achievement data, ELL students consistently did not make AYP for three years in elementary school.	SA 1		
		Elementary special education did not meet AYP in ELA, mathematics, or science in 2002–03 or 2004–05. However, they met mathematics AYP in 2003–04.	SA 1		
		There is a drop in meeting AYP in mathematics for the ELL population for all levels across all three years.	SA 1-2		
		According to achievement data, SWDs consistently did not make AYP for three years in elementary.	SA 17		

Votes	Final?
1	Removed

\*This key finding speaks to the purpose for the audit and should be answered (supported) by the other key findings; thus the group decided to remove it.

**2. Are teachers teaching the written curriculum in their classrooms?**

<p>Teachers interviewed stated that they are teaching the curriculum but with little flexibility in curriculum implementation or topics. Teachers in both ELA and mathematics indicated that there are inconsistencies with implementation and monitoring systems in the written curriculum.</p>	<p><b>Supporting Findings</b></p>	<p>ELA teachers are teaching the written curriculum inconsistently throughout the district.</p>	DR 2
		<p>There is limited evidence for monitoring and implementation of the mathematics curriculum.</p>	DR 3
		<p>All of the teachers interviewed stated that they were teaching the curriculum that was required in general education classrooms.</p>	ELL 9
		<p>Teachers indicated they had low to moderate discretion to modify the curriculum.</p>	SI 5
		<p>The reasons that respondents were confident in curriculum alignment differed between ELA and mathematics teachers. Evaluation of the curriculum was active in ELA. In mathematics, monitoring was dependant on the textbook.</p>	SI 4
	<p><b>Hypotheses</b></p>		

<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>
4	NO

**3. Does the district provide materials that support the implementation of the written curriculum, and are they used?**

Teachers have adequate materials to implement curricula, except where bilingual and ELLs are concerned.		<b>Supporting Findings</b>	Most schools need more high-interest materials for students reading below grade level and more materials in Spanish for ELL students.	SI 7	
			Bilingual books for children and audiobooks and software are often used for supplements.	ELL 4	
			All mathematics teachers surveyed indicated they use manipulatives, measurement instruments, and data collection devices in their instructional practices.	SEC 23	
			Teachers were provided with an adequate amount of instructional materials.	SI 6	
			A majority of teachers felt they had appropriate materials.	SE 11	
<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	<b>Hypotheses</b>	1. Money.	60	-++
3	YES		2. Administrators are not aware of the bilingual resources that are available.	57	+++
			3. Monolingual teachers are not aware of bilingual resources for the ELLs in their classrooms.	50	+++
			4. Resources are not easily accessible and available across the board.	36	-++
			5. Materials are purchased but not distributed to the appropriate people for our children’s learning.	27	+++

<p>The curricula are of high quality and aligned with standards and assessments. Implementation of the curricula is supported through pacing calendars and in school monitoring.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="191 578 640 670"> <tr> <th>Votes</th> <th>Final?</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Not rated</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> </table>	Votes	Final?	Not rated	NO	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	The regional focus is on instructional quality (or how the accepted curricula are implemented).	DI 27
	Votes	Final?					
	Not rated	NO					
	Most schools expressed confidence that what they teach is aligned to the city performance standards.	SI 4					
	In-school monitoring supports curriculum delivery in most schools.	SI 6					
	Coaches and assistant principals provide teachers with a pacing calendar with series materials.	ELL 9					
	The region or district staff members are confident in the alignment of curricula and instructional materials provided to the schools.	DI 27					
	<b>Hypotheses</b>						

#### 4. Are the teachers teaching to the state standards?

Teachers believe they are teaching the required curriculum aligned to the state standards.	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	All ELL teachers interviewed stated they were teaching the curriculum that was required in general education classrooms.	ELL 7
		A majority of teachers reported teaching to the state standards (with modification for SWDs).	SE 12
		The SEC show a correlation between the standards and what is being taught in phonics for Grades K–2.	SEC 10
	<b>Hypotheses</b>		
<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>		
7	NO		

While teachers felt that curricula were being taught, a variety of specific omissions and questions of intensity were noted when standards were discussed.*	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	While the instructional components of Grades 3–8 mathematics touch on all concepts, the state standards call for a more in-depth focus on specific content areas.	SEC 12, 14
		All students are held to the same standards; however, the performance indicators are different based on proficiency level of ELLs (beginning, intermediate, and advanced).	ELL 10
		While the K–5 ELA standards call for a concentration on demonstrating “speaking and presenting” and “listening and viewing” skills, the evidence shows we do not concentrate enough instruction in these areas.	SEC 10,11,13
		The taught curriculum is covering all levels of cognitive demand in comprehension while the standards call for greater concentration around “investigate” than at other levels in Grades K–2.	SEC 10
*Combined with previous finding.	<b>Hypotheses</b>		
<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>		
5	NO		

**5. Is the taught curriculum aligned with the state assessments?**

<p>There were no key findings for this guiding question.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="191 500 640 594"> <thead> <tr> <th>Votes</th> <th>Final?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Votes	Final?			<b>Supporting Findings</b>	<p>The Grades 3–12 ELA assessments concentrate on critical reading and comprehension skills, while the Grade 4–12 standards have less of focus on these topics. (The district noted the discrepancies between the standards and assessments and wanted to document this.)</p>	<p>SEC 11, 12</p>	
	Votes	Final?						
	<b>Hypotheses</b>							

**6. Is the written curriculum aligned with the state standards?**

<p>Curricula are generally aligned with standards, although specific questions arose regarding geometry and measurement strands at the middle school level.</p>	<p><b>Supporting Findings</b></p>	<p>The district mathematics curriculum is well aligned to the 2005 New York state mathematics standards for Grades 2 and 4.</p>	<p>CA 1-9</p>	
		<p>Districts current high school mathematics curriculum is well aligned with the 1999 New York state standards, and the new curriculum will be put in place in September 2007 to meet the new (2005) standards.</p>	<p>CA 13-17</p>	
		<p>District staff indicated that the learning needs of ELLs are addressed through the New York state standards.</p>	<p>ELL 5</p>	
		<p>The district’s middle school mathematics curriculum (Impact) does not adequately address the content strands of geometry and measurement.</p>	<p>CA 8, 11</p>	
	<p><b>Hypotheses</b></p>			

<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>
6	NO

<p>The ELA curriculum is not completely aligned to state standards, and it becomes less aligned in the higher grades.</p>	<p><b>Supporting Findings</b></p>	<p>Grades 6 and 10 demonstrate the greatest gaps in alignment between state standards and written curriculum across all standards (reading / writing / speaking / listening).</p>	<p>CA 7</p>	
		<p>Across the ELA curriculum (reading / writing / speaking / listening), the gap between the written curriculum and the standards broadens progressively as the grade go up.</p>	<p>CA all</p>	
	<p><b>Hypotheses</b></p>	<p>1. Some providers are not aware of the state standards.</p>	<p>55</p>	<p>+++</p>
		<p>2. There is a lack of higher levels of articulation between grade bands.</p>	<p>49</p>	<p>+++</p>
		<p>3. School teams do not engage in comprehensive curriculum planning utilizing state and city standards and assessment of their students needs.</p>	<p>49</p>	<p>+++</p>

<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>
2	YES

**7. Do all students have access to a rigorous and challenging curriculum?**

<p>In general, teachers believed the implemented curriculum was challenging and met the needs of the students. However, some felt frustrated with the adaptation of the instruction.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="191 678 653 771"> <tr> <td><b>Votes</b></td> <td><b>Final?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	7	NO	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	There are high expectations for all students, including SWDs.	SE 4
	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>					
	7	NO					
	Students' special needs strongly influence mathematics instruction.	SEC 34					
	Respondents indicated the curriculum is effective in meeting student needs.	SI 4					
	Scripted programs generated frustration because teachers were unable to adapt instruction to meet students' needs.	SI 6					
	Observed instruction was skill based in both general education and ESL classrooms.	ELL 21					
	All teachers agree that ELLs are held to the same standard as general education students because students are being taught the same curriculum and expected to take the same assessment.	ELL 9					
No one thought the context (content standards) was "watered down" for ELLs. They are held to the same standards.	ELL 17						
<b>Hypotheses</b>							

**8. What does the district/school do for students who are not scoring at proficient levels according to NCLB (within and outside the school day)?**

Students who are not scoring at proficient levels according to NCLB are receiving extra support through AIS/37.5 or other intervention services during and after school.*	Supporting Findings	Intervention and ELLs needing extra support can get individualized assistance through AIS (Academic Intervention Services).	ELL 5				
		AIS services and 37.5 minute block options are available to all SWDs.	SI 15				
		All district staff noted scheduling conflicts that confront students in programs serving ELLs.	ELL 5				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Votes</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Final?</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">NO</td> </tr> </table> *Determined to be a positive finding and set aside to return to during report writing	Votes	Final?	5	NO	Hypotheses		
	Votes	Final?					
	5	NO					

The large number of ELLs that need services is a challenge with respect to resources, personnel, materials and space.	Supporting Findings	Schools have difficulty serving the large ELL population.	SI 11				
		ELL population requires more resources especially personnel, materials, and space.	SI 11				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Votes</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Final?</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">NO</td> </tr> </table>	Votes	Final?	4	NO	Hypotheses		
	Votes	Final?					
	4	NO					

**9. Does classroom instruction maximize the use of best practices and research-based practices?**

In spite of a lower graduation rate, ELL classrooms show evidence of research-based practices at a relatively high rate. Specifically, ELL classrooms have small class size and strong classroom environments are cited.	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	Respondents rated comprehensive approaches to ELLs as most effective.	SI 11				
		Not graduating on time, ELLs and secondary.	ELL 5				
		The most frequent access type of instructional activity included. Identify prior knowledge.	ELL 20				
		Smaller classes, less than 20.	ELL 23				
		(Empty cell)	(Empty cell)				
<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>Votes</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>Final?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Not rated</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	Not rated		<b>Hypotheses</b>		
<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>						
Not rated							

Instruction at all levels relies mostly on direct instruction. There is a relative lack of student discussion, project-based learning, individualized instruction, cooperative learning, hands-on learning, and use of technology.	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	Technology and computer use not seen 95 percent of the time in K–8 mathematics instruction.	OBS 13			
		Cooperative learning was not seen 72 percent of the time in mathematics K–8 instruction.	OBS 12			
		High school mathematics performance assessment were not seen in 100 percent of classes.	OBS 18			
		K–8 mathematics student discussion not seen 91 percent.	OBS 14			
		100 percent of mathematics teachers surveyed in Grades K–8 indicated that they engage students in small groups and pairs to solve mathematics exercises, problems, investigations, or tasks.	SEC 24			
		In K–8 mathematics, project-based learning and investigation not seen 100 percent of the time.	OBS 14			
		Mathematics K–8 performance assessment not seen or rarely seen 100 percent of the time.	OBS 14			
		K–8 direct instruction observed 82 percent of the time.	OBS 12			
		<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>Votes</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>Final?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">5*</td> <td style="text-align: center;">YES</td> </tr> </table> <p>* This rating is a combination of two different findings, with ratings of 5 and 6 each.</p>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	5*	YES
<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>					
5*	YES					

		100 percent of teachers surveyed indicated that their students keep a mathematics portfolio.	SEC 26		
		High school mathematics cooperative learning not seen 83 percent of the time, individual instruction not seen 100 percent of the time, project-based learning not seen 100 percent of the time.	OBS 18		
		In mathematics high school instruction, hands-on learning was seen rarely or not at all 100 percent of the time, higher level feedback was not observed 83 percent, and systemic individualized instruction was not observed 100 percent of the time.	OBS 18		
		Teachers use best practices and research-based practices inconsistently.	DR 10		
		Student discussion not observed 79 percent of the time.	OBS 4		
		Direct instruction was observed 78 percent of site visits.	OBS 4		
		In high school ELA, student discussion was not observed in 83 percent of classes, independent research not observed 100 percent of the time, and project-based learning not present 83 percent of the time.	OBS 10		
		K–8 systemic individualized instruction was not observed 96 percent of the time.	OBS 4		
		K–8 ELA instruction, project-based learning was not seen 100 percent of the time.	OBS 4		
	<b>Hypotheses</b>		1. There is a lack of classroom management.	67	+++
			2. Scheduling and logistics for professional development is a problem.	64	+++
			3. Testing process causes short-term focus to professional development.	60	+++
			4. There is a lack of gaining “buy-in” and capacity building to implement and monitor instruction	49	+++
			5. Teachers teach as they were taught (following well-engrained patterns).	48	+++
			5. College is not prepping teachers well for the classroom.	48	+++
		6. Professional development needs to have teachers involved in how to use different instructional strategies. (Teachers don’t know how.)	47	+++	
	7. Doesn’t go through School Leadership Team (SLT).	26	+++		

**10. Do teachers identify and provide appropriate additional instruction for students who are not proficient?**

All teachers that teach SWDs have a thorough understanding of testing accommodations but do not have the same understanding for day-to-day instruction.	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	Teachers use differentiated instruction and other strategies for accommodating/modifying instruction but do not have a thorough understanding of accommodating/modifying for specific SWDs.	SE 8					
		Teachers of SWDs have a thorough understanding of accommodations/modifications for testing.	SE 5/8					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Votes</b></td> <td><b>Final?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>YES</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	5	YES	<b>Hypotheses</b>	1. There is a lack of articulation time among general ed teachers and service providers.	73	+++
	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>						
5	YES							
2. Teachers are not receiving adequate training in interpreting, analyzing and implementing IEP prescriptions.	67	+++						
3. Professional development needs to be inclusive of all teachers: general education, ESL, ELL, SWD and administrators.	59	+++						
4. There is a lack of appropriate materials (and knowledge) to accommodate...	52	+++						

Schools capacity and approach to address the needs of all student groups was perceived to be the most problematic.	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	Schools don't think they are effective in meeting the needs of students with special needs.	SI 10					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Votes</b></td> <td><b>Final?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	4	NO	<b>Hypotheses</b>			
	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>						
4	NO							

**11. Do teachers use assessment data to inform instruction (monitoring, diagnosis, reteaching)? Are data accessible?**

<p>Most teachers are using assessment data to inform instruction, monitor progress, diagnose student needs, and make instructional decisions (e.g., reteaching when appropriate).</p>	<p><b>Supporting Findings</b></p>	<p>In a small number of schools, where the teachers are familiar with assessments, there is a wide range of decisions and mode regarding instruction and instructional program.</p>	SI 9				
		<p>More than 50 percent of Grades 5–12 teachers stated that they participated in teacher reviewing student work or scoring assessments.</p>	SEC				
		<p>Teachers report using data to pinpoint exact skills that a student is lacking or is weak in.</p>	SE 20				
		<p>Teachers use assessment data to some extent in nearly all schools.</p>	SI 9				
		<p>Only in small number of schools were wide-ranging instructional decisions made based on assessment.</p>	SI 9				
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Votes</th> <th>Final?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Not rated</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Votes	Final?	Not rated			
Votes	Final?						
Not rated							
<p><b>Hypotheses</b></p>							

<p>The region/district provides valuable support and professional development in the use of formative assessments for both teachers and administrators; however, additional support is needed to ensure alignment of instruction to meet the needs of all students including SWDs and ELLs.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="191 773 632 865"> <thead> <tr> <th>Votes</th> <th>Final?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>YES</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Votes	Final?	3	YES	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	Teachers use classroom assessment data to inform instruction of all students including SWDs.	SE 13, 21
	Votes	Final?					
	3	YES					
	Interview teachers did not mention using assessment data within IEPs in providing instruction for SWDs.	SE 8					
	Only in a few schools do administrators communicate how they use assessment data.	SI 9					
	In only a few schools do administrators communicate to teachers how they use the data.	SI 9					
	All teachers have stated that utilizing diagnostic or classroom assessment results in ELA have had a positive or “strong” positive influence on their teaching.	SEC 41					
	Many of the teachers had received professional development regarding the info contained in NYSESLAT scores and some used scores to determine or plan instruction.	ELL 14					
	The region promotes assessment use by both teachers and administrators.	DI 29					
	The region/district provides valuable assistance in selecting formative assessments.	DI 27					
	In most schools, teachers were unsure how administrators used assessment data. Data are mostly used to check student progress and school trends.	SI 9					
	Assessments are used for a limited range of decisions in small-group or individual instruction.	SI 9					
	No substantial evidence of monitoring the use of assessment data to inform instruction.	ELL 15					
	<b>Hypotheses</b>	1. School teams do not consistently engage in analyzing student work, student data, and student progress to plan appropriate and effective instruction.	66	+++			
2. There is a lack of training on scaffolding for general education teachers and literacy training for ESL staff.		54	+++				
3. Schools do not know yet how to align assessments with instruction for all students.		40	+++				
4. Formative/summative distinction blurred.		30	+++				

**12. Is there a process in place within the district to monitor the effectiveness of instructional programs?**

There is a need for more support and supervision at the school level from administration for teachers regarding IEP implementation.	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	There is a lack of oversight of IEP implementation.	SE 10				
	<b>Hypotheses</b>	1. There is a lack of set school structure to manage IEPs.	58	+++			
		2. The title of dedicated IEP supervisors was eliminated.	53	---			
		3. There is not enough professional development for school-based administrators regarding IEPs.	33	+++			
		4. There is a lack of additional professional development on adaptation and modification.	29	+++			
		5. Even though structures of supervision of special education have been set, there is a need of more time for those supervisors to become more effective.	24	---			
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Votes</b></td> <td><b>Final?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>YES</td> </tr> </table>		<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	3	YES	
<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>						
3	YES						

Loss of the Special Education Supervisors diminished special education expertise.	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	There was a negative impact with the loss of Special Education Supervisors.	SE 10				
	<b>Hypotheses</b>	1. There was an assumption that other administrators could be trained to perform the same responsibilities – there is inconsistent performance.	50	---			
<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Votes</b></td> <td><b>Final?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>YES</td> </tr> </table>		<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	4	YES		
<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>						
4	YES						

Program implementation needs to be done.		<b>Supporting Findings</b>	A more systemic approach to program evaluation is an area in need of improvement.		SI 27
<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	<b>Hypotheses</b>			
Not rated					



<p>Teachers receive professional development opportunities and participate in diverse methods of professional development.</p>	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	<p>Overall, the SEC instructional data results reveal more than 50 percent of teachers are receiving support in the ELA community.</p>	SEC					
		<p>All teachers surveyed stated that ELA professional development has had a positive to “strong” positive influence on their craft.</p>	SEC 40					
		<p>All teachers surveyed stated they were prepared well or very well to teach mathematics with manipulatives.</p>	SEC 38					
		<p>More than 50 percent of Grades 5–12 teachers stated that they participated in teacher reviewing student work or scoring assessments.</p>	SEC					
		<p>Training and professional development are cited as the most effective ways the region and district support schools.</p>	SI 27					
		<p>More than 50 percent of teachers in Grades 5–12 surveyed stated that they participated in teacher study groups, networks or collaborative.</p>	SEC					
		<p>Teachers have professional development opportunities and support for instructional programs.</p>	SE 12, 14					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">Votes</th> <th style="width: 50%;">Final?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Not rated</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Votes	Final?	Not rated		<b>Hypotheses</b>			
Votes	Final?							
Not rated								

<p>There are more professional development offerings for the region and district-level personnel than for teachers.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="191 435 625 527"> <thead> <tr> <th>Votes</th> <th>Final?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Votes	Final?	4	NO	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	More service training and professional development directly to teachers is needed.	SI 27
	Votes	Final?					
	4	NO					
	“Most of our PD is geared toward leadership.” There is a lack of direct services to teachers.	SI 27					
<b>Hypotheses</b>							

**14. Are teachers translating professional development into effective classroom practice?**

<p>Mathematics teachers report that professional development translates into classroom practices.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="191 527 623 620"> <tr> <td><b>Votes</b></td> <td><b>Final?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not rated</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> </table>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	Not rated	NO	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	All teachers surveyed stated that they were prepared well to very well to teach with manipulatives.	SEC 8
	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>					
	Not rated	NO					
	100 percent of teachers surveyed indicated that their students keep a mathematics portfolio.	SEC 26					
	Mathematics teachers responded that their preservice preparation had a positive influence on mathematics instruction	SEC 34					
More than 50 percent of K–12 mathematics teachers view the majority of their professional development activities consistent with their grade-level plan to improve teaching.	SEC 42						
<b>Hypotheses</b>							

**15. Are there sufficient supports in place for new teachers?**

Teachers and ELL district interviewees stated that new teachers are not receiving additional support other than that offered to all teachers.	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	No additional support as a “new” hire into ELL program instruction beyond that provided for all ELL program teachers.	ELL 6					
		It is not mandatory for new teachers to attend professional development.	ELL 6					
		There is inconsistency in the amount and type of support that new teachers receive.	SI 16					
	<b>Hypotheses</b>							
<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Votes</b></td> <td><b>Final?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> </table>		<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	6	NO			
<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>							
6	NO							

Certain changes in administration and staffing had a negative impact on support for new teachers.	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	There was a negative impact with the loss of Special Education Supervisors.	SE 10					
		A number of new teachers leave the district within 2–3 years and are replaced with more new teachers.	SI 29					
	<b>Hypotheses</b>							
<table border="1"> <tr> <td><b>Votes</b></td> <td><b>Final?</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> </table>		<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>	5	NO			
<b>Votes</b>	<b>Final?</b>							
5	NO							

**16. Do district and school plans prioritize the needs identified by NCLB?**

Limited monitoring of NCLB plans.	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	Limited evidence was found for the implementation and monitoring of plans and policies for NCLB.	DR 24					
	<b>Hypotheses</b>							
<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Votes</th> <th>Final?</th> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>NO</td> </tr> </table>		Votes	Final?	7	NO			
Votes	Final?							
7	NO							

Parents want their voices heard.*	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	Needs more community-based organization in the focus group.	ELL 36					
		Schools are bureaucratic, and parents are not included.	ELL 33					
		There are no choices for parents to voice their concerns.	ELL 31					
	<b>Hypotheses</b>							
<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Votes</th> <th>Final?</th> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Removed</td> </tr> </table>		Votes	Final?	3	Removed			
Votes	Final?							
3	Removed							
* Although all present agreed that this is an important issue, it is out of the scope of the audit and was set aside as unable to be addressed by this project.								

There is a commitment to improve the achievement of SWDs.		<b>Supporting Findings</b>	There is a commitment to improve the achievement of SWDs.		SE 23					
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Votes</th> <th>Final?</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Not rated</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Votes	Final?	Not rated		<b>Hypotheses</b>				
		Votes	Final?							
		Not rated								

## Data Map II. Other Findings

1. Where is the district struggling most in terms of content areas and demographic groups over time?
2. Are teachers teaching the written curriculum in their classrooms?

Finding	CA	DI	DR	ELL	OBS	SI	SE	SA	SEC
Because of inconsistently written IEPs, teachers have difficulty teaching the written curriculum to meet the needs of SWDs.							9		

3. Does the district provide materials that support the implementation of the written curriculum, and are they used?

Findings	CA	DI	DR	ELL	OBS	SI	SE	SA	SEC
Teachers in some schools reported inadequate supplies of chairs, overhead bulbs, chalk, and calculators.						6			
At the region or district level, additional staffing is needed.		27							

4. Are the teachers teaching to the state standards?
5. Is the taught curriculum aligned with the state assessments?
6. Is the written curriculum aligned with the state standards?

Findings	CA	DI	DR	ELL	OBS	SI	SE	SA	SEC
Scripted programs generated frustration because teachers were unable to adapt instruction to meet student needs.						6			
While the Grades 5–12 standards call for a more in-depth study of some topics versus others, teachers indicated they have a more global coverage on all topics than an in-depth focus.									74
ELA, mathematics, and bilingual classrooms differed markedly on this scale (curriculum alignment) with ELL classrooms showing little to no evidence of alignment. Mathematics classrooms being an average in alignment and ELA classrooms show the most consistent evidence of alignment.	X								

**7. Do all students have access to a rigorous and challenging curriculum?**

<b>Finding</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>DI</b>	<b>DR</b>	<b>ELL</b>	<b>OBS</b>	<b>SI</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>SEC</b>
The ratings of instructional strategies of ELL programs were spanned from low to high and illustrate a wide range of instructional strategies.				27					

**8. What does the district/school do for students who are not scoring at proficient levels according to NCLB (within and outside the school day)?**

<b>Findings</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>DI</b>	<b>DR</b>	<b>ELL</b>	<b>OBS</b>	<b>SI</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>SEC</b>
District staff confirmed the provision for ELL accommodations for standardized testing.				5					
ELL accommodations for standardized testing translates, excluded time, separate locations, third readings.				5					
ELL classrooms were arranged to facilitate student interactions.				24					
ELA implementation of policies to support nonproficient students varies from school to school.			8						
Second community-based organization (CBO) likes to be more active within the schools.				34					
One CBO is federally funded.				34					
Two CBO participated in the focus group discussions.				34					
Parents of SWDs worry about services being withdrawn if students are progressing in special education.							10		
The implementation of policies to support nonproficient students varies from school to school.			8						

**9. Does classroom instruction maximize the use of best practices and research-based practices?**

<b>Findings</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>DI</b>	<b>DR</b>	<b>ELL</b>	<b>OBS</b>	<b>SI</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>SEC</b>
Student learning time is maximized based on observations.							18		
Most schools feel student behavior was potentially or at times a problem, but not out of control.						19			
There appears to be confusion about what is a positive behavioral support plan. No one was able to describe a situation where a BIP would be needed.							5		

**10. Do teachers identify and provide appropriate additional instruction for students who are not proficient?**

**11. Do teachers use assessment data to inform instruction (monitoring, diagnosis, reteaching)? Are data accessible?**

<b>Findings</b>	<b>CA</b>	<b>DI</b>	<b>DR</b>	<b>ELL</b>	<b>OBS</b>	<b>SI</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>SEC</b>
All teachers have stated that utilizing diagnostic or classroom assessment results in ELA have had a positive or “strong” positive influence on their teaching.									41
Many of the teachers had received professional development regards the info contained in NYSESLAT scores and some ideas they used score to determine or plan instruction.				14					
The region promotes assessment use by both teachers and administrators.		29							
The region/district provides valuable assistance in selecting formative assessments.		27							

**12. Is there a process in place within the district to monitor the effectiveness of instructional programs?**

**13. Is the professional development (regional, district, school) of high quality and focused on the content/pedagogical areas of need?**

Finding	CA	DI	DR	ELL	OBS	SI	SE	SA	SEC
Teachers in empowerment schools noted they no longer attend professional development at the district. Three of five schools interviewed were empowerment.							21		

**14. Are teachers translating professional development into effective classroom practice?**

Findings	CA	DI	DR	ELL	OBS	SI	SE	SA	SEC
There was limited evidence found for implementation and monitoring of professional development in mathematics.			21						
Most small-group/differentiated instruction takes place in the ELL programs when compared with mathematics and ELA. Where ELA programs demonstrate least small-group instruction.									
Many instructional activities are in place. Most small group/pair instruction (more than math/ELA teachers).				20					

**15. Are there sufficient supports in place for new teachers?**

**16. Do district and school plans prioritize the needs identified by NCLB?**