

**New York State Education Department
Audit of the Written, Taught, and
Tested Curriculum
Newburgh Enlarged City School District
Final Report**

May 2008

**Submitted to
Newburgh Enlarged City School District**

**Submitted by
Learning Point Associates**



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Introduction

This final report is the result of an audit of the written, taught, and tested English language arts (ELA) curriculum of Newburgh Enlarged City School District conducted by Learning Point Associates. In 2007, 12 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 ELA curriculum 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 provides 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 Comprehensive District Education Plan or Consolidated Application.

District Background

Overview

Geographic Background

Newburgh Enlarged City School District is located in Orange County, New York, and serves students from the city of Newburgh, the town of Newburgh, the town of New Windsor, and parts of Cornwall, though more than half of the students live in the city of Newburgh¹ The district is located on the western bank of the Hudson River, about 60 miles north of New York City at the intersection of Interstate 84 and Interstate 87.²

Student Population

According to the New York State District Report Card for 2005-06,³ 12,267 students were enrolled in the Newburgh Enlarged City School District in grades PK–12. Of these students, 46 percent of were eligible for free lunch, 12 percent were eligible for reduced-price lunch, and 13 percent had limited English proficiency.

Demographics

The district has nine elementary schools, three junior high schools, and one high school. Students in the district are fairly evenly divided between three racial/ethnic groups: 35 percent of the students are Hispanic or Latino, 32 percent are white, and 31 percent are black or African-American. About 2 percent of the student population is Asian, native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.⁴ The district is lead by an eight member Board of Education.⁵

Student Academic Performance

As of 2005–06, Newburgh Enlarged City School District is in its third year of being a district in need of improvement. Two subpopulations have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) consistently: students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency.⁶ Although these subpopulations underperformed in elementary, middle, and high schools, student performance decreased as students grew older. Many more subpopulations did not make AYP at the high school level than in middle school and many more at the middle school level than in elementary school.

¹ <http://newburghschools.org/newburgh/subpages/district/generalinfo.cfm>, retrieved April 29, 2008.

² <http://www.newburgh-ny.com/about/loc.htm>, retrieved April 25, 2008.

³ <https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb-rc/2006/AOR-2006-441600010000.pdf>, retrieved April 25, 2008.

⁴ <https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb-rc/2006/AOR-2006-441600010000.pdf>, retrieved April 25, 2008.

⁵ <http://newburghschools.org/newburgh/subpages/boe/boegeninfo.cfm>, retrieved April 25, 2008.

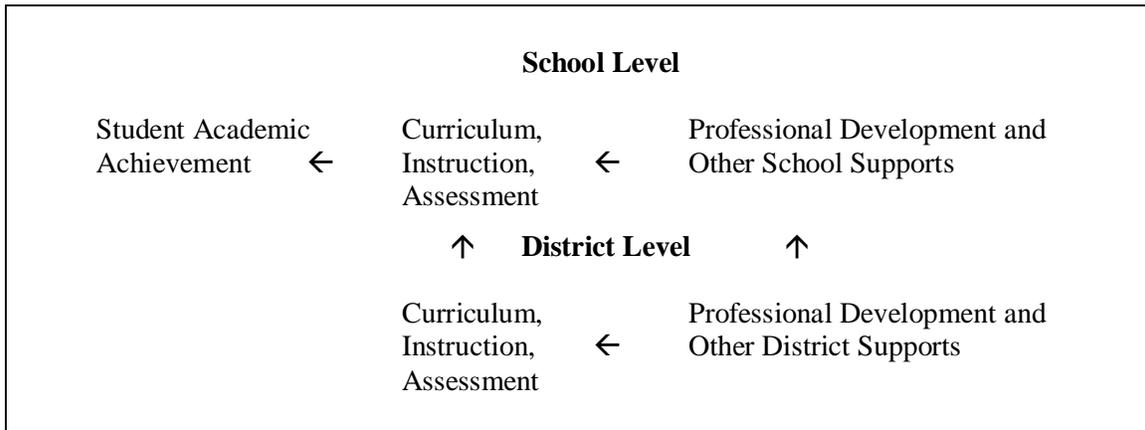
⁶ <https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb-rc/2006/AOR-2006-441600010000.pdf>, retrieved April 25, 2008.

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-interpretationSM 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 six essential questions for the focus of the audit:

1. To what extent is a comprehensive, clearly articulated, and aligned curriculum guiding instruction across the district?
2. How does instruction focus on the effective delivery of the curriculum?
3. What academic interventions are available for students who need additional academic support?
4. What professional learning opportunities that support instruction and student learning are provided to teachers?
5. To what extent do student achievement data (formative as well as summative) inform academic programming, planning, and instruction?
6. What staffing practices and profiles are utilized to effectively support teaching and learning across the district?

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; selecting a school sample and teacher samples; and planning and delivering communications about the audit to the district's key stakeholders, including a kickoff meeting involving the larger district community.

Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis

To conduct the 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 district's corrective-action status. Broadly categorized, information sources included NCLB accountability status, the *Surveys of Enacted Curriculum* (SEC), observations of instruction, interviews of school and district personnel, review of key district documents, alignment of the district's written ELA curriculum, and reviews of the special education and ELL programs.

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.

NCLB Accountability Status

Learning Point Associates compiled NCLB accountability data for the most recent three years available. These data provided the district with an overview of student achievement trends by level and subgroup.

Surveys of Enacted Curriculum

To examine whether instruction was aligned to the New York state standards and assessments, teachers in the district completed the SEC. Based on two decades of research funded by the National Science Foundation, the SEC are designed to facilitate the comparison of the enacted (taught) curriculum to standards (intended curriculum) and state tests (assessed curriculum), 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 general education 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.

Observation data were collected from between four and eight classrooms in each of the sample schools across the district. Observations were conducted on two days, a minimum of two weeks apart, in each school. Each observation lasted approximately 45 minutes. In observing classrooms, observers noted the presence or absence of classroom features per 15-minute instructional segment. Each 45-minute observation session produced a summary, which was based on three 15-minute classroom segments. Observation data were aggregated to the district by school grade levels: elementary, middle, and high school. For schools that span Grades K–8, observations were conducted in the elementary grade levels and the data were included with other elementary observation data. For schools that spanned middle through high school, observations focused on Grades 9–12 and the data were included with other high school observation data.

Interviews

To garner additional data concerning the alignment of the written, taught, and tested ELA 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 40 minutes in length for teachers and 60 minutes or more for coaches, principals, and district staff. The protocols were developed specifically to address the guiding questions of the audit 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 and between schools. Principal and coach interviews included 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.

Key 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, Learning Point Associates completed a structured analysis of key district documents.

A document review matrix was developed and used to synthesize document information against a subset of the audit’s guiding questions. The matrix was designed to determine whether each submitted group of documents contained clear evidence of district plans or policies, implementation of those plans or policies, and internal monitoring and evaluation of the implementation in support of each identified question. Three Learning Point Associates analysts evaluated the extent to which each respective document addressed the relevant question in order to ensure multiple perspectives during the process. After individual reviews were completed, the reviewers held a consensus meeting and generated a report.

Curriculum Alignment

A district’s written curriculum demonstrates its program of ELA studies for students. Learning Point Associates focused its attention on two key areas for this curriculum alignment process. First, Learning Point Associates used the revised taxonomy table (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001) to code and compare school district learning objectives/expectations and performance indicators from the New York State English Language Arts Core Curriculum (NYSED, 2005), in terms of levels of knowledge and cognitive demand. Second, using criteria for identifying and describing a cohesive, comprehensive, and clearly articulated curriculum identified in Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) and NYSED (2005), Learning Point Associates examined curriculum alignment documents submitted by the district. In both areas, materials were examined and analyzed for Grades 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10.

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 or regional staff interviews; teacher interviews (including 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 individualized education program [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 the district has developed to ensure services to SWDs, as identified under the six guiding questions developed for the audit.

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 or regional staff interviews; principal and teacher interviews (including both ELL program teachers 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 six guiding questions developed for the audit.

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

| Guiding Questions | SEC | Observations | Interviews | Key Document Review | Curriculum Alignment | Special Education Review | ELL Review |
|--|-----|--------------|------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| 1. To what extent is a comprehensive, clearly articulated, and aligned curriculum guiding instruction across the district? | | | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2. How does instruction focus on the effective delivery of the curriculum? | X | X | X | X | | X | X |
| 3. What academic interventions are available for students who need additional academic support? | | | X | X | | X | X |
| 4. What professional learning opportunities that support instruction and student learning are provided to teachers? | X | | X | X | | X | X |
| 5. To what extent do student achievement data (formative as well as summative) inform academic programming, planning, and instruction? | X | | X | X | | X | X |
| 6. What staffing practices and profiles are utilized to effectively support teaching and learning across the district? | | | X | X | | X | X |

Phase 3: Co-Interpretation of Findings

The purpose of co-interpretation was to interpret the data collected in a collaborative group setting.

The co-interpretation process consisted of several steps, starting with the interpretation of the data within individual data sets and ending with the identification of key findings across data sets. These steps occurred during a two-day co-interpretation meeting with key school and district staff. Because this process was crucial 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 (e.g., Document Review Report, Curriculum Alignment Report, Interview Report, SEC Report, Observation Report, Special Education Report, and ELL Report), in a small-group setting. Individual groups were asked to select the findings from their data report(s) that they believed were most significant and then to categorize those findings according to one of the six topic areas addressed by the guiding questions: curriculum, instruction, academic intervention services, professional development, data use, and staffing.

Identification of Key Findings

Participants then were separated into topic-area groups for the purpose of grouping individual findings across data sets along common themes. From various data sources, the participants used the method of triangulation to provide support for combining and subsuming some of the findings. As the investigative groups presented their findings to the whole group, some natural combining and winnowing of results occurred.

The whole group used a voting process to prioritize the findings. Participants then were led through a discussion process to rate the prioritized findings based on the following questions:

- Is the identified key finding 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, would there be a measurable, positive impact systemwide?

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

Phase 4: Action Planning

NYSED will provide a recommended process and templates to the districts to meet the action planning requirements of the proposal. Submission of the completed action plan is the responsibility of each district.

Implementation of the Process

The recommended process for action planning includes the following steps: goal and strategy setting, action and task planning, integration and alignment of actions, and integration and alignment with the Comprehensive District Education Plan or Consolidated Application.

In the goal- and strategy-setting step, the district team identifies what it wants to achieve during the next three years. For each goal, the team identifies key strategies along with success indicators for each. Then, the team sets specific objectives, which drive more detailed action development by those who will be assigned to implement the plan. Learning Point Associates

will work not only with the larger team but also with the smaller teams and individuals responsible for setting actions and associated costs.

Rollout of the Plan

The final component of the action planning process is communicating the audit action plan to the larger school community. This process is crucial to ensure that schools are aware of the action plan and are prepared to revise their comprehensive education plans or other guiding plans as necessary to reflect the district's plan.

References

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.). (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives* (Complete ed.). New York: Longman.

New York State Education Department. (2005). *English language arts core curriculum (prekindergarten–grade 12)*. Albany, NY: Author. Retrieved May 30, 2008, from <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/ela/elacore.pdf>

Key Findings

As indicated in the description process for Phase 3: Co-Interpretation of Findings, each key finding statement was generated through the co-interpretation process. During a facilitated process, groups of school and district administrators, teachers, parents, and district technical assistance providers identified key findings across multiple data sets. Participants prioritized these key findings during the co-interpretation meeting, and they are included below in priority order. The supporting findings, which can be mapped back to the original data sets, are included in the data map in Appendix B.

Key Finding 1

Interview respondents across all settings indicated that professional development opportunities exist, but they:

- **Are not consistent across the district.**
- **Do not address specialized subgroup needs (i.e., ELL and SWD).**
- **Are not monitored consistently for implementation.**

In addition, teachers indicated a need for a formal structure to support collaborative planning.

This finding bears considerable evidence from six of the seven data sources: the SEC Report, the Interview Report (i.e., interviews of administrators, literacy instructional leaders, and general education teachers), the Special Education Report, the ELL Report, the Curriculum Alignment Report, and the Document Review Report. Although there was evidence from various data sources that the district provides professional development, this finding identifies weaknesses in the district's approach to professional development.

The data suggest that the quality and availability of professional development opportunities is inconsistent across the district. For example, although more than half the general education teachers interviewed for the ELL Report reported receiving professional development on the use of data, less than 30 percent of special education teachers reported attending a similar training. More than 70 percent of the general education teachers who were interviewed said they had not been trained on how to use data effectively. The availability of content coaches also is highly inconsistent, according to general education interview respondents.

Even in cases where professional development is offered, interview respondents often expressed mixed reviews on the usefulness of the professional development they received. In the Interview Report, respondents from several sample schools stated that professional development provided by the district was neither relevant nor useful. The majority of ELL program teachers indicated that professional development was neither useful nor applicable to ELLs. Similarly, elementary and secondary teachers stated in the Special Education Report that professional development was irrelevant.

In addition, there is little evidence that the district systematically monitors the implementation of professional development programs. According to the Document Review Report, the district did not submit evidence of monitoring the occurrence of professional development opportunities or the participation of school staff in these trainings. The Document Review Report also found very little evidence that any follow-up takes place to ensure implementation of professional development or to measure its impact.

The need for improved professional development specifically targeted to meet the needs of the district's special education and ELL populations also was noted in this key finding. Interviews with special education teachers and ELL program teachers indicated that professional development is needed, especially to help them effectively implement curriculum maps and provide support for SWDs and ELLs. General education teachers interviewed for the Special Education Report and ELL Report also frequently reported needing more professional development to work with these populations.

Finally, co-interpretation participants noted a lack of consistent support for teacher collaboration, both in the schools and from the district. For example, special education teachers across the district indicated a desire for more collaboration with general education teachers. Interviews with general education teachers in various sample schools supported the finding that not enough time is allocated for collaboration on instructional planning. Across the various sources, teachers from all settings indicated a desire for increased collaboration.

Key Finding 2

As reported by general education teachers, district personnel, and ELL teachers, interventions and program supports for ELLs and SWDs are either not widely available or not sufficient. Also, those supports for all populations outside of the school day/year were described as affected by low student attendance. In addition, there is no process for monitoring the existing academic intervention services (AIS) plan.

Data that support this finding were drawn from the interviews with general education teachers and school administrators as well as interviews from the Special Education Report and the ELL Report. Findings from the Document Review Report corroborated the findings from those reports.

Interview respondents from across the district voiced concerns about the availability and adequacy of interventions and program supports for ELLs and SWDs. Interviews with district officials and school staff and the Document Review Report indicated that AIS are available during the school day at all schools across the district for SWDs as well as students without disabilities. However, the Document Review Report revealed that program-specific support for SWDs and ELLs was not included in the district's AIS plan. The ELL Report noted that teachers specifically need more support for their lowest performing ELLs. The most common challenge stated by elementary teachers in the ELL Report was the need for more resources in the form of additional English as a Second Language (ESL) personnel, resource personnel, AIS for bilingual students, and materials and support for students who need extra help. Interview respondents reported that in addition to AIS, more resources and support are needed for students with very low levels of proficiency or with special needs.

Insufficient monitoring of AIS programs also was noted by participants in the co-interpretation process as a part of this finding. Although the documents submitted for review indicated that AIS programs are aligned to the ELA curriculum and that there is a policy for how, when, and why a child is removed from AIS, they provided no indication that AIS is monitored.

District officials reported that interventions offered outside of the school day generally have low student attendance, which limits the effectiveness of these programs.

Key Finding 3

There is a lack of shared understanding on the part of general education and special education and ELL teachers and building administrators regarding instructional and curricular definitions and implementations of the following:

- **Modifications**
- **Adaptations**
- **Accommodations**
- **Access to general education**

There is a lack of shared understanding about how to create and implement IEPs in all classrooms.

This key finding is strongly supported by the Interview Report, the Special Education Report, the ELL Report, and the Curriculum Alignment Report.

Co-interpretation participants highlighted several pieces of evidence that suggest the district lacks a common vocabulary and approach to meet the needs of SWDs and ELLs. For example, the Curriculum Alignment Report revealed that the curriculum maps do not appear to address differentiated instruction in that they do not have a critical approach for teaching students at different levels. Teachers of ELLs reported that they do not use a standard, districtwide ESL curriculum. The ELL Report revealed that the differentiation of instruction for ELLs does not meet the various developmental needs of students.

The data indicate some variability in the extent to which teachers in the district modify the curriculum to meet the needs of SWDs and ELLs. Although the district does not appear to have a plan for modifications to the ELA curriculum for SWDs and ELLs, special education and ESL teachers report that they nonetheless modify the curriculum as best as they can to meet the needs of their students.

A large proportion of general education and special education teachers provided varying degrees and types of modification to the curriculum materials or assignments for SWDs. A review of IEPs showed that the plans contain descriptions of the program modifications to which SWDs are entitled during instruction. Nonetheless, not all general education teachers are comfortable or

aware of how to effectively apply the modifications. The Special Education Report revealed some confusion as to the role that IEPs should play in differentiating instruction for SWDs.

District administrators, however, reported that ELL and special education teachers are expected to follow the same districtwide ELA curriculum as general education teachers. These administrators generally concede that some modifications are needed to meet the beginner proficiency levels of ELLs, but there is disagreement in terms of what modifications are needed.

Key Finding 4

The Curriculum Alignment Report, Document Review Report, and interviews with teachers across settings indicate that curriculum maps lack the depth to ensure successful implementation and monitoring of the ELA curriculum (i.e., guidelines, processes, resources, pacing, assessment, and consistency). There is inconsistent use of the curriculum maps for Grades K–12, according to teachers of ELLs and SWDs. In addition, there is a lack of emphasis on higher-order thinking skills in Grades 2–8 in comparison with the state standards.

The significant weight of evidence supporting this key finding appears in the Curriculum Alignment Report. Additional support can be found in the ELL Report and the SEC Report.

Generally, the emphasis on higher-order thinking skills in Grades 2–8 is low when compared to the New York state standards. There is an inverse relationship between the emphasis on remembering and understanding between Newburgh Enlarged City School District and NYSED, with NYSED placing far greater emphasis than the district on understanding and far less emphasis on remembering. The New York state curriculum requires a greater level of opportunities for thinking and learning that demonstrate the ability to analyze and evaluate across the areas of ELA than the district provides to students. In addition, there were very few indicators in the district’s curriculum that students are required to use metacognitive or factual knowledge when compared to NYSED performance indicators.

In the SEC, many teachers self-reported that they are teaching skills and strategies that are different from those in the state standards. Observations of ELL classrooms showed that general education teachers and ELL teachers use a wide range of instructional practices to work with ELLs and that these strategies often are similar. Nonetheless, the discrepancies found between New York state standards and Newburgh Enlarged City School District’s instructional practices in the Curriculum Alignment Report indicated to co-interpretation participants that the curriculum maps do not ensure the successful implementation and monitoring of an aligned ELA curriculum.

Key Finding 5

Direct instruction was the most frequently observed instructional strategy across all grade levels in both general education and ELL settings. Students were seldom observed engaged in hands-on learning in any setting (ELL, general education, special education).

The primary source for this key finding comes from classroom observations conducted in general education, special education, and ELL classrooms. Additional data are drawn from the SEC.

Across classroom settings, direct instruction was observed more frequently than any other instructional orientation. Many observations also revealed the prevalent use of whole- or large-group settings in ELL classrooms and in general education classrooms at the elementary and secondary levels. A review of the SEC Reports supported this finding, with teachers self-reporting that they frequently engage in large-group instruction in their classrooms.

The Observation Report further revealed that experiential or hands-on learning was observed rarely. The Special Education Report noted that seldom were students seen engaged in experiential activities. In general education classrooms, no experiential, hands-on learning was observed in inclusive classrooms or at the secondary level.

Many teachers reported that they struggle to meet the needs of SWDs through direct instruction. ELL program teachers exhibited more varied instructional approaches than general education teachers, particularly in the use of scaffolded instruction, integration of language learning goals, use of comprehensible language, and development of cultural awareness.

Additional Key Findings

Additional key findings were identified by the district co-interpretation participants but were not prioritized for action planning. These findings, grouped into five categories, are as follows:

Curriculum

- 13. Student expectations are not clearly defined in the curriculum maps for elementary and secondary grades.**
- 15. There does not appear to be evidence of a district curriculum policy or monitoring of curriculum implementation.**

Instruction/Materials

- 6. Data obtained from observations, interviews, and surveys illustrate that across grade levels and all classrooms, teachers and administrators expressed concerns with materials available for ELLs and SWDs, specifically with:**
 - **Adequacy of materials**
 - **Access to materials**
 - **Effectiveness of materials**

- 12. Classroom observation data show that technology use in the classroom was limited across all grade levels and settings (i.e., general education, ELL, and special education).**
- 19. Across grade levels, SEC data indicate classroom instruction is not aligned with state standards in terms of listening, viewing, speaking, and presenting.**

Use of Student Achievement Data

- 7. Student progress is monitored by a variety of assessments, including benchmarks; however, the availability and timely distribution of the assessment data are inconsistent, and teachers voiced concerns about their effectiveness and use.**

Instructional and Support Services for ELLs

- 8. Supports for former ELLs are limited and vary from school to school.**
- 10. Observations of ELL classrooms indicate more crowding and space limitations than in general education classrooms.**
- 11. Teachers report the need for translation services, both written and oral.**
- 14. Parent focus group data indicate that parents are concerned about the limited availability of bilingual programs.**
- 16. As reported by ELL teachers, general education teachers, and parents, the prereferral and case-study evaluation (CSE) referral process is lengthy.**
- 18. General education teachers are unaware of how ELLs and SWDs are placed.**
- 20. Many teachers voiced concerns about the equity of testing expectations regarding student achievement for ELLs, given ELL needs for additional time to develop language proficiency.**

Instructional and Support Services for SWDs

- 9. Findings show that SWDs' utilization of support staff is inconsistent between elementary and secondary levels. Support staff are more fully engaged in instructional activities at the elementary level.**
- 17. Special education teachers reported that most interactions between administrators and teachers of SWDs are related to behavior and there is less focus on instruction.**
- 18. General education teachers are unaware of how ELLs and SWDs are placed.**

Positive Key Findings

A series of positive key findings also emerged from the district co-interpretation process. District participants prioritized these findings, which indicate what is being done well in the district, as follows:

- 1. The district has K–12 curriculum maps in place that are accessible to all teachers, ensuring that SWDs and ELLs have access to the general education curriculum. Teachers and district administrators interviewed believe the maps are aligned with NYSED standards.**

- 2. There are support programs both during and outside of the school day and year, with programs during the day reported as having high student participation.**
- 3. Across all grade levels and settings (i.e., general education, special education, and ELL classrooms), classroom observations show high levels of academically focused class time and student engagement.**
- 4. The mentoring program is viewed positively by the majority of teachers.**
- 5. Survey and observations report alignment to state standards in instruction in Grades 1–6, general education, and ELL classrooms.**
- 6. All teachers and all parents interviewed reported that all students have access to the district’s curriculum.**
- 7. Respondents reported that the district provides students with testing accommodations.**
- 8. Interviews with and observations of ELL teachers indicate that they incorporate language learning goals into their lessons.**
- 9. Observation data indicate that secondary ELL and general education classrooms ranked similarly on assessment methods and feedback to students; those rankings were in the middle to high range.**

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.

It is important to note that a one-to-one connection between the 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. Furthermore, the order of listing does not reflect a ranking or prioritization of the recommendations. For each recommendation, additional information is provided about specific actions that 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 as points of reference for consideration.

The key findings that arose out of the co-interpretation with Newburgh Enlarged City School District led Learning Point Associates to make four recommendations:

- Implement a comprehensive, clearly articulated ELA written curriculum for all students.
- Implement a clearly articulated ELA system of instruction.
- Develop and implement sustained districtwide ELA professional development opportunities, with special emphasis on teaching SWDs and ELLs, for all instructional staff.
- Develop and implement a districtwide system to increase access to the core curriculum for ELLs.

Throughout the audit process, and especially during the co-interpretation, district staff and advocates demonstrated their dedication to the Newburgh Enlarged City School District vision statement: "The district will provide the programs and resources to ensure that all students reach their full academic potential." They are to be commended for their consistency and conscientiousness because they asked tough questions about their ELA curriculum, how it is taught and learned, and how students and staff can be better served to strengthen their abilities to perform as educators and learners. Commendation also is due for the district's proactive response to action planning. Well before receipt of this document, the Audit of Curriculum leadership organized itself to initiate a living action plan.

The four recommendations clearly serve the district's vision statement. The improved curriculum will need to include grade-level maps that are aligned with NYSED ELA performance indicators, clearly articulated learning objectives, viable instructional pacing suggestions, links to instructional materials, ties to assessments, and plans for monitoring and renewal. The instructional plan should include written instructional guides, recommended methods, and performance indicators. It should emphasize differentiated instruction and the use of student achievement data to inform instruction. The plan must include a monitoring of the implementation component.

Learning Point Associates is aware and respectful of the study of secondary special education programs in Newburgh Enlarged City School District conducted by the Regional School Support

Center. The study consisted of classroom observations in each secondary building, focus groups with district staff, and staff surveys. The focus of the observations included structured, predictable school and classroom environments; planning for effective instruction; effective implementation of specially designed instruction; and ongoing assessment. The focus groups and surveys were conducted to determine the district's understanding of specially designed instruction, supplementary aids, accommodations, and program modifications; processes used to group students for instruction and services; and processes used to project program, staffing, and resources needs.

The following findings and recommendations of the Regional School Support Center are consistent with the work of Learning Point Associates and should be held in high regard as the district develops its action plan.

- Formalize and provide guidance to appropriate staff on how to group SWDs for instruction.
- Define and reinforce the concept of specially designed instruction, supplementary aids, accommodations, and program modifications.
- Consider developing a practice to be implemented in the fall that would provide projections for where teachers believe their students will be placed in the following year. Administrators should use that information for space, staff, resource, and budget planning.
- Provide training and technical assistance on IEP reading and interpretation.
- Communicate and demonstrate expectations for classroom instruction in resource rooms, self-contained instructional settings, and integrated teaching arrangements.
- Focus on the roles of staff.
- Review the process of conducting case study evaluation meetings.
- Create a Newburgh Enlarged City School District Continuum of Services for Special Education document and provide professional development for its appropriate use.

During the co-interpretation process, the Newburgh Enlarged City School District team became particularly enthusiastic about professional development, expressing a genuine intent to develop, implement, and sustain a comprehensive program for instructional, support, and administrative staff. This program will emphasize improving services to special student populations, including SWDs, ELLs, and other NCLB subgroups. Learning Point Associates advises bringing teachers of these populations together with staff from the general education program to form professional learning communities and then revising school schedules to facilitate staff collaboration.

Recommendation 1: Curriculum

Implement a comprehensive, clearly articulated K–12 ELA written curriculum for all students. This curriculum will include:

- **Written grade-level ELA curriculum maps that are aligned to NYSED ELA performance indicators in terms of breadth and depth**
- **Clearly articulated learning objectives and/or outcomes**
- **Viable instructional pacing suggestions for content coverage**
- **Links to curricular materials supplied by the district**
- **Flexibility to ensure that the written curriculum materials can meet the ELA needs of all students**
- **Ties to both formative and summative assessments to ensure that the curriculum is meeting student needs**
- **Plans for implementation, monitoring, and renewal of curriculum across the district**

Link to Findings

ELA Curriculum Maps. The Document Review Report, Curriculum Alignment Report, and Interview Report indicate that there is some evidence of a clearly articulated, comprehensive, and aligned ELA curriculum in Newburgh Enlarged City School District. For example, there are ELA curriculum maps for each grade level. These maps present some generalized student expectations and learning objectives as well as some references to content, skills, curricular materials, and assessments. However, expectations and outcomes appear vague as to specific content addressed—they essentially mirror performance indicators in the NYSED ELA Core Curriculum (2005)—and they do not address a diverse range of cognitive demand and knowledge levels, nor are they linked to specific content, skills, materials, or assessments. Other components, such as samples of lesson plans and suggested instructional methods to address students’ diverse instructional and learning needs, were not provided. As evident in the curriculum maps at several grade levels, there is a lack of focus on higher-order thinking skills, as well as on metacognitive and factual knowledge levels.

District representatives analyzed these reports, identified key findings, and assigned high priority to the following findings:

- The district’s K–12 ELA curriculum maps are accessible to all teachers, and maps are aligned with NYSED standards.
- The curriculum maps lack the depth to ensure successful implementation and monitoring of the ELA curriculum; there is inconsistent use of the curriculum maps in Grades K–12; and there is a lack of emphasis on higher-order thinking skills in Grades 2–8 in comparison with the state standards.
- There is a lack of shared understanding among general education teachers, special education teachers, ELL teachers, and building administrators regarding instructional and

curricular definitions as well as if and how the curriculum and instruction should be modified to ensure all students with full access to the general ELA curriculum.

- Data obtained from observations, interviews, and surveys illustrate that across grade levels and all classrooms, teachers and administrators expressed concerns with:
 - Adequacy of materials
 - Access to materials
 - Effectiveness of materials available for ELLs and SWDs

Monitoring of ELA Curriculum Development. The Document Review Report, Curriculum Alignment Report, and Interview Report reveal that the district does not have a formal policy or plan to monitor curriculum development. During the co-interpretation process, district representatives identified this matter in two key findings. Representatives strongly believed the ELA curriculum maps lacked content depth and breadth to indicate what exactly should be monitored, and this key finding was identified as a high priority by this group. This group also acknowledged that there was no explicit policy or plan for monitoring the development of the ELA curriculum, but this key finding received no votes during the prioritization phase. In its judgment and based on compelling research evidence, Learning Point Associates believes that continuous monitoring of ELA curriculum development is a crucial factor to aid the district in emerging from NYSED corrective action.

Link to Research

Comprehensive, Articulate, and Aligned ELA Curriculum. Inspired by research in this area, Flippo (2001) and Rasinski and Padak (2004) discuss the importance of broadening the view of what constitutes a comprehensive ELA curriculum. Among the many considerations they present, Rasinski and Padak (2004) suggest that a comprehensive ELA curriculum must incorporate the following:

- A variety of types of text, both print and electronic
- Emphasis on higher-order thinking and challenging students' beliefs
- Diverse needs of all students, including ELLs and those with special needs
- Multiple types of reading and writing across the curriculum
- Ways to more effectively maintain student ELA learning and achievement beyond the school day and school year (e.g., summer vacation)

This broader view of literacy curriculum, say the authors, presents the curriculum as a means of assisting students in constructing a better understanding of themselves in addition to a roadmap of specific content and skills to teach children.

From a practical standpoint of what teachers and schools should provide to students, a comprehensive ELA curriculum provides equal attention to multiple forms and means of reading and writing (e.g., guided reading, independent reading, shared writing, independent writing); embraces a variety of text types and genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction); and connects to content

areas such as social studies and science (Bintz & Moore, 2007; Flippo, 2001; Rasinski & Padak, 2004). This comprehensive curriculum also embraces a variety of means for teaching, learning, and demonstrating literacy (e.g., direct instruction from teachers to students and between students as a whole class and in small groups, cooperative learning, independent learning, experiential learning).

A comprehensive, clearly articulated, and aligned ELA curriculum presents a blueprint or plan, often appearing as curriculum maps for each grade level that present content that students should learn and teachers should teach, as well as methods and materials that teachers might use to instruct and assess (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Glatthorn, 1994, 1995; Glatthorn, Boschee, & Whitehead, 2005; Glatthorn, Carr, & Harris, 2001). These maps present clear and complete student learning objectives that are aligned to external standards and performance indicators in terms of depth and breadth of content covered (Danielson, 2002; English, 2000; Marzano & Kendall, 2007). These objectives succinctly state what students will learn (i.e., knowledge level—noun clause) and how they will learn it (i.e., cognitive demand level—verb clause), relative to the specific curricular content (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In addition, every effort is made to align higher-order student expectations (i.e., applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating) and instructional and assessment practices with external standards (English, 2008).

In developing student expectations and an ELA curriculum, school districts should be guided by external standards or performance indicators; however, they should avoid presenting these external statements as their student expectations or curriculum (Anderson, 2002). The Newburgh Enlarged City School District should consider the NYSED ELA Core Curriculum as a guide to developing an ELA curriculum that aligns with performance indicators in regard to breadth and depth of content covered; but it should not consider these indicators in and of themselves a comprehensive, fully articulated ELA curriculum.

System for Monitoring ELA Curriculum Development. Although a curriculum commonly is thought of as discrete parts—such as the written, taught, and learned curriculum—a curriculum might be better viewed as a system composed of these and other parts that, when functioning well, are synergistically intertwined. Like any other system, it must be thoughtfully developed, implemented, monitored, maintained, and renewed to function effectively and efficiently. Stakeholders must share a common vision for reforming this system and working collaboratively to ensure success (Newmann, 2002).

In his review of curriculum renewal research and practices, Brown (2004) suggests that teachers, schools, and districts might benefit from viewing curriculum as “a system for guiding learning and promoting organizational productivity” (p. 1). Building and maintaining this system involves:

- Establishing a common curriculum language.
- Building consensus around curriculum nonnegotiables.
- Establishing alignment to promote accountability.
- Meeting the needs of all learners.
- Evaluating curriculum.

- Finding parallels among current national curriculum models.

Glatthorn (1994, 1995), Glatthorn, Boschee, and Whitehead (2005), and Glatthorn, Carr, and Harris (2001) identify nine research-based guidelines for developing and implementing a high-quality, comprehensive curriculum:

- Emphasize depth over breadth on the most important topics.
- Require students to apply a variety of learning strategies to solve authentic problems.
- Emphasize process and content in order for students to acquire essential skills and subject knowledge.
- Respond to individual student needs.
- Develop a spiraling curriculum that spans and connects across multiple school years.
- Link academic and applied knowledge.
- Integrate curriculum selectively and thoughtfully across content areas.
- Focus on achieving a limited and reasonable number of essential curriculum objectives.
- Strive for the goal of high-quality learning for all students, using the written curriculum as a means to an end, not an end in and of itself.

Viewed collectively, Brown (2004), Glatthorn (1994, 1995), Glatthorn, Boschee, and Whitehead (2005), and Glatthorn, Carr, and Harris (2001) present general ground rules and considerations to guide school systems in the arduous yet essential task of developing and implementing a viable ELA curriculum. Each system must personalize and refine these rules and considerations to work within its specific contexts. A district must continually revisit, update, and improve its ELA curriculum to ensure it continues to reflect best practices, current content, and appropriate assessment tools and procedures (Hoffman, 1996; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2002. In addition to ensuring that the content of curriculum maps and related guideline documents are current, effective schools also consider ways to improve teacher access to these materials, including posting revised versions on the Internet for viewing and download (Zavadsky, 2006).

Implementation Considerations

Newburgh Enlarged City School District has made progress in redeveloping its ELA curriculum and curriculum maps. Learning Point Associates and the district recognize, however, that further work is needed to develop a clearly articulated, comprehensive, and aligned ELA curriculum that not only will assist in leading the district out of NYSED corrective action status but also will improve the quality of ELA teaching and learning across the district.

In developing its action plan for NYSED, Newburgh Enlarged City School District should address the following suggestions with respect to Recommendation 1:

- **Identify how Newburgh Enlarged City School District will create a system of curriculum throughout the district.** A vision of this system of curriculum and instruction can guide the further development and implementation of the written

curricular components. In order to ensure that this work is done in a coherent and consistent manner, structures, responsibilities, timelines, and indicators of success should be determined in the initial planning stages.

- **Determine and clearly articulate the ELA content and skills to be taught on curriculum maps.**
 - Create explicit student expectations or learning objectives for each grade level. These focused expectations or learning objectives should identify what students will learn (e.g., the knowledge—noun clause) and how they will learn it (e.g., the cognitive demand level—the verb clause) relative to the specific content and skill. The district should:
 - Identify how these expectations or objectives will align to grade-level NYSED ELA indicators and standards.
 - Organize expectations or objectives into ELA content or curricular content (e.g., social studies, science, mathematics) themes, topics, or units.
 - Ensure that expectations or objectives represent a range of knowledge levels and cognitive demands (e.g., higher order thinking). Learning Point Associates used Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) revised taxonomy table to examine the district's expectations and objectives and NYSED ELA performance indicators, which it included in the Curriculum Alignment Report that was prepared for the co-interpretation process. The district may wish to consult and use these two resources as it revises existing and devises new student expectations and learning objectives.
 - Ensure that expectations and objectives do the following:
 - Are clearly linked to curricular materials (i.e., identify each text and other items by title, source, page number).
 - Identify which expectation addresses which ELA area. There must be abundant opportunities (e.g., read-alouds, guided reading, shared writing, independent writing, small-group discussions, independent listening and speaking events) for students to participate in all four areas of ELA (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking).
- **Identify specific formative assessment tools and procedures that are tied to student expectations or learning outcomes.** In addition to teacher-created tools and procedures, assessment should include student assignments, projects, and other student-created artifacts that demonstrate learning and understanding. The district should link these assessments to planning future instruction, including reteaching content and skills to students demonstrating need. (See additional comments regarding assessments in the Curriculum Monitoring section that follows.)
 - Expectations and objectives need to be aligned to but not be replicas of NYSED ELA grade-level performance indicators.
 - Curriculum maps may be organized into units, topics, or themes of content (ELA and cross-curricular) under essential and guiding questions. Within each unit, the district should include relevant and focused content (i.e., student expectations or learning objectives; curricular materials; instructional methods, including suggestions for

differentiating instruction; and formative assessments). Currently, the district's curriculum maps for the targeted grade levels identify themes (i.e., monthly themes for Grades 2, 4, 6, and 8; seven units for Grade 10). However, there are no links to suggested and specific lesson plans, instructional strategies, theme-related texts and other curricular materials, or theme-specific formative assessments. Essential questions do not appear to be addressed by information presently listed for the corresponding month or timeframe. Newburgh Enlarged City School District should revise these maps to more fully develop curricular components within each theme or unit. Such changes will provide teachers with more specific instructional guidance and links to available curricular resources, which should lead to improved instruction and learning.

- **Identify which NYSED ELA performance indicators are addressed by expectations or objectives in each unit.**
- **Develop a plan for curriculum monitoring.** This plan will monitor the successful development and sustained review and improvement of a clearly articulated, comprehensive, and aligned ELA plan (cross-curricular, whenever possible). The plan should be guided by and communicated to all district stakeholders and it should embrace the NYSED ELA Core Curriculum standards. The plan should address the following:
 - **What will be monitored?** In this case, the district needs to monitor the development and continuous revision and updating of the district's Grades K–12 written ELA curriculum.
 - **Who will monitor?** Identify the individual(s) who will be in charge of ensuring that the district initially develops and continually revises an ELA curriculum. Ideally, administrators and teachers should be involved in this process. It is important to clearly articulate roles and responsibilities for all parties, including how individuals or committees will collaborate and report to one another in order to ensure success.
 - **How, when, and why will monitoring occur?** The district should articulate a schedule that explains when the responsible parties will carry out their specified curriculum development monitoring task(s) and how they will proceed. Also, Learning Point Associates suggests that the district identify how it might use formative and summative assessments as part of the monitoring process (e.g., student performance on these assessments will provide some evidence of the effectiveness of the written curriculum). The district should adopt a policy that explains why the comprehensive monitoring process it develops will be an important part of improving ELA teaching and learning in the district.

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Recommendation 2: Instruction

Implement a clearly articulated K–12 ELA system of instruction that is guided by the following:

- **Written instructional guides that align instructional methods with the district’s written curriculum (content and materials) as well as state standards and performance indicators**
- **Guidance for and implementation of differentiated instruction and other learning opportunities to accommodate students’ diverse needs**
- **Plans to ensure that instruction is informed by a variety of assessment data**
- **Plans to monitor curriculum implementation across the district**

Link to Findings

Instruction Aligned to the Written ELA Curriculum. The Document Review Report, SEC Report, Observation Report, and Interview Report indicate that Newburgh Enlarged City School District has K–12 ELA curriculum maps in varying degrees of completion and that there is some alignment between district student expectations and NYSED ELA Core Curriculum performance indicators in terms of depth and breadth of content. During the co-interpretation, district representatives indicated that they believe all teachers have equal access to these maps and that the maps are aligned to NYSED performance indicators.

Learning Point Associates and district representatives who participated in co-interpretation agree that the curriculum maps created for the 2007–08 school year represent marked improvement over the older maps in terms of identifying ELA content and skills to be covered during the school year. However, both groups also acknowledge that these maps need to be revised to identify more specifically the content and skills that the district will teach and to include more details and guidance regarding how teachers will teach the content and skills without simply replicating the NYSED performance indicators.

There is substantial evidence indicating that although teachers believed they had access to curriculum maps, the maps did not consistently guide teachers’ instruction across the district. In addition, curriculum maps do not emphasize higher-order thinking skills in Grades 2–8, although individual teachers do incorporate higher-order thinking skills in their instruction; this finding indicates a further mismatch between the written curriculum and what teachers actually do while teaching (i.e., the taught curriculum).

Differentiated Instruction. The Document Review Report, SEC Report, Observation Report, and Interview Report indicate that many district personnel are confused about whether or how to modify or adapt the curriculum or instruction to meet various student needs, indicating uncertainty not only about how to successfully teach all students but also how to adapt material and instruction for individual students. During co-interpretation, district representatives confirmed findings indicating that direct instruction was the most frequently observed instructional strategy across all grade levels, in both general education and ELL settings. Seldom

were students observed engaged in hands-on learning in any setting (i.e., ELL, general education, or special education).

Data-Driven Instruction. The Document Review Report, SEC Report, Observation Report, and Interview Report indicate that many district educators do not use data to guide their instruction, most often because they do not know how to analyze or interpret data reports or how to properly plan and implement data-driven instruction. In fact, many teachers believe that they are responsible for “covering” adopted materials, rather than ensuring that students understand what is taught. As a result, teachers believe current district practice leaves little or no time for modifying lessons or materials; teachers appear to indicate that instruction currently is process- and program-driven, not data-driven.

Monitoring of ELA Instruction (Curriculum Implementation). The Document Review Report and Interview Report reveal that Newburgh Enlarged City School District does not have a formal policy or plan to monitor ELA instruction. During the co-interpretation, district representatives identified this situation as an important key finding, but it did not receive any votes. In its judgment and based on compelling research, Learning Point Associates believes continuous monitoring of ELA instruction is a crucial factor to aiding the district in emerging from corrective action.

Link to Research

Alignment of ELA Instruction With the District’s Written Curriculum. The presence of and adherence to a high-quality, comprehensive, and clearly articulated curriculum has a high impact on student achievement (Marzano, 2003). As noted in Recommendation 1, a crucial component of a comprehensive, clearly articulated, and aligned ELA curriculum is a clear link between the written and taught curricula. “Deep alignment” is attained when higher-order district student expectations are aligned to external standards that, in turn, are aligned to instruction and assessment processes (English, 2008). The goal is to establish clear links between what students should learn (i.e., written curriculum) and what teachers should teach (i.e., taught curriculum), often including the use of ELA curriculum maps to plan and implement instruction and other learning opportunities that target the required student learning objectives and content (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Glatthorn, Boschee, & Whitehead, 2005; Glatthorn, Carr, & Harris, 2001; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

Guidance on How to Differentiate ELA Instruction. *How* teachers teach is at least as important as *what* they teach, so simply matching instructional goals and practices to objectives and materials in the written curriculum is not sufficient to implement effective literacy instruction consistently (Edwards, Turner, & Mokhtari, 2008; Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, & Rodriguez, 2002). An aligned written curriculum does not guarantee that quality instruction will be provided (Allington, 1994). Although the written curriculum can and should inform instruction, it is essential to acknowledge that “textbooks and programs are not curriculum delivery; they are curriculum design” (English, 2008, p. 9). Curricular pressures to use and cover certain materials, the implementation of certain methods, and student performance on high-stakes assessment, among other issues, can and do have potential negative impacts on the quality of instruction provided to students (Jackson, Harper, & Jackson, 2002). Therefore, Learning

Point Associates strongly suggests that districts work with curriculum committees to design instructional guides that are flexible in use.

A crucial consideration in providing effective instruction for all students is to differentiate the instruction, thereby embracing the beliefs that students take different paths to reach the same goal or outcome (Clay, 1998) and that making a difference means making instruction and other learning opportunities different (International Reading Association, 2000). In other words, effective instruction ensures that all students can read and write (Cunningham & Allington, 2007). Successful schools and teachers devise means for differentiating instruction across instructional settings (e.g., whole class, small group) to address students' individual needs (King-Shaver & Hunter, 2003; Tomlinson, 2001; Walpole & McKenna, 2004).

The best literacy teachers do not show fidelity to one particular instructional method; rather, these teachers tailor instruction to meet the needs and interests of their students (Duffy, 1994; Duffy & Hoffman, 1999; Hoffman, 1996). Such teachers recognize that needs and interests shift from text to text, topic to topic, and day to day, and so they regularly assess their students' learning and understanding and make adjustments in instruction as needed. Some teachers use Bloom's taxonomy and metacognitive processes to identify appropriate student expectations, activities, and instructional approaches to prepare and use curriculum maps to guide and differentiate instruction (Langa & Yost, 2007; Tomlinson, 2001).

Studies of effective ELA instruction have yielded many informative and practical findings (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; Alvermann, 2002; Langer, 2004; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991; Torgesen et al., 2007). For example, effective teachers of literacy:

- Challenge and actively involve students.
- Create a supportive, encouraging, and friendly classroom environment.
- Ask many inferential questions.
- Explicitly teach skills (e.g., word-level, text comprehension, writing skills).
- Frequently engage students in reading and writing connected texts.
- Set and maintain high yet reasonable achievement expectations.

Effective early childhood and elementary-level literacy instruction supports children's emerging understanding and employment of phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). In addition, exemplary teachers use a balance of teaching approaches (i.e., small groups, whole class, and individual); make clear connections between reading and writing; give students easy and frequent access to interesting texts, choice of texts, and collaboration opportunities with peers; and match students with appropriate texts (Allington, 2006).

Effective adolescent literacy instruction is crucial to the academic success of all students and must be viewed as serving the unique and specific academic needs of middle and high school students and not simply as an extension or remediation of elementary-level instruction (Alvermann, 2002; Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Graham & Perin, 2007; Kamil, 2003). Such high-

quality instruction must be incorporated across the curriculum and content areas (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007). Rather than simple acquisition of basic literacy skills, Langer (2001, 2002, 2004) emphasizes a focus on “high literacy,” in which students engage in more cognitively demanding activities, learn when and how to apply various strategies and skills, and participate in thoughtful debates. Torgesen et al. (2007) found that struggling students need intensive instruction in such areas as vocabulary, comprehension, and critical reading strategies. In his review of research, Kamil (2003) found some support for the positive effects of bilingual education on the academic success of ELLs, while Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, and Rivera (2006) call for more intensive instructional interventions that emphasize literacy areas such as vocabulary development and reading comprehension strategies. In short, the research clearly supports the belief that students who struggle with reading can and should be academically successful if provided with appropriate intervention that targets their needs.

Data-Driven Decisions for ELA Instruction and Improved Student Achievement. Highly effective teachers regularly share student achievement data and use this data to inform instruction (Hayes & Robnolt, 2007; Mokhtari, Rosemary, & Edwards, 2007; Taylor et al., 2002). Such teachers review and use formative and summative assessment tools and practices (e.g., teacher observations, assignment rubrics, teacher-created quizzes and tests; district-created and mandated tests; state-created tests) independently and with colleagues as professional learning communities to learn how to analyze data and interpret assessment results and to plan data-driven instruction (Taylor & Pearson, 2005; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2005). Edwards et al. (2008) discussed tensions between classroom assessment of student learning for accountability purposes and assessment for learning purposes. Both forms of assessment are necessary and serve a purpose, but they are implemented and interpreted differently. For example, assessment for accountability tends to focus on student performance, whereas assessment for learning purposes tends to focus on student learning with implications for improved future instruction. When assessment results are used to determine student learning, instruction designed around students’ needs and strengths (i.e., differentiated instruction) may be planned and implemented (Hall, 2002).

System for Monitoring ELA Instruction (Curriculum Implementation). Guidelines offered by Brown (2004), Glatthorn et al. (2001, 2005), and Rasinski and Padak (2004) that inform curriculum development monitoring also inform instruction monitoring. For instance, instruction should be aligned to the written curriculum so that what is expected to be taught guides the instruction that teachers plan and deliver (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Monitoring would involve, in part, determining the extent to which delivered instruction matches the written curriculum. In addition to ensuring that what students are taught is aligned with expectations, it also is essential to examine how students are taught (Taylor & Pearson, 2000; The Teaching Commission, 2006). It is important to examine the extent to which teachers are employing strategies that foster all students in successfully learning and achieving (Allington, 2006; Cunningham & Allington, 2007; Langer, 2002, 2004). In summary, monitoring ELA curriculum implementation involves examining two elements: the match between content and student learning objectives in the written and taught curriculum (i.e., to what extent teachers are teaching what the curriculum dictates that students need to learn) and the quality of instruction and other learning opportunities provided to all students.

Implementation Considerations

As discussed in Recommendation 1, Newburgh Enlarged City School District has developed revised ELA curriculum maps that present many components of a comprehensive ELA curriculum. However, in their current form, these maps fall short in providing teachers with organized and sufficiently detailed instructional guidance. Most teachers are not sure what specific curricular content and skills they need to teach their students, aside from the NYSED ELA core curriculum performance indicators, which represent most of the district student expectations on the maps. Furthermore, teachers are not sure what instructional strategies (including sample lesson plans), texts, other curricular resources, or content- or skill-specific assessments they may or should use to teach their students. Therefore, in developing its action plan for NYSED, the district should consider the following suggestions with respect to Recommendation 2:

- **Gather representatives from all stakeholder groups to assist the district in prioritizing the curricular content and skills and essential questions as well as in identifying best practice instructional models and methods that teachers may use to effectively teach all students.** Teachers should be provided with a plethora of options for teaching the curriculum so that all students are provided with equal access to the general curriculum.
- **Ensure that ELL and SWD educators are at the table and working with general education teachers to modify instructional approaches to meet the needs of all students.**
- **Work to create explicit materials that teachers can modify,** as well as examples of modifications, student work products that align to student learning objectives or outcomes, and performance indicators.
- **Articulate a district definition of differentiated instruction** and all that it entails. The district needs to have a full working definition in place to help ensure that all stakeholders are working from the same concept.
- **Conduct a district-level alignment to ensure that the instruction addresses a full range of knowledge levels and cognitive demands,** with an emphasis on foster higher-order thinking. Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) taxonomy table could be used to align the district's written and taught curricula to each other as well as the NYSED ELA core curriculum.
- **Create models of data use that showcase a variety of data to make instructional decisions,** including flexible student grouping, instructional strategies, and methods, materials, and assessment tools. Data sources will include findings from various and frequent assessments (i.e., formative and summative), such as teacher observations, checklists and rubrics, reading inventories and benchmarks, student work samples, teacher-student conferences, tests, and quizzes. Formative assessments are most useful for determining day-to-day student learning and informing instruction. Data-driven instruction should occur more frequently and efficiently with focused, appropriate, and sustained professional development, which is addressed in Recommendation #3.

- **Develop and implement a plan for monitoring ELA instruction**, guided by similar considerations that were addressed in Recommendation 1 for monitoring the written ELA curriculum. This plan should identify and explain how, when, and why monitoring will occur. The district should articulate a schedule that explains when and how parties will carry out instructional monitoring tasks.

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Recommendation 3: Professional Development

For all instructional staff, develop and implement sustained districtwide ELA professional development opportunities that encompass the following plans and processes:

- **Specifically address successful implementation of the district’s written ELA curriculum, based on professional development best practices and standards.**
- **Support collaborations between instructional staff (e.g., general education, special education, and ELL teachers), particularly through professional learning communities, to improve ELA instruction and learning for all student populations.**
- **Continuously monitor professional development results to ensure successful implementation of professional development initiatives, especially of professional learning communities, and to determine their impact on ELA instruction and learning.**

Link to Findings

The key document review and interview reports indicated that Newburgh Enlarged City School District provides inconsistent and inadequate professional development opportunities to its instructional staff in the area of ELA. The district did not submit documents that demonstrate the existence of clearly articulated ELA professional development policies, plans, or implementation and monitoring practices. During interviews, general education, special education, and ELL teachers expressed contrasting views regarding how to provide effective ELA instruction for all students, particularly SWDs and ELLs. For example, some teachers believed they did not have the required knowledge or time to instruct students with particular needs. Some teachers were concerned that there was little or no time for general education, special education, and ELL teachers to collaborate in ELA planning and instruction. During these same interviews, many teachers agreed that ELA professional development either was not provided or did not address teachers’ or students’ ELA needs or that it was offered sporadically and inconsistently across the district.

During the co-interpretation meeting, district participants ranked the issue of inconsistent and inadequate ELA professional development opportunities as a significant barrier to improved student achievement in ELA.

Link to Research

Professional development often is a key component of successful school reform (Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2002). Unfortunately, most professional development provided to teachers is based on outdated models and beliefs, is largely ineffective, and is particularly inadequate for new teachers, who often leave the profession out of frustration within five years (Fullan, 2007; Smylie, Bay & Tozer, 1999; The Teaching Commission, 2004, 2006). Generally speaking, Fullan (2007) reports, one-time workshops, especially those on topics not specifically related to a curricular or instructional issue, do not provide the focused, sustained, and collaborative assistance that teachers need to have a meaningful impact on their teaching or students’ learning. Although Fullan (2007) acknowledges the importance of formal workshops

and presentations, he asserts that these experiences contribute about 30 percent, at best, of what is needed to bring about positive change in teacher and student performance in schools. The remaining 70 percent is determined by teachers' daily learning and the day-to-day practical changes and improvements they make. Clearly, the vital question for the district to address is how professional development should be defined and implemented in a school to ensure that it contributes to improved instruction and learning.

Professional Development and Implementing the ELA Curriculum. Many schools and school districts that have provided targeted ELA professional development have witnessed improved student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Pearson, Taylor, & Tam, 2005; Rogers et al., 2006; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 1999; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2005). Historically, professional development for teachers has focused on either generalized best practices (i.e., practices that were thought to be applicable to all subject areas) or discipline-specific strategies (i.e., best practices for specific, individual subject areas). There is substantial evidence favoring discipline-specific or pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman & Quinlan, as cited in Shulman & Sherin, 2005). Therefore, professional development should be discipline-specific and designed to assist teachers in refining their knowledge and teaching of this subject area. Research embraces this perspective regarding effective ELA professional development (Pearson et al., 2005; Taylor, Frye, Peterson, & Pearson, 2004; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2003, 2005; Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, & Rodriguez, 2002). Teachers who receive professional development in research-based literacy instruction methods demonstrate more effective teaching practices and implementation of the ELA curriculum, which often results in measurable improvement in student achievement (Center on Instruction, 2006; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008).

Further evidence of the importance of teachers of literacy participating in discipline-specific professional development is evident in professional standards for teachers. For example, standards presented in documents published by the International Reading Association (2004, 2007) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2002, 2003) not only describe characteristics of effective teachers of literacy but emphasize the importance of these teachers participating in sustained, targeted ELA professional learning opportunities to improve their literacy teaching effectiveness and students' literacy achievement.

Professional Learning Communities. Professional development traditionally has been viewed as information provided to teachers with the hope and expectation that it will result in improved teaching and learning. This type of professional development generally has not been successful, however, because it is provided too infrequently and is not focused on teacher needs (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Fullan, 2007).

In contrast to a focus on development, professional learning communities embrace a more intimate, learning-oriented process, whereby teachers meet frequently, often daily, to collaborate on planning and teaching, reflect on lessons taught and challenges faced, and critically examine issues and matters of most interest and concern at the time (Fullan, 2007; Lieberman & Miller, 2002; Stoll, Bolam, McMahan, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006; Wiliam, 2008). The sole purpose of meeting with learning community members is to gain insight, elicit help, and develop potential strategies, plans, or ideas that can be put into immediate use.

McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) found three types of professional learning communities in the high schools they studied. One type merely enacted traditional practices that maintained the status quo of students who succeeded. The second type lowered expectations and standards, which feigned the success of additional students. In the third type, members of professional learning communities devised and implemented innovative and differentiated strategies and methods to engage all students. McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) caution that simply meeting and collaborating in a professional learning community does not guarantee improved teaching or learning, especially if collaboration merely serves to reinforce teachers' poor practices and beliefs. Therefore, professional learning community meetings and collaborations must be guided and monitored by sound practices.

Teachers do not necessarily "select" one of these groups, because multiple factors influence what happens in schools. The type of professional learning community that teachers form and the likely success of reform efforts are greatly influenced by the organization and culture of the school system (Fullan, Hill, & Crévola, 2006) and the kind and degree of trust forged and nurtured among administrators, teachers, students, and other stakeholders (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Professional learning communities have been associated with positive outcomes such as instructional improvement, school climate changes, and improved student learning (Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005; Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas, & Wallace, 2005; Phillips, 2003; Strahan, 2003; Supovitz, 2002; Vescio et al., 2008). Eight studies that examined the impact that professional learning communities had upon student achievement reported improvement in both the elementary and secondary levels (Vescio et al., 2008). In one study, professional learning communities accounted for 85 percent of the variance in student achievement (Louis & Marks, 1998). Several studies also have found that students scoring at the proficient level on standardized tests increased by 25 percent to 40 percent over a three- to four-year period in schools with professional learning communities (Berry et al., 2005; Phillips, 2003; Strahan, 2003).

Professional learning communities are associated with positive changes in teaching practices and school culture. For example, schools with strong professional learning communities used more authentic pedagogy that included higher level thinking, construction of meaning through conversation, and development of knowledge for use beyond the classroom (Louis & Marks, 1998). Teachers who participated in professional learning communities made substantive changes in their instruction by using more student-centered techniques and less individual skill sheets and isolated instructional activities (Dunne, Nave, & Lewis, 2000; Englert & Tarrant, 1995). In addition, as teachers participated in professional learning communities over time, the discussion changed from focusing on the challenges of teaching low-achieving students to designing and using a variety of instructional processes and products (Hollins, McIntyre, DeBose, Hillings, & Towner, 2004). Professional learning communities contribute to changes in professional culture in schools because they promote collaboration and reflection (Vescio et al., 2008). They also enable teachers to address personally meaningful, classroom-based concerns and to solve problems (Zorfass, Shaffer & Keefe-Rivero, 2003).

Building and maintaining successful professional learning communities is complex. This type of professional development requires breaking from traditional beliefs and practices; devising and

implementing new methods; and constructing a viable, trusting, inclusive, and trusting school culture. Such changes require extensive time, effort, and support—which, unfortunately, produces results that sometimes do not meet the expectations of many policymakers, regulators, and administrators (Fullan, 2007; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). School systems that intend to reform literacy teaching and learning are encouraged to consider professional learning communities as an integral component of a sustained, research-based, and comprehensive professional development and reform plan (Rogers et al., 2006; Taylor et al., 2005). Such a plan needs time and support to develop and transform practice and improve student achievement (Vescio et al., 2008; Whitcomb, 2004).

Monitoring Professional Development Implementation and Effectiveness. The National Staff Development Council (NSDC, 2001) developed standards of practice for professional development in three categories—context, process, and content—that have been shown to improve student learning. *Context standards* pertain to how materials and leaders support teachers. *Process standards* identify procedural information, such as strategies to employ to reach an intended goal as well as knowledge and skills of how people collaborate. *Content standards* relate to the knowledge and skills that teachers obtain as a result of their professional development participation. These NSDC standards not only should guide the development of effective professional development but also should be used as a means for monitoring the effective delivery and impact of professional development. School districts need to ensure that the professional development they provide is targeted to the content that teachers need to teach, is focused on targeted skills and strategies that teachers need to help students improve their learning and achievement, is aligned to district and state standards, and occurs on a daily basis in the form of collaborative meetings among educators, not merely a formal district- or schoolwide workshop (The Teaching Commission, 2004).

Context, process, and content also inform the development and implementation of effective ELA professional development. For example, research has found that teachers' ELA instruction and students' literacy achievement improve when teachers participate in sustained, focused, research-based professional learning opportunities, including professional learning communities (Pearson et al., 2005; Rogers et al., 2006; Taylor et al., 2005). The reform model developed by Taylor et al. (2005) requires that teachers meet in teams three times per month in small groups and as a whole staff once per month to address literacy issues and to engage in professional learning activities that directly link to practice, such as reviewing the latest literacy research and analyzing student achievement data.

Using the NSDC standards as a guide, monitoring successful implementation of professional learning in literacy might include documenting matters related to context (e.g., When did teachers meet, and under what circumstances? What were the agenda and goals? What factors supported this meeting?); process (e.g., How did teachers proceed in order to accomplish the agenda or goals?); and content (e.g., What information was examined during the meeting? What knowledge did teachers gain from the meeting that will affect their teaching effectiveness?). Likewise, the standards of the International Reading Association (2004, 2007) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2002, 2003) might be employed to examine the literacy-specific benefits and gains of professional learning opportunities.

Implementation Considerations

Newburgh Enlarged City School District needs to develop, implement, and monitor sustained districtwide ELA professional development opportunities for all instructional staff. The literature reviewed in the previous section presents many practical, research-based procedures to guide successful development and implementation. In developing its action plan, the district should consider the following suggestions with respect to Recommendation 3:

- **Plan continuous professional development based on the ELA curriculum.** Consider content (i.e., what students need to learn and teachers need to teach) and process (i.e., how teachers may provide more effective instruction and other learning opportunities to improve student understanding and achievement). Focus on a few key ELA topics most closely tied to improving ELA teaching and learning, specifically those issues presented in Recommendations 1 and 2 of this report. Avoid simultaneously covering too many topics, which may frustrate and confuse an otherwise focused, well trained, and enthusiastic staff.
 - Professional development may be led by out-of-district providers so long as they focus on the key ELA topics and contribute to improving ELA teaching and learning as discussed in this recommendation.
- **Develop, implement, and monitor professional learning communities to improve ELA teaching and learning in the district.** The district should consider four important factors to successfully implementing professional learning communities:
 - **Membership.** Professional learning communities can be composed of teachers, administrators, paraprofessionals, and other staff. They can span grade levels, roles, and curricular areas. The number of members varies, although some research suggests seven individuals per each professional learning community (Zorfass et al., 2003).
 - **Schedule.** Schools generally create schedules that permit professional learning communities to meet monthly or bimonthly, typically during the school day.
 - **Focus.** Meetings of professional learning communities should focus on student learning (DuFour, 2004), specifically on what each student is expected to learn, how to measure whether and when students have met their learning objectives, and how to respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning. These issues should be addressed using student data because ongoing assessment is essential to powerful instructional practices (Marzano, Pickering, & McTigue, 1993). Those communities that engage in structured, sustained, and supported instructional discussions and also investigate the relationships between instructional practices and student work produce more gains in student learning (Supovitz, 2002). Embedding data-based instruction within a professional learning community may help to improve the outcomes of all students. There is considerable research regarding positive outcomes that occur when teachers use data to inform instruction and monitor student performance for SWDs (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986; Fuchs et al., 1994; Hosp & Fuchs, 2005; Stecker & Fuchs, 2000). Newburgh Enlarged City School District already has initiated the use of data-driven instructional practices, so teachers are becoming familiar with collecting, interpreting, and using student data. Thus, using data within the context of

- professional learning communities builds upon a current practice and strength within the district.
- **School Culture.** Professional learning communities depart from the typical norm of teacher isolation. Instead, professional learning communities encourage reflective dialogue and collaboration among teachers. Thus, schools must move teachers away from individual to collective processes to analyze student work, instructional strategies, or curriculum. To accomplish this goal, professional learning communities must build mutual trust and respect among its members (Bolam et al., 2005).
 - **Create and implement a plan for monitoring professional development in the district.** As discussed regarding monitoring the district’s written curriculum (Recommendation 1) and monitoring instruction and the taught curriculum (Recommendation 2), a successful and effective monitoring process involves several considerations. The monitoring plan should articulate a schedule that identifies and explains the following:
 - Who will monitor professional development activities.
 - How and when professional development monitoring will take place, including documenting what is monitored and what actions will occur based on results.
 - How and why monitoring professional development is linked to improving ELA teaching and learning.

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Recommendation 4: English Language Learners

Develop and implement a districtwide system to increase ELL access to the core curriculum by:

- **Creating and implementing a communication system (consistent with previous recommendations) to explicitly and effectively convey information about ELL policy (e.g., language allocation policy) and services (e.g., AIS and ESL program goals) to all teachers and administrators so that all service providers are informed and any required follow-up and placement or referrals can be provided in a timely fashion.**
- **Revising the district curriculum maps to provide strategies and guidance regarding differentiation of instruction, particularly for ELLs (as mentioned in Recommendations 1 and 2).**
- **Training teachers, coaches, and building administrators in the implementation of the revised curriculum map(s) and in appropriate differentiating practices for ELLs (as mentioned in Recommendations 1 and 3).**
- **Securing and disseminating sufficient and adequate supplemental materials and support for school staff to ensure ELL access to the curriculum (as mentioned in Recommendation 2).**

Link to Findings

Communication about policies, plans, and services for ELLs in Newburgh Enlarged City School District was an area of concern that emerged after a review of the ELL Report during the co-interpretation process. This particular issue was highlighted in at least three prioritized and validated key findings (see Key Findings 2, 3, and Additional Key Finding 15 in Appendix B). According to the ELL Report, the submitted documents illustrate that the district has plans for implementation—specifically involving a bilingual afterschool program and Saturday Academy in place for academic interventions for ELLs who need additional academic support. However, knowledge of this plan was not consistent among all teachers of ELLs. Communication about policies regarding the education of ELLs is inconsistent. Teacher interviews and the reviewed district documents reveal a lack of a systematic language-acquisition policy and goals for the bilingual and ESL programs in the district. In addition, there are no prescribed timelines or benchmarks for students' timely acquisition of English.

The Document Review Report and the ELL Report found that although the district has an ELA curriculum and curriculum map in place, some ELL teachers and general education teachers who instruct ELLs are modifying the curriculum in different ways. There also is no clear plan for how instruction can be differentiated for ELLs in content-area classes. In addition, administrators and teachers agreed that there is no common curriculum guiding the instruction of ELLs, particularly those identified as beginner English proficient. Findings from the ELL Report indicate that teachers are modifying the curriculum and differentiating instruction to a certain extent, but they are left to their own devices to ensure access to the curriculum for the ELLs they instruct. Instruction varies not only from school to school but also between ELL program offerings at the same grade level within schools. Teachers are responding to the perceived needs of their ELL

students, but there is no consistent plan or curriculum map to guide them in meeting the needs of various levels of ELLs within the core ELA curriculum framework. This particular issue was evident in the prioritized and validated Key Findings 3 and 4.

General education teachers and ELL program teachers expressed different opinions regarding the adequacy and sufficiency of supplemental materials for ELLs (as expressed in Key Finding 6). Although many ELL teachers and administrators reported receiving and providing adequate materials to support the instruction of ELLs, many general education teachers reported not having adequate supplemental materials to differentiate instruction for the ELLs in their classrooms. In addition, some ELL program teachers reported not receiving sufficient materials from their local schools to meet the demands of teaching students who are using two languages.

Link to Research

Communication. Effective systems of communication are essential to ensure that all stakeholders receive a consistent message. In order to meet guidelines and expectations, district staff need to know that such guidelines and expectations exist. Also, district plans and policies must be documented to ensure a consistent message. There is a paucity of research in the specific area of the effect of communication systems on ELL school performance; however, drawing on this limited research on comprehensive school reform and ELL needs provides some guidance. Studies in this area yield information about the importance of considering ELL needs in the planning of any new school or district initiative as well eliciting ELL support from the entire school staff.

Research on comprehensive school reform suggests that responsibilities at the district level can include administering an appropriate accountability system. It is important for a district to work with individual schools to ensure that programs specifically address the needs of ELLs. Berman, Minicucci, McLaughlin, Nelson, & Woodworth (1995) documented the district's role in supporting reform at eight schools considered to be exemplary in involving ELLs. These schools commonly circulated information about reform efforts to school staff. Communication must be used as a tool to foster understanding on behalf of administrators, teachers, and nonteaching staff of the assets and needs that ELLs bring to school (Dentler & Hafner, 1997).

A language allocation policy should be distributed and discussed with all district stakeholders. A language allocation policy is a district-level policy that guides the proportion of first language and second language use through a bilingual or ESL program to ensure that students receive the appropriate proportion of ESL and/or ELA services, which is determined by the level of English proficiency of students as demonstrated on tests. The educational community that supports the teaching and learning for ELLs should be able to articulate the language allocation policy and the rationale behind it as well as when and why the student's native language and English are used in the classroom. Researchers like Cazden (1986) emphasize that schools offering a transitional bilingual education model must have a consistent plan for the use of each language for instruction and a supportive transition plan for children when they are transferred into the monolingual English-only program.

Curriculum. Gebhard (2003), among others, asserts that appropriate, equitable instruction for ELLs is neither watered down nor unmodified; she notes that “to increase equity for [ELLs], schools must provide the support that these students need to engage in challenging content-based learning tasks” (p. 35). Equitable instruction includes using content standards while content is presented in linguistically appropriate ways (Reeves, 2006). Curricular expectations for ELLs must be the same as those for general education populations because high student achievement can be met only when instruction provides ELLs with access to the curriculum (Reeves, 2006). Teachers must use a variety of strategies or “multiple access points” in their lessons with ELLs in order to facilitate an understanding of the core ELA curriculum (Cline & Necochea, 2003). Access to the core curriculum, therefore, is provided when challenging material is presented using multiple modalities. According to Gardner (1993), for example, student learning can be amplified if teachers incorporate multiple intelligences into their lessons, thereby increasing the probability of providing access to the core curriculum for ELLs.

Several researchers argue that unmodified instruction or instruction designed solely for English-proficient students is inadequate (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Gibbons, 2002). To ensure that the curriculum is modified and instruction is differentiated for ELLs in both ELL programs and in general education settings, the district should revise the curriculum map to make it more usable for instructing ELLs. Curriculum frameworks need specifically to address ELLs so that their literacy strengths and their challenges can be addressed systematically (Callahan, 2005; National Council of Teachers of English, 2008).

Materials. Educating children who are learning a second language calls for the full involvement of all educational professionals and for the utilization of all appropriate and available educational materials, technologies, and approaches (Genesee, 1994). Good instruction is enhanced by appropriate, standards-aligned instructional resources that are made available to all teachers of ELLs. For ELLs, English texts need to be designed with supporting graphics, linguistic accessibility, and helpful formats to engage students with text in a language they have not yet mastered. In addition, resource materials, academic texts, and other instructional resources in the native language are needed for students to bolster knowledge of academic content and developing literacy (Ansary & Babaii, 2002; Olsen, 2006). Texts also must match the cognitive competence of the learners (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). In elementary classrooms, trade books with diverse levels of difficulty and many illustrations can help serve this function.

Adequate texts within the classroom and connections to resources outside of the classroom, such as libraries and the Internet, are known to increase motivation (Morrow & Young, 1997) and reading achievement (Guthrie, Schafer, Von Secker, & Alban, 2000). Using appropriate texts and reading materials for ELLs can support student engagement in learning. Studies of engagement show that engagement is strongly related to reading achievement. A study of students at ages 9, 13, and 17 showed greater achievement for more highly engaged readers than for less engaged readers (Campbell, Voelkl, & Donahue, 2000). Engaged readers can overcome obstacles to achievement and become agents of their own reading growth (Guthrie, Schafer, & Huang, 2001). Having an ample supply of texts relevant to learning goals contributes to engagement.

Implementation Considerations

In developing its action plan for NYSED, Newburgh Enlarged City School District should address the suggestions in the following three categories with respect to Recommendation 4:

Communication

- **Revisit the ways in which information about policies and plans regarding ELLs is disseminated, explicated, and implemented.** It may be helpful to map the channels of communication in the district to determine areas that need to be improved. Clear communication must begin with a clear message, so it would be appropriate for the district to clearly articulate, document, and disseminate plans and policies regarding the education of ELLs. The review of documents conducted by Learning Point Associates, The Education Alliance, and American Institutes for Research can be used as a means to evaluate weaknesses that exist in the documentation of plans and policies in the district. The development of a language allocation policy would be an important first step for the district to better define the bilingual education program.
- **Prioritize the plans and policies that will be closely monitored to ensure appropriate implementation.** The district and its schools should consider monitoring the implementation of policies and plans pertaining to ELLs to ensure that all stakeholders receive, understand, and apply the information about ELLs in their work with them, reexamining instructional practices and curricular choices as necessary. The implementation of policies and plans can be monitored by revising walk-through and classroom observation protocols to reflect the prioritized district plans and policies.
- **Work toward developing a culture of accountability at the school level for ELLs.** In such a culture, information that pertains to ELLs is shared and acted on by all those responsible for their education.

Curriculum

- **Develop a guidance document, and model the development of curriculum maps that include ELLs.** This is the first step for the district to support the development of school-level curriculum maps for use with ELLs. Curriculum maps should define differentiated instruction for ELLs according to the various English proficiency levels. It may be appropriate to create a developmentally appropriate curriculum for beginner ELLs that concentrates on the acquisition of English language skills, which are the key components of literacy for new readers as well as for the ELA core curriculum.
- **Create maps at the school level to ensure their usefulness and to create ownership on the part of all teachers of ELLs.** Curriculum maps to be used with ELLs should address teacher responsibility for building background knowledge to fill content knowledge and skills gaps. A clearly documented curriculum that explicitly links the needs of ELLs in both ESL and bilingual education settings to the core ELA curriculum will support all teachers of ELLs and provide coherence throughout the district.
- **Provide training for both ELL and general education teachers who instruct ELLs.** Such training should focus on supportive instruction for ELLs that enable them to work on language and curricular content aligned with the ELA core curriculum and New York state

ELA standards. The district also should provide professional development for teachers in effective differentiation for ELLs. In addition, the district should build teacher knowledge in the areas of second language acquisition, inclusive curriculum, culturally responsive practice, and academic language instruction as it pertains to ELLs.

- **Provide professional development for principals to build their knowledge of language acquisition, inclusive curriculum, culturally responsive practice, and differentiated instruction as it pertains to ELLs.** Such professional development is important, given that principals are responsible for making decisions about ELL placement and instruction.
- **Consider a system to monitor the implementation of curriculum plans and professional development.** Revising walk-through and observation protocols to reflect the curriculum maps and the offered professional development can serve as a means of determining if implementation has taken place. As explained in the communication implementation considerations section, the district similarly should

Materials

- **Ensure that materials used to support the teaching and learning of ELLs are linked directly to curricular goals.** The disbursement of funds for materials can be tied tightly to the curriculum goals stated in the curriculum maps. Prior to purchase, the district and its schools should evaluate materials for linguistic level and cultural appropriateness, appealing presentation, intellectual and academic integrity, multilevel activities that take students beyond knowledge of content to real-world application, and activities that offer a variety of ways of representing knowledge and understanding. The district should closely examine materials against the priorities that are stated in the curriculum maps. After materials have been selected, the district then can model the use of materials to teachers to supplement the core curriculum and distribute these materials to all teachers of ELLs in all settings (i.e., ESL, bilingual, and general education teachers).

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Appendix A. District Strengths

The information in this appendix comes from the Newburgh Audit Team and was shared during the kickoff meeting in October 2007.

| Peak Experiences | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Student successes | Positive student feedback; student achievement; collaborative, caring, respectful relationships; collegiality, and partnerships |
| Meaningful professional development | People love their teaching experiences, motivating others, providing for needs of others, continued high expectations |
| More technology and data use | |

| Values | |
|--|---|
| Parent involvement (leadership council) | |
| Seeing a situation from different viewpoints | Community diversity, diversity in abilities, opportunities for creativity at all levels of school, culture change |
| Reflective practices | Appreciation of learners' growth, mentoring |
| Collaboration—sharing knowledge | |
| Enthusiasm, motivation to teach and learn | Resilience, determination, creativity |
| Data-driven instruction and decision-making, leading to improved resource allocation | Become more technology friendly |
| Accomplishing goals | |

| Wishes | |
|---|--|
| Cultivate positive attitudes and energy | |
| Consistency, common professional language | |
| Improved access to data for teachers | |
| Community members can get past politics to address children's needs | |
| More staff to facilitate, coordinate curriculum | |
| Accept who we are and not pass blame | |
| Mentoring for new administration | |
| Data informing instruction | |
| Retention of programs for at-risk students | |
| Embrace culture of change | |

Appendix B. Data Map of Co-interpretation Key Findings

March 26–27, 2007

During the co-interpretation process, Newburgh Enlarged City School District participants analyzed seven individual reports (data sets) and identified findings. Participants then grouped the individual findings from across the data sets under each of the six topic areas examined through the audit: curriculum, instruction, academic intervention services, professional development, data use, and staffing. Participants worked together to identify which of the resulting key findings were most significant.

The following tables document the results of the co-interpretation process. Each table lists a key finding identified by co-interpretation participants, together with the individual supporting findings from various data sources.

Key

Report Abbreviations:

CA—Curriculum Alignment Report

DR—Document Review Report

ELL—English Language Learner Report

INT—Interview Report

OBS—Observation Report

SE—Special Education Report

SEC—Surveys of Enacted Curriculum Report

Voting Colors:

Red votes = areas for improvement

Green votes = positive areas

Key Findings

| Key Finding 1 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|---------------|
| <p>Interview respondents across all settings indicated that professional development opportunities exist, but they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are not consistent across the district. • Do not address specialized subgroup needs (i.e., ELL and SWD). • Are not monitored consistently for implementation. <p>In addition, teachers indicated a need for a formal structure to support collaborative planning.</p> <p>Votes: 29 Red</p> | 1. Elementary teachers feel more supported by colleagues to try out new ideas than do junior high and high school teachers. | SEC |
| | 2. Network, collaborative, and study groups are being used by most teachers across grade levels as a professional development tool. | SEC |
| | 3. At the high school level, most conversations regarding self-directed learning are conducted through informal conversations. | SEC |
| | 4. Primary professional development for teachers in Grades 9–12 takes place in informal discussions. | SEC |
| | 5. All K–12 teachers self-report that they are not observing each other teaching classes. | SEC |
| | 6. General and special education teachers stated that they would like to visit successful inclusion sites. | SE, p. 21 |
| | 7. According to teachers, the use of scheduled time for collaboration among teachers varies across the district. | INT, p. 10 |
| | 8. Teachers are using teacher center and Internet resources for professional development. | SEC |
| | 9. There is evidence of district efforts in planning and implementing professional development. | CA, p. 11 |
| | 10. Special education and general education teachers stated that the most useful professional learning about how to meet the needs of SWDs came from informal interactions with other teachers. | SE, p. 21 |
| | 11. General and special education teachers support struggling students and informally collaborate and strategize on a regular basis. | SE, p. 17 |
| | 12. Following professional development, the sign-up sheet does not constitute evidence of implementation. | DR, p. 11 |
| | 13. No evidence was submitted as proof that monitoring of these opportunities has taken place. | DR, p. A8 |
| | 14. There is no policy or plan for professional development that ensures participation of staff and measures the impact of ELA professional development on classroom instruction. | DR, p. 12 |
| | 15. There is no evidence of monitoring strategies for the new teachers' support program. | DR, pp. 16–17 |

| Key Finding 1 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---------------|--|-------------|
| | 16. There is no evidence of policies, plans, implementation, or monitoring for support of new administrators. | DR, p. 17 |
| | 17. There is no evidence that monitoring strategies currently are in place for professional development. | DR, p. 14 |
| | 18. ESL teachers rely on an informal network of teacher communication between them and other teachers. | ELL, p. 17 |
| | 19. Communication between ELL and general education teachers is both formal and informal, varying across schools. | ELL, p. 17 |
| | 20. Teachers reported that relationships between general and special education teachers is generally positive and collaborative. | SE, p. 26 |
| | 21. Teachers described working together to develop lesson plans, talking about student related issues, discussing accommodations, and dividing responsibilities of delivering instruction and modifications. | SE, p. 26 |
| | 22. All teachers reported that the relationship with other staff is positive and has provided value to their work. | SE, p. 27 |
| | 23. General education teachers are supported with special education teachers in inclusive settings. | SE, p. 27 |
| | 24. Teachers reported devising systems of paper communications when they have conflicting schedules. | SE, p. 27 |
| | 25. Most parents reported feeling quite welcome at their children’s schools and found the staff to be friendly, the environment pleasant, and translators available. | ELL, p. 80 |
| | 26. General education and ELL teachers believe there is rarely collaboration between each other due to lack of time. | ELL, p. 60 |
| | 27. Both ELL and general education teachers cited barriers to needed communication between teachers, such as schedule conflicts and the lack of a common preparation time. | ELL, p. 24 |
| | 28. According to teachers, the use of scheduled time for collaboration among teachers varies across the district. | INT, p. 10 |
| | 29. Teachers reported not being able to work with other teachers about specific student concerns or how to address student needs due to conflicting schedules. | SE, p. 27 |
| | 30. General education teachers were resistant to having SWDs in their classrooms. | SE, p. 28 |

| Key Finding 1 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---------------|--|----------------|
| | 31. The principals at four schools believe that new teachers would benefit from more support and time for collaboration with their peers. | INT, p. 25 |
| | 32. More than 70 percent of interviewed teachers reported that they had not been trained in how to use data effectively to make instructional and programmatic decisions. | SE, p. 20 |
| | 33. Professional development in the use of data to inform instruction is necessary for teachers and administrators, according to interview respondents. | INT, pp. 13–14 |
| | 34. Eight teachers across the elementary sample reported that they have not received any professional development in the area of using assessment data. | ELL, p. 33 |
| | 35. More than half of general education teachers indicated receiving professional development or support related to using assessment data to improve student learning. | ELL, p. 62 |
| | 36. ELL program teachers received some form of support or professional development on using assessment data to improve student learning. | ELL, p. 62 |
| | 37. Respondents in schools with moderate to low ratings on professional development said the district’s professional development sessions are not useful. | INT, p. 21 |
| | 38. Elementary and secondary teachers stated that professional development was not relevant. | SE, p. 19 |
| | 39. In three elementary schools and two secondary schools, it is believed that professional development is not aligned with teachers’ instructional needs. | INT, p. 20 |
| | 40. General education and special education teachers expressed a need for practical, successful strategies that they can readily implement. | SE, p. 22 |
| | 41. Many special education teachers reported that the skills and strategies learned at professional development still needed to be modified to provide the appropriate support for SWDs. | SE, p. 20 |
| | 42. General education and special education teachers identified the need for clarification on what it means to modify a lesson. | SE, p. 22 |
| | 43. High school special education teachers reported that they are not always prepared to teach new subject areas. | SE, p. 20 |
| | 44. ELL program teachers are dissatisfied with professional development offerings. There are not enough offerings that address the ELL population. | ELL, p. 61 |
| | 45. The majority of ELL program teachers voiced opinions that professional development was not useful overall or did not apply to ELLs. | ELL, p. 33 |

| Key Finding 1 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| | 46. Nearly half of teachers interviewed were not satisfied with professional development. | SE, p. 19 |
| | 47. The areas identified by elementary and secondary schools as needing improvement are professional development and parental involvement. | INT, p. 27 |
| | 48. Teachers would like more consistency and relevance in professional development offerings. | SE, p. 19 |
| | 49. The quality of professional development for principals is “sometimes good, sometimes bad,” according to interview respondents. | INT, p. 30 |
| | 50. General education teachers expressed mixed reviews on the usefulness of professional development they received. | ELL, p. 61 |
| | 51. Overall rating: There was moderate evidence for professional learning opportunities that support ELL instruction and learning provided to teachers (with choices of substantial, moderate, limited, and no evidence). | ELL, p. A8 |
| | 52. ELL program teachers were mixed regarding the level of support they received through their schools in participating in professional development. | ELL, p. 61 |
| | 53. Special education teachers said they have been able to implement some of the professional development strategies they have learned along with the general education teachers. | SE, p. 20 |
| | 54. Teachers at a few elementary and secondary schools believe that professional development provided is both sufficient and relevant. | INT, p. 20 |
| | 55. In schools where professional development is tied to instruction, it is reported to be most effective by interview respondents. | INT, p. 20 |
| | 56. Teacher professional development is provided through Superintendent Conference Days, professional half-days, and the Teacher Center, according to district administrators. | INT, p. 33 |
| | 57. According to district administrators, the district provides a variety of professional development for principals. | INT, p. 38 |
| | 58. Special education teachers reported that they are offered the same professional learning opportunities as general education teachers. | SE, p. 20 |
| | 59. Professional development is available, based on data from assessment committee meetings; it is open to all teachers, and principals meet with teachers. | ELL, p. 17 |
| | 60. Secondary special education teachers are encouraged to attend department meetings and workshops in the subject areas they teach. | SE, p. 20 |

| Key Finding 1 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---------------|--|----------------|
| | 61. Administrators cite professional development opportunities, indicating that the district supports teachers and rewards them. | ELL, p. 16 |
| | 62. ELL program teachers reported participating in a variety of professional development to address the needs of ELLs. | ELL, p. 32 |
| | 63. General education and special education teachers reported receiving professional development on differentiated instruction, effective IEP writing, and corrective reading in the content areas, as well as workshops on AIS. | SE, p. 19 |
| | 64. The availability of content coaches as instructional leaders is highly inconsistent. | INT, pp. 22–23 |
| | 65. District staff will provide professional development for teachers who teach SWDs to help them move quickly into the general curriculum. | SE, p. 33 |
| | 66. Professional development regarding ELA curriculum was cited as the predominant support that would be helpful in improving ELL student achievement. | ELL, pp. 8–16 |
| | 67. The majority of general education teachers interviewed did not participate in professional development related to instructional needs of ELLs. | ELL, p. 61 |
| | 68. Administrators voiced that professional development is necessary for the effective implementation of the ELA curriculum for ELLs. | ELL, p. 13 |
| | 69. ESL teachers are not included in grade-level meetings. | ELL, p. 15 |
| | 70. Professional development has been given through the Teacher Center, and there are no specific courses for working with ELLs. | ELL, p. 16 |
| | 71. Special education teachers reported a need for training on how to adapt the curriculum maps for SWDs. | SE, p. 20 |
| | 72. Some general education and special education teachers expressed a need for training in cultural sensitivity, the effective use of technology, and ways to differentiate instruction for diverse ability groups. | SE, p. 22 |
| | 73. Documents submitted illustrate that the district has plans as well as implementation in place for professional learning opportunities that support ELL instruction and learning. | ELL, p. A8 |
| | 74. Teachers indicated that there are opportunities for professional development on strategies for teaching SWDs. | SE, p. 19 |
| | 75. A major goal of district administrators is for teachers to learn how to analyze and use data, especially benchmark data, to plan instruction. | INT, p. 31 |

| Key Finding 1 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---------------|---|-------------|
| | 76. Half of elementary general education teachers reported no professional development at all on teaching practices for ELLs, and the other half said they received limited professional development. | ELL, p. 33 |
| | 77. Schools with the most available literacy coach time find the greatest influence on instruction. | INT, p. 24 |

| Key Finding 2 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---|--|----------------|
| <p>As reported by general education teachers, district personnel, and ELL teachers, interventions and program supports for ELLs and SWDs are either not widely available or not sufficient. Also, those supports for all populations outside of the school day/year were described as affected by low student attendance. In addition, there is no process for monitoring the existing AIS plan.</p> <p>Votes: 24 Red</p> | 1. AIS are available to all students with and without disabilities. | SE, p. 17 |
| | 2. Bilingual AIS support is indicated as a need by school-level interview respondents. | INT, p. 16 |
| | 3. Interview respondents reported that in addition to AIS, more resources and support are needed, particularly for students with very low levels of proficiency or with special needs. | INT, p. 17 |
| | 4. District administrators state that AIS services still are evolving at the secondary level for SWDs. | SE, p. 17 |
| | 5. The AIS plan is approved by the board of education and serves as a policy and a plan. | DR, p. 8 |
| | 6. AIS is available in all schools within the district, according to teachers' comments. | INT, p. 17 |
| | 7. There is no bilingual AIS program to meet needs of bilingual students. | ELL, p. 31 |
| | 8. Program implementation specific to SWD and ELLs is not included in the AIS plan. | DR, p. 8 |
| | 9. General education teachers did not know anything about services for ELLs who also are SWDs. | ELL, p. 60 |
| | 10. Overall rating: There is moderate evidence regarding academic interventions available for ELLs needing academic support. | ELL, p. 20; A7 |
| | 11. According to district administrators, AIS are provided by classroom teachers, ELA specialists, literacy coaches, and reading teachers. | INT, p. 31 |
| | 12. Parents are concerned about which children receive AIS services and how they receive it. | SE, p. 17 |
| | 13. The AIS description does not describe how the district ensures alignment of the AIS services and programs to the ELA curriculum. | DR, p. 7 |
| | 14. Parents expressed some confusion about AIS (i.e., what does AIS mean?) | SE, p. 17 |
| | 15. ELL program teachers have some form of additional academic support available for low-performing students. | ELL, p. 59 |
| | 16. More than half of general education teachers identified some form of instructional support available for low-performing ELLs. | ELL, p. 59 |
| | 17. The most common challenge stated by elementary teachers was the need for more resources in the form of additional ESL personnel, resource personnel, AIS for bilingual students, materials, and/or support for students who need extra help. | ELL, p. 24 |

| Key Finding 2 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---------------|--|-------------|
| | 18. The majority of general education teachers said they did not receive any instructional supports to help ELLs meet standards. | ELL, p. 31 |
| | 19. Other challenges mentioned by general education teachers included early and accurate identification of students, a lack of communication and training between ELL and general education teachers, the ability to gauge the comprehension of ELLs when they tend to be “quieter and shy,” and too much testing overall. | ELL, p. 38 |
| | 20. According to district administrators, bilingual programs and ESL programs are offered as support for ELLs. | INT, p. 32 |
| | 21. Newburgh Enlarged City School District shows little evidence provided to describe how, why, or when a child is to be discontinued from the AIS program. | DR, p. 8 |
| | 22. No evidence was submitted as proof that monitoring of AIS has taken place for ELLs. | ELL, p. A7 |
| | 23. There is no evidence of monitoring strategies for AIS. | DR, p. 9 |
| | 24. Documents submitted illustrate that the district has plans and implementation in place for academic interventions for ELLs who need academic support. | ELL, p. A7 |
| | 25. The implementation of the AIS policy and plan was evident only in two of 10 areas. The document states that it provides AIS to struggling students and that it happens during the school day. | DR, p. 9 |
| | 26. None of the general education teachers knew anything about specific plans for addressing learning needs of ELLs. | ELL, p. 59 |
| | 27. Most ELL program teachers are aware of learning plans and policies (programs) for ELLs. | ELL, p. 59 |
| | 28. According to district officials, interventions offered outside of the school day are affected by student attendance, and low attendance limits the effectiveness of these programs. | INT, p. 32 |

| Key Finding 3 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
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| <p>There is a lack of shared understanding on the part of general education and special education and ELL teachers and building administrators regarding instructional and curricular definitions and implementations of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications • Adaptations • Accommodations • Access to general education <p>There is a lack of shared understanding about how to create and implement IEPs in all classrooms.</p> <p>Votes: 24 Red</p> | 1. Elementary general education and ELL program teachers modified their lessons but in different ways. | ELL, p. 43 |
| | 2. Parents expressed concern that interventions and related services interfere with instructional time for SWDs. | SE, p. 18 |
| | 3. Parents expressed concerns that some of their children (SWDs) missed out on lessons where they went to related services OT/PT/Speech. | SE, p. 18 |
| | 4. Teachers expressed concern that interventions and related services interfere with instructional time for SWDs. | SE, p. 18 |
| | 5. Secondary teachers expressed a particular concern that it was difficult to cover everything even before adding in related services because they believed the instructional periods already are too short. | SE, p. 18 |
| | 6. General education teachers reported that SWDs miss parts of their classes because they leave class for OT/ST, making it difficult to provide quality and individualized instruction. | SE, p. 18 |
| | 7. The quick pace of curriculum, which is based largely on benchmark exams, does not account for the extra processing time. | ELL, p. 37 |
| | 8. General education teachers do not modify the curriculum for the ELLs in their classroom. | ELL, p. 55 |
| | 9. Both ELL and general education lessons used similar types of modifications. | ELL, pp. 67 and 70 |
| | 10. Most general education teachers who don't modify the curriculum rely instead on a push-in ELL program teacher or resource teacher. | ELL, p. 23 |
| | 11. ELL teachers make modifications to the ELA curriculum based on students' needs. | ELL, p. 54 |
| | 12. When determining what to teach students, a majority of the ELL program teachers interviewed reported that they modify the ELA curriculum. | ELL, p. 27 |
| | 13. ELL program teachers do not use a standard, districtwide ESL curriculum. | ELL, p. 54 |
| | 14. The average rating for general education classes was higher than the rating for ELL classes regarding the appropriateness of the lesson for the developmental needs of students. | ELL, p. 42 |

| Key Finding 3 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
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| | 15. All elementary ELL program lessons and most general education lessons developed cultural awareness, promoted positive self-image, and related lessons relevant to students' real-life experiences. | ELL, p. 46 |
| | 16. Lesson ratings for general education and ELL secondary teachers had a wide range. On one end of the range, the curriculum is not being implemented effectively and is not supporting the differing developmental levels of students because of confusing or unsuccessful attempts at differentiating instruction. At the other end of the range, the curriculum is being implemented with some differentiation of instruction but not enough to meet the various developmental needs of students. | ELL, p. 69 |
| | 17. Eighty-five percent of all teachers provided varying degrees and types of modifications to the curriculum materials or assignments. | SE, p. 8 |
| | 18. Administrators indicated that curriculum modifications have not been developed districtwide to address needs of ELLs. | ELL, p. 12 |
| | 19. General education teachers have mixed opinions regarding whether the ELA curriculum prepares ELLs for the Regents exam. | ELL, p. 56 |
| | 20. ELL program teachers believe that the ELA curriculum prepares ELLs for taking the Regents exam. | ELL, p. 56 |
| | 21. ELL teachers are not consistently getting ESL standards or written curriculums for their students. | ELL, p. 55 |
| | 22. Curriculum modifications have not been developed districtwide to address ELL needs. | ELL, p. 12 |
| | 23. Reviewed IEPs contain descriptions of the program modifications that SWDs are entitled to during instruction. | SE, p. 8 |
| | 24. Curriculum maps do not appear to address differentiated instruction. | CA, p. 21 |
| | 25. In their current form, the district's curriculum maps do not address differentiated instruction, written information pertaining to instruction, assessment in Grade 10, or comprehensive plans for ELA teaching and learning. | CA, p. 20 |
| | 26. IEP goals and objectives are reflective of the general education ELA curriculum and/or skills needed to progress in the curriculum. | SE, p. 5 |

| Key Finding 3 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
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| | 27. Generally, administrators indicated that ELL program teachers should follow the aligned ELA curriculum with ELL students. Some indicated agreement, but with modifications to meet beginner proficiency needs of ELLs; agreement is needed regarding which modifications. | ELL, p. 11 |
| | 28. Most general education teachers believe ELLs are held to the same learning standards as other students in their classes. | ELL, p. 56 |
| | 29. Half of ELL teachers do not believe that their students are held to the same standards as general education students. | ELL, p. 56 |
| | 30. Compared to ELL classrooms, the general education classrooms show evidence of a lower proportion of students being held accountable to the same standards. | ELL, p. 67 |
| | 31. Submitted documents illustrate that the district has plans regarding an ELA curriculum used to teach ELLs in an afterschool and extended school-year program. | ELL, p. A3 |
| | 32. Overall rating: There was moderate evidence of a curriculum guiding instruction. | ELL, p. A3–4 |
| | 33. Some parents cited the value of learning two languages as the basis of enrolling in a bilingual program. | ELL, p. 79 |
| | 34. Administrators were concerned about adjustment of ELA curriculum for ELLs. | ELL, p. 11 |
| | 35. Bilingual teachers voiced concern about the lack of a language allocation policy. There is no policy in place for knowing what percentage of instruction should be in Spanish or in English and no consistency between levels. Such decisions are a “matter of opinion.” | ELL, p. 31 |

| Key Finding 4 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---|---|---------------|
| <p>The Curriculum Alignment Report, Document Review Report, and interviews with teachers across settings indicate that curriculum maps lack the depth to ensure successful implementation and monitoring of the ELA curriculum, (i.e., guidelines, processes, resources, pacing, assessment, and consistency). There is inconsistent use of the curriculum maps for Grades K–12, according to teachers of ELLs and SWDs. In addition, there is a lack of emphasis on higher-order thinking skills in Grades 2–8, in comparison with the state standards.</p> <p>Votes: 19 Red</p> | 1. There is an inverse relationship between the emphasis on <i>remember</i> and <i>understand</i> between the district and NYSED, with far greater emphasis on <i>understand</i> by NYSED and far less on <i>remember</i> by NYSED as compared to the district. | CA, pp. 6–7 |
| | 2. In the category of <i>apply</i> , there is greater emphasis on procedural knowledge in the district’s curriculum than NYSED and less emphasis on conceptual knowledge as compared to NYSED. | CA, pp. 6–7 |
| | 3. Metacognitive knowledge was emphasized across all cognitive-demand domains except <i>evaluate</i> in the district’s ELA curriculum. | CA, p. 6 |
| | 4. Compared to NYSED performance indicators, there were very few indicators in the district’s curriculum that required students to use metacognitive or factual knowledge. | CA, p. 6 |
| | 5. Grade 4 students most often apply procedural knowledge and occasionally <i>remember</i> or <i>understand</i> conceptual knowledge. | CA, p. 9 |
| | 6. Grade 4 students show no evidence of <i>evaluate</i> . | CA, pp. 9–10 |
| | 7. Grade 4 students rarely <i>create</i> or <i>analyze</i> . | CA, pp. 9–10 |
| | 8. Grade 4 students rarely use metacognitive knowledge across the curriculum. | CA, pp. 9–10 |
| | 9. Grade 4 ELA curriculum lacks emphasis on metacognition and factual knowledge. | CA, pp. 9–10 |
| | 10. The NYSED curriculum requires a greater level of opportunities for thinking and learning that requires a demonstration of the ability to <i>analyze</i> and <i>evaluate</i> across the areas of language arts than the district provides to students. | CA, p. 12 |
| | 11. In the district’s ELA curriculum, metacognitive knowledge only occasionally is targeted in the domains of <i>apply</i> and <i>create</i> . It is not evident in the domains of <i>remember</i> , <i>understand</i> , <i>analyze</i> , and <i>evaluate</i> . | CA, pp. 12–13 |
| | 12. There is far less emphasis on <i>analyze</i> and <i>evaluate</i> in the district’s curriculum than in NYSED’s performance indicators. | CA, pp. 12–13 |
| | 13. There is an absence of expectations in the district’s ELA curriculum for Grade 8 students to <i>evaluate</i> their work. | CA, pp. 14–16 |

| Key Finding 4 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---------------|---|---------------|
| | 14. NYSED performance indicators expect students to acquire a large portion of concept knowledge in Grade 8. The district’s students most often are expected to learn procedural knowledge, followed by some conceptual knowledge. | CA, pp. 14–16 |
| | 15. In comparison with NYSED ELA Grade 8 performance indicators, the district’s Grade 8 ELA curriculum does not expect students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills. | CA, pp. 14–16 |
| | 16. In Grade 10 in the district, metacognition is emphasized at the <i>remember</i> and <i>apply</i> levels of cognitive demand. (positive). | CA, pp. 18–19 |
| | 17. In comparison to NYSED performance indicators, the Grade 10 district curriculum lacks the opportunity to <i>analyze, evaluate, and create</i> using procedural knowledge. | CA, pp. 18–19 |
| | 18. In Grade 10, the district curriculum appears to place a greater emphasis on understanding than the other higher cognitive demands such as <i>evaluate</i> and <i>create</i> . | CA, pp. 18–19 |
| | 19. NYSED performance indicators emphasize <i>understand, apply, and remember</i> (in that order) while the district emphasized <i>apply, remember, and understand</i> (in that order). | CA, p. 10 |
| | 20. The order of emphasis of the NYSED performance indicators is conceptual, procedural, metacognitive, and factual while the district emphasizes procedural, conceptual, factual, and metacognitive. | CA, p. 10 |
| | 21. ELL program classes and general education classes represent a similar emphasis on conceptual work such as comprehension. | ELL, p. 46 |
| | 22. Elementary ELL program classrooms implemented more activities relating to skill development than general education classrooms. | ELL, p. 46 |
| | 23. Third-grade teachers are self-reporting that instruction is focused on <i>memorize</i> and <i>recall</i> rather than on <i>generate</i> and <i>analyze</i> . | SEC |
| | 24. Three of six ELL teachers’ strategies are consistent with the lesson’s purpose. The other three lessons observed ranged from few instructional strategies relevant to the lesson’s purpose to most if not all of instructional strategies irrelevant to the lesson’s purpose. | ELL, p. 73 |
| | 25. Elementary general education and ELL classrooms ranked similarly on the instructional strategies employed. | ELL, p. 46 |
| | 26. ELL and general education teachers use a wide range of instructional practices to work with ELLs. | ELL, p. 58 |

| Key Finding 4 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
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| | 27. With one exception, general education classrooms emphasized skill development 50 percent or more of the time. | ELL, p. 73 |
| | 28. Grade 3 teachers are teaching basic literacy skills not covered on the state standards. | SEC |
| | 29. In first grade, teachers self-reported that instruction is focused on memory and recall rather than analysis and evaluation. | SEC |

| Key Finding 5 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
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| <p>Direct instruction was the most frequently observed instructional strategy across all grade levels in both general education and ELL settings. Students were seldom observed engaged in hands-on learning in any setting (ELL, general education, special education).</p> <p>Votes: 17 Red</p> | 1. Among the greatest differences between general education teachers and ELL teachers is in the use of scaffolded instruction, integration of language learning goals, use of comprehensible language, and development of cultural awareness—with ELL program teachers rated higher. | ELL, p. 72 |
| | 2. Teachers reported that they still struggled in meeting the needs of all SWDs through differentiated instruction. | SE, p. 11 |
| | 3. Forty-one percent of the activities students are involved in at the elementary level involves independent seatwork. | OBS, p. 4 |
| | 4. Observed student activities: 0 percent experiential hands-on learning in inclusive classrooms or at the secondary level; 69 percent sustained writing/composition in inclusive classrooms. | OBS, p. 13 |
| | 5. Grouping strategies: 60 percent of the self-contained classrooms utilize small-group settings. | OBS, p. 12 |
| | 6. Grade 6 teachers use small-group instruction about 20 percent of the time. | SEC |
| | 7. Grade 4 teachers use small-group instruction 15 percent to 20 percent of the time. | SEC |
| | 8. Both elementary general education and ELL program classrooms engaged predominantly in whole-class instruction. | ELL, p. 44 |
| | 9. The most frequently observed instructional strategy at the middle school level was teacher acting as a coach or facilitator. | OBS, p. 5 |
| | 10. The most frequently observed student activity at the middle school level was sustained writing/composition. | OBS, p. 5 |

| Key Finding 5 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
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| | 11. ELL instruction is more whole-group than small-group or pairs. | ELL, p. 71 |
| | 12. The most frequently observed form of instruction at the high school is direct instruction. | OBS, p. 6 |
| | 13. Students were seldom seen being engaged in experiential activities. | SE, p. 13 |
| | 14. It was noted that in general education classrooms and secondary classrooms, teachers predominantly used large-group instruction during the observation. | SE, p.12 |
| | 15. In elementary schools, direct instruction was the most prevalent instructional practice observed. | OBS, p. 4 |

Additional Key Findings: Areas for Improvement

Additional findings were identified as key by the district co-interpretation participants but were not prioritized for action planning.

| Key Finding 6 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---|--|-------------|
| <p>Data obtained from observations, interviews, and surveys illustrate that across grade levels and all classrooms, teachers and administrators expressed concerns with materials available for ELLs and SWDs, specifically with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequacy of materials • Access to materials • Effectiveness of materials available <p>Votes: 10 Red</p> | 1. The secondary-level district coordinator informs all special education teachers about resources and materials they need and what is being used in general education. | SE, p. 6 |
| | 2. Self-contained settings tend to have more materials than the resource setting. | SE, p. 7 |
| | 3. District coordinators reported that resources and materials may not be adequate to meet students' needs. | SE, p. 7 |
| | 4. Both the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan and walk-through documents focus on instructional strategies, not on the use of curricular materials. | DR, p. 4 |
| | 5. The district expects ELLs to use the same materials, follow the same curriculum maps, and receive the same instruction as general education students, according to interviews. | INT, p. 32 |
| | 6. Special education teachers have the same textbooks and courses as general education teachers. | SE, p. 6 |
| | 7. ELL program teachers and general education teachers expressed concerns about the adequacy of training and transition planning regarding the new reading series and curriculum maps. | ELL, p. 23 |
| | 8. Secondary-level coordinators speak to the English director for materials and information that special education secondary teachers need. | SE, p. 6 |
| | 9. Seventy-one percent of the teachers observed used the core ELA program and/or supplemental materials in their instruction. | SE, p. 5 |
| | 10. Respondents reported that at the elementary level, instructional consistency is increasing due to the use of curricular materials and maps. | INT, p. 7 |
| | 11. The curriculum documents for Grades 2 and 4 name the assessments from the reading series. | CA, p. 22 |
| | 12. Seventy-one percent of the teachers observed used the core ELA program and/or supplemental materials in their instruction. | SE, p. 5 |
| | 13. The Grade 8 curriculum maps list the names of texts to be read; no specific references to page numbers or content within these texts are presented or explained. | CA, p. 21 |

| Key Finding 6 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
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| | 14. There was a special education component to the new reading program that could have been purchased by the district but was not. | SE, p. 7 |
| | 15. Special education teachers have problems using the same curricular materials with SWDs. | SE, p. 7 |
| | 16. There is a lack of Spanish materials to support native language arts and ELA at the same level. There are missing worksheets for leveled readers in text series. | ELL, p. 28 |
| | 17. Some special education teachers are unsure about where to go for curricular materials. | SE, p. 7 |
| | 18. Available materials differed from classroom to classroom. | ELL, p. 28 |
| | 19. ELL teachers receive materials or funds to purchase materials to supplement instruction for ELLs. | ELL, p. 55 |
| | 20. General education teachers do not receive supportive or adequate materials to use with the ELLs in their class. | ELL, p. 55 |
| | 21. ELL teachers use a variety of sources to help determine what to teach students. | ELL, p. 54 |
| | 22. The special education coordinator states that administrators assist in building with getting materials. | SE, p. 6 |
| | 23. Most teachers used the core ELA program and/or supplemental materials in their instruction. | SE, p. 5 |
| | 24. The district’s curriculum documents for Grades 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 do not present any strategies or examples for teaching the identified themes or curricular materials. | CA, p. 21 |
| | 25. For the first time, the district has implemented the same core reading series across the elementary schools, according to district administrators. | INT, p. 29 |
| | 26. The books in Spanish are not exactly the same. They are in a different order; classroom learning centers are not provided in Spanish; and assessment components are not included. The programs that are available to monolingual students are not the same as for Spanish students. | ELL, p. 28 |
| | 27. Overall, the general education and ELL programs received ratings on the lower end of the scale in relation to learning environment. Much lower ratings were noted in three areas: ELL classroom resources, including visual aids and native language texts; technology and computer resources; and up-to-date, appropriate classroom displays of student work. | ELL,, p. 76 |
| | 28. Principals and instructional leaders noted that instructional materials are adequate. | INT, p. 8 |
| | 29. Teachers have discretion to choose activities and materials that emphasize the skills outlined in the core reading program and to differentiate instruction for students at different proficiency levels. | INT, pp. 8–9 |
| | 30. Materials and personal supports for ELLs vary greatly. | ELL, p. 8 |

| Key Finding 6 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
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| | 31. General education teachers reported differences in the availability of ELL materials. | ELL, pp. 2–3 |
| | 32. Teachers reported that more differentiated materials are needed for classrooms. | INT, p. 8 |
| | 33. Some of the secondary classrooms observed had little to no novels or books, while others had reading choices readily available for the students. | SE, p. 9 |
| | 34. Curriculum materials are a problem at the high school level. | SEC |
| | 35. Some ELL program teachers mentioned shortages of materials. | ELL, p. 23 |
| | 36. Supports for former ELLs are limited and vary from school to school. | ELL, p. 13 |
| | 37. Elementary general education classrooms have only limited ELL resources while ELL classrooms have accessible resources that are in good condition and up-to-date. | ELL, p. 48 |
| | 38. Across the district schools, respondents cited the need for instructional collaboration, planning, and materials support to improve instruction. | INT, p. 27 |
| | 39. Secondary teachers expressed concerns about overcrowded schools and classrooms with inadequate materials for teachers. | ELL, p. 81 |
| | 40. All elementary classrooms observed were literacy-rich environments, as compared to slightly less than one third of secondary classrooms observed. | SE, p. 9 |
| | 41. Materials such as Spanish texts, grammar texts, Lightspan, and computer labs for ELLs are “ineffective,” according to 50 percent of administrators. | ELL, p. 13 |

| Key Finding 7 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
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| <p>Student progress is monitored by a variety of assessments including benchmarks; however, the availability and timely distribution of the assessment data are inconsistent, and teachers voiced concerns about their effectiveness and use.</p> <p>Votes: 5 Red</p> | 1. No evidence was submitted as proof that implementation or monitoring of these practices (use of ELL student achievement; data to inform programming, planning, and instruction) has taken place. | ELL, p. A9 |
| | 2. Most general education teachers were not informed of students whose ELA test scores fell below the expected proficiency level. | ELL, p. 63 |
| | 3. ELL and general education teachers do not know how exited students are monitored. | ELL, p. 64 |
| | 4. Low-performing ELLs are monitored for progress. | ELL, p. 18 |
| | 5. Half the ELL teachers interviewed were not informed about students whose ELA test scores fell below the expected proficiency level. | ELL, p. 63 |
| | 6. A majority of special education teachers expressed concern about the benchmark testing, reporting that the pacing is not appropriate. | SE, p. 20 |
| | 7. Comprehensive assessment plan was not mentioned by teachers. | SE, p. 25 |
| | 8. Teachers did not know if the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), state ELA, or benchmark assessment data were utilized to strengthen instruction in ELL programs or general education. | ELL, p. 24 |
| | 9. Few general education teachers had any experience with assessment data. | ELL, p. 63 |
| | 10. Parents expressed a desire to have test results used more effectively. | SE, p. 25 |
| | 11. Test results appear to be of limited use to ELL teachers. | ELL, p. 63 |
| | 12. A majority of special education teachers expressed concern about the benchmark testing, reporting that the pacing is not appropriate. | SE, p. 20 |
| | 13. General education teachers expressed concern about the district’s benchmarks. | SE, p. 21 |
| | 14. According to district administrators, benchmarks are the preferred means for getting student data. | INT, p. 30 |
| | 15. There is evidence of plans and implementation of data-driven decision making for administrators and teachers. | DR, p. 14 |
| | 16. Teachers did not agree on the types of assessment data they received. | ELL, p. 63 |

| Key Finding 7 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
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| | 17. According to the Comprehensive Assessment Plan, assessment data are distributed to teachers. | SE, p. 25 |
| | 18. Sufficient data are available from all assessment types according to interview respondents. | INT, p. 15 |
| | 19. The availability and sharing of district data to and within schools is inconsistent, according to interview respondents. | INT, p. 15 |
| | 20. Respondents reported that it is believed that some data sources, such as state tests, are not available in a timely manner. | INT, p. 13 |
| | 21. Many teachers said the NYSESLAT and state data come too late to be useful. | ELL, p. 36 |
| | 22. There is no formal system for tracking students. | ELL, p. 24 |
| | 23. ELA performance of SWDs is assessed through a variety of assessments, including teacher-made tests and quizzes, grades, projects, homework, curriculum-based assessments, district assessments, and yearly state assessments. | INT, p. 25 |
| | 24. Just more than half of teachers responded that they believed they were performing well, primarily citing increases in state test scores. | SE, p. 23 |
| | 25. ELL and general education teachers reported using a variety of methods of assessing students in the classroom to inform instruction and monitor student learning. | ELL, p. 63 |
| | 26. All elementary students (ELL and general education) in the district are assessed formally by standardized state tests, the NYSESLAT exam, and benchmark exams (four times per year). | ELL, p. 24 |
| | 27. Approximately half of all the interviewed teachers reported using classroom data to identify needs of students to provide instruction and monitor student progress. | SE, p. 25 |

| Key Finding 8 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Supports for former ELLs are limited and vary from school to school. Votes: 4 Red | 1. Transition programs are not in place to monitor students exited from ELL programs. | ELL,, p. 13 |
| | 2. The goal of the district is for ELLs to transition into the regular curriculum. | INT, p. 32 |
| | 3. General education teachers and ELL program teachers reported using a wide variety of instructional strategies with ELLs in their classrooms. | ELL, p. 23 |

| Key Finding 9 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Findings show that the SWDs’ part of the utilization of support staff is inconsistent between elementary and secondary levels. Support staff are more fully engaged in instructional activities at the elementary level. Votes: 3 Red | 1. In one third of secondary classroom observations, the teaching assistants were not active in assisting the students or the teachers. | SE, p. 27 |
| | 2. Teaching assistants in elementary classrooms were observed to be more involved, with nearly three quarters of them actively working with students on activities that reinforce the central lesson. | SE, p. 27 |
| | 3. Observation data indicated that support staff are not always used to support instruction. | SE, p.72 |
| | 4. Teaching assistants have no instructional role; they typically monitor student behavior or do not interact with students at all, according to observations. | SE, p. 12 |
| | 5. In all cotaught classrooms, general education teachers primarily delivered content while special education teacher provided one-on-one assistance, which usually involved keeping track of students. | SE, p. 26 |
| | 6. Special education teachers are supported with teaching assistants in inclusive settings. | SE, p. 27 |

| Key Finding 10 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Observations of ELL classrooms indicate more crowding and space limitations than in general education classrooms. Votes: 2 Red | 1. The greatest differences between ELL program and general classrooms pertained to space and classroom facilities. Classroom space for ELL ranged from adequate to crowded. | ELL, p. 76 |
| | 2. Though both ratings were on the higher scale, ELL elementary classrooms were rated lower due to limited space and difficult visibility of the board or classroom demonstrations. | ELL, p. 48 |

| Key Finding 11 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---|--|--------------------|
| Teachers report the need for translation services, both written and oral. Votes: 2 Red | 1. Teachers identified the need for translation services for conferences and notes sent home as an important challenge undermining parent engagement. | ELL, p. 24 |
| | 2. ELL program teachers spoke about the language barrier with parents and indicated how that situation compounds the level of involvement they have in their child’s educational experience as well as their level of involvement with the school and individual teachers. | ELL, p. 37 |

| Key Finding 12 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|--|--------------------|
| Classroom observation data show that technology use in the classroom was limited across all grade levels and settings (i.e., general education, ESL, and special education). Votes: 2 Red | 1. Most classrooms did not have more than one or two computers, and, in fact, six classrooms had no computers. | SE, p. 9 |
| | 2. General education elementary classrooms had limited, outdated, or inaccessible technology or computer resources. | ELL, p. 48 |
| | 3. Across all levels, the use of technology either was not observed or was observed rarely during classroom observations. | OBS, p. 8 |
| | 4. The overwhelming majority of observed classrooms did not use computer technology to support the teaching of the ELA curriculum. | SE, p. 9 |

| Key Finding 13 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Student expectations are not clearly defined in the curriculum maps for elementary and secondary grades. Votes: 1 Red | 1. The Grade 8 curriculum maps do not present information as student expectations or learning objectives, so it is uncertain what students should understand and be able to do. | CA, p. 20 |
| | 2. The curriculum documents for Grades 2 and 4 do not address student expectations. | CA, p. 22 |
| | 3. The district's curriculum maps in Grades 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 do not clearly state student expectations or learning objectives. | CA, p. 20 |
| | 4. The district's ELA curriculum framework does not appear to present any district curriculum or student expectations. | CA, p. 21 |
| | 5. The district's curriculum maps include many student expectations under the content/skills columns that actually are NYSED performance indicators rather than expectations for student learning of specific content and skills within each theme. | CA, p. 20 |

| Key Finding 14 | Supporting Findings | Data Source and Page |
|---|--|-----------------------------|
| Parent focus group data indicate that parents are concerned about the limited availability of bilingual programs. Votes: 1 Red | 1. Most parents were in agreement about the value of learning two languages and expressed concerns about the apparently limited availability of the bilingual program at district schools. | ELL, pp. 78 and 81 |
| | 2. Parents are concerned about the limited availability of bilingual programming. | ELL, p. 78 |

| Key Finding 15 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|--------------------|
| There does not appear to be evidence of a district curriculum policy or monitoring of curriculum implementation. Votes: 0 | 1. No relevant evidence was provided of a district policy or monitoring strategy to ensure that curricular materials are utilized in the classroom. | DR, p. 5 |
| | 2. No relevant evidence was provided of a district policy or monitoring strategy regarding selection and provision of curricular materials. | DR, p. 5 |
| | 3. None of the submitted documents showed proof that curriculum monitoring has taken place. | ELL, p. A3 |
| | 4. The submitted documentation does not show a policy for providing professional development to teachers, administrators, and staff in the areas of content, student expectations, and instructional strategies for all students. | DR, p. 12 |
| | 5. The Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) plan, walk-through form, and daily lesson plans do not provide space for recording or evaluating classroom delivery of the curriculum or across the district. | DR, p. 6 |
| | 6. According to district administrators, instruction is monitored through classroom walk-throughs, lesson plans received, and benchmark assessments. | INT, p. 29 |
| | 7. From the documents submitted, there is no evidence of policy or monitoring of instruction. | DR, p. 6 |

| Key Finding 16 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---|---|--------------------|
| As reported by ELL, general education teachers, and parents, the prereferral and CSE referral process is lengthy. Votes: 0 | 1. The district has adopted a policy regarding prereferral intervention strategies in general education (prior to a referral for special education). | SE, p. 16 |
| | 2. The instructional support team (IST) prereferral process is used in the district before making referrals to special education for students in general education classes who are struggling academically. | SE, p. 16 |
| | 3. ELL teachers and general education teachers raised concerns about the lengthy process for ELLs who also are SWDs. | ELL, p. 59 |
| | 4. ELL program teachers said that providing instruction for ELLs who also are SWDs is difficult because the process for obtaining services is lengthy and bureaucratic. | ELL, p. 60 |
| | 5. Parents cited delays in getting needed services and extra help for their children. | ELL, p. 78 |

| Key Finding 17 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Special education teachers reported that most interactions between administrators and teachers of SWDs are related to behavior and that there is less focus on instruction. | 1. Secondary special education teachers believe they do not have support from the district regarding issues of implementation and frustrations of students. | SE, p. 28 |
| | 2. One third of teachers thought principals were not attuned to what teachers did in teaching SWDs. | SE, p. 28 |
| | 3. One third of teachers reported that principals' participation with special education students was limited to helping with behavior issues and finding places for testing. | SE, p. 28 |
| | 4. The majority of teachers said that interactions with administrators were initiated by the teacher and most often focused on issues related to behavior. | SE, p. 28 |
| | 5. One third of teachers reported that their principals were involved and helpful, having an open-door policy. The teachers felt comfortable in dealing with issues related to behavior management, parents, and new ideas for teaching strategies. | SE, p. 27 |
| Votes: 0 | | |

| Key Finding 18 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|--------------------|
| General education teachers are unaware of how ELLs and SWDs are placed. | 1. No documents showed evidence of a district-level plan for ELL instruction during the regular school day. | ELL, p. A5 |
| | 2. ELL program teachers identify the NYSESLAT test as the major factor in determining a student's placement. | ELL, p. 57 |
| | 3. General education teachers have mixed opinions of how ELL students are placed. | ELL, p. 57 |
| | 4. The district does not have a plan to provide data to classroom teachers regarding the placement of ELLs and SWDs in general education. | ELL, p. 14 |
| Votes: 0 | | |

| Key Finding 19 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---|--|-------------|
| <p>Across grade levels, SEC data indicate classroom instruction is not aligned with state standards in terms of listening, viewing, speaking, and presenting.</p> <p>Votes: 0</p> | <p>1. Across grade levels, classroom instruction for listening, viewing, speaking, and presenting is not aligned with state standards.</p> | <p>SEC</p> |
| | <p>2. Speaking and presenting is not represented on the taught curriculum as compared to the state standards for Grades 2, 4, and 6.</p> | <p>SEC</p> |

| Key Finding 20 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|-------------------|
| <p>Many teachers voiced concerns about the equity of testing expectations regarding student achievement for ELLs, given ELL needs for additional time to develop language proficiency.</p> <p>Votes: 0</p> | <p>1. Many teachers voiced concerns about the equity of testing expectations regarding student achievement for ELLs, given ELL needs for additional time to develop language proficiency.</p> | <p>ELL, p. 23</p> |

Positive Key Findings

A series of positive key findings also emerged from the district co-interpretation process. These findings, indicating what is being done well in the district, were prioritized by district participants.

| Positive Key Finding 1 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|-------------------|
| <p>The district has K–12 curriculum maps in place that are accessible to all teachers, ensuring that SWDs and ELLs have access to the general education curriculum. Teachers and district administrators interviewed believe the maps are aligned with NYSED standards.</p> <p>Votes: 24 Green</p> | 1. All ELL and general education teachers affirmed that ELLs are held to the same learning standards as general education students because they all take the same tests. | ELL, p. 23 |
| | 2. The district’s framework document indicates that the frameworks are expected to be used in all classes and serve all students, including SWDs and ELLs. | CA, p. 21 |
| | 3. The submitted documents illustrate that the district has some plans and implementation in place that address instruction focused on the effective delivery of the curriculum in the K–4 extended school year and Intensive English Saturday Academy. | ELL, p. A–5 |
| | 4. No documents reviewed showed evidence of a separate district ELL curriculum for classroom instruction. | ELL, p. A3 |
| | 5. There is a conflict with ELL program teachers’ belief that there is no single ELL curriculum; yet they also believe that the ELA curriculum prepares ELLs for the Regents exam. | ELL, p. 54 and 56 |
| | 6. A written ESL curriculum does not exist. | ELL, p. 23 |
| | 7. There is no single curriculum used by all secondary ELL program teachers in the district. | ELL, p. 54 |
| | 8. Curriculum maps have been created for Grades K–11 with benchmark assessments used as indicators of curriculum alignment according to district administrators. | INT, p. 29 |
| | 9. District coordinators at the elementary and secondary levels reported that curriculum access issues have improved tremendously in recent years. | SE, p. 6 |
| | 10. Interviewed elementary teachers reported that ELA curriculum maps align with ESL and ELA standards. | ELL, p. 23 |
| | 11. Special education teachers have the same curriculum maps as general education teachers. | SE, p. 6 |
| | 12. The district’s ELA curriculum framework document appears to present performance indicators by grade level, ELA learning standard, and key idea. It also resembles the NYSED ELA core curriculum. | CA, p. 21 |

| Positive Key Finding 1 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|------------------------|--|-------------------|
| | 13. The district’s curriculum requires four more applications when compared to NYSED’s performance indicators. | CA, pp. 12–13 |
| | 14. The district and schools provide various supports to ensure that SWDs have access to the general education ELA curriculum. | SE, p. 4 |
| | 15. The district’s written curriculum document was created to guide teachers’ instruction in Grades K–12. | DR, p. 4 |
| | 16. ELL and general education teachers were aware that information about curriculum and standards was available online. | ELL, p. 23 |
| | 17. General education teachers use the ELA curriculum map as the primary guide in helping them determine what to teach. | ELL, p. 54 |
| | 18. General education teachers receive curriculum maps. | ELL, p. 55 |
| | 19. ELA curriculum is available and ELL teachers should be following. | ELL, pp. 8 and 11 |

| Positive Key Finding 2 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---|--|-------------|
| There are support programs both during and outside of the school day and year, with programs during the day reported as having high student participation. Votes: 18 Green | 1. Parents of ELLs reported mixed views of availability and quality of extracurricular and afterschool offerings for their students. | ELL, p. 80 |
| | 2. The supports for ELLs’ summer program, afterschool, and Saturday classes are outside of the school day. | ELL, p. 15 |
| | 3. According to district staff, academic support offered during the day had high student participation. | INT, p. 32 |
| | 4. The district offers afterschool programs with an academic component focused on ELA skills to prepare all students for the ELA test. | SE, p. 16 |

| Positive Key Finding 3 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|--|--------------------|
| Across all grade levels and settings (i.e., general education, special education, and ELL classrooms), classroom observations show high levels of academically focused class time and student engagement. Votes: 17 Green | 1. Across all grade levels observed, class time was academically focused. | OBS, p. 7 |
| | 2. Across all grade levels observed, student engagement was generally high. | OBS, p. 7 |
| | 3. General education classes generally tried to generate enthusiasm among students, which was somewhat effective. Many students were engaged and participating in the lesson. | ELL, p. 73 |
| | 4. A majority of visited classrooms exhibited classroom management strategies in which routines were established to maximize instructional time and students were transitioned rapidly and smoothly from one to another. However, classroom management provided students with opportunity to learn in 40 percent of self-contained classrooms. | SE, p. 10 |
| | 5. In most classrooms visited, teachers did not have to spend a substantial amount of time managing student behaviors during instruction (however, the data do not support this finding in the self-contained setting). | SE, p. 10 |

| Positive Key Finding 4 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|--------------------|
| The mentoring program is viewed positively by the majority of teachers. Votes: 16 Green | 1. The mentor program is effective and highly regarded. | INT, p. 25 |
| | 2. The Teacher Center provides support for new teachers throughout its mentorship program and orientation training. | INT, pp. 24–25 |
| | 3. There is evidence of policies, plans, and implementation practices to support new teachers. | DR, p. 16 |

| Positive Key Finding 5 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Survey and observations report alignment to state standards in instruction in Grades 1–6, general education, and ELL classrooms. Votes: 14 Green | 1. Across grade levels, ELA teachers enjoy teaching English, language arts, and reading. | SEC |
| | 2. Instruction is well-aligned to state standards in Grades 4–6. | SEC |
| | 3. Classroom instruction is better aligned to state standards in Grades 1–5. | SEC |
| | 4. Grade 4 curriculum as taught by teachers is well-aligned. | SEC |
| | 5. Comprehension on phonics and comprehension are well-aligned to the state standards in Grade 1. | SEC |
| | 6. Grade 4 instruction is somewhat aligned to the state standards. | SEC |
| | 7. Vertical alignment of classroom instruction between Grades 6 and 7 is very high. | SEC |
| | 8. Comprehension of phonics and curriculum and instruction are well-aligned to the state standards in Grade 1. | SEC |
| | 9. Because of limited teacher responses in Grades 7–11, additional data sources must be consulted to confirm the appearance of poor alignment between instruction and state standards in Grades 7–11. | SEC |
| | 10. Elementary general education and ELL program classes were rated highly on lesson alignment with NYSED ELA standards. | ELL, p. 42 |

| Positive Key Finding 6 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|--------------------|
| All teachers and all parents interviewed reported that all students have access to the district’s curriculum. Votes: 11 Green | 1. Across the grade levels, listening, viewing, speaking, and presenting classroom instruction is not aligned to the state standards. | SEC |
| | 2. Students in 8:1:1 and 15:1:1 self-contained settings who can be mainstreamed into the inclusive settings have full access to the general education ELA curriculum if their ability level permits, according to their IEPs. | SE, p. 5 |
| | 3. All interviewed parents believed their children had access to general education curriculum or that their children’s ELA curriculum was connected to general education ELA curriculum. | SE, p. 5 |
| | 4. Students in inclusive settings at the elementary and secondary levels have the opportunity to have full access to general education ELA curriculum. | SE, p. 4 |
| | 5. Special education teachers and coordinators agreed that all SWDs have access to the general education ELA curriculum. | SE, p. 4 |

| Positive Key Finding 6 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|------------------------|---|-------------|
| | 6. At the secondary level, most students with disabilities received services in Prescriptive Learning Resource (PLR) with a 5:1 student-teacher ratio or Prescriptive Learning Classes (PLC) with a 15:1 student-teacher ratio. | SE, p. 3 |
| | 7. Neither general education teachers nor ELL teachers are sure of ELL students' access to advanced placement or honors classes. | ELL, p. 57 |
| | 8. Special education coordinators cited various ways in which schools ensure that SWDs have access to general education ELA curriculum: "push in" programs, program aides, reading specialists, professional development, AIS, curriculum support, and IST. | SE, p. 5 |
| | 9. IEPs identify when and where the student has access to and instruction in the general education ELA curriculum or alternate curriculum. | SE, p. 5 |
| | 10. Building coordinators emphasized the role of teachers in ensuring students' access to general education ELA curriculum. | SE, p. 6 |
| | 11. Access to general education ELA curriculum varies by the type of setting and severity of disabilities. | SE, p. 6 |
| | 12. Despite the belief expressed by special education administrators and coordinators that all teachers have access to and are using the same materials, this belief was not echoed at the school level. | SE, p. 7 |
| | 13. Coordinators report that every child is assigned the reading series selected by district, which ensures all students have access to same curriculum. | SE, p. 5 |
| | 14. A continuum of services is provided to SWDs at the secondary level. | SE, p. 7 |

| Positive Key Finding 7 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|---|--|-------------|
| <p>Respondents reported that the district provides students with testing accommodations.</p> <p>Votes: 11 Green</p> | 1. District coordinators indicated that the electronic IEP system used in the district helps to ensure that testing modifications are offered. | SE,, p. 24 |
| | 2. All special education teachers and administrators who reported on the issue (nine of 11) expressed the belief that their school did a good job of ensuring that SWDs received accommodations during testing. | SE, p. 24 |
| | 3. More than 90 percent of all interviewed teachers reported that all SWDs with whom they worked or taught received testing accommodations during state and district assessments and took the general assessments. | SE, p. 24 |
| | 4. Special education teachers and administrators indicated that special education teachers were primarily responsible for ensuring that SWDs received the accommodations specified on their IEPs. | SE, p. 24 |
| | 5. Instruction supporting student performance: familiarize with test format, test taking strategies, external help sites. | SE, p. 14 |

| Positive Key Finding 8 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|---|-------------|
| <p>Interviews with and observations of ELL teachers indicate that ELL teachers incorporate language learning goals into their lessons.</p> <p>Votes: 7 Green</p> | 1. All ELL program teachers incorporate language learning goals into their lessons. | ELL, p. 58 |
| | 2. All ELL program teachers and most general education teachers said they incorporate language learning goals into content instruction. | ELL, p. 23 |
| | 3. Language instruction was not as present in general education classes as in ELL program classes. | ELL, p. 73 |
| | 4. In four of six ELL classrooms, language learning instruction was relevant to content-area learning and integration in lesson. | ELL, p.73 |
| | 5. Three of five general education teachers reported including language learning goals along with content goals in their lessons with ELLs. | ELL, p. 58 |

| Positive Key Finding 9 | Supporting Findings | Source/Page |
|--|--|-------------|
| <p>Observation data indicate that secondary ELL and general education classrooms ranked similarly on assessment methods and feedback to students; those rankings were in the middle to high range.</p> <p>Votes: 1 Green</p> | 1. The average rating (on a 4-point scale, with 4 being greatest) for providing feedback to students was 2.3 for ELL programs and 2.6 for general education programs. | ELL, p. 75 |
| | 2. A general consistency was noted in assessment practices between general education and ESL programs. | ELL, p. 74 |
| | 3. The average rating (on a 4-point scale, with 4 being the greatest) for teacher monitoring progress and reteaching if necessary was 3.0 for both general education and ELL teachers. | ELL, p. 75 |
| | 4. The average rating for general education teachers (on a 4-point scale, with 4 being the greatest) for opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery was 2.8. | ELL, p. 75 |

Miscellaneous Findings

These findings were identified from the data sets by co-interpretation participants but ultimately were not included in the development of the key findings.

| Miscellaneous Findings | Source/Page |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Some interviewed teachers would like to have monitoring be more of a learning experience and an opportunity for growth. | INT, p. 9 |
| 2. Some ELL teachers did not know how ELL programs were monitored. | ELL, p. 64 |
| 3. Across the district, what was noted as most valued by respondents included dedicated staff and colleagues, supportive school climate, and students and diversity. | INT, p. 27 |
| 4. General education teachers identified different issues as the critical challenges in improving the performance of ELLs. | ELL, p. 65 |
| 5. Approximately one quarter of teachers responded that SWDs were not doing well, citing the following as the reasons: poor attendance, fast pace necessitated by having to keep up with curriculum maps, and amount of remediation or repetition needed to help students master content. | SE, p.23 |
| 6. General education teachers communicate the purpose of the lesson, use instructional strategies consistent with lesson's goals, activate knowledge, and develop subject-area engagement more often than ELL teachers. | ELL, p. 72 |
| 7. One quarter of teachers responding indicated that their SWDs were performing as best as they could. | INT, p. 23 |
| 8. Interview respondents gave five of the eight schools a high rating in terms of the monitoring of instruction, meaning that monitoring is systematic and focused. | INT, p. 9 |
| 9. ELL programs are monitored with observations and walk-throughs, and some believe ESL teachers self-monitor. | ELL, p. 18 |
| 10. Instruction is spread across more content areas at lower levels of cognitive demand than is required by the New York state assessments for Grades K–12. | SEC |
| 11. Most parents are pleased with teacher efforts and extra help. | ELL, p. 80 |
| 12. AIS services are perceived by teachers to be generally positive. | INT, p. 18 |
| 13. ELL program teachers say personnel and staff supports are available but not sufficient. | ELL, p. 59 |
| 14. Elementary general education and ELL classrooms were consistent in aspects of assessment practices. The average ratings were high for both general education and ELL and indicate high quality and frequency of assessment practices. | ELL, p. 46 |
| 15. Teachers' self-report that speaking, listening, author's craft, and writing applications are missing in Grade 1. | SEC |
| 16. Parents expressed concerns about the lack of affordable tutoring or one-on-one help for their children. | ELL, p. 81 |

| Miscellaneous Findings | Source/Page |
|--|--------------------|
| 17. Special education teachers are required to attend English department meetings. | SWD, p. 5 |
| 18. The teaching assignments of high school special education teachers fluctuate from year to year. | SWD, p. 20 |
| 19. Based upon limited teacher responses, there appears to be an emphasis on basic literacy skills in special education and ELL classrooms that are not represented on state standards. | SEC |
| 20. A frequently observed student activity at the high school level is student discussion and independent seatwork. | OBS, p. 6 |
| 21. In high school classrooms, the most prevalent student activity was sustained reading. | OBS, p. 6 |
| 22. The district is progressing toward an inclusive classroom model for SWDs. | INT, p. 38 |
| 23. Parents are concerned about the time limits for students in the bilingual program. | ELL, p. 78 |
| 24. Parents are concerned about limited availability of bilingual programs at some schools. | ELL, p. 80 |
| 25. A frequently used instructional strategy at the high school was teacher acting as coach/facilitator. | OBS, p. 6 |
| 26. Two ELL program teachers mentioned scheduling as a challenge to their work. | ELL, p. 38 |
| 27. Student absenteeism is a problem at the high school level. | SEC |
| 28. The majority of ELL program teachers believed that ELLs do not value education and are not motivated to speak English or attend school regularly. | ELL, p. 65 |
| 29. In elementary schools, the most prevalent assessment activity was performance assessment. | OBS, p. 4 |
| 30. More elementary ELL program classrooms than general education classrooms displayed up-to-date and appropriate student work, with some general education classrooms displaying limited or dated work or none at all. | ELL, p. 49 |
| 31. In Grade 7, writer's craft is not being taught with as much rigor as it is expected in the state standards. | SEC |
| 32. Both general education and ELL program classrooms ranked similarly on instructional strategies employed. Both received midrange to low ratings to the point that it may inhibit learning. | ELL, p. 73 |
| 33. General education and ELL classrooms received high ratings in classroom resources, classroom facilities (good condition), rooms arranged to encourage learning, classroom culture, and mutually respectful interactions. | ELL, p. 48 |
| 34. Grade 3 teachers are teaching basic literacy skills that are not covered on the New York state alignment. | SEC |