

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

**May 2008**

**Submitted to  
Poughkeepsie 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 Poughkeepsie City School District 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

Poughkeepsie City School District is located in the city of Poughkeepsie, the county seat of Dutchess County in New York state.<sup>1</sup> The city is located about 80 miles south of the state capital of Albany and about 75 miles north of New York City on the eastern shore of the Hudson River.<sup>2</sup> As of July 2006, its population was 30,050.

### Student Population

The New York State District Report Card for 2005–06<sup>3</sup> stated that 4,606 students were enrolled in the Poughkeepsie City School District in Grades K–12. Of these students, 66 percent were eligible for free lunch, 12 percent were eligible for reduced-price lunch, and 8 percent were considered to be of limited English proficiency.

### Demographics

The District Report Card<sup>3</sup> also indicated that Poughkeepsie City School District consists of nine schools: seven elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Approximately 63 percent of students are black or African American, 18 percent are white; 17 percent are Hispanic or Latino; and 1 percent are Asian, native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander.

The district employs 805 staff members, a number that includes 405 teaching staff. It operates with a budget of \$75 million per year and is directed by a five-member board of education.<sup>4</sup>

### Student Academic Performance

The federal Title I status of the Poughkeepsie City School District for the year 2005–06 is a *district in need of improvement—Year 3* in the subject of ELA.<sup>5</sup> In the Poughkeepsie City School District for the past three years in the subject of ELA, SWDs did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) at the elementary school or middle school level. SWDs also did not make AYP at the high school level during 2004–05 and 2005–06, two of the past three years when that subpopulation was large enough to have its test results disaggregated at the high school level.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.city-data.com/city/Poughkeepsie-New-York.html>, retrieved April 24, 2008

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pkny.info/city.php#>, retrieved April 24, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb-rc/2006/AOR-2006-131500010000.pdf>, retrieved April 24, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.poughkeepsieschools.org/media/Poughkeepsie\\_City\\_School\\_District\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_07.pdf](http://www.poughkeepsieschools.org/media/Poughkeepsie_City_School_District_Fact_Sheet_07.pdf), retrieved April 24, 2008.

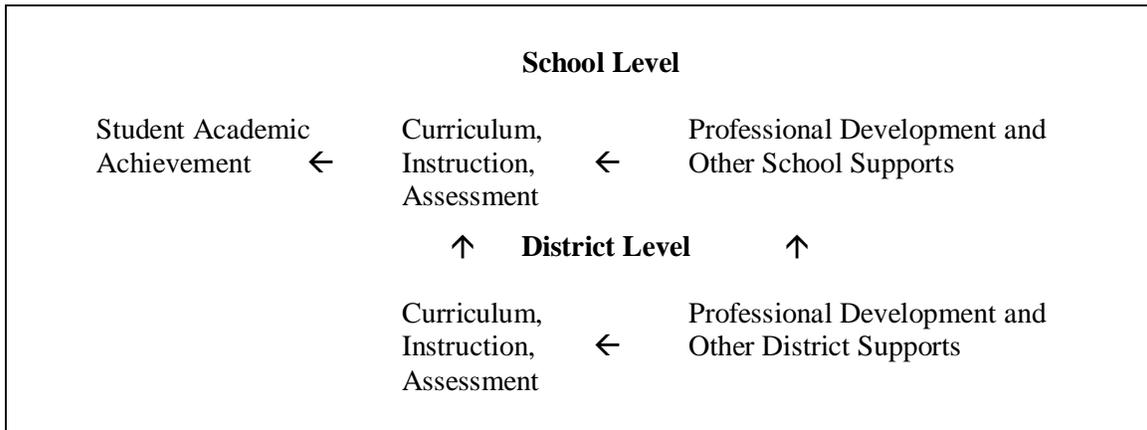
<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb-rc/2006/AOR-2006-131500010000.pdf>, retrieved April 24, 2008.

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

**Figure 1. Theory of Action**



## **Guiding Questions for the Audit**

To address both the needs of individual districts and the requirements of the audit, Learning Point Associates identified the following 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 this audit, Learning Point Associates examined district issues from multiple angles, gathering a wide range of data and using the guiding questions to focus on factors that affect curriculum, instruction, assessment, and other school supports. All of these data sources work together to bring focus and clarity to the main factors contributing to the district's corrective-action status. Broadly categorized, information sources included NCLB accountability status, the *Surveys of Enacted Curriculum*, 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 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 *Surveys of Enacted Curriculum* (SEC). Based on two decades of research funded by the National Science Foundation, the SEC are designed to facilitate the comparison of 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 schools. 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 schools, 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 to specifically 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 had 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, a structured analysis of key district documents was completed.

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 and/or policies, implementation of those plans/policies, and internal monitoring and evaluation of the implementation in support of each identified question. The degree to which each respective document addressed the relevant question was evaluated by three Learning Point Associates analysts to ensure multiple perspectives during the process. After individual reviews were completed, a consensus meeting was held and a report was generated by all reviewers.

## **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 both 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 at 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**

<b>Guiding Questions</b>	<b>SEC</b>	<b>Observations</b>	<b>Interviews</b>	<b>Key Document Review</b>	<b>Curriculum Alignment</b>	<b>Special Education Review</b>	<b>ELL Review</b>
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 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 had several steps, starting with the interpretation of the data within individual data sets and followed by the identification of key findings across data sets. These steps occurred in a two-day co-interpretation meeting with key school and district staff. Because this process was critical in identifying the priority areas for district improvement, the detailed approach is outlined here.

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

The co-interpretation process began with the study of the individual data reports (e.g., document review, curriculum alignment, interview data, SEC data, classroom observations, and special populations) in a small-group setting. Individual groups were asked to first 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 were then broken 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 were then led through a discussion process to rate the prioritized findings based on the following criteria:

- 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 critical 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. In a facilitated process, groups of school and district administrators, teachers, parents, and district technical assistance providers identified key findings across multiple data sets. These key findings were prioritized by the participants at co-interpretation and are included in this section, 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

**Despite documents showing evidence of a professional development plan, district and school personnel expressed a desire for additional, relevant, and systematic professional development for school administrators, teachers, and teaching assistants on the following:**

- **Leadership/teacher observation**
- **SWDs**
- **ELLs**
- **Differentiated instruction**
- **Use and evaluation of data to drive instruction**
- **New teacher mentoring**

This key finding was derived from the Document Review Report, the SEC Report, the Interview Report (interviews of administrators, literacy instructional leaders, principals, and general education teachers), the Special Education Report, and the ELL Report.

A review of district documents provided evidence that the Poughkeepsie City School District provides ELA professional development to general education teachers and principals. This document review, coupled with the SEC, indicated that teachers receive professional development on state standards, curriculum content, and instructional strategies for working with general education, special education, and ELL students.

Nonetheless, the Interview Report conveyed that respondents across all school levels wanted additional professional development. In all eight sample schools, respondents reported that the district provides limited opportunities for ELA professional development for teachers. Professional development is primarily offered four times per year during superintendent conference days. In four of the six elementary schools, interviewed teachers said they receive comprehensive professional development through the Reading First program. Respondents at the two non-Reading First sample elementary schools reported that the primary form of ELA professional development they receive is the vendor training from Open Court, which is not as extensive or comprehensive as the training provided through Reading First. Nearly all high school respondents who were interviewed said that aside from the required superintendent conference days, the only planned or comprehensive professional development the school

receives is provided by the America's Choice vendor, which targets only some ninth-grade teachers.

Several teachers indicated in their interviews that the content of district-mandated professional development (superintendent conference days) is not aligned with district goals and does not lead to professional growth. Many elementary teachers said that professional development provided by the district is not relevant to ELA instruction. In the high school, respondents said that only ninth-grade teachers who received training through America's Choice were influenced by professional development. Teachers at other grade levels said the district's professional development is not useful or relevant.

Various teachers said they would like more district professional development on topics such as creation of varied lesson plans, differentiated instruction, working with ELLs and special education students, use of data, and collaborating with other teachers. ELL program teachers reported needing more training on how to best address the needs of ELLs and literacy instruction for ELLs. Similarly, special education teachers expressed a desire for training on how to modify the reading programs and ELA curriculum for SWDs.

Support for new teachers was identified as a specific need by participants in the co-interpretation process. The key document review and the interviews of teachers, school administrators, and district personnel revealed that the district has a mentorship program for new teachers. However, several school interview respondents questioned the effectiveness of this program. District interview respondents indicated that new teachers need more district support than they currently receive and cited a need for more professional development and support from administrators. One respondent said that the lack of support can be “disheartening” for new teachers who are eager to work with students but do not feel supported.

Interviews of district staff indicated that principals could also use more professional support. In six of the eight sample schools included in the Interview Report, principals indicated that some professional development is provided, but this support does not always help them strengthen their building leadership. The Document Review showed that the district has no documented activities related to providing principals with professional development opportunities that address the ELA curriculum; that the district provided no evidence of policies that ensure participation of staff in professional development sessions. In addition, there is no evidence that the district assesses the impact of ELA professional development on classroom instruction.

## **Key Finding 2**

**There is little or no evidence—with the exception of Reading First and America's Choice schools—that data are consistently available, are used to monitor and drive instruction, and are used to adjust academic programs for students, particularly ELLs and SWDs. For example, state assessment data are not timely.**

This key finding is primarily supported by interviews conducted for the Interview Report, the Special Education Report, and the ELL Report. The Document Review Report also contributed to the development of this finding.

Participants in co-interpretation noted that within the Reading First and America's Choice programs, teachers and administrators are using data effectively to guide instruction. Interviews across all settings revealed that teachers in schools that use Reading First and America's Choice generally have sufficient data to monitor student progress and plan their instruction. In some cases, staff from these schools described the overwhelming amount of data that are available to them. Teachers at these schools also reported that they receive professional development to help them utilize data effectively. Co-interpretation participants corroborated these findings and stated that both programs include assessments that teachers can use to drive instruction.

In contrast, personnel at the schools that do not participate in Reading First or America's Choice said they have only a limited amount of data available. Teachers at these schools reported relying on informal assessments, such as teacher-made assessments, to help them monitor student progress. Interview respondents said they have not been trained on the use of data.

All schools, regardless of the ELA program used, reported that state assessment data are not timely. The data from the state tests usually arrive the following school year, so teachers and administrators do not use these data to monitor their students or adjust instruction accordingly.

Co-interpretation participants said that there are no districtwide policies that support the systematic use of data. The Document Review revealed little or no evidence that formative and summative student achievement data are used to monitor the adjustment of curriculum. This report also noted a lack of district documentation related to the use of data to place SWDs and ELLs in general education classrooms. There also is no documented evidence of the district implementing or monitoring the use of student achievement data to inform ELL academic planning, programming, and instruction.

### **Key Finding 3**

**Based on classroom observations, technology is not being used extensively at any grade level, including special education.**

The weight of this key finding comes from three reports: the Classroom Observation Report, the Special Education Report, and the ELL Report. Evidence is derived from the observations conducted in general education and special education classrooms.

Across grade levels in general education classrooms, classroom observations revealed that technology is not being used extensively either as a tool for instructional delivery or as a learning tool or resource. At the elementary, middle, and high school levels, using technology as a learning tool or resource was either not observed or rarely observed during classroom observations 80 percent to 100 percent of the time.

The Special Education Report revealed that slightly more than three quarters (76 percent) of the inclusive, self-contained, and general education classrooms observed did not use computer technology to support the teaching of the ELA curriculum.

## **Key Finding 4**

**Interview respondents reported a need for additional dually certified special education and ESL teachers, an ELA coach in some schools, support staff, and a district ESL director.**

This key finding is supported by interviews conducted for the Interview Report, the Special Education Report, and the ELL Report.

Respondents from all elementary schools frequently cited a need for additional staff to support ELA instruction. Two elementary schools do not have a designated ELA coach or instructional leader, so teachers at these schools turn informally to the building administrators or colleagues to receive support for ELA instruction.

District personnel reported in interviews that it is challenging to hire dually certified special education teachers. The Special Education Report described a change to the guidance staff structure, which was viewed by respondents as reducing support provided to SWDs in self-contained classrooms.

In the ELL Report, administrators said teachers need more support from personnel, such as teaching assistants, translators, volunteers, and Title I teachers. Elementary and secondary ESL and general education teachers said that more ESL teachers are needed in the district. Furthermore, interview respondents noted that the district does not have an ELL director.

## **Key Finding 5**

**With the exception of the Ramp-Up to Advanced Literacy program for approximately one third of ninth-grade students, there is no districtwide written and aligned curriculum to cover students in Grades 9–12, including ELLs and SWDs.**

This key finding was generated from the following data sources: the Curriculum Alignment Report; the Document Review Report; and interviews conducted for the Interview Report, the Special Education Report, and the ELL Report.

The Curriculum Alignment Report and the Document Review Report revealed that there is no set ELA curriculum at the high school level. The exception is the ninth-grade academy, which has implemented the America's Choice program. The district did not submit any curricular materials or scheduling/timeframes for Grade 10. In addition, the Curriculum Alignment Report noted that there are no clearly articulated student expectations embedded in the ELA curriculum. The Document Review Report also showed that there is no curriculum mapping in the high school to guide consistent delivery of instruction.

Interviews with teachers and instructional leaders at the high school indicated that instructional guidance comes through an approved book list for each grade level. Interview respondents reported that they assume that the book lists are aligned to New York state standards. Secondary ELL program teachers interviewed also said they select instructional materials from the book list.

ELL teachers indicated a lack of an ESL curriculum or guidance regarding use of the existing curriculum for ELLs. These teachers noted that in addition to the reading lists, preparation for the Regents exams also helps them design units of study.

Special education teachers reported that they differentiated instruction in order to meet the varying needs of SWDs.

## **Additional Key Findings**

Additional key findings were identified by the district co-interpretation participants but were not prioritized for action planning. These findings include the following:

6. The district instructional support team process is inconsistently reviewed and monitored, and district and building administrators and teachers reported a need for additional or improved services for struggling students prior to referral to special education or the instructional support team.
7. General, special education, and ESL teachers across grade levels reported that informal collaboration is occurring but also expressed a need for formal collaboration opportunities, such as common planning time.
8. Poughkeepsie City School District's written ELA curriculum does not appear to present a comprehensive plan for teaching and learning, although each grade (i.e., 2, 4, 6, 8) does contain elements of an effective ELA curriculum. In comparison to the NYSED curriculum, the Poughkeepsie City School District ELA curriculum appears to place much greater emphasis on the application of procedural knowledge and less emphasis on concept application, evaluation, synthesis, and.
9. ELA standards are being implemented differently across ESL classrooms. There is no uniform curriculum guiding ESL instruction, except for the summer program curriculum.
10. Secondary general education teachers reported that they do not know which students have IEPs at the beginning of the school year and that they do not have access to IEPs. In contrast, special education teachers, in general, use IEPs more consistently and frequently in planning their instruction.
11. Based on teacher interviews and IEP reviews, there is no clear consistent practice for modifying ELA curriculum and instructional materials to meet the needs of ELLs and SWDs.
12. The monitoring of instruction is primarily conducted through the structured programs implemented in Poughkeepsie City School District. Minimal monitoring is occurring independent of these programs, including Academic Intervention Services (AIS).
13. Based on observations, ELA instruction lacks project-based learning and integration of subject areas.
14. The district offers academic intervention programs outside of the school day, but student participation is limited and sporadic for various reasons.
15. Interview and focus group respondents report that the success of outreach to ELL parents is limited and results in limited parental awareness and support.

16. Most observed general education classroom teachers did not use any performance assessment strategies (e.g., teacher use of a formal assessment such as a rubric or rating scale to assess students' demonstrated knowledge; portfolios or charts of progress) nor did they use student self-assessment strategies (e.g., students' reflection on their own learning; or portfolios, logs, or checklist). These student self-assessments do not include test feedback from a computer or grading their own or another student's paper.
17. Based on the SEC and interviews, ELA instruction is not always aligned with the state standards.
18. Based on special education and general education classroom observations, direct instruction was more prevalent than alternative grouping strategies at the elementary school and high school levels.
19. Individually based activities and instruction at the secondary level or in elementary ESL classrooms as a differentiated instruction were not observed. Interviews indicated that special education and general education inclusion used this strategy to meet the needs of the individual students.
20. Although there was moderate evidence in district documents regarding academic interventions available for ELLs needing academic support, only elementary teachers were aware of additional services for low-performing ELLs.
21. According to interviews, key documents, and observations, there are inconsistencies in distribution and utilization of ELA curricular materials for all students, particularly at the secondary level and the elementary level, where general education teachers instruct ELLs.

## **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 as follows:

1. Observations and interviews indicate a variety of instructional strategies utilized at the elementary and middle levels in general and special education classes, including the following:
  - Systematic instruction of ELA skills and strategies
  - Well-planned lessons
  - Higher level feedback
  - Teacher as coach/facilitator
  - Direct instruction
  - Cooperative/collaborative grouping
  - Ability grouping
2. The elementary schools have seen more uniform ELA instruction since implementing Reading First and using Open Court materials.

3. There is evidence of instructional support and professional development in the district. This support is most pronounced in Reading First and America's Choice schools.
4. In most classrooms observed, classroom management was effective.
5. Elementary and middle school classrooms focused a significant amount of time on the key components of reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
6. High levels of student engagement and academically focused class time were observed at the elementary level.
7. Interviews indicate that Ramp-Up, Reading First interventions, and Title I ESL are services available to struggling students during the school day in participating schools.
8. Visuals related to New York state standards are visible in classrooms.
9. Elementary, secondary, and ESL teachers reported similar instructional practices in working with ELLs.
10. Middle school and one third of Grade 9 ELA instruction is guided by the America's Choice school reform design.
11. A majority of interviewed teachers reported that SWDs are appropriately prepared for state and district assessments, receive appropriate testing accommodations, and that those accommodations are monitored by qualified staff. They further reported that SWDs are performing well or very well on assessments. (However, this subgroup has not made AYP in accordance with NCLB.)

## 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 key findings and recommendations does not exist. Rather, Learning Point Associates has identified the areas that are believed to be the most critical for the district. Further, the order of listing does not reflect a ranking or prioritization of the recommendations. For each recommendation, additional information is provided on specific actions 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 Poughkeepsie City School District led Learning Point Associates to make five recommendations:

- Develop a comprehensive, clearly articulated K–12 ELA written curriculum for all students.
- Implement K–12 ELA instruction that is aligned with the curriculum, includes differentiated instruction, uses student achievement data, and is monitored for implementation.
- Develop and implement a districtwide ELA professional development system that addresses the priorities and needs of the district, school leadership, instructional, support, and administrative staff.
- Increase access to the general curriculum for SWDs.
- Increase access to the general curriculum for ELLs.

In his *Instructional Plan for Improving the Schools of the Poughkeepsie City School District*, the superintendent expressed his intent to “improve and enhance all components of our schools.” As Poughkeepsie City School District acts on the recommendations of Learning Point Associates, it will strengthen curriculum and instruction for all students, thus serving and enhancing the superintendent’s plan.

In developing a comprehensive, clearly articulated written ELA curriculum, the district can embrace the superintendent’s concept of “theme-focused career academics.” The strengthened curriculum also will provide the foundation for the continued expansion and development of Reading First and the America’s Choice Whole School Reform Model. The district is advised to create curriculum maps and documents for Grades 9–12 and revise existing curriculum maps for Grades K–8 with the superintendent’s plan in mind. These documents should be aligned with NYSED ELA performance indicators in terms of depth and breadth of content.

Just as the students of Poughkeepsie City School District will be well served by the superintendent’s plan for elementary school, middle school, and high school restructuring, they

will benefit from the district's attention to instructional improvements. At all grade levels, instructional approaches and materials must be aligned to the curriculum and NYSED standards. Instruction must be differentiated and offer multiple learning opportunities to accommodate students of many and varied needs, especially SWDs and ELLs. The ninth-grade academy and theme-focused career academies included in the superintendent's plan are sound educational concepts and should be key components of the district's action plan for instruction. In addition, Poughkeepsie students would benefit from the development of a comprehensive system of data collection to inform instruction. The introduction of the Reading First and America's Choice programs have provided models and advanced the practices of effective data use. These practices should be expanded to serve other programs and involve additional staff so that data-driven decision making is taking place throughout the district—from the board room to the classroom.

Participants in the Poughkeepsie co-interpretation meeting strongly endorsed the need for a districtwide professional development program to serve certified staff, support staff, and administration. Instructional staff would benefit from continuing programs on instructional methods and strategies to more effectively serve at-risk students. Administrators need programs to develop leadership skills, build teams, and monitor staff performance as well as mentor early career educators. All staff would benefit from programs to model and foster collaboration. As the action plan for professional development is written, the related components of the superintendent's plan should be merged so that the two plans become one, thus enhancing and accelerating the performance of staff in serving their students.

The need for SWDs and ELLs to have increased access to the general curriculum was strongly cited in the co-interpretation meetings. As a subgroup, SWDs have not made AYP in accordance with NCLB. Although Poughkeepsie City School District was not cited for the performance of its ELLs, participants in the data collection process and at co-interpretation strongly noted that this student group is growing in size, yet their needs are not currently well met. Special education teachers, teachers of ELLs, general education teachers, teacher assistants, and administrators are in need of professional development so that they can better serve all students and programs and services can be strengthened and monitored.

## **Recommendation 1: Curriculum**

**Develop a comprehensive, clearly articulated K–12 ELA system of written curriculum for all students that includes the following elements:**

- **Curriculum maps or documents for Grades K–12 that consistently drive content and display information in similar ways**
- **Alignment of the district's written curriculum and the NYSED ELA performance indicators in terms of depth and breadth of content**
- **Clearly articulated and aligned student expectations at district determined benchmarks**
- **Instructional pacing information that is viable and tied to specific, district-provided materials**
- **Suggested instructional methods and materials to meet all students' ELA needs**

- **Specific assessment tools and techniques linked to the content**
- **A plan to monitor curriculum development and implementation across the district**

### **Link to Findings**

Data reports indicate that Poughkeepsie City School District presently has ELA curriculum maps for Grades K–8 but not for Grades 9–12. A fully developed written curriculum encompasses several components: clearly articulated student expectations, pacing guidelines, connections to core instructional strategies, links to specific formative and summative assessments, and connections to instructional and curricular materials. The Curriculum Alignment Report indicates that the curriculum maps at each grade level for K–8 present aspects of these components. Other curricular components (i.e., suggested differentiated instruction methods to address diverse student needs) are absent altogether in the current curriculum maps. In addition, the district curricular documents, generally, do not address or align with a diverse range of cognitive demand and knowledge levels presented in the state’s performance indicators. More specifically, compared with the NYSED performance indicators, the Poughkeepsie City School District ELA curriculum places greater emphasis on the application of procedural knowledge and less emphasis on higher order thinking such as evaluation, synthesis, and metacognitive skills.

### **Link to Research**

**Comprehensive, Articulate, and Aligned ELA Curriculum.** An *aligned* and *fully articulated* curriculum has the following qualities (Danielson, 2002; English, 2000):

- Alignment of district and state standards in terms of content breadth
- Alignment of district and state standards in terms of cognitive depth
- Clearly articulated student expectations
- Realistic pacing guidelines for coverage of the district standards
- Other curricular components in addition to district standards and pacing guides that may include instructional strategies, connections to district materials, other resources, or assessment options

Aligning a curriculum to a state’s content standards is an important educational practice. New York state school districts are expected to align their ELA curriculum to meet NYSED ELA performance indicators and standards (NYSED, 2005). However, a district that presents state standards or performance indicators as its student expectations does not have an aligned curriculum (Anderson, 2002) because curriculum alignment is more than a correlation between or a restatement of performance indicators and local district student expectations.

Academic standards are intended to create more intellectually demanding content and pedagogy, thereby improving the quality of education for all students. By establishing a uniform curriculum, schools are one step closer to producing greater equality in students’ academic achievement (Sandholtz, Ogawa, & Scribner, 2004). A fully articulated and aligned curriculum with specific performance indicators, assessments, and strategies provides teachers with a common set of expectations. When the curriculum materials, programs, and assessments are

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

Research shows that curriculum is one of the factors contributing to student achievement. Marzano's (2003) review of research in this area found that having a viable and guaranteed curriculum is one of the strongest indicators of improving student performance. Curriculum alignment can be a very powerful factor in improving schools. The research literature has found a link between assessments and the curriculum. If used wisely, curriculum alignment that coordinates the written, taught, and tested curriculum can effectively help teachers develop units that will interest students and enable them to perform well on high-stakes tests (Glatthorn, 1999). Schools also would benefit from a comprehensive district organization that utilizes a coordinated approach to setting goals, curriculum development, and testing rather than addressing these factors as three separate elements (Crowell & Tissot, 1986).

**System for Monitoring ELA Curriculum Development.** Curriculum must be thoughtfully developed, implemented, monitored, maintained, and renewed to effectively and efficiently function. Stakeholders must share a common vision and work collaboratively to ensure success (Newmann, 2002).

In his review of research and practices, Brown (2004) suggests that teachers, schools, and districts might best be served by viewing curriculum as “a system for guiding learning and promoting organizational productivity” (p. 1). Building and maintaining this system involves (1) establishing a common curriculum language; (2) building consensus around curriculum nonnegotiables; (3) establishing alignment to promote accountability; (4) meeting the needs of all learners; (5) evaluating curriculum; and (6) finding parallels among current national curriculum models to compare with other school systems. Collectively, school districts may view these points as important considerations on which to construct their more detailed curriculum plans.

It is essential for schools to continually revisit, update, and improve their ELA curriculum to ensure that it continues to reflect best practices, current content, and appropriate assessment tools and procedures (Hoffman, 1996; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2002).

### **Implementation Considerations**

Poughkeepsie City School District needs to improve its written ELA curriculum plans and processes. These changes in the ELA curriculum will result in the creation of a blueprint that better aligns the specific content and the skills that the district expects its students to acquire with the NYSED grade-level standards and performance indicators in terms of content depth and

breadth. In addition, it will offer more targeted guidance and resources to aid teachers in planning and delivering more effective ELA instruction for all students.

Particular steps and considerations Poughkeepsie City School District should attend to in developing its ELA curriculum include the following:

- **Design a strong process.** It is important to note that Poughkeepsie City School District already has designed many elements of a comprehensive articulated curriculum. However, a unified, systemic approach and refinement are necessary to ensure that all grade levels are equitably and accurately updated. Creation of district *design* expectations, templates, and overarching goals for this encompassing ELA project will assist in making this time well spent.
- **Build off of existing structures.** The district can explicitly review the student expectations that have been created. One of the necessary steps in fulfilling this recommendation has to do with the full creation of student expectations. Once again, Poughkeepsie City School District has some elements of these in place. Alignment and refinement of some of the current expectations as well as creation of new expectations for other grade levels is necessary. Some of the decisions that will need to be made include the following question: Will these expectations be designed quarterly, monthly, for each grade level, for each ELA topic area, or aligned to current programming? Other questions as to the monitoring and the use of the data from these expectations and formative assessments are included in Recommendation 2.
- **Close gaps.** The district should examine the depth and breadth of knowledge that is currently included within the maps; conduct a gap analysis; and determine how, as a system, these gaps will be addressed.
- **Accentuate the strengths of all district personnel.** Although Poughkeepsie City School District has many experts, we strongly suggest that a cross-department team should be charged with this work. Ensuring that curricular expectations are designed and set by ELL, SWD, and general education teachers can help in communicating the vital message that all teachers are responsible for student success.
- **Monitor for success.** The plan for monitoring the successful development and implementation of the curriculum should explain how the district will ensure that it creates and maintains a comprehensive, clearly articulated, and aligned ELA curriculum. This task may be the responsibility of an ELA curriculum committee consisting of K–12 teachers and administrators, which is charged with dual tasks of development and revising. To ensure that factors possibly impacting the ELA curriculum are known and addressed in collaboration with other district efforts, this committee should not operate in isolation.

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## **Recommendation 2: Instruction**

**Implement a districtwide collaborative system of instruction, which provides all students with access and support to the district ELA written curriculum. The system will contain the following aspects:**

- **Alignment to the district written curriculum and breadth and depth of the NYSED learning standards and performance indicators**
- **Assistance and direction in offering differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students**
- **Appropriate support and modifications for ELLs and SWDs who are in general education settings**
- **Information on technology integration in the classrooms**
- **Guidance on the use of data from performance assessments to inform instructional decision making**
- **Building from and full integration of the current system of instructional support teams**
- **Implementation, monitoring, and renewal checkpoints for consideration**

### **Link to Findings**

At the Poughkeepsie City School District co-interpretation meeting, participants reviewed data reports and determined that ELA instruction is a high-priority area for the district. In terms of the content being taught in the ELA classrooms, the SEC Report and the Interview Report indicate that instruction is not always aligned with the state standards. Based on special education and general education classroom observations, direct instruction was more prevalent than other instructional approaches at both the elementary and the high school levels. Classroom observers also noted that ELA instruction lacks project-based learning, and integration of subject areas and technology is not used extensively at any grade level. In regard to instruction for ELL students in particular, data reveal that individually based activities and differentiated instruction were rarely observed across all grade levels. In addition, there is little to no evidence that data are used to adjust, to drive, or to monitor instruction.

### **Link to Research**

**Alignment of ELA Instruction and Written Curriculum.** As noted in Recommendation 1, one crucial component of a comprehensive, clearly articulated, and aligned ELA curriculum is a clear link between the written curriculum and the classroom instruction. Teachers often use ELA curriculum maps to plan and guide instruction and other learning opportunities that target the required student learning objectives and content. Therefore, to guide teachers in their ELA instruction, the district should establish clear links between what students are expected to learn (i.e., written curriculum) and what teachers are expected to teach (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Glatthorn, Boschee, & Whitehead, 2005; Glatthorn, Carr, & Harris, 2001; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). This brings up the issue of duality in teaching. How teachers teach and the methods that

they use are as important as what they teach (the content of instruction), so simply matching instructional goals and practices to objectives and materials in the written curriculum is not sufficient to implement effective literacy instruction that meets the needs of all students (Edwards, Turner, & Mokhtari, 2008; Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, & Rodriguez, 2002). An aligned written curriculum in and of itself does not guarantee that quality instruction will be provided (Allington, 1994).

**Effective ELA Instruction.** Researchers indicate that effective teachers of literacy do the following (Allington & Walmsley, 2007; Langer, 2004; Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991; Torgesen et al., 2007):

- 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.

The National Reading Panel (2000) has identified five areas of reading in which readers need instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. The amount of instructional time in each of the five areas varies depending on the knowledge and ability of the reader. As instructional time decreases in phonemic awareness and phonics, instructional time in comprehension increases. Successful readers use multiple strategies flexibly to construct meaning as they read (Clay, 1998). There are scientifically based reading strategies for instruction in the multiple areas of comprehension (e.g., inferencing, summarizing) (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Effective adolescent literacy instruction is crucial to all students' academic success and must be viewed as serving the unique and specific academic needs of middle school and high school students, 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 and his colleagues (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; Francis, 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 idea that students who struggle with reading can and should be academically successful if provided with appropriate intervention that targets their needs.

**Differentiated ELA Instruction.** Effective teachers seek to meet students directly at their level not at arbitrary grade levels or age levels (Tomlinson, 1999, 2001). There is substantial evidence that SWDs and ELLs who struggle with reading in the primary grades will continue to experience difficulties throughout their school years if not provided with appropriate and focused intervention (Allington, 2006; Francis et al., 2006; Scanlon, Vellutino, Small, Fanuele, & Sweeney, 2005). A crucial consideration in providing effective instruction for all students is to differentiate instruction, thereby embracing the belief that students take different paths to reach the same goal or outcome (Clay, 1998). This differentiation is not a byproduct of engaged teaching but, rather, a planned, purposeful action. Addressing a variety of readiness, interests, and learning styles in appropriately differentiated instruction allows teachers to vary instructional approaches by varying the content, the process, or the product (Tomlinson & Strickland, 2005).

Tomlinson (2004, p. 231) notes:

“Rooted in research and theory of psychology and education, differentiated instruction asks [the] teacher to do the following:

- Actively work with students to develop learning environments that are positive for each learner.
- Routinely engage in reflection on learners as individuals as well as on learners as a group.
- Systematically assess learner knowledge, understanding and skill via pre-assessment, formative assessment, and summative assessment in light of desired learning goals.
- Purposefully modify instruction in response to learner need and to extend learner proficiency from its current point base, as indicated by assessment and reflection.
- Consistently adapt content (how students get access to what they need to learn), process (activities or how students learn), and/or products (how students show what they know, understand and can do) based on student learner readiness, interest, and learning profile (Tomlinson, 1999, 2001).”

For instance, addressing the needs of learners at the initial stages of reading, the focus of literacy instruction should be on improving alphabeticity—including phonemic awareness, word analysis, and sight-word recognition—and on moving toward automaticity. However, comprehension is not to be ignored. Grouping for reading instruction is one of the most effective ways to provide a safe learning environment for adolescents (Curtis & Longo, 1999). After benchmarks are established, however, teachers have a wide range of choices in methods, strategies, and materials when designing lessons. Research shows that students learn in a variety of ways and need multiple exposures to the same content (Tomlinson, 1999). Differentiation is one way that teachers can meet the diverse needs of all students.

Some teachers use Bloom’s taxonomy and metacognitive processes to identify appropriate student expectations, activities, and instructional approaches; to prepare and use curriculum maps; and to guide and differentiate instruction (Langa & Yost, 2007; Tomlinson, 1999, 2001). The most effective teachers of literacy 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). These 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.

**Use of Technology in ELA Instruction.** Ever-emerging technology is creating the need for individuals to learn and to employ new forms of literacy (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). For students, it is important that they learn to do the following (North Central Regional Education Laboratory [NCREL], 2002):

- Understand the use and purpose of a variety of technology devices and learning resources.
- Use technology for creative purposes and for content-specific use to support learning and research.
- Understand the social, ethical, and human issues dealing with technology, such as working collaboratively with others and understanding the changes that information technology has had on society.
- Use technology to gather information, communicate with others, and create products either independently or collaboratively.
- Use technology research tools for problem-solving and illustration of ideas in order to accomplish a variety of activities.
- Use technology problem-solving and decision-making tools to evaluate electronic sources.

Leu and his colleagues (2004) theorize that existing or traditional conceptualizations of literacy do not adequately identify or explain how and why technologies such as computers and the Internet are creating the need for individuals to learn and employ new forms of literacy. Researchers urge teachers to adjust the instructional methods—including the methods and materials they employ as well as the tasks they assign—to more closely align with how today's "digital native" students learn and interact within increasingly complex, technologically mediated environments (Prensky, 2001). Teachers of young children must incorporate authentic instruction and other learning opportunities using computers into their curriculum in order to foster children's literacy development for an ever-changing and increasingly technological society (Brooks & Wilson, 2006). To take adequate advantage of technology, sufficient technological literacy is important for teachers as well as students. Teachers require adequate staff development to feel comfortable with technology and use it in the way it was intended to gain maximum effect (NCREL, 2002).

**Data-Driven Decisions for ELA Instruction and Improved Student Achievement.** Research illustrates that using student assessment data is a critical starting point for giving frequent and specific feedback to teachers on whether or not their instructional strategies are meeting the needs of all of their students (Gregory & Kuzmich, 2004). Highly effective teachers regularly share student achievement data and use these data to inform instruction (Hayes & Robnolt, 2007; Mokhtari, Rosemary, & Edwards, 2008; Taylor et al., 2002). Research recommends a balance between formative and summative assessments. This approach also is referred to as "assessment

for learning with descriptive feedback” and “assessment of learning” (Stiggins, Arter, Chappuis, & Chappuis, 2004, pp. 36–37). Formative assessments—or assessment *for* learning with descriptive feedback—assist in informing instructional practices (Stiggins et al., 2004, pp. 36–37). This type of assessment can be used individually (i.e., teachers review and use data independently to plan instruction) or as a group (i.e., teachers assemble in small-group or whole-group professional learning communities to learn how to analyze data and to engage in actual data analysis and lesson development and revising) (Taylor & Pearson, 2005; Taylor et al., 2005). Research supports that data-driven decision making requires professional development and continued support from all stakeholders (Holloway, 2003).

**System for Monitoring ELA Curriculum Implementation.** Guidelines offered by Brown (2004) to inform curriculum-development monitoring (as discussed in Recommendation 1) also may 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). In addition, to ensure 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).

### **Implementation Considerations**

As Poughkeepsie City School District aims to improve its ELA instruction, particular steps and considerations that the district should attend to in the area of ELA instruction include the following:

- **Provide clarity and cohesion for teams working between and on the curriculum and instruction recommendations.** Poughkeepsie City School District may choose to have one working team that implements these recommendations; however, if multiple teams are working, strong coordination and guidance are two of the factors necessary for successful implementation. Representative stakeholder participation, especially in the areas of ELL and SWD teachers, will be essential in serving all students in the district.
- **Prioritize district-level instructional initiatives and efforts.** When focusing on instructional initiatives, ensuring that stakeholders are involved in making these decisions is key. To achieve district-level adoption and implementation, consolidation and prioritization must be evident in the planning and decision-making process. This approach will involve a full look at current district plans as well as reading programs that are currently up and running. Poughkeepsie City School District has multiple programs in place: Reading First, America’s Choice, and Ramp Up as well as AIS programs that are under way. Alignment of the instructional models and expected outcomes is one step in this process.
- **Enhance existing tools in the district.** Poughkeepsie City School District has curriculum maps for most grade levels. Adding to and refining these maps is one step in creating a cohesive and coherent system of curriculum and instruction. Addressing the duality of teaching—both the content and the process—and explicitly laying out both student expectations and teacher expectations will assist in creating vertical and horizontal alignment across classrooms, grade levels, and schools within the district.

- **Incorporate explicit examples and scaffolding for differentiated instruction, lessons, and planning.** A differentiated instruction approach acknowledges that different students need different types of materials and instruction to meet the same learning goals and objectives. Among other considerations, Poughkeepsie City School District must ensure that all teachers have an abundant supply of reading materials of varying types, genres, topics, and reading levels as well as guidance on meeting the needs of all students. We strongly suggest that a committee of ELL, SWD, and ELA specialists work collaboratively on these supports.
- **Encourage teachers to incorporate technology into their ELA instruction.** Because some teachers may not feel comfortable with technology, staff development may be one way to help all staff learn how to integrate technology into ELA instruction.
- **Use data use to drive the development and implementation of effective instruction.** Teachers should use data to plan instruction for their students. Because some teachers may be unsure how to make such data-driven decisions, professional development opportunities (as discussed in Recommendation 3) should be provided.
- **Develop a plan for monitoring ELA instruction.** The plan should explain how the district will incorporate existing or create new systems, structures, and processes to ensure that what students need to know—in terms of content/skills, standards, and performance indicators—is emphasized.

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## **Recommendation 3: Professional Development**

**Develop and implement a districtwide ELA professional development system that does the following:**

- **Addresses the priorities of the district, school leadership, teachers, and support staff, especially in implementation of the district’s written ELA curriculum and analysis of student data to make instructional decisions.**
- **Supports collaborations across all instructional staff, including new teachers, to improve ELA instruction and student learning.**
- **Is continuously monitored to ensure successful implementation and to determine impact on ELA instruction and learning.**

### **Link to Findings**

The Document Review Report and Interview Report indicate that Poughkeepsie City School District provides inconsistent and inadequate professional development opportunities to district staff on how to develop and implement an effective ELA curriculum. The Interview Report also reveals that both new and veteran teachers lack sufficient instructional support and would appreciate more opportunities to collaborate to improve their content knowledge and pedagogy and, in the case of new teachers, to be mentored by a more experienced colleague. Moreover, the Interview Report discloses that many district administrators lack sufficient knowledge and capacity to provide instructional staff with effective educational leadership to improve ELA teaching and learning. In addition, it indicates that teachers and administrators believe they and most of their colleagues do not know how to analyze, interpret, and use student achievement data to guide instructional decisions.

### **Link to Research**

Professional development is often 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). Fullan (2007) generally reports that one-time workshops—especially those on topics not specifically related to a curricular or instructional issues—do not provide the focused, sustained, and collaborative assistance that teachers need to have a meaningful impact on their teaching or on students’ learning. Research has shown that linking professional development to district goals is one way to effectively change instructional practices and student achievement (Guskey, 2000).

Professional development should be thought of as a cycle beginning with goals linked to student achievement (Sparks & Hirsh, 1997). In terms of student achievement, teachers need to develop a plan to measure how they have met the goals (Fuhrman, Clune, & Elmore, 1988). This planning stage is the time to align professional development to curriculum, assessments, and local needs. When evaluation is tied to professional development, structures for feedback and for follow-up are included in the process.

When designing professional development, the content focus of these opportunities is critical to ensuring staff buy-in (Richardson, 1994). If teachers see little value in the information presented, little change will occur. The concept of “just in time” information for teachers can be helpful for impacting practice (Schunk, 2004). “Just in time” content professional development comes from teacher-identified needs.

The Poughkeepsie City School District data reports reveal that professional development support is needed in areas such as the implementation of the ELA curriculum and the analysis of student data.

**Professional Development on Implementing the ELA Curriculum.** Many schools and school districts that have provided targeted ELA professional development have witnessed improved student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Pearson, Taylor, & Tam, 2005; Rogers et al., 2006; Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, & Rodriguez, 2005). Research favors professional development that is discipline-specific, or focuses on *pedagogical content knowledge* (Shulman & Sherin, 2005). This type of professional development is designed to assist teachers in refining their knowledge and teaching of a subject area. Researchers have embraced this perspective regarding effective ELA professional development (Pearson et al., 2005; Taylor, Frye, Peterson, & Pearson, 2003). 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).

**Professional Development on Using Data to Drive ELA Instruction.** If school systems want teachers to plan and deliver instruction based on student achievement data, there is substantial evidence indicating that teachers must be trained in how to gather, interpret, and act upon such data (Hayes & Robnolt, 2007). Such training must address specific data sources and focus on assisting teachers in translating findings to meaningful instruction. Of course, meaningful training actively engages teachers in *constructing* an understanding of interpreting and using data to guide instruction rather than just *telling* definitions and procedures (Schnellert, Butler, & Higginson, 2008). Some school systems have devised tools and procedures for teaching teachers how to make data-driven instructional decisions. Such tools enable teachers to create their own procedures and share strategies with colleagues (e.g., Boudett, Murnane, City, & Moody, 2005; Henning, 2006; Nichols & Singer, 2000). Brimijoin, Marquise, and Tomlinson (2003) described how one teacher actively engaged her fifth-grade students in self-assessment and in sharing this information with her so that she could differentiate their instruction and better meet their needs.

**Leadership and Professional Development.** Principals need to critically examine the type and quality of the leadership they provide teachers and students (Evans & Mohr, 1999). A mentoring model for the professional development of school leaders has been developed whereby individuals learn to do the following (Danzig, Osanloo, Blankson, & Kiltz., 2005, p. 4–5):

- “Translates guiding ideas into educational practices that engage all members of the community.”
- “Designs effective learning processes so that individuals and organizations learn.”

- “Provides relevant school data that can be used as a tool for developing a learning community that strives to improve.”
- “Surfaces mental models that people bring to the world and helps faculty and staffs identify strengths and weaknesses of these models.”
- “Embraces a deeper understanding and learning about one’s own work and practice.”

Effective district and building administrators embrace professional development in content, for themselves and teachers. The training they receive and the activities in which they engage support them in doing their jobs more effectively and efficiently (Fullan, 2007).

**Support for Collaboration.** Professional development traditionally has been viewed as information that was provided to teachers with the hope and expectation that it would result in improved teaching and learning. This traditional view of professional development generally has not been successful, often because it was provided too infrequently and was not focused on teacher needs (Darling-Hammond, 2001; Fullan, 2007).

In contrast, the use of professional learning communities provide 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 otherwise critically examine issues and matters of most interest and concern at the time (Fullan, 2007; Lieberman & Miller, 2002; Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006; William, 2008). The goal of meeting within such a community is to gain insight, elicit help, and develop potential strategies, plans, or ideas that may 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 the same traditional practices, which maintained the status quo of students who succeeded. The second type lowered expectations and standards, which feigned the success of additional students. The third group devised and implemented innovative and differentiated strategies and methods to engage all students. Teachers do not necessarily select one of these groups, as multiple factors influence what happens in schools.

McLaughlin and Talbert (2001) caution that teachers’ meeting and collaborating does not guarantee improved teaching or learning if teachers’ collaboration merely serves to reinforce each other’s poor practices and beliefs. Therefore, meetings and collaborations need to be guided and monitored by sound practices. School systems intending to successfully 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 (Taylor et al., 2005; Rogers et al., 2006), which need time and support to develop and transform practice and improve student achievement (Vescio et al., 2008; Whitcomb, 2004).

**Monitoring of Professional Development Implementation and Effectiveness.** Implementing effective monitoring practices is critical to the success of the overall professional development plan. Knowing when professional development is working—and when to adjust as a result of inconsistent implementation or outcomes—will ensure that time and funds are wisely invested (Hodges, 1996). Districts can monitor professional development in several ways, ranging from

tracking attendance to monitoring the implementation of instructional strategies during observations and walk-throughs (Danielson & McGreal, 2000; Toch & Rothman, 2008).

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* focus on how teachers may be organized and may be supported by materials and leaders. *Process standards* identify procedural information, such as strategies to employ to reach an intended goal, and knowledge and skills of how people collaborate. *Content standards* relate to the knowledge and skills that teachers will 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 this professional development. After all, 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 teachers need to help students improve their learning and achievement, is aligned to district and state standards, and is occurring on a daily basis as collaborative meetings among educators—not merely as a formal districtwide or schoolwide workshop (The Teaching Commission, 2004).

## **Implementation Considerations**

Poughkeepsie City School District needs to develop and implement a sustained districtwide ELA professional development system. The research presented in the previous section presents many practical, research-based procedures to guide successful development, implementation, and monitoring. Particular steps and considerations Poughkeepsie City School District should attend to in developing its action plan include the following:

- **Provide professional development that is continuous.** Ongoing professional development provides opportunities for depth and growth in important topics essential to improving teaching effectiveness and student learning.
- **Make use of external professional development providers.** Such providers can and should be from outside of the district, as long as the professional development provided aligns to the district’s goals.
- **Plan professional development based on the ELA curriculum.** Consider both content (i.e., what students need to learn and what 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).
- **Engage educators at all levels in determining the types and focus of professional development to be provided.**
- **Consider supporting the creation and sustainability of professional learning communities.** Professional learning communities provide opportunities for educators to

assemble on a regular basis to read and discuss current research and student data, and to plan and revise future instruction based on relevant findings.

- **Monitor implementation of professional development.** This approach involves tracking the implementation of the initiative(s), gathering data on a regular basis to determine what is working well, and then making improvements as necessary to maximize positive outcomes. The first step is to track attendance at professional development meetings. The school and the district also can monitor the implementation of instructional strategies discussed during professional development during observations or walk-throughs. These observations may or may not use the same protocols as or be tied to the evaluation of teachers. They might be done on a peer-peer basis as part of a professional learning community.

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## **Recommendation 4: Students With Disabilities**

**Create structures and processes to improve the awareness, understanding, and knowledge of all teachers regarding the concept of increasing access to the general ELA curriculum for SWDs through the following:**

- **Ensuring that all teachers receive training on incorporating into their instruction research-based instructional strategies to help meet the needs of a diverse student population.**
- **Ensuring that all teachers share a common vocabulary regarding disability categories, curriculum adaptations and augmentations, and the purpose and use of IEPs.**

### **Link to Findings**

Interviews of teachers in general education and special education revealed a need for professional development on designing and implementing strategies to adapt instruction for SWDs. Secondary teachers specifically expressed a need to learn how to modify America's Choice materials. Eighty-five percent of special education teachers interviewed stated that professional development activities available to them were the same as what was available to general education teachers. IEP access and use were expressed as serious issues by secondary teachers. In the co-interpretation meetings, these issues became significant evidence in Key Findings 1, 5, 6, 10, 11, and 12.

Because the SWD subgroup has not made AYP in accordance with NCLB and most of these students are taught for part of their day in the general education classrooms, it is essential that both general and special education teachers are equipped to meet their needs and to assess their progress. Teachers of students with learning disabilities need to acquire additional specialized knowledge to individualize instruction, and teachers also need to build skills and recommend modifications and accommodations needed for SWDs to be successful in the general education curriculum. Professional development is needed to prepare teachers to be able to do the following:

- Possess a substantial base of knowledge about criteria for identifying research-based methodology and instructional programs available to individualize instruction for SWDs.
- Be proficient in providing direct skill instruction in ELA, listening, and learning strategies.
- Be able to adjust instruction and learning supports based on student progress, observation, and professional judgment.
- Conduct comprehensive evaluations that include standardized assessment measures, informal assessment, and behavioral observations as well as translate the data into meaningful educational recommendations.
- Explain test results to help parents and teachers understand each student's needs and the recommendations generated during the assessment process.

- Possess strong communication skills to function as collaborative partners and members of problem-solving teams.
- Be knowledgeable about the nature and implications of disabilities as well as requirements of NCLB, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA, 2004), and federal and state regulations.

## **Link to Research**

Successful student access to the curriculum comes about through the implementation of validated programs and procedures. It calls for the student (if appropriate), special and general education teachers, parents, a district representative, and representatives of other agencies necessary to best serve the student’s needs to take part in the student’s educational planning, with improved learning in the general education curriculum as a goal. Research suggests that the meaning of “access to the general education curriculum” is often not well understood, and few school districts have clear policies regarding how to promote such access (Agran, Alper, & Wehmeyer, 2002). As a result, practitioners often interpret promoting “access to the general education curriculum” to mean different things. Frequently, it is interpreted simply as student placement in the general education classroom.

In regard to the IDEA mandates for ensuring student involvement with and progress in the general education, the progress is typically defined by content and student performance standards. The inclusion discussion should address what is taught, how curriculum content is delivered, and what supports are needed to ensure progress in the general education curriculum (Soukup, Wehmeyer, Bashinski & Bovaird, 2007). It also is important to give attention to the nature and intensity of supplementary aids and services provided to ensure involvement and progress. Sec. 602(33) of IDEA (2004) defines *supplementary aids and services* as “aids, services, and other supports provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.” Turnbull, Turnbull, and Wehmeyer (2007) suggested a framework for conceptualizing the types of supports intended as supplementary aids and services: curriculum modifications, including curriculum adaptations and curriculum augmentations; access to educational and assistive technology; assessment and task accommodations; and the availability of paraeducator or peer supports.

*Curriculum adaptations* refers to modifications that change the way content is represented or presented to students to promote student engagement, either through pedagogical means (e.g., advance organizers) or through the use of technology (e.g., digital talking books). *Curriculum augmentations* refer to the addition of content to the general education curriculum to enable students to learn skills and strategies to perform more effectively in the general education curriculum (e.g., teaching students learning-to-learn strategies, cognitive strategies, and student-directed learning strategies).

A limited number of studies address the degree to which SWDs are involved with the general education curriculum. For many SWDs, particularly students with learning disabilities, the focus of the special education services provided has been to ensure student progress in core content areas. As such, there are no studies that speak explicitly to the degree to which students with

learning disabilities are “involved with” the general education curriculum. Rather, many studies describe only instructional methods and curriculum adaptations and augmentations—shadowing, verbatim notes, graphic or advance organizers, self-regulation strategies, semantic maps, mnemonics, chunking, questioning, and visualizing strategies—to promote progress in core content areas for students with learning disabilities (Baker, Gersten, & Scanlon, 2002; Graham & Harris, 2005; Jitendra, Edwards, Choutka, & Treadway, 2002; Pressley, 2005).

A review of instructional approaches taken with SWDs indicates that when curriculum modifications such as augmentations (e.g., teaching students cognitive strategies) are used, student engagement and progress improves (De La Paz & MacArthur, 2003). Cobb-Morocco (2001) concluded that students with learning disabilities can improve their understanding of ideas and concepts, investigative methods, and purposes of knowledge through subject-specific cognitive strategies. Deshler et al. (2001) described validated practices for teaching students with learning disabilities that have positive effects on student learning, including using content-enhancement routines that rely on teachers to select critical elements of the content they believe to be most important. Swanson and Hoskyn (2001) conducted a component and composite analysis of educational practices to determine which practices positively influenced the performance of students with learning disabilities. They found that advanced organizers (defined as curriculum adaptations that direct student focus on information that is particularly salient or important in a reading) were successful. Swanson and Deshler (2003) noted that critical to improving outcomes for SWDs is providing educators with specific examples of how to improve upon high-quality instructional strategies—such as explicit practice—by combining these strategies with content-enhancement routines or learning-strategy instruction.

Pugach and Warger (2001) observed that the access mandates in NCLB and IDEA shift the focus of the “problem” to be solved when teaching SWDs from fixing or changing the student to examining the relationship between the student and the curriculum and, when necessary, modifying the curriculum to enable student learning. According to Beckman (2001), improved student learning requires teachers, schools, and districts to give up unproductive traditions and beliefs, replacing them with validated practices and a full understanding of the intent of the law. Successful student access to the general education curriculum is most likely to occur when there is general acceptance of the following principles:

- Responsibility for the learning outcomes of special education students is equally shared by the classroom teacher and the special education teacher.
- The classroom teacher not only is aware of the student’s IEP goals but also plays a significant role in determining those goals and providing instruction to help the student reach them.
- The classroom teacher is concerned with each student’s strengths and needs.
- Administrators understand that teachers need time within their contracts to prepare standards-based activities and materials designed to meet the diverse needs of their students.
- Collaboration is valued. Time is allocated for teachers to collaborate with other teachers and parents regarding students.

- Expectations are not set according to a student’s classification; it is recognized that a classification does not determine how much or how well the student will learn or perform.
- It is understood that good instruction incorporates variation in delivery, activities, expectations, and assessment to accommodate diverse learning strengths and needs.
- Parents are considered to be part of the team.

## Implementation Considerations

Poughkeepsie City School District can implement this recommendation by taking the following steps:

- **Provide general and special education teachers with professional development and training on instructional and educational practices that increase access to the general education curriculum,** including the following:
  - IEPs that include goals and objectives that are tied to the New York state content standards
  - Descriptions of disability categories and how disabilities impact educational performance
  - Content enhancement strategies
  - Progress monitoring and data-based instructional decision making.
  - Research-based instructional practices and learning strategies (e.g., scaffolding, feedback, opportunity to respond, peer tutoring, direct instruction, response prompting strategies, naturalistic language interventions, metacognitive strategies)
- **Provide general and special education teachers with professional development and training that includes specific skills that teachers can immediately use and implement in their practice.** Hands-on skills training, classroom observations, and videotapes of successful inclusive classes and situation-specific problem-solving activities over the course of a school year can provide teachers with a key frame of reference (Whitworth, 1999).
- **Increase the use of instructional coaches.** Teachers and administrators report that literacy coaches are beneficial, and the district could extend the use of coaches to other areas related to access such as inclusion facilitators or positive behavior support coaches.

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## **Recommendation 5: English Language Learners**

**Develop and implement a districtwide system to support the instruction of ELLs and to increase ELL access to the ELA curriculum by doing the following:**

- **Creating a system that effectively reaches all staff who make decisions about education for ELLs, especially principals and teachers, including general education and ESL teachers. The system would explicitly and effectively convey information about plans and policies related to the education of ELLs, professional development opportunities and plans, student performance data, differentiating instruction, systematically modifying the ELA curriculum to meet the needs of ELLs, and supplemental materials for ELLs.**
- **Creating and disseminating a curriculum plan for ELLs to achieve English proficiency, with benchmarks and a timeline for each of the major subgroups of ELLs—newcomers, Students with Interrupted Formal Education, and intermediate/advanced ELLs.**
- **Preparing all teachers to work effectively with ELLs by doing the following:**
  - **Providing professional development on including English language and core curriculum goals in each lesson and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of ELLs.**
  - **Providing opportunities for all teachers who instruct ELLs (ESL and general education teachers) at each school to regularly communicate with each other about ELLs.**

### **Link to Findings**

The three areas of improvement that have been identified in this recommendation are relevant and related to each other. They also have been validated in key findings at the Poughkeepsie co-interpretation. The findings from the ELL Report clearly illustrate a lack of a central organizational structure to support and facilitate the teaching and learning of ELLs. Key Findings 1, 2, 4, and 7 indicate a deficit in the way in which the district has supported the teaching and learning of ELLs, especially with regard to teacher and administrator professional development, curriculum guides that systematically modify curriculum and differentiate instruction, and adequacy of staffing.

Teacher interviews, administrator interviews, and a review of district documents indicated that communication about plans, policies, and supports has not been effective in providing essential information to the Poughkeepsie City School District community. A centralized system for communication has not been utilized by the district to disseminate information about ELLs except for a few recent meetings that have been held over the past year for ESL teachers throughout the district. Poughkeepsie City School District does not have an ESL coordinator or district leader to facilitate communication between teachers of ELLs, principals, and the district.

A review of the ELL Report reveals the lack of a central curriculum that guides the instruction of ELLs throughout the district schools. ESL and general education teachers have gathered different

resources to guide instruction in their classrooms, but there is no central document or guide to ensure equitable access to the core curriculum for ELLs. In addition, a review of the ELL Report indicates that there is no monitoring system to ensure that instruction is differentiated in ESL and general education classes to meet the unique needs of ELLs.

ESL and general education teachers and administrators reported a lack of professional development opportunities that explicitly address the learning needs of ELLs or ELL teaching strategies. Professional development opportunities were limited to ESL teachers who were willing to enroll in workshops offered by out-of-district agencies. Interview respondents indicated few if any opportunities available for general education teachers or principals.

### **Link to Research**

Short and Fitzsimmons (2007) explain that ideal programs for ELLs are age-appropriate, motivating, designed with realistic second-language and literacy development expectations, and supported with adequate resources and staff. To maximize achievement of reading skills and language proficiency for ELLs, investment from the school district, staff resources, and teachers are necessary (Lesaux & Siegel, 2003). In addition, newcomer students may need a specialized program to accommodate their learning needs, accelerate their learning of English, and help with their acculturation to U.S. schooling practices and basic content information (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

**System of Communication.** In a 1997 comparative study of 11 school districts, Dentler and Hafner (1997) found that in the three districts in which student scores improved, teachers were knowledgeable about the learning needs and characteristics of ELLs. Systematic responsiveness to ELLs occurred only in locations where administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff shared an understanding of the assets and needs ELLs bring to school (Dentler & Hafner, 1997). A system of communication and professional development can ensure that the district is providing the important information that can lead to an improvement in student scores.

Studies in the area of comprehensive school reform yield some information on the importance of the consideration of ELL needs in the planning of any new school or district initiative and the importance of 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 districts to work with individual schools to ensure that programs specifically address the needs of ELLs. Berman, Minicucci, McLaughlin, Nelson, and Woodworth (1995) documented the district's role in supporting reform at eight schools considered exemplary in involving ELLs. A common characteristic of the actions of these districts included circulation of information about reform efforts to school staff.

**Curriculum.** Responsiveness to the unique needs of every student must form the basis for instructional practice, especially as applied to ELLs. Differentiated instruction offers teachers an adaptive toolkit of practices that can be deployed in varied formats to meet the needs, strengths,

and learning preferences of students. ELLs are challenged and engaged through activities that are based on content, process, and product.

Cummins' (1994) pedagogical principle for students in linguistically diverse classrooms explains the importance of providing ELLs with curriculum content that is similar to that of native-English-speaking students:

If students are to catch up academically with their native-English-speaking peers, their cognitive growth and mastery of academic content must continue while English is being learned. Thus, the teaching of English as a second language should be integrated with the teaching of other academic content that is appropriate to students' cognitive level. (p. 42)

In addition, the ELA curriculum for ELLs that is taught during the school day must be as follows:

- Comprehensive
- Developmentally appropriate for age and proficiency level of ELLs
- Based on the core curriculum
- Focused on key components of literacy that have been demonstrated to improve students' reading proficiency

Gebhard (2003), among others, asserts that appropriate, equitable instruction for ELLs is neither watered down nor unmodified: "To increase equity for English-language learners, 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 access to the curriculum (Reeves, 2006). Teachers, both ESL and general education, 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 (1983), for example, student learning can be amplified if teachers incorporate multiple intelligences into their lessons, therefore increasing the probability of providing access to the core curriculum for ELLs.

Teachers of ELLs must attempt to provide access to the core curriculum for ELLs by proactively modifying and designing and initiating instructional and social strategies that influence classroom dynamics in general education classrooms toward understanding that diversity enriches and enhances the learning process (Chamot & O'Malley, 1994; Cline & Necochea, 2003; Nieto, 2000; Sobul, 1994; Spring, 1995; Walter, 1996).

**Professional Development and Teacher Collaboration.** In order to improve the quality of instruction that all ELLs receive, regardless of the program in which they are enrolled, all teachers need to be knowledgeable about the development and the acquisition of a second language and the particular challenges that ELLs face in learning both English and content. They also need to be fully cognizant of the diversity of ELLs based on their native-language

proficiency, English-language proficiency, and prior literacy and schooling experiences as well as a host of social and emotional factors that may affect these learners. Teachers need to do the following:

- Differentiate their instruction for their diverse learners based on data they get from multiple assessments.
- Teach all students according to rigorous content standards, and provide ELLs with specific language instruction to support content access.
- Focus on teaching vocabulary and academic language needed to understand texts taught in the core curriculum.

The attributes of professional development that are deemed important for all teachers according to the American Educational Research Association are affirmed as important in the studies examined by August and Calderón (2006) for the report created by the National Literacy Panel for Language-Minority Children and Youth. These attributes include the following:

- Long-term commitment to developing a particular knowledge base and skill set
- Ongoing meetings between teachers and professional development providers
- Opportunities for classroom practice with mentoring and coaching
- Focusing on learning specific strategies for improving instruction for ELLs, the theory that informs those strategies, and how to apply them in the classroom

A practical first step in this area would be to provide embedded professional development to general education teachers who integrate knowledge of language acquisition, literacy, and teaching strategies to ELLs. This approach is preferable to the current system of providing opportunities, on a voluntary basis, for teachers to attend occasional workshops from outside-of-district service providers. Research shows that when training is piecemeal and teachers are the ones expected to put the pieces together, the desired changes in instructional practice are not achieved.

One possible training resource is the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), which is a research-based professional development program designed to support the teaching of the core curriculum content to ELLs (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). Having district- or school-based personnel trained as trainers of SIOP would be an investment in sustaining high-quality and accessible content-area instruction for ELLs. The SIOP model training and resources are described on the SIOP Institute website ([www.siopinstitute.net/research.html](http://www.siopinstitute.net/research.html)). Another online resource providing teachers and administrators with current research, materials, and information on teaching diverse learners is the Education Alliance's *Teaching Diverse Learners* website ([www.alliance.brown.edu/tidl/](http://www.alliance.brown.edu/tidl/)).

Administrators as well as teachers should fully understand the principles of second-language acquisition and be given training to provide evaluations of literacy programs and classroom-based instruction for ELLs (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). As instructional leaders, they should look for and recognize effective instructional techniques for working with ELLs when they observe in classrooms, such as use of appropriate speech (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

Collaboration between teachers is an essential component of any reform initiative. The challenge of developing and implementing a curriculum that is fully integrative, child-centered, and individualized is not a part-time concern accomplished by second-language teachers working alone with second-language students on language development in isolation during scheduled periods of the day (Genesee, 1994). ESL and general education teachers must work together to form a coordinated approach to meeting the needs of ELLs (Genesee, 1994; Met, 1994). Educational planning for ELLs should be an integral part of all departments and schools responsible for teaching children who are learning a second language and through a second language (Genesee, 1994).

Collaborative planning among teachers from different settings can ensure that the linguistic demands of content learning are addressed both in the second language and in the content classroom (Met, 1994). Similarly, collaborative planning can enable ESL teachers to provide content-based lessons that support, reinforce, and coordinate with content lessons provided by general education teachers (Met, 1994).

Administrators also play an important part in ensuring that teachers receive the support they need (Duff, 2005). This support should include scheduling time and opportunities for ESL and content teachers to collaborate and compare teaching strategies, to review the progress of ELLs in the school, and to choose appropriate interventions and classroom resources (Crandall, Bernache, & Prager, 1998; Harklau, 1999; Short & Fitzsimmons, 1997)

## **Implementation Considerations**

### *System of Communication*

- **Revisit the ways in which information is disseminated, explicated, and implemented** at both the district and the school levels.
- **Clearly articulate plans and policies** regarding the education of ELLs through documentation.
- **Develop a system of responsibility and accountability** by ensuring that there are designated staff members at the district level to oversee district communication regarding the education of ELLs. In addition, foster a culture of accountability at the school level in which information that pertains to ELLs is shared and acted on by all those responsible for their education.
- **Provide administrators and teachers with disaggregated program and individual ELL test data.**
- **Create a method for feedback** to ensure that all stakeholders receive, understand, and apply the information about ELLs in their work with them, re-examining instructional practices and curricular choices as necessary.
- **Monitor the implementation of policies pertaining to ELLs.**

The ultimate goal of this communication system is to provide a crucial message to all school personnel from leadership—a message that the academic performance of ELLs is a priority within the school and within the district and is the responsibility of the entire staff.

### ***Curriculum***

- **Clearly document the district’s ELA curriculum and policies** that explain how it should be used to guide instruction across classroom settings.
- **Define differentiated instruction for ELLs** according to the various English proficiency levels.
- **Develop a district-guidance document** to be used as a model for the creation of curriculum maps that include strategies for supporting ELLs. These maps should address teacher responsibility for building background knowledge to fill content knowledge and skills gaps.

Make sure ELLs participate in the content curriculum, even though their level of participation may be lower than that of the native English speakers, by differentiating the levels of difficulty while addressing the same content goals.

### ***Professional Development and Collaboration***

- **Provide professional development for teachers in effective differentiation for ELLs.** 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,** who are responsible for making decisions about ELL placement and instruction. Build their knowledge of language acquisition, inclusive curriculum, culturally responsive practice, the SIOP model, and differentiated instruction as it pertain to ELLs.
- **Develop school-level plans that support the collaboration of teachers of ELLs** across settings that include designated meeting times and a feedback loop to communicate the effectiveness of the collaboration.

Through professional development opportunities, teachers and administrators may learn about the diversity among students within the ELL population in Poughkeepsie and the importance of differentiating classroom instruction and assessment within this group as well as within the general education population.

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## Appendix A. District Strengths

At the Poughkeepsie City School District kickoff meeting for the curriculum audit on October 18, 2007, participants cited the following peak experiences in recent district history:

- **Student Successes**  
Academic growth, making AYP, high graduation rate, positive reports, strong performances
- **Innovations in Programs**  
Communities, Parent University, fundraising, science fair, Moving Up
- **Grants to Foster Creative Approaches to Education**  
Reading First, Voyager Expanded Learning, Ventures, Magnet, mini grants
- **Positive Professional Development**  
Empowerment of teachers, expanded technology use
- **Communication and Collaboration**  
Scoring Assessments, 1 day, Comprehensive School Reform Development grant, musical production, positions filled

Kickoff meeting participants also expressed these values:

- **Teaching and Learning Process**  
Seeing growth, seeing excitement, learning environments that foster positive educational experiences
- **Supportive Leadership, Dedication of District Staff and Superintendent**  
Responsible, respectful, systematic integrity, decision making for the good, empowering teachers
- **Problem-Solving, Consensus Building, Follow-Through With Process**  
Sharing, collegiality, relationship building, communication, strong leadership
- **Collaboration With Stakeholders**  
Sense of completion
- **Using Technology**

## **Appendix B. Data Map of Co-Interpretation Key Findings**

### **Poughkeepsie City School District: April 7–8, 2008**

During the co-interpretation process, Poughkeepsie 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: Areas for Improvement

Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>Despite documents showing evidence of a professional development plan, district and school personnel expressed a desire for additional, relevant, and systematic professional development for school administrators, teachers, and teaching assistants on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership/teacher observation</li> <li>• Students with disabilities (SWDs)</li> <li>• English Language Learners (ELLs)</li> <li>• Differentiated instruction</li> <li>• Use and evaluation of data to drive instruction</li> <li>• New teacher mentoring</li> </ul> <p><b>Votes: <u>22 Red</u></b></p>	1. Nearly all high school respondents said that aside from the required superintendent conference days, the only planned or comprehensive professional development the school receives is provided by the America’s Choice vendor, and that only targets ninth-grade teachers.	INT, p. 18
	2. Secondary school was given a low rating on professional development because most respondents said that only ninth-grade teachers were influenced by professional development. Teachers at other grade levels said the district’s professional development is very weak (not useful or relevant).	INT, p. 19
	3. Secondary ESL teachers cited needed areas for improvement, including literacy efforts for ELLs, training of general education teachers, and parental involvement.	ELL, p. 61
	4. None of the secondary ESL and general education teachers interviewed had any professional development or support from the district around using assessment data to improve student learning.	ELL, p. 58
	5. In the secondary schools, respondents cited professional development as needing improvement.	INT, p. 25
	6. In the elementary schools, respondents cited that teacher professional development needs improvement.	INT, p. 25
	7. Many elementary teachers said that professional development provided by the district is not relevant to ELA instruction; these teachers said they would like more district professional development on topics like writing, test preparation, creation of varied lesson plans, working with special education students, and collaborating with other teachers.	INT, p. 19
	8. Administrators, elementary, ESL and general education teachers identify one of the greatest obstacles to improving the performance of ELLs is not having enough professional development for teachers of ELLs.	ELL, pp. 13 and 35
	9. High school teachers are not receiving professional development on the state standards.	SEC
	10. Teachers indicate a need for professional learning in the areas of SWDs; cultural sensitivity; using technology effectively; differentiating instruction.	SE, pp. 25–26
	11. Professional development is not prevalent in the assessment area at all levels (assessments versus standards).	SEC

Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	12. District respondents said that professional development on additional topics is needed. Examples: mathematics instruction, classroom management, poverty, low reading levels, ELL, and SWD	INT, p. 30
	13. All eight sample schools reported that the district provides limited opportunities for ELA professional development for teachers. Professional development is primarily offered four times a year during superintendent conference days.	INT, p. 18
	14. A number of district respondents said that many of the schools operate autonomously.	INT, p. 31
	15. General education and special education teachers expressed a need for practical, successful strategies that they can use to adapt the programs currently in place.	SE, p. 25
	16. Middle and high school teachers expressed the need for help in how to modify America’s Choice and how to adapt for different students.	SE, p. 25
	17. Special and general education teachers beyond ninth grade reported not benefiting from participating in professional learning opportunity from the new program, America’s Choice.	SE, p. 23
	18. Respondents at two non-Reading First elementary schools reported that the primary form of ELA professional development they receive is the vendor training from Open Court, which is not as extensive or comprehensive as the training provided through Reading First.	INT, p. 18
	19. Principals would like to see the district provide more support to strengthen their leadership abilities.	INT, p. 24
	20. In six schools, principals indicated that some professional development is provided, but it does not always help them strengthen their building leadership.	INT, p. 24
	21. Principals at six schools (five elementary, one secondary) reported that district professional development is limited and not always helpful; principals instead get professional development from external sources like regional centers, professional organizations, or local colleges.	INT, p. 24
	22. Areas that principals would like additional training in are use of data, special education classification, and parental involvement.	INT, p. 24
	23. It appears that the Poughkeepsie City School District lacks documentation of evidence in the implementation of providing professional development to principals in instructional strategies to support the delivery of the ELA curriculum, providing ELA professional development opportunities in a variety of settings and venues, ensuring participation of staff in professional development opportunities and measuring the impact of ELA professional development on	DR, p. 10

Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	classroom instruction.	
	24. Nearly 85 percent of special education teachers indicated that they are offered the same professional learning opportunities as general education teachers.	SE, p. 24
	25. Most elementary ESL teachers reported having received professional development or other support around using assessment data to improve student learning. Only half of elementary general education reported receiving related training or support.	ELL, p. 30
	26. Middle school teachers report a high level of professional development on state standards.	SEC
	27. Elementary ESL teachers received some form of professional development to address the educational and instructional needs of ELLs, but the usefulness of the professional development was mixed. Elementary general education teachers reported fewer opportunities, but found all of those opportunities useful.	ELL, p. 29
	28. Elementary ESL teachers stated that the most common way they receive information regarding curriculum and standards is through BETAC professional development workshops, conferences, and trainings. Three teachers say that the district department supervisor is also a source.	ELL, p. 20
	29. Over 80 percent of the teachers interviewed believed that the professional learning opportunities were useful and easily able to implement strategies.	SE, p. 22
	30. Administrators list the following challenges: staff attitudes (“a mindset needs to change top-down”); elimination of department heads; staffing—reading support and ESL teachers, translators; need for more opportunities for ELLs to practice English such as summer programs and Regents preparation (more services, resources, and time); parent education; professional education for ESL teachers.	ELL, p. 13
	31. Secondary ESL and general education teachers reported they had no professional development to address the needs of ELLs aside from one staff meeting and other opportunities they sought on their own.	ELL, p. 58
	32. Some teachers indicated that the content of district-mandated professional development (superintendent conference days) is not aligned with district goals and does not lead to professional growth.	INT, p. 18
33. Several high school teachers said they would like several topics like content area instruction, differentiated learning, technology, and character education addressed in district professional development.	INT, p. 19	

Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	34. No documents were found to support evidence of either plans or policies, implementation, or monitoring of professional development to support ELL instruction and learning.	ELL, p. 14
	35. Documents submitted by the district provide no evidence for professional learning opportunities that support ELL instruction and learning provided to teachers.	ELL, p. 14
	36. There appears to be no evidence of monitoring of providing professional development, ensuring staff participation and measuring its impact on classroom instruction.	DR, p. 10
	37. Responses of district level respondents indicate that the district does not have a systematic process for identifying the impact of professional development on instructional practices.	INT, p. 20
	38. It appears the Poughkeepsie City School District demonstrates some relevant evidence of plans (detailed outline of program) of providing ELA professional development in all criteria except opportunities in a variety of settings and venues.	DR, p. 10
	39. It appears that the Poughkeepsie City School District had documented some relevant evidence of professional development to teachers (general education) and principals in curriculum content and instructional strategies to general education, ELLs, and SWDs.	DR, p. 10
	40. District interview respondents indicated that new teachers need more district support than they currently receive. One respondent said that the lack of support can be “disheartening” for new teachers who are eager to affect students but do not feel that the district encourages them to do so.	INT, p. 31
	41. Seven of eight administrators described the mentoring program for all new ESL teachers.	ELL, p. 10
	42. There is a mentoring program throughout the district but only two out of four elementary schools felt it was productive.	INT, p. 23
	43. District administrators expressed some concern as to whether the mentorship program is effective in supporting new teachers.	INT, p. 30
	44. District administrators indicated that new teachers need: more professional development, cultural sensitivity training, assistance navigating the bureaucratic components; more administrative and leadership support.	INT, p. 23
	45. New teachers at the secondary level receive most of their support informally from more experienced colleagues.	INT, p. 23
	46. Respondents at the district level indicated that support for new teachers varies from school to school.	INT, p. 30

Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	47. Respondents from two elementary schools indicated that new teacher support needs to be vastly improved because new teacher are often on their own.	INT, p. 23
	48. District personnel interviewed are not aware f the quality or extent of support provided to new teachers.	INT, p. 32
	49. Teaching assistants in over 75 percent of observed special education and general education elementary classrooms were active in working with students.	SE, p. 32
	50. District level respondents indicated that the district does not have a comprehensive plan for principal professional development, but areas being considered include how to do classroom observations and provide effective instructional leadership.	INT, p. 30
	51. District level respondents said principals need more district support to provide effective instructional leadership.	INT, p. 30
	52. District personnel reported that the district has experienced high turnover of school administrators.	INT, p. 30
	53. It appears that the Poughkeepsie City School District lacks evidence of documentation that plans exist to 1) offer support for new principals, 2) facilitate the retention of experienced teachers and administrators, and 3) access the performance of teachers, and administrators across the district, relative to the district’s mission.	DR, p. 10
	54. In two elementary schools, teachers indicated the need for more training on how to make data-based instructional decisions.	INT, p. 12
	55. Several district respondents said teachers are not yet proficient at analyzing and using data to make instructional decisions.	INT, p. 28
	56. At the secondary level, many respondents said they would like professional development to learn how to better use data for their instruction.	INT, p. 12
	57. At the high school level, any training on the use of student data seemed either informal or limited to the use of Regents scores.	SE, p. 30
	58. In four elementary schools, data use was evident, but it did not consistently inform instruction.	INT, p. 12
	59. At the middle school level, special education and general education teachers reported working with the literacy coach on using student data effectively.	SE, p. 29

Key Finding 2	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>There is little or no evidence—with the exception of Reading First and America’s Choice schools—that data are consistently available, are used to monitor and drive instruction, and are used to adjust academic programs for students, particularly ELLs and SWDs. For example, state assessment data are not timely.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>14 Red</u></b> <b><u>6 Green</u></b></p>	1. Administrators referenced variety of formal and informal assessments to measure student performance and provide interventions.	ELL, p. 11
	2. Secondary general education and ESL classrooms were consistent in aspects of assessment practices. Average ratings were generally high for both.	ELL, p. 70
	3. Elementary ESL and general education teachers state that dissemination of test scores is not systematic and too late to inform instruction. Some ESL teachers say they use it to differentiate instruction.	ELL, p. 31
	4. In less than one fourth of classrooms observed (including inclusive, self-contained, and general education), teachers were observed using formative assessments.	SE, p. 30
	5. There is evidence that Poughkeepsie City School District plans to make data-based decisions. However, there is limited evidence of implementation and limited or no evidence of monitoring.	DR, pp. 11–12
	6. Elementary ESL and general education teachers both gave a variety of responses regarding the kinds of feedback they received on the results of monitoring, the performance of ELLs, observations, and monthly meetings.	ELL, p. 32
	7. There appears to be no evidence of monitoring the adjustment of curriculum based on formative and summative student achievement data.	DR, pp. 10–12
	8. There is no evidence of implementation or monitoring the use of student achievement data to inform ELL academic planning, programming, and instruction.	DR, p. 14
	9. ESL teachers respond that there is no transition support in place for ELL exiting ESL and going into general education. There is no monitoring after ESL services end.	ELL, p. 60
	10. Document provides limited evidence that the district uses student achievement data to inform ELL academic programming, planning, and instruction.	ELL, p. 14
	11. A majority of elementary ESL teachers state that principals or program supervisors monitor the ESL program. Elementary general education teachers believe that program monitoring does not take place. Tracking of ELLs who have exited the ESL program is informal.	ELL, p. 32
	12. There is little or no documentation that data regarding general education placements for ELLs and SWDs is provided to classroom teachers.	DR, pp. 11–12
	13. Across all grade levels, respondents indicated that the results of NYS test do not arrive in a	INT, p. 11

Key Finding 2	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	timely manner.	
	14. NYS assessments are commonly used to monitor progress, but the data are not available until weeks or months after being administered.	INT, pp. 27–28
	15. Reading First students who are struggling are monitored more frequently to determine if interventions are needed.	INT, p. 27
	16. According to interview respondents, teachers at the four Reading First elementary schools have sufficient data to make instructional decisions, and they regularly use formal assessments (DIBELS and TerraNova) to monitor instruction.	INT, p. 11
	17. Respondents said that the district used to implement its own benchmark assessments.	INT, p. 28
	18. Most respondents said the Reading First schools have more student performance data available than other district schools.	INT, p. 27
	19. In four elementary schools, respondents indicated that they consistently and frequently used data to make instructional decisions. They use the data to group students, determine what to reteach, modify instructional strategies, and inform interventions.	INT, p. 12
	20. All elementary schools reported that they use NYS tests, teacher-made assessments, and end-of-unit tests from the core reading series as formative assessments.	INT, p. 11
	21. Elementary ESL and general education teachers mentioned informal and classroom-based assessments. ESL teachers also mentioned the NYSESLAT, LAB-R, and other state tests.	ELL, p. 31
	22. In the middle school, primary data sources are tests included in the America’s Choice program and required state exams.	INT, p. 11
	23. Two non-Reading First elementary schools indicated a limited availability of assessment data. They relied primarily on the assessments from the core reading instead of on formal assessments to make instructional decisions in ELA.	INT, p. 11
	24. In one Reading First elementary school, respondents indicated that only the Reading First teachers in Grades K–3 have frequent and regular access to student performance data.	INT, p. 12
	25. Four elementary schools and the middle school indicated that there is frequent and consistent sharing of assessment data within the school and between administration.	INT, p. 12
	26. The high school received a low rating. No interviewees reported having any regular formal meeting or systematic method for sharing and discussing student data with one another.	INT, p. 13

Key Finding 2	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	27. Teachers at the high school primarily use data from teacher-made assessments and classwork. They do not regularly use more formal assessments to plan instruction.	INT, p. 11
	28. One problem regarding data use is the lack of a centralized location where assessment data are stored.	INT, p. 28
	29. Elementary general education and special education teachers reported that progress monitoring was part of the ELA curriculum through the use of DIBELS measures.	SE, p. 29
	30. The secondary ESL teachers stated that NYSESLAT data was stored among teachers. The general education teachers did not receive information about ELLs whose test scores fell below proficiency.	ELL, p. 59
	31. Two elementary schools offered mixed responses on sharing and discussing data within the school. In one school, data are discussed in monthly meetings and at grade-level meetings. In the other school, there is little or no communication about student assessment.	INT, p. 12

Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<b>Based on classroom observations, technology is not being used extensively at any grade level, including special education.</b>  <b>Votes: <u>13 Red</u></b>	1. Seventy-six percent of classrooms observed did not use computer technology to support the teaching of the ELA curriculum (including inclusive, self-contained, and general education).	SE, p. 10
	2. One hundred percent of observed classrooms did not use technology.	OBS, p. 15
	3. In elementary schools, computer instruction for delivery was used frequently or extensively in 19 percent of classrooms.	OBS, p. 4
	4. In the elementary classrooms, the use of technology as a learning tool or resource was the least observed.	OBS, p. 8

Key Finding 4	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<b>Interview respondents reported a need for additional dually certified special education and ESL teachers, an ELA coach in some schools, support staff, and a district ESL director.</b>  <b>Votes: <u>13 Red</u></b>	1. Most administrators describe needs for personnel support in the way of teaching assistants (TAs), translators, Title 1 reading teachers, college volunteers. They also indicated that ESL teachers support general education teachers who work with ELLs. Administrators responded positively to collaboration between ESL and general education teachers.	ELL, p. 9
	2. Elementary ESL and general education teachers reported a need for additional ESL teachers.	ELL, p. 35
	3. High school teachers reported that a change in the guidance staff structure (specifically support for self-contained students) was detrimental to the students' program.	SE, p. 33
	4. Challenges to improve performance of ELLs as reported by secondary general education teachers include needing ESL curriculum, more ESL staff, need transition program, language barrier, need for more support for grammar.	ELL, p. 61
	5. In the elementary schools, respondents cited a need for additional instructional staff.	INT, p. 25
	6. In two elementary schools, there is no designated ELA coach or ELA instructional leader; instead teachers turn informally to the principals or colleagues.	INT, p. 21
	7. The district has found it difficult to hire science and mathematics teachers as well as dually certified special education teachers.	INT, p. 31
	8. The district does not have an ESL director.	ELL, p. 8

Key Finding 5	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>With the exception of the Ramp-Up to Advanced Literacy program for approximately one third of ninth-grade students, there is no districtwide written and aligned curriculum to cover students in Grades 9–12, including ELLs and SWDs.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>13 Red</u> <u>1 Green</u></b></p>	1. Grade 10 does not have clearly articulated student expectations	CA, pp. 21–22
	2. No curriculum documents were submitted for Grade 10.	CA, pp. 22–23
	3. There is no set ELA curriculum at the high school level.	CA, p. 7
	4. All three secondary ESL program teachers reported having no ESL curriculum; the teachers have to chart their own course.	ELL, p. 52
	5. Grades 10–12 do not have curriculum maps or guides and instead use grade-level reading lists, which interview respondents assume are aligned to NY state standards.	INT, pp. 5–6
	6. High school teachers reported that because they did not have a set curriculum for English, they based their instruction around the individual ELA state standards.	SE, p. 7
	7. Three out of four secondary general education teachers reported selecting from an approved book list and designing units based on the standards and the Regents exam.	ELL, p. 52
	8. There is no evidence of a Grade 10 Poughkeepsie City School District ELA curriculum.	CA, p. 20
	9. No scheduling/timeframes were identified for Grade 10.	CA, p. 22
	10. No curricular materials were submitted for Grade 10.	CA, p. 22
	11. It appears there is no curriculum mapping in the high school to guide consistent delivery of ELA instruction.	DR, pp. 5–6
	12. Only Grade 9 in the high school follows the America’s Choice program model.	INT, p. 7
	13. Both special and general education inclusion teachers interviewed reported that they differentiated instruction in order to meet the varying needs of SWDs.	SE, p. 12

Key Finding 6	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>The district instructional support team process is inconsistently reviewed and monitored, and district and building administrators and teachers reported a need for additional or improved services for struggling students prior to referral to special education or the instructional support team.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>11 Red</u></b></p>	1. Instructional support team (IST) process is monitored at the middle school level but not at other levels.	SE, p. 19
	2. Instructional support teams are used in the district as part of a prereferral process to ensure that teachers implement interventions before making referrals to the committee on special education.	SE, p. 19
	3. Some high school teachers reported the IST process needs to be improved.	SE, p. 19
	4. District coordinators indicated prereferral process and how interventions are provided needs to be revamped. There is a need for more early interventions at the K–3 level.	SE, p. 19
	5. According to interview respondents, non-proficient students are referred to programs that provide academic support if they scored 1 or 2 on state ELA exam or if their teacher recommends/refers them.	INT, p. 14
	6. Some building administrators reported that students need to be classified in order to receive services.	SE, p. 21
	7. Half (50 percent) of general education and special education teachers reported intensive interventions are more available for those students who have been classified with a disability than those who are struggling.	SE, p. 21
	8. Teachers reported that additional resources and supports are needed, particularly for students with very low levels of proficiency or with special needs.	INT, p. 15f
	9. In the elementary schools, respondents cited that supportive services for nonproficient students needed improvement.	INT, p. 25
	10. Several district respondents pointed out that the number of referrals to special education is too high. Also, students are referred because teachers do not know how to provide them with effective instruction.	INT, p. 29
	11. District respondents noted that the district does not necessarily encourage teachers to differentiate instruction.	INT, p. 29
	12. A number of district respondents said they were uncertain that struggling students are instructed at a level that meets their needs.	INT, p. 29
	13. Many administrators recognized a need for additional academic support for ELLs similar to recently implemented ESL summer program.	ELL, p. 10

Key Finding 7	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p data-bbox="178 321 527 625"><b>General, special education, and ESL teachers across grade levels reported that informal collaboration is occurring, but also expressed a need for formal collaboration opportunities, such as common planning time.</b></p> <p data-bbox="178 667 451 699"><b>Votes: <u>9 Red</u></b></p>	<p data-bbox="548 321 1709 459">1. Elementary general education challenges: home/school connection/parent outreach program; need for better communication and more opportunities for collaboration with ESL teachers; large class size; staffing (need for more ESL teachers); more training around ELL instruction; curriculum to address more effective instruction for ELLs.</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 321 1923 459">ELL, p. 35</p>
	<p data-bbox="548 467 1709 573">2. ESL teachers commented on lack of performance feedback due to lack of or limited monitoring infrastructure. General education teachers also revealed similar concerns about no formal method of communication about student performance.</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 467 1923 573">ELL, p. 59</p>
	<p data-bbox="548 581 1709 686">3. All the secondary ESL teachers interviewed reported incorporating language learning goals for ELLs. Half of the general education teachers interviewed used the language learning goals in their lessons with ELLs.</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 581 1923 686">ELL, p. 55</p>
	<p data-bbox="548 695 1709 768">4. All elementary ESL teachers and five out of seven general education teachers incorporate language learning goals and content goals into their lessons.</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 695 1923 768">ELL, p. 24</p>
	<p data-bbox="548 776 1709 881">5. General education classes were generally observed to have significantly greater classroom and technology resources, more classroom space and facilities, and had more displays of student work than were observed in ESL classrooms.</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 776 1923 881">ELL, p. 47</p>
	<p data-bbox="548 889 1709 995">6. Each secondary ESL teacher described a different process for placing ELLs in different course levels. The general education teachers were unclear about the process for placing ELLs in courses.</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 889 1923 995">ELL, p. 54</p>
	<p data-bbox="548 1003 1709 1076">7. Administrators responded positively to collaboration between ESL and general education teachers.</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 1003 1923 1076">ELL (admin interviews)</p>
	<p data-bbox="548 1084 1709 1255">8. Elementary ESL teachers challenges: staffing (need for additional ESL teachers); scheduling/common scheduling practices (combined impeding effect of the large number of ELLs and Reading First); space; materials; no central ESL curriculum; not enough professional development; no common planning time; communication with general education teachers.</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 1084 1923 1255">ELL, p. 34</p>
	<p data-bbox="548 1263 1709 1369">9. Among elementary ESL teachers, there was no common response regarding specific district or school plans to address the learning needs of ELLs. General education teachers did not know of any such plan.</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 1263 1923 1369">ELL, p. 27</p>
	<p data-bbox="548 1377 1709 1414">10. Elementary ESL teachers are aware that students can receive both ESL and special</p>	<p data-bbox="1709 1377 1923 1414">ELL, p. 28</p>

Key Finding 7	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	education teachers. Most general education teachers were not aware of, or did not believe ELLs could receive special education services.	
	11. None of the four secondary general education teachers were aware of supplementary instructional materials for ELLs provided by the district.	ELL, p. 53
	12. Half of the elementary general education teachers and half of ESL teachers were not specific regarding the types of instructional support they received. The remaining half of general education teachers talked about support from ESL teachers in their building.	ELL, p. 26
	13. Elementary ESL and general education teachers state they have no common planning time, but there is some level of cooperation between the two. It is quite limited and informal.	ELL, p. 27
	14. Teachers are making the time to collaborate, although they are not given the time.	INT, p. 9
	15. Interview respondents at secondary schools indicated that collaboration time is limited and inconsistent. Teachers expressed they would like more consistent opportunities to engage in discussions with their peers about instruction.	INT, p. 9
	16. In the secondary schools, respondents cited time for teacher collaboration as needing improvement.	INT, p. 25
	17. All of the secondary ESL teachers reported working with general education teachers through a variety of means of low performing ELLs. No formal structure was reported.	ELL, p. 25
	18. General education teachers reported a high level of collaboration between general education and special education in order to ensure that IEP goals are met.	SE, p. 17
	19. Interview respondents at four out of seven schools reported that they were given ample time and support to collaborate with other teachers because of common planning periods, grade level meetings, lunch, superintendent conference days, and common prep time.	INT, p. 9
	20. Respondents at all eight sample schools reported that they value students, collaborative school climate, and dedicated staff.	INT, p. 25
	21. Both secondary ESL and general education teachers expressed a lack of teacher supports to help meet ELL standards.	ELL, p. 56

Key Finding 8	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>Poughkeepsie City School District’s written ELA curriculum does not appear to present a comprehensive plan for teaching and learning, although each grade (i.e., 2, 4, 6, 8) does contain elements of an effective ELA curriculum. The Poughkeepsie City School District ELA curriculum appears to place much greater emphasis on the application of procedural knowledge and less emphasis on concept application, evaluation, synthesis, and metacognition than the NYSED curriculum appears to.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>9 Red</u></b></p>	1. The Poughkeepsie City School District Grade 6 curriculum places less emphasis in procedural and conceptual knowledge in evaluation than the NYS Grade 6 ELA performance indicators.	CA, pp. 13–14
	2. It appears in Poughkeepsie City School District Grade 6 ELA curriculum that there is a greater emphasis on applying and creating than NYS Grade 6 performance indicators.	CA, pp. 13–14
	3. There was no evidence of explicitly addressed differentiated instruction for Grades 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 in Poughkeepsie City School District’s curriculum.	CA, pp. 21–22
	4. The cognitive demand “analyze” is approximately equal in NYSED and Poughkeepsie City School District Grade 8 ELA curriculum.	CA, pp. 16–17
	5. There is no evidence of factual knowledge in NYSED Grade 8 ELA in the cognitive demand “remember” and Poughkeepsie City School District Grade 8 ELA in the cognitive demand “apply.”	CA, pp. 16–17
	6. There is no evidence of metacognitive knowledge in the areas of analyze, evaluate, and create in Poughkeepsie City School District’s Grade 8 ELA curriculum, and there is an emphasis on these in NYSED’s Grade 8 performance indicators.	CA, pp. 16–17
	7. Grades 2, 4, 6, and 8 have evidence of clearly articulated student expectations.	CA, p. 21
	8. Grades 2, 4, 6, and 8 provide instructional strategies each month.	CA, pp. 22–23
	9. The Grade 8 curriculum map for Poughkeepsie Middle School is organized around the readers workshop and writers workshop models.	CA, p. 23
	10. Grade 6 does not specifically reference any curricular materials by name.	CA, p. 22
	11. In the secondary schools, respondents cited curriculum maps and alignment as needing improvement.	INT, p. 25
	12. Each curriculum document includes many of the components of an effective ELA curriculum but, viewed as a whole, each document does not yet present a comprehensive plan for ELA teaching and learning.	CA, p. 23
	13. Grades 2, 4, and 8 identify specific use of curricular materials with varied specificity.	CA, p. 22
	14. The Poughkeepsie City School District Grade 2 ELA curriculum appears to place more emphasis on the cognitive demand of “create” than the NYSED performance indicators.	CA, p. 8
	15. It appears that the Grade 2 ELA Poughkeepsie City School District curriculum requires that students remember procedures whereas NYSED requires remembering more concepts.	CA, p. 7

Key Finding 8	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	16. It appears that the NYSED grade 2 ELA performance indicators require factual knowledge in the “remember” and “apply” level of cognitive demand and the Poughkeepsie City School District lacks this in their cognitive demands in Grade 2 curriculum.	CA, pp. 7–8
	17. It appears that the NYSED Grade 2 ELA performance indicators (on levels of understand, analyze, evaluate, create) require more metacognitive knowledge than Poughkeepsie City School District’s Grade 2 curriculum.	CA, pp. 7–8
	18. The Poughkeepsie City School District Grade 2 ELA curriculum appears to place more emphasis on the procedural knowledge domain than the NYSED Grade 2 ELA performance indicators.	CA, p. 8
	19. It appears that the Grade 2 Poughkeepsie City School District curriculum has 20 percent more objectives that require application of procedural knowledge than the NYSED curriculum does and fewer that require application of conceptual knowledge.	CA, p. 7
	20. It appears that the Poughkeepsie City School District Grade 4 ELA curriculum places less emphasis on the cognitive demand levels of analyze and evaluate than the NYSED Grade 4 ELA performance indicators.	CA, pp. 10–11
	21. It appears that Poughkeepsie City School District places less emphasis on metacognitive knowledge and conceptual knowledge than the NYSED Grade 4 ELA performance indicators.	CA, pp. 10–11
	22. There is a greater percentage of conceptual and metacognitive knowledge in NYSED Grade 4 ELA performance indicators compared with Poughkeepsie City School District Grade 4 ELA performance indicators.	CA, pp. 10–11
	23. Poughkeepsie City School District Grade 4 ELA curriculum and NYSED Grade 4 ELA curriculum performance indicators place a higher emphasis on the domains of conceptual and procedural knowledge.	CA, pp. 10–11
	24. The curriculum documents for Grades 2 and 4 do not explicitly reference or list specific assessment tools or procedures.	CA, pp. 22–23
	25. The Grade 6 ELA Poughkeepsie City School District performance indicators place nearly three times more emphasis on the cognitive demand “apply” and twice as much emphasis on the cognitive demand “create” than the NYSED Grade 6 ELA curriculum.	CA, pp. 13–14
26. The Grade 6 ELA NYSED performance indicators place nearly three times more emphasis on the cognitive demand “remember” and twice as much emphasis on the cognitive demand	CA, pp. 13–14	

Key Finding 8	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	“understand” than the Poughkeepsie City School District Grade 6 curriculum.	
	27. The Grade 6 map does not address the assessments needed to identify whether students have met the identified performance indicators.	CA, pp. 22–23

Key Finding 9	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<b>ELA standards are being implemented differently across ESL classrooms. There is no uniform curriculum guiding ESL instruction, except for summer program curriculum.</b>  <b>Votes: <u>8 Red</u></b>	1. Secondary ESL teachers reported using the standards to differing degrees.	ELL, p. 52
	2. Six out of seven elementary ESL teachers state that they use the standards in some way, but most were not specific about their methods for applying them.	ELL, p. 19
	3. Elementary ESL teachers had varied responses to whether they believed ELLs were held to the same standards as general education students although some feel that this is an unrealistic expectation for some ELLs. Half of general education teachers agree that ELLs are held to the same standards. The rest stated that although teachers were expected to hold all students to the same standards, the practice could vary from student to student.	ELL, p. 22
	4. Poughkeepsie administrators were evenly split between understanding that either ESL teacher were following the same curriculum as general education ELA teachers or that there is was no districtwide ESL curriculum map.	ELL, p. 7
	5. Three out of seven elementary ESL teachers indicated did not provide a written ESL curriculum.	ELL, p. 19
	6. Elementary ESL teachers reported that they change what they teach from year-to-year based on student needs.	ELL, p. 19
	7. Secondary ESL classes relied primarily upon whole group instructional practices while general education had a balance between whole group, individual, and small group/pairs.	ELL, p. 67
	8. There is only limited evidence for how instruction focuses on the delivery of curriculum for ELLs. The curriculum information given for ELLs is only for a summer program not a school year program.	ELL, p. 14
	9. Secondary ESL classrooms demonstrated significantly greater focus upon communication of lesson purpose and the integration of language learning goals and the development and stimulation of subject area engagement.	ELL, pp. 67–68
	10. Significant differences were identified were favoring general education over ESL	ELL, p. 43

Key Finding 9	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	instruction in the areas communicating lesson purpose; employing strategies consistent with lesson purpose; scaffolding instruction; teacher integration of language learning goals; and stimulating subject-area engagement.	
	11. Secondary ESL instruction focuses primarily upon skills-based activities where general education instruction focuses upon conceptually based activities.	ELL, p. 69
	12. ESL activities were primarily skills-based in nature while general education classroom activities were balanced between skills-based and conceptual models.	ELL, p. 44
	13. Virtually all general education and ESL secondary classrooms were rated either 3 or 4 in relation to alignment of lessons to state standards, student accountability appropriateness of lessons to student developmental needs, and modifications in the instruction observed to meet these needs.	ELL, p. 65

Key Finding 10	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<b>Secondary general education teachers reported not knowing which students have IEPs at the beginning of the school year and that they did not have access to IEPs. However, special education teachers, in general, used IEPs more consistently and frequently in planning their instruction.</b>  <b>Votes: <u>7 Red</u></b>	1. Secondary general education teachers have reported not having access to IEPs.	SE, p. 17
	2. Secondary general education teachers reported not knowing which students in their classes have IEPs at the beginning of the school year.	SE, p. 17
	3. About one third of general education teachers reported not always having access to or having reviewed the IEPs of their SWDs.	SE, p. 16
	4. Special education teachers relied on IEPs in planning their instruction more consistently and frequently than did general education teachers.	SE, p. 16

Key Finding 11	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p data-bbox="184 245 539 509"><b>Based on teacher interviews and IEP reviews, there is no clear consistent practice for modifying ELA curriculum and instructional materials to meet the needs of ELLs and SWDs.</b></p> <p data-bbox="184 558 451 586"><b>Votes: <u>5 Red</u></b></p>	1. Special education and general education teachers expressed having difficulty making curricular modifications.	SE, p. 9
	2. Three fourths of special education and general education teachers reported that they provided varying degrees of modifications to the curricular materials or assignments.	SE, p. 8
	3. Three fourths of IEPs reviewed contained descriptions of the program modifications and supports SWDs were entitled to during instruction.	SE, p. 9
	4. Five of the seven elementary general education teachers do not modify curriculum for ELLs in their classroom although they may modify instructional practices. Some reasons given were that the Open Court materials and Reading First programs are not flexible. One teacher felt they could not lower the standards.	ELL, p. 21
	5. The two out of seven elementary general education teachers reported that they do modify curriculum for ELLs. One uses Open Court’s interventions and ELL components. Both were not explicit in how they made modifications.	ELL, p. 21
	6. Six of the seven elementary ESL teachers said that they did modify the ELA curriculum for ELL students, for example, by using a language level that was more appropriate.	ELL, p. 21
	7. Three of the four secondary general education teachers reported some type of modification of their curriculum for the ELLs in their classrooms.	ELL, p. 52
	8. All elementary general education teachers assert that they must follow a state- or district-mandated curriculum. Two specifically referred to Open Court, and one said that there was an ESL component that they don’t use but that they give to the ESL teacher.	ELL, p. 19
	9. Special education coordinators cited various ways that schools ensured that SWDs had access to the general education curriculum.	SE, p. 5
	10. Middle school teachers reported that using curriculum maps helped to ensure that SWDs were receiving the same curriculum content as students without disabilities.	SE, p. 6

Key Finding 12	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>The monitoring of instruction is primarily conducted through the structured programs implemented in Poughkeepsie City School District. Minimal monitoring is occurring independent of these programs, including AIS.</b></p> <p><b><u>Votes: 4 Red</u></b> <b><u>4 Green</u></b></p>	1. There is no evidence of monitoring of AIS that occurs outside of the regular day, specifically for ELLs and specifically for SWDs.	DR, p. 8
	2. Documents submitted provide evidence that the district has plans and implementation in place for ELLs who need additional academic support. However, no evidence was submitted demonstrating that monitoring of these interventions has taken place.	ELL, p. 14
	3. In three sample schools, teachers reported that despite not having a designated ELA instructional leader, they have colleagues who informally provide instructional leadership and who influence their ability to teach ELA to students at all ability levels.	INT, p. 21
	4. According to interview respondents, teachers have little to no discretion in what materials they use, but they have flexibility in terms of what activities and lessons to present from the reading programs.	INT, p. 7
	5. The majority of administrators reported that the ELLs in the district were centrally monitored for effectiveness.	ELL, p. 11
	6. Monitoring focuses on whether teachers are following the core program and whether instruction is differentiated.	INT, p. 8
	7. There is little or no evidence submitted of formative assessment of student progress in AIS.	DR, pp. 8–9
	8. It appears that there is no alignment of AIS to the curriculum.	DR, p. 9
	9. Secondary general education resources are significantly superior to those in ESL classrooms. General education also received higher ratings in both classroom arrangements and facilities.	ELL, p. 72
	10. It appears that there is evidence of whole school reform at the middle school and high school through the implementation of America’s Choice.	DR, p. 6
	11. All six elementary schools and the middle school received a high rating on monitoring of instruction—monitoring is done through formal observations, walk-throughs, and reviews of lesson plans.	INT, p. 8
	12. According to respondents, the America’s Choice literacy coach influences and improves ELA instruction.	INT, p. 21
	13. Middle and elementary schools had a high rating in regard to influence of the instructional leader on instruction. Teachers said the coaches work closely with teachers and are	INT, p. 21

Key Finding 12	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	extremely effective. Respondents indicated that the leadership of the Reading First coach is highly influential.	
	14. Half of the elementary general education teachers interviewed claimed they received most of their information about curriculum and standards at the school level. One new teacher said there was no direct communication about the curriculum.	ELL, p. 20
	15. Both ESL and general education teachers were not monitored to their knowledge with the exception of observations and annual performance reviews.	ELL, p. 59
	16. According to respondents in the high school, monitoring of instruction only occurs in Grade 9, which has the America’s Choice program. In other Grades 10–12, respondents expressed uncertainty about the focus and effectiveness of monitoring.	INT, p. 8

Key Finding 13	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<b>Based on observations, ELA instruction lacks project-based learning and integration of subject areas.</b>  <b>Votes: <u>3 Red</u></b>	1. At the middle school regarding instructional strategies, integration of subject areas and project-based learning were not observed.	OBS, p. 12
	2. At the middle school, in regards to instructional strategies, no observations were made of project-based learning, integration of subject areas, and parent/community involvement.	OBS, p. 7
	3. In the elementary classrooms, the instructional strategies that were observed least frequently were project-based learning and integration of subject areas.	OBS, p. 7
	4. One hundred percent of observed classrooms did not use/implement integration of subject areas; project-based learning; teacher acting as a coach/facilitator; and parent community involvement in learning activities.	OBS, p. 14

<b>Key Finding 14</b>	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	<b>Source/Page</b>
<b>The district offers academic intervention programs outside of the school day, but student participation is limited and sporadic because of various reasons.</b>  <b>Votes: <u>3 Red</u></b>	1. Three schools with a high rating in regard to availability of interventions all offer extended-day programs that focus on literacy.	INT, p. 14
	2. Special education and general education teachers said that other factors impact student performance, that is, poor attendance and the amount of remediation that needs to be done to get students up to grade level.	SE, p. 27
	3. High school students are offered academic support and afterschool homework help, but student participation is not consistent.	INT, p. 15
	4. Respondents at the schools with extended-day programs said that transportation is a barrier to student participation. Students in the afterschool program do not come because of transportation issues.	INT, p. 15

<b>Key Finding 15</b>	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	<b>Source/Page</b>
<b>Interview and focus group respondents reported that the success of outreach to ELL parents is limited and results in limited parental awareness and support.</b>  <b>Votes: <u>2 Red</u></b>	1. District respondents indicated that they would like to engage the parents to take on more active roles in their children’s education.	INT, p. 32
	2. Administrators listed the following ways they reach out to parents of ELLs: interpreters; translation services at school events; workshops and information sessions; literacy classes; direct teacher communication with parents; and bilingual school staff. Some say no outreach occurs. Less than half say that they reach out by hosting multicultural events and activities.	ELL, p. 12
	3. Despite good faith efforts on the part of the district personnel to contact parents of ELLs, two attempts were made to conduct a parent focus group but both failed to meet minimum attendance.	ELL, p. 4
	4. Interview respondents reported that struggling students need more parental support, more specialized teachers, and more assistants.	INT, p. 15

Key Finding 16	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>Most observed general education classroom teachers did not use any performance assessment strategies (e.g., teacher uses a formal assessment such as a rubric or a rating scale to assess students' demonstrated knowledge or uses portfolios or charts of progress) nor did they use student self-assessment strategies (e.g., students' reflect on their learning or use portfolios, logs, or checklists). These student self-assessments do not include test feedback from a computer or include grading from their own or another student's paper.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>2 Red</u></b></p>	1. Grade 8's reporting of instruction on the writing process is misaligned to the state assessments.	SEC
	2. Two thirds of observed classrooms did not use any performance assessment strategies. One sixth of classrooms used assessment strategies frequently.	OBS, p. 15
	3. At the middle school level, student self-assessment was less frequently observed.	OBS, p. 8
	4. One hundred percent of observed classrooms did not use student self-assessment.	OBS, p. 15
	5. In the elementary classroom, student self-assessment and performance assessment strategies were observed the least.	OBS, p. 8

Key Finding 17	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>Based on the SEC and interviews, ELA instruction is not always aligned with the state standards.</b></p> <p><b>Notes: <u>1 Red</u></b></p>	1. General education and ESL lessons evidenced sizeable differences between lesson alignment to state standards. General education was rated particularly high, with alignment of lessons and objectives to standards and with students held more accountable to standard lessons and lessons modified to meet the students' needs.	ELL, p. 40
	2. ESL classroom activities generally met the needs of students, but those activities were less often aligned with state standards than were those observed in general education classrooms.	ELL, p. 40
	3. In Grade 2, Poughkeepsie teachers are 59 percent aligned with state standards.	SEC
	4. Grades K–12 Poughkeepsie teachers reported that they are not spending enough time on “speaking and presenting” as well as “listening and viewing” according to NYS standards.	SEC
	5. Special education teachers reported that the goals in the IEPs do not always match what is expected on state assessments or in the state standards.	SE, p. 18
	6. The reported taught curriculum is more highly aligned to the standards than to the assessments.	SEC
	7. General education teachers indicated that they assume that the curriculum and materials they are using are aligned with the state standards.	ELL, p. 20
	8. In Grade 6, Poughkeepsie teachers are 75 percent aligned with state standards.	SEC
	9. NYS standards indicate comprehension instruction should be at a higher cognitive demand level than is being reported by Grade 4 teachers.	SEC
	10. State standards require a considerable amount of instruction time in “listening and viewing” and “speaking and presenting” that is not being reported by Grade 2 teachers.	SEC

## 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 18	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>Based on special education and general education classroom observations, direct instruction was more prevalent at the elementary school and high school than alternative grouping strategies.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>0</u></b></p>	1. In the elementary schools, the least frequently observed instructional practices are individual tutoring and collaborative learning.	OBS, p. 7
	2. In elementary classrooms, direct instruction was the most prevalent instructional practice observed. This was observed frequently or extensively in 100 percent of the classrooms observed.	OBS, p. 4
	3. Observation data showed that the use of differentiated teaching strategies (grouping, one-to-one, etc.) was apparent in 80 percent of all classrooms (including inclusive, self-contained, and general education),.	SE, p. 13
	4. Most high school classrooms (83.3 percent) did not use team teaching; only 16.7 percent did.	OBS, p. 14
	5. At the middle schools, observers rarely noted team teaching.	OBS, p. 7
	6. One hundred percent of high school classrooms practiced direct instruction frequently/extensively.	OBS, p. 14
	7. It was observed that elementary classrooms used work centers in 22 percent of observations. There were ability groups in 7 percent of the observed classes, and there were multiage groupings in 7 percent of the classes.	OBS, p. 4
	8. A greater percentage of elementary classrooms observed utilized small group and one-on-one instruction than did observed secondary classrooms (across special and general education settings).	SE, p. 14
	9. In the elementary classrooms observed, the student activities that were observed the least were systematic individual instruction, sustained writing/composition, independent inquiry/research, and student discussion.	OBS, p. 8
	10. In high school classrooms, 83.3 percent did not organize their students by ability groups. The rest of the observed classrooms organized students by ability groups extensively.	OBS, p.14
	11. At the middle school, in regard to classroom organization, ability grouping was observed frequently or extensively in 33 percent of observed classrooms.	OBS, p. 5

<b>Key Finding 18</b>	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	<b>Source/Page</b>
	12. At the middle schools, ability groupings were observed in approximately half of the classrooms in regards to classroom organization.	OBS, pp. 5 and 12
	13. One hundred percent of observed high school classrooms did not organize their students in work centers or in multiage grouping.	OBS, p. 14
	14. At the middle school, in regards to classroom organization, observers saw no multiage grouping or work centers (for individual or groups).	OBS, p. 12
	15. Self-contained classrooms and secondary classrooms were less likely to be arranged for flexible grouping than were inclusive classrooms and elementary classrooms.	OBS, pp. 10–11

<b>Key Finding 19</b>	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	<b>Source/Page</b>
<b>Individually based activities and instruction at the secondary level or in elementary ESL classrooms as a differentiated instruction was not observed. Interviews indicated that special education and general education inclusion used this strategy to meet the needs of the individual students.</b>	1. Two of the general education teachers explained that they differentiated the instruction by using cooperative grouping or by altering tests and activities.	ELL, p. 55
	2. In the high school, 100 percent of observed classrooms did not use cooperative/collaborative learning and individual tutoring.	OBS, p. 14
	3. At the middle school, observers rarely noted individual tutoring (teacher, peer, aide, adult volunteer).	OBS, p. 7
	4. ESL classrooms were found to spend less amount of time on individualized activities (roughly half).	ELL, p. 42
<b>Votes: <u>0</u></b>		

Key Finding 20	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>Although there was moderate evidence regarding academic interventions available for ELLs needing academic support in district documents, only elementary teachers were aware of additional services for low-performing ELLs.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>0</u></b></p>	1. Among elementary ESL teachers, there was no common response regarding specific district or school plans to address the learning needs of ELLs. General education teachers did not know of any such plan.	ELL, p. 27
	2. Two of the three secondary ESL teachers reported little knowledge of services for ELLs who are SWDs. The general education teachers also reported a lack of information sharing for ELLs with SWDs.	ELL, p. 57
	3. Elementary ESL teachers are aware that students can receive both ESL and special education services. Most general education teachers were not aware of or did not believe that ELLs could receive special education services.	ELL, p. 28
	4. There was moderate evidence regarding academic intervention available for ELLs needing additional academic support in district documents.	ELL, p. 14
	5. Most elementary ESL and general education teachers are aware of and listed various additional services for low-performing ELLs.	ELL, p. 26
	6. None of the secondary ESL teachers were aware of any additional services for ESL students. Only one general education teacher was aware of addition support services.	ELL, p. 56
	7. None of the secondary ESL or general education teachers interviewed reported knowledge of district plans and policies to address the learning needs of ELLs.	ELL, p. 56

Key Finding 21	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>According to interviews, key documents, and observations, there are inconsistencies in distribution and utilization of ELA curricular materials for all students, particularly at the secondary level and at the elementary level where general education teachers instruct ELLs.</b></p> <p><b>Notes: <u>0</u></b></p>	1. It appears that the Poughkeepsie City School District lacks evidence of plans (a detailed outline of activities to guide programs) for sufficient curricular materials across the district and lacks a process to ensure curricular materials are utilized.	DR, p. 5
	2. It appears that the Poughkeepsie City School District lacks evidence of implementation (activities conducted to execute district policies and plans) in sufficient curricular materials across the district, lacks curricular materials for ELLs, curricular materials for SWDs, and a process to ensure curricular materials are utilized.	DR, p. 5
	3. It appears that implementation (activities to execute policies/plans) show some relevant evidence in process for selecting and for aligning curricular materials.	DR, p. 5
	4. It appears that addressed plans (detailed outline of program) demonstrate some relevant, incomplete evidence in 1) process for selecting and aligning curricular materials, 2) sufficient curricular materials for ELLs, and 3) sufficient materials for SWDs.	DR, p. 5
	5. It appears that documentation of the consistent delivery of ELA instruction within and across schools is weak—only some evidence was provided.	DR, p. 6
	6. In 84 percent of all classrooms observed across settings, teachers used the core ELA program or supplemental materials for instruction.	SE, p. 5
	7. All three secondary ESL teachers shared the experience of having limited instructional materials for their ELLs.	ELL, p. 53
	8. In the high school and in one elementary school, more materials are needed for low- and high-performing students.	INT, p. 8
	9. Access to curriculum materials is inconsistent at the school level.	SE, p. 8
	10. High school special education teachers expressed confusion about where to go to for materials.	SE, p. 8
	11. High school Grades 10–12 do not have the materials they need to teach ELA to all students. They do not have a specific program to follow.	INT, p. 8
	12. Half of elementary ESL teachers said they were given choices of supplemental materials to order for themselves. General education teachers offered varied responses regarding what materials they were provided to supplement instruction for ELLs. In general, they felt that they did not receive much in the way of supplemental materials.	ELL, p. 22

Key Finding 21	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	13. Teachers in Reading First schools said they have more than enough materials for students at different skill levels.	INT, p. 7
	14. Five elementary schools and the middle school said they have adequate materials to meet the needs of all students.	INT, p. 7
	15. Two thirds of elementary special education teachers reported that they had the same materials as the general education classes.	SE, p. 8
	16. District respondents said there is no formal district process to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented as intended.	INT, p. 27
	17. It appears that the Poughkeepsie City School District lacks evidence of plans (detailed outline of activities to guide programs), sufficient curricular materials across the district, and a process to ensure that curricular materials are utilized.	DR, p. 5
	18. The district has plans regarding an ELA curriculum used to teach ELLs in a summer program. No evidence was submitted demonstrating that monitoring has taken place.	ELL, p. 14
	19. One secondary special education coordinator indicated that there was no formal monitoring to ensure that SWDs were accessing the general education curriculum.	SE, p. 5

## 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><b>Observations and interviews indicate a variety of instructional strategies utilized at the elementary and middle levels in general and special education classes, including the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Systematic instruction of ELA skills and strategies</b></li> <li>• <b>Well-planned lessons</b></li> <li>• <b>Higher level feedback</b></li> <li>• <b>Teacher as coach/facilitator</b></li> <li>• <b>Direct instruction</b></li> <li>• <b>Cooperative/collaborative grouping</b></li> <li>• <b>Ability grouping</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Votes: <u>25 Green</u></b></p>	1. In elementary classrooms, student activities were observed, including hands-on learning (19 percent) and sustained reading (7 percent)	OBS, p. 4
	2. At the middle school in regards to instructional strategies, 67 percent of the teachers act as a coach-facilitator frequently or extensively.	OBS, p. 5
	3. Seventy-two percent of all teachers observed (across grade levels and special education and general education settings) used explicit and systematic instruction in ELA with modeling and explanation of ELA skills and strategies.	SE, p. 14
	4. In the elementary classrooms, the instructional strategies most frequently observed were 1) higher level instruction feedback (37 percent); 2) use of higher level questioning (22 percent); 3) teacher as a facilitator (19 percent); and 4) parent involvement (7 percent)	OBS, p. 4
	5. Half of special education teachers reported wanting more time to work with other special education teachers.	SE, p. 31
	6. Nearly all special education teachers at the high school level expressed a desire for more inclusion and collaboration between general and special education teachers.	SE, p. 31
	7. A majority of the teachers observed appeared to have well-planned lessons and were very organized (across grade levels and general and special education settings).	SE, p. 14
	8. At the middle school, the use of higher-level questioning strategies and higher-level instructional feedback to enhance student learning were occasionally observed.	OBS, p. 5
	9. In 67 percent of classroom higher-level instructional feedback strategies were used 33 percent (one third) no higher level instructional feedback strategies were used.	OBS, p. 14
	10. Half of observed classrooms extensively used high academically focused class time, one third of classrooms frequently used high academically focused class time, and one sixth occasionally used high academically focused class time.	OBS, p. 15
	11. In 83 percent of classrooms, high-level questioning strategies were used. In 16.7 percent of classrooms, no such strategies were used.	OBS, p. 14

Positive Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	12. At the middle school, in regard to instructional orientation, 33 percent of the observations were of direction instruction, 33 percent were of cooperative/collaborative and 33 percent were ability grouped.	OBS, p. 5
	13. At the middle school, regarding student activities, independent seatwork, sustained reading, and student discussion were observed occasionally.	OBS, p. 5
	14. At the middle school level, in 33 percent of classrooms, students seemed interested in classroom activities frequently or extensively.	OBS, p. 6
	15. At the middle school, regarding student activities, systematic individual instruction and experiential, hands-on learning were rarely observed.	OBS, p. 8

Positive Key Finding 2	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<b>The elementary schools have seen more uniform ELA instruction since implementing Reading First and using Open Court materials.</b>  <b>Votes: <u>23 Green</u></b>	1. Interview respondents in Reading First schools said literacy instruction is more uniform in the RF Grades (K–3) than in the non-RF grades.	INT, p. 7
	2. Interview respondents reported that the Reading First program has been beneficial.	INT, p. 26
	3. ELA instruction is most uniform in the Reading First schools, according to district administrators interviewed.	INT, p. 27
	4. All of the teachers interviewed believed their ELA lessons were aligned with the NYS ELA learning standards.	SE, p. 6
	5. Open Court has been adopted in all district elementary schools, according to district interview respondents.	INT, p. 26
	6. The Open Court reading series was just introduced this year at the non-Reading First schools. Respondents are just starting to notice more uniform instruction.	INT, p. 7
	7. The district attempts to align ELA curriculum to state standards through Open Court in elementary schools and America’s Choice program in the middle school and in Grade 9 in the high school.	INT, p. 6

Positive Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>There is evidence of instructional support and professional development in the district. This support is most pronounced in Reading First and America’s Choice schools.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>17 Green</u></b></p>	1. Reading First and America’s Choice schools responded that the influence of professional development on ELA instruction was high.	INT, p. 19
	2. Secondary special and general education teachers indicated most of the professional learning opportunities have recently revolved around the new program, America’s Choice.	SE, p. 23
	3. Interview respondents at Reading First elementary schools said they participate in professional development through the Reading First program and that they find it helpful.	INT, p. 24
	4. In addition to professional development offered to Reading First participants, administrators identified professional development opportunities on training on testing, scoring, and analyzing the NYSESLAT data.	ELL, p. 10
	5. Reading First covers strategies to assist struggling students or SWDs.	SE, p. 23
	6. Interview respondents at four elementary schools and at one secondary school reported that they receive sufficient professional development through funded programs such as Reading First and America’s Choice.	INT, p. 18
	7. According to interview respondents, vendors of Open Court and America’s Choice provide extensive training for the effective use of the reading series. They also provide teachers with ideas and with strategies to implement in the classroom.	INT, p. 19
	8. Reading First and America’s Choice schools have ELA coaches who provide instructional leadership and support.	INT, p. 21
	9. Almost three fourths of all teachers in the district reported that the administrators gave them the support that they needed.	SE, p. 32
	10. In three elementary schools, it was indicated that the leadership of the Reading First coach is highly influential. Teachers said they incorporate strategies, activities, and ideas they learned from their coaches in their instruction.	INT, p. 21
	11. The district Reading First coordinators occasionally visit classrooms to monitor program implementation, and the coordinator from America’s Choice visits the classroom to monitor implementation of that program.	INT, p. 8
	12. Two thirds of teachers interviewed reported that the relationship between general education and special education teachers is generally positive and collaborative.	SE, p. 31
	13. It appears that the Poughkeepsie City School District has documented some relevant	DR, p. 13

Positive Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	evidence of plans (detailed outlines) of offering support for new teachers, directing distribution of teachers/principals, identifying support content coaches, and expectations of leadership.	
	14. In the high school, Grade 9 has a literacy coach through America’s Choice who provides ELA support.	INT, p. 15
	15. In the high school, teachers in Grade 9 have a literacy coach through America’s Choice who provides ELA support; teachers in Grades 10–12 informally turn to the ELA department chair and other colleagues for instructional support, but they do not have a designated ELA instructional leader.	INT, p. 21

Positive Key Finding 4	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<b>In most classrooms observed, classroom management was effective.</b>  <b>Votes: <u>17 Green</u></b>	1. Classroom management strategies were more likely to interrupt instruction in self-contained and secondary classrooms.	SE, p. 11
	2. At the middle school level, 83 percent of the time teachers could present lessons without disruption.	OBS, p. 6
	3. In three fourths of all classrooms observed, interactions between teachers and students were positive (including inclusive, self-contained, and general education).	SE, p. 11
	4. In most classrooms observed (68 percent), teachers did not have to spend a substantial amount of time managing student behaviors during instruction (including inclusive, self-contained, and general education).	SE, p. 11

Positive Key Finding 5	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>Elementary and middle school classrooms focused a significant amount of time on the key components of reading, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>15 Green</u></b></p>	1. During student activities, 100 percent of observed classrooms did not utilize any of the following: experimental, hands-on learning; systematic individual instruction; sustained writing/composition; sustained reading; independent inquiry/research on the part of students; student discussion.	OBS, p. 15
	2. Two thirds of observed classrooms did not use independent seatwork during activities. One third of observed classrooms rarely used independent seatwork.	OBS, p. 15
	3. In Grade 2, teachers focus and spend more time on phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary than on the state requires.	SEC
	4. In Grade 4, teachers are still spending a significant amount of time instructing phonics.	SEC
	5. In Grade 2, vocabulary is not taught in the correct cognitive demand.	SEC
	6. Grade 8 classroom instruction data reflect the same data as Grades 9–12 in vocabulary and comprehension.	SEC

Positive Key Finding 6	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>High levels of student engagement and academically focuses class time were observed at the elementary level.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>15 Green</u></b></p>	1. In the elementary classrooms, it was observed that 70 percent of the classrooms were considered to have a high level of student engagement.	OBS, p. 6
	2. In the elementary classrooms, it was observed that 96 percent of the classrooms were considered to have high academically focused classrooms.	OBS, p. 6
	3. Half of observed classrooms occasionally used a high level of student attention/interest/engagement: one sixth used rarely, one sixth frequently, and one sixth extensively.	OBS, p. 15

Positive Key Finding 7	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>Interviews indicate that Ramp-Up, Reading First interventions, and Title I ESL are services available to struggling students during the school day in participating schools.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>9 Green</u> <u>1 Red</u></b></p>	1. On the elementary level, the primary intervention source for students who are struggling is the Title I program. Struggling students are offered an additional 30- to 90-minute instructional block during which instruction is differentiated.	INT, p. 14
	2. Respondents at one school reported that additional academic support for students is effective and improved student proficiency in ELA.	INT, p. 14
	3. District respondents noted that Reading First has provided adequate support for struggling students and has contributed to some increases in test scores.	INT, p. 29
	4. Additional academic support is provided to students based on student test scores. In the Reading First schools, additional supplemental services are provided.	INT, p. 28
	5. Respondents at elementary and middle schools said students benefit from mandatory interventions that are offered during the school day, particularly because of the reinforcement of ELA skills, additional ELA block time, small-group instruction, and support from additional ELA personnel.	INT, p. 15
	6. In four elementary schools, they rely primarily on the Title I intervention program and on differentiated materials provided by Open Court. These schools do not offer extended-day programs.	INT, p. 15
	7. Administrators said many non-ESL-specific supports exist, like remedial reading, Title I staff, teaching assistant support, before-school and afterschool tutoring, summer school, test prep classes, social workers, IST, special education, and Reading First interventions.	ELL, p. 10
	8. At the high school level, tutoring is available for nonproficient students, according to district respondents.	INT, p. 28

Positive Key Finding 8	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>Visuals related to NYS standards are visible in classrooms.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>8 Green</u></b></p>	1. In 24 out of 25 observed classrooms, lessons and schedules for the day were clearly posted on the board or in the front of the room (across all grade levels and general and special education settings).	SE, p. 14
	2. A large majority of the classrooms observed had print-rich and literacy-rich environments (including inclusive, self-contained, and general education).	SE, p. 10

<b>Positive Key Finding 9</b>	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	<b>Source/Page</b>
<b>Elementary, secondary, and ESL teachers reported similar instructional practices in working with ELLs.</b>  <b>Votes: <u>2 Green</u></b>	1. Elementary ESL teachers and general education teachers described a wide range of instructional practices that facilitate learning among ELLs, although each group listed different practices.	ELL, p. 24
	2. All secondary general education and ESL classrooms ranked similarly on instructional strategies employed. Ratings for both were generally very high, indicating a facilitation of learning.	ELL, p. 68
	3. All of the ESL and general education teachers identified a range of teaching strategies while working with ESL students.	ELL, p. 55

<b>Positive Key Finding 10</b>	<b>Supporting Findings</b>	<b>Source/Page</b>
<b>Middle school and one third of Grade 9 ELA instruction is guided by the America's Choice school reform design.</b>  <b>Votes: <u>1 Green</u></b>	1. Secondary school administrators engage in “focus” walks to gauge the level at which America’s Choice model is being implemented.	INT, p. 27
	2. The America’s Choice program guides instruction at the middle school.	INT, p. 7
	3. America’s Choice has been adopted in the middle school and in Grade 9 as an academy model.	INT, p. 27
	4. Middle school teachers pointed to the curriculum maps and a new program called America’s Choice to show how their curriculum was aligned to the state standards.	SE, p. 7
	5. The general education teachers whose school was participating in America’s Choice had multiple sources of information about curriculum and standards.	ELL, p. 53
	6. According to district respondents, there is a major emphasis on implementing a consistent and uniform ELA program across the district.	INT, p. 26

Positive Key Finding 11	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p><b>A majority of teachers interviewed reported that SWDs are appropriately prepared for state and district assessments, receive appropriate testing accommodations, and that those accommodations are monitored by qualified staff. They further reported that SWDs are performing well or very well on assessments.</b></p> <p><b>Votes: <u>1 Green</u></b></p>	1. Nearly 90 percent of special education and general education teachers reported that all of the SWDs they worked with or taught received testing accommodations during state and district assessments, and this was supported in the IEP review.	SE, p. 28
	2. Half of special education and general education teachers reported that their SWDs were performing to the best of their abilities.	SE, p. 27
	3. School coordinators reported that they made efforts to see that qualified staff monitored testing accommodations.	SE, p. 28
	4. Nearly three fourths of the teachers interviewed reported that they prepared students for the state assessments by tailoring their instruction to help them master the ELA skills needed.	SE, p. 15
	5. Half of special education and general education teachers said they believed that SWDs in the Poughkeepsie City School District were performing well or very well.	SE, p. 27