New York City Department of Education English Language Arts Curriculum Audit: School Interview Report for Districts 10, 11, 14, 18, and 29

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Introduction

The School Interview Report is one of several reports included in the English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Audit conducted for the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) by Learning Point Associates. The study examines five domains in the general education classroom:

- Curriculum alignment
- Instruction (focusing on instructional materials and their use)
- Data use
- Academic support for nonproficient students
- Professional learning opportunities for teachers (i.e., professional development sessions, collaborative opportunities, and coaching).

The study is based on an analysis of interview data collected from more than 500 teachers, principals, and literacy coaches in 64 New York City schools dispersed among the five districts participating in the audit: Districts 10, 11, 14, 18, and 29. The schools were selected to be representative of all New York City schools; as such, they cover a range performance levels and their student bodies include different proportions of English Language Learners (ELLs) and Students With Disabilities (SWDs).

Report Organization

The introduction presents a brief overview of the interview study's methodology, including the sampling procedures, data collection, and analytic approach. (More detail is presented in the appendixes.) Following the introduction are three sections: curriculum and instruction, professional learning opportunities, and contextual issues.

The curriculum and instruction section discusses instructional practices associated with the following: curriculum alignment, instructional programs and materials, data use, and academic support provided for nonproficient students. It addresses administrative and instructional practices related to these topics as well as respondent perceptions about the effectiveness and utility of instructional resources.

The next section discusses professional learning opportunities for teachers. It examines three types of such opportunities: in-house professional development sessions, opportunities for teachers to collaborate, and learning opportunities provided by an ELA content coach. It also discusses administrative direction and teacher participation as well as respondent perceptions about the effectiveness, influence, and utility of the professional learning opportunities.

The third section describes contextual conditions and circumstances that were frequently mentioned as concerns by respondents.

Overview of the Methodology

Key features of the methodology used to collect and analyze the interview data are presented in this section. Additional information is provided in Appendixes A and B.

Selecting the Sample of Schools

The number of schools participating in the audit for each district and the number of schools per school level (elementary, middle, and high) originally were proposed in the Learning Point Associates Audit Proposal in July 2007. In each district, the number of sample schools is proportionate to the number of schools in the district, with secondary schools overrepresented to ensure an adequate number of schools in both the middle and high school groups. The schools were selected based on two major criteria: student achievement (with selected schools that had performance indexes among the top third in the city, the middle third, and the lower third); and the population of ELLs and SWDs (with schools selected to ensure adequate representation of these groups). The final sample consists of a diverse group of 64 schools.

Table 1 presents the characteristics of the schools selected in the different districts. More detailed data for each school are presented in Appendix A.

Table 1. The Audit Sample Schools

District	# of Schools	Elementary Schools	K–8	Middle Schools	6–12	High Schools	Perf. Index Range	ELLs % Range	SWDs % Range
10	21	8	2	4	2	5	101–180	7%–64%	1%–27%
11	14	8	0	2	0	4	108–175	3%–20%	8%–23%
14	10	6	0	2	0	2	107–173	4%–26%	6%–25%
18	8	5	2	1	0	0	114–182	1%–4%	5%–22%
29	11	6	2	1	0	2	131–193	2%–25%	7%–20%
All schools	64	33	6	10	2	13	101–193	1%–64%	1%–27%

Data Collection

Interview respondents in each school included the school principal, the school ELA content coach (in some schools, this person was someone who fulfilled coach responsibilities but was not a content coach), and four to 10 teachers. The teacher respondents were randomly selected by Learning Point Associates from teacher lists provided by the sample schools. Teachers were selected to represent the majority of the grade levels served by the school. The number of respondents per school level is listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Interview Respondents by School Level

School Level	# of Teachers	# of Principals	# of Coaches	Total
Elementary (*n* = 33)	217	33	36	286
Grades K–8 (*n* = 6)	50	6	9	65
Middle (*n* = 10)	57	10	10	77
Grades 6–12 (*n* = 2)	11	2	1	14
High (*n* = 13)	62	13	8	83
Total	397	64	64	**525**

Interviews

Interviews were conducted in the schools between April 1 and June 15, 2008. The interviews were guided by structured protocols that were organized around the five domains (curriculum alignment, instruction, data use, academic support for nonproficient students, and professional learning opportunities for teachers). Questions asked of principals, coaches, and teachers were aligned to support comparison of responses and to obtain multiple perspectives.

Analytic Approach

Data from interviews were aggregated to the school level. The analytic approach focused first on identifying school-level variables for each of the five domains. Within the domains, the school-level variables represented three functional areas associated with instructional support (administrative focus, resources, and training); teacher practice or participation; and teacher perceptions of effectiveness or utility. Table 3 depicts the five domains and the functional areas that were examined. Checkmarks indicate which school variables were identified.

Table 3. School-Level Variables Per Domain and Functional Areas

Domains	Functional Areas				
	Instructional Support: Administrative Focus	Instructional Support: Resources	Instructional Support: Training	Teacher Practice or Participation	Effectiveness or Utility
Curriculum alignment	√	√	√	√	
Instructional materials		√	√	√	√
Data use	√	√	√	√	√
Academic support for nonproficient students	√				√
Professional learning opportunities	√	√		√	√

The variables were assigned values through examining the response data from multiple respondents. Variable values were limited to three values (*high*, *moderate*, or *low*) or to two options (*yes* or *no*). Variable values were assigned based on one of the following approaches: examining open-ended responses from teacher, principal, and/or coach interviews; deriving the average values of close-ended responses from teacher interviews; or applying a rating based on distribution of close-ended responses from teacher interviews.

For each of the domains, teacher interviews included close-ended items about the effectiveness, utility, helpfulness, or influence of instructional supports. The items offered four response options: *a great deal*, *moderately*, *minimally*, and *not at all*. For these items, the distribution of responses was examined to determine a value for each variable. Based on the distribution, the variables were assigned values of *high*, *moderate*, or *low* for each school. A variable was assigned a value of *high* when the majority of teachers gave the top response (*a great deal*). A variable was assigned a value of *moderate* when half the teachers chose *moderately* or lower. Variables were assigned a value of *low* when the majority of the teachers chose *moderately* or lower. Throughout this report, the school level findings refer to *high*, *moderate*, and *low* ratings on the variables.

For several domains (curriculum alignment, instructional materials, and data use), the relationships between variables associated with instructional support and teacher practice were examined to determine if higher levels of instructional support are associated with higher levels of teacher practice or participation—for example, whether teachers use data more frequently in schools in which they are provided training on data and where an administrative focus on data is evident.

For the variables assessing teacher perceptions of the effectiveness, utility, helpfulness, or influence of instructional supports, the reasons that respondents gave for their opinions were examined—for example, the reasons for opinions on the effectiveness of instructional materials or utility of collaboration with other teachers. Because of the large number of teachers in the sample, a random selection of 180 interviews was reviewed. These interviews represented different grade levels of the schools. Depending on the item, a range of 50 to 120 relevant responses were available for analysis. The reasons or explanations that are reported are those that were cited most frequently by respondents.

Coach and principal interviews were analyzed for descriptions of instructional practices as well as explanations of factors that influence implementation of instructional practices related to the domains. For the coaches and principals, all responses were considered within the category of interest (either all schools, or schools serving different grade levels, for example).

The data displays in this report present information by school level: elementary, middle, and high. A few of the schools in the sample have a range of grade levels: six schools serve Grades K–8 and two schools serve Grades 6–12. For the purpose of this study, K–8 schools are included with the elementary schools and 6–12 schools are included with the high schools. Thus, the analysis examines an elementary group of 39 schools, a middle school group of 10 schools, and a high school group of 15 schools.

The analytic approach was useful for drawing direct comparisons among the schools, analyzing relationships between instructional support and practice, and summarizing respondent explanations of those relationships and of teacher opinions related to the effectiveness or utility of a support.

Curriculum and Instruction

Four domains associated with curriculum and instruction are examined in this section of the report: curriculum alignment, instructional programs and materials, data use, and additional academic support offered to nonproficient students. Within each domain, respondents were asked about the following functional areas: administrative focus and direction, resources, training, teacher practice, and perceived effectiveness or utility. The specific school-level variables associated with these domains and functional areas are defined in tables at the beginning of each of the four subsections of this section. In addition, figures present major findings by school level.

Curriculum Alignment

Three variables associated with curriculum alignment were examined: administrative focus, training on alignment, and teacher use of alignment tools. Table 4 defines these three variables.

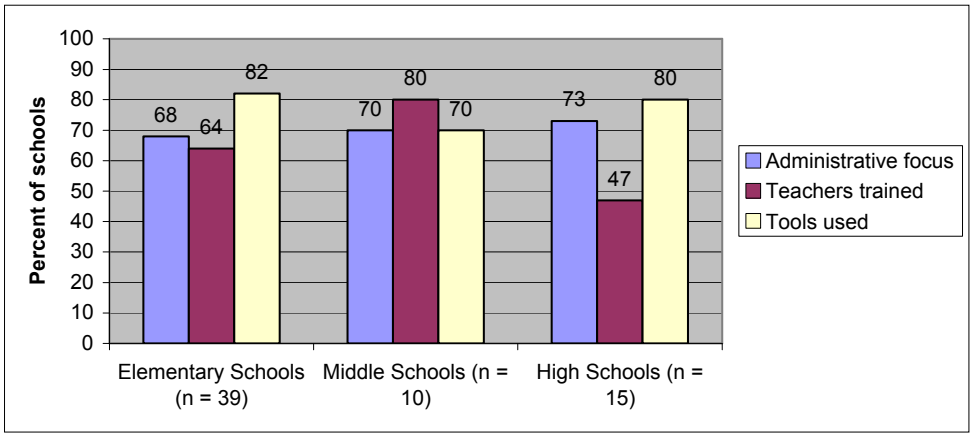
Table 4. Curriculum Alignment Variables and Definitions

Variable Name	Definition
Administrative focus	The school administration has actively engaged teachers in curriculum alignment activities.
Training on alignment	The teachers in the school have received training on aligning the curriculum.
Teacher use of alignment tools	Alignment tools, such as pacing calendars and maps, are used by teachers to plan instruction.

Presence of Curriculum Alignment in the Schools

Several factors indicate that in the majority of sample schools, practices associated with the alignment of the ELA curriculum to state learning standards are evident. As Figure 1 conveys, in approximately 70 percent of schools at all levels, administrative focus on curriculum alignment is high. In 64 percent of elementary, 80 percent of middle schools, and 47 percent of the high schools, all or nearly all teachers indicated they were trained to use alignment tools. In approximately 80 percent of high school and elementary schools and 70 percent of middle schools, all or nearly all teachers said they use alignment tools on a regular basis to design ELA lessons.

Figure 1. Curriculum Alignment: Percentage of Schools Rated High on Administrative Focus, Training, and Use of Alignment Tools



Administrative Focus

Whether administrators focus on curriculum alignment was considered to be pivotal in a school. Administrator descriptions of the strategies they use to guide curriculum alignment gave evidence of two types of strategies: active strategies that involve members of the school faculty in efforts to learn about, develop, review, revise, and implement an aligned ELA curriculum and passive strategies, which primarily are associated with administrator communication to faculty members (for example, through memos and faculty meetings) and school requirements related to alignment that do not actively engage teachers (for example, requirements that the ELA standards be posted in classrooms). Those schools in which active strategies were described were rated *high* on administrative focus.

Administrators in 44 of the 64 schools were identified as implementing active administrative strategies—typically a set of such strategies—to support curriculum alignment. The percentage was approximately the same for schools serving different grade levels. Two typical examples where administrative focus was assessed as *high* are presented below:

- **Engagement at the Grade Level.** One practice found in several schools is for an administrative instructional team to develop and align the ELA curriculum and then engage teachers at the grade level in implementing the curriculum. For example, in an elementary school, an instructional team consisting of the principal, the ELA coach, and assistant principals has designed the curriculum and established directives. Both the curriculum and the directives are disseminated at grade-level meetings by the assistant principals, who identify the instructional foci for each month. The assistant principals follow these meetings with classroom observations and reviews of lesson plans.
- **Teacher Responsibility for Developing the Curriculum.** In several schools, teachers are actively engaged in developing, reviewing, and revising the ELA curriculum to ensure the school curriculum is aligned with state standards. For example, in an elementary school, the administration developed curriculum maps and pacing calendars cooperatively with the teachers and followed up with appropriate professional development. The curriculum map undergoes regular revisions, according to the coach

who said, "We begin every meeting with a discussion of standards and how we will use them on the map." Instruction is monitored, and follow-up includes reflective discussions among teachers and administrators.

Training on Alignment

In 40 of the 64 sample schools, all or nearly all teachers indicated that they had received training about how to align their lessons to state learning standards. High levels of training were less evident in the high schools than in the middle and elementary schools. This alignment training was the main difference between high schools and other schools in the sample.

Use of Alignment Tools

Alignment tools have a presence in the majority of the sample schools. The preferred tools are curriculum maps and pacing calendars, which support cross-school curriculum alignment, particularly in elementary and middle schools. In the high schools, responses indicate that teachers use curriculum maps and also rely on the Regents exam to design aligned ELA lessons.

Across the schools, several uses of alignment tools were described, including individually planning lessons that address state learning standards, collaboratively planning lessons with other teachers at the same grade level, coordinating instruction within and across grades, determining if students are meeting objectives, and preparing for the Regents exam.

Factors Influencing Curriculum Alignment

The relationship between administrative focus and training on curriculum alignment and teacher practice in using alignment tools to plan instruction was explored, with the expectation that higher administrative focus and training would result in higher levels of related teacher practice.

However, this was not the case. The analysis indicated that teachers in schools with high administrative focus are no more likely to regularly use alignment tools to plan lessons than teachers in schools where administrative focus is not high. Teachers in schools with higher administrative focus, however, are more likely to be trained on curriculum alignment. In this sample, 14 schools were identified as having low administrative focus on curriculum alignment but a high level of teacher practices associated with alignment. Seven schools had high administrative focus and low levels of reported teacher practice; middle and high schools are overrepresented among these seven schools.

Principal and coach responses to questions about alignment and the implementation of an aligned curriculum identified four factors apart from administrative focus that influence teacher practice: the experience of teachers, the degree of collaboration among teachers at a particular grade level, the required state examinations, and recent focus on alignment by administrators.

- **Alignment Is Stronger in Grades With Experienced Teachers.** Approximately 20 percent of the principals and/or coaches cited teacher experience as a reason for differences in curriculum alignment practices within the school. Usually, principal and coach respondents stated that more experienced teachers are more adept at curriculum

alignment. For example, a high school with active administrative strategies for aligning the curriculum has high teacher turnover and an inexperienced teaching staff, with 13 of 15 teachers from an alternative certification program. The high number of new teachers focuses coach and administrative support on helping teachers with classroom management approaches and organizational practices—"bringing them up to speed," a principal said. In another school, a coach said, "We're at a very embryonic stage [of curriculum alignment] because so many of our teachers are new in English. I think the entire English department is new. There are so many things I have to work on with them, but I think we're developing and emerging."

- **Alignment Is Supported by Collaboration Among Teachers.** Teacher collaboration to plan instruction differs across grade levels, principals in approximately 20 percent of the schools noted. Those grade levels where collaboration was identified as *high* were assessed to more consistently develop an aligned ELA curriculum.
- **Alignment Is Influenced by State Exams.** State exams influence curriculum alignment, according to approximately 15 percent of the school principals or coaches. At the elementary level, respondents noted that alignment is more consistent in the upper elementary grades because of the state exams administered to Grade 3 and higher. At the high school level, one principal said the Regents exam had a positive influence on alignment but another principal said the influence was negative. Several high school 11th-grade teachers pointed out that the Regents exam disrupts the delivery of an aligned curriculum in 11th grade. The Regents exam dominates the 11th-grade curriculum, according to these high school teachers. No 11th-grade teachers in our sample said the Regents exam had a positive influence on alignment, although several teachers said they used the exam to design their lessons.
- **Alignment Is Uneven in Schools When the Administrator's Focus on and Support for Alignment Is Recent.** In two schools, administrators focus on alignment; however, the alignment practices have not yet become widespread in the schools or alignment tools are not widely available. Although the number of sample schools in which this situation was mentioned is small, it may be a factor in other new schools throughout the city. In one of the sample schools, respondents indicated that monthly curriculum maps for the school are created. However, at the time of the interviews, these were being developed on a challenging schedule and often were not ready at the beginning of the month. Teachers then developed their own personal curriculum or used a variety of other sources to prepare standards-based lessons. In a combined middle and high school, a principal noted that a new assistant principal was focusing alignment efforts on the lower grades first and then planned to implement an aligned curriculum across the entire school.

Instructional Programs and Materials

Several school-level variables related to instructional programs and materials are described in this section. These variables are associated with the types of materials used, training, instructional practice (including guidance for scheduling and consistency of use), and teacher opinions about the effectiveness of the programs and materials for their proficient and nonproficient students (see Table 5).

Table 5. Instructional Programs and Materials Variables and Definitions

Variable Name	Definition
Types of ELA materials	Whether teachers use published ELA programs, no programs but school-selected ELA materials, or teacher-selected materials
Training on using ELA programs and materials	All or nearly all teachers have been trained on using the literacy programs and materials
Schedule guides use of programs and materials	The use of instructional programs and materials by teachers is guided by a school or a grade-level schedule.
Evidence of consistency in use	The ELA programs and/or materials are used consistently by the teachers in the school.
Perceived effectiveness for proficient students	ELA programs and materials are perceived to be effective for proficient students.
Perceived effectiveness for nonproficient students	ELA programs and materials are perceived to be effective for nonproficient students.

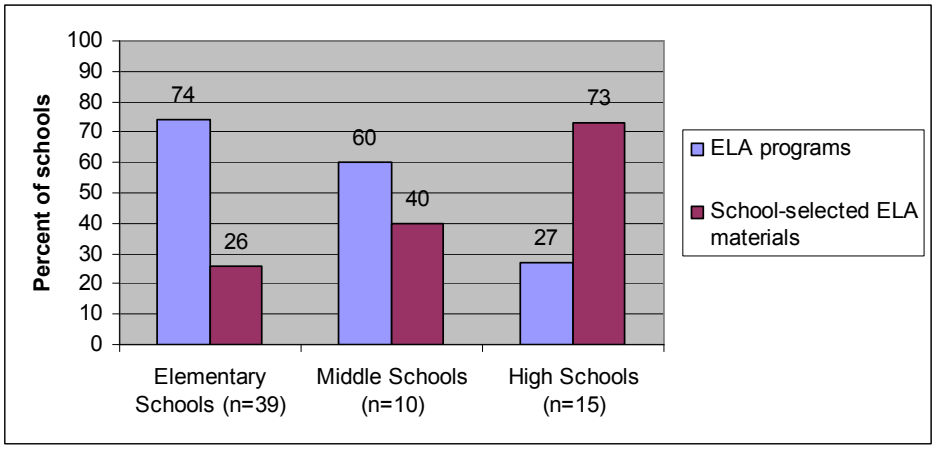
Types of ELA Materials

According to respondents, nearly all the sample schools have numerous programs and supplemental materials for teaching ELA. Teachers across the schools named several programs that are used in their schools. In many schools, more than one ELA program is used, with multiple programs and additional materials addressing the major components of the city's balanced literacy framework.

Responses from the principals, coaches, and teachers revealed that a difference among the schools is whether the school relies on ELA literacy programs (published programs with guidelines and structures for developing and sequencing lessons), usually in addition to other instructional materials (such as leveled books), or whether the school provides diverse instructional materials but not a published literacy program from which teachers select. Less prominent in this sample were three schools in which teachers mainly select ELA instructional materials on their own.

Figure 2 depicts the percentage of schools per grade level where published ELA programs are used and those in which other ELA instructional materials and no published programs are used. The schools using published programs generally provide additional types of instructional materials.

Figure 2. Percentage of Schools Using Different Types of ELA Instructional Resources



The use of literacy programs is more common in elementary and middle schools than in high schools. In 74 percent of the elementary schools, 60 percent of the middle schools, and 27 percent of the high schools, respondents indicated that published ELA programs are used to teach literacy.

Many elementary schools use multiple programs to address different aspects of the balanced literacy approach. The following description by an elementary teacher exemplifies how instructional programs are used to address balanced literacy skills:

> Our program is balanced literacy. The materials that we use to accomplish balanced literacy include *Fundations*, other supports from the core curriculum that have to do with phonics. Phonemic awareness would be taught using *Words Their Way*…. Our reading materials are rich classroom libraries. We use Writer's Workshop as the vehicle for writing instruction. We use a rich resource of materials and have classroom libraries for shared reading. We use *Making Meaning* to support read-alouds.

In 34 percent of the sample schools, respondents reported that teachers do not use a published ELA program and mainly rely on a variety of school-selected materials. High schools are well represented in this group, with teachers in 11 of the 15 high schools (including a combined middle/high school) choosing from a variety of instructional materials that the school has selected (sometimes with teacher input). The following statements are from high school teachers:

> Teachers go directly to real literature. They don't like the programs as well.

> Teachers don't really use a program. There are school libraries, and teachers create the libraries that will be useful for their classes

Training on Using ELA Materials

In 95 percent of the sample elementary and middle schools and in 40 percent of the high schools, all or nearly all of the interviewed teachers reported that they had been trained to use the ELA programs and materials. Types of training approaches reported include in-house training (usually from the ELA coach), turnkey training (in which teachers who attend sessions outside of the school present the information to their colleagues), training from program developers, and training from consultants associated with publishers.

In the high schools, the lower level of training specific to instructional programs and materials is consistent with teachers relying more on materials rather than programs and the high level of teacher choice in selecting materials.

Teachers frequently mentioned professional development sessions on ELA materials as especially helpful. Several teachers noted how important it is to develop a greater understanding of what they are supposed to be teaching. The following comments exemplify this assessment:

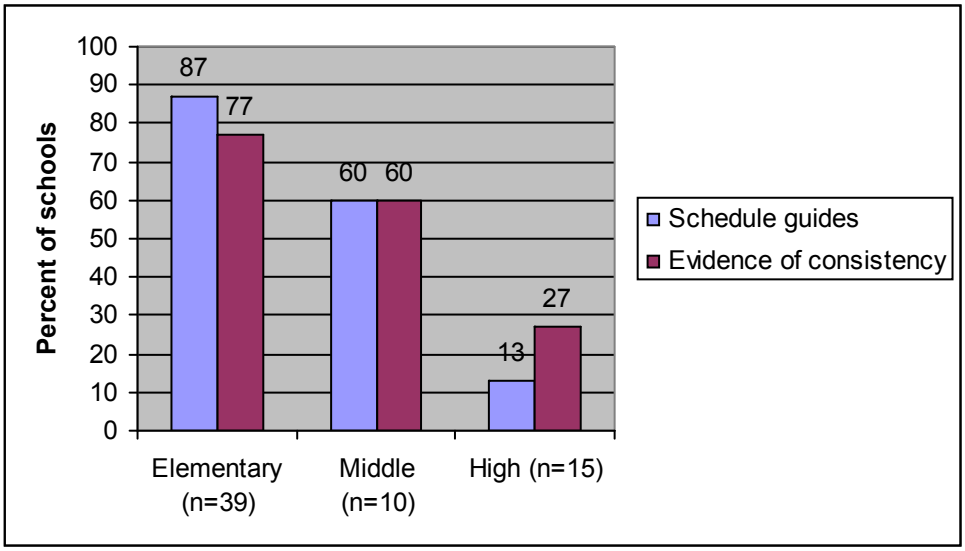
> I think [professional development] really helped me be able to take control of the programs and be able to use them effectively for my students—in terms of not feeling like I'm reading out of a book or not understanding what I'm teaching and just teaching, and for understanding why the programs are set up the way they are and how I can use that effectively in my classroom.

> If you're unfamiliar with the set-up, the format,…it's very difficult to be organized and prepared to be able to teach [using the program]. And because all of our programs for second grade are now scripted, I see that a lot of times teachers just pick up a book and then they just teach it. I don't know how they can be really effective, especially for the kids that are pushing you to go further. You need to know which direction to go.

Guidance and Consistency in Using Programs and Materials

Figure 3 depicts school-level variables related to consistency of use of the materials and programs—whether a school schedule guides the use of literacy programs and materials by indicating which topics or lessons should be covered and when, and whether teacher responses indicate consistency in the use of programs and materials across the school. Consistency was determined by comparing teacher responses on three factors: the materials and programs used, frequency of use, and how closely programs or materials were followed.

Figure 3. Percentage of Schools Rated High on Use of School Schedule and High on Consistency in Using ELA Instructional Materials



As Figure 3 indicates, a school schedule guides the use of programs and materials in 87 percent of the elementary schools, 60 percent of the middle schools, and 13 percent of the high schools, according to respondents. Similarly, within-school consistency in the use of programs and materials is more evident in elementary schools (77 percent) and middle schools (60 percent) than in high schools (27 percent).

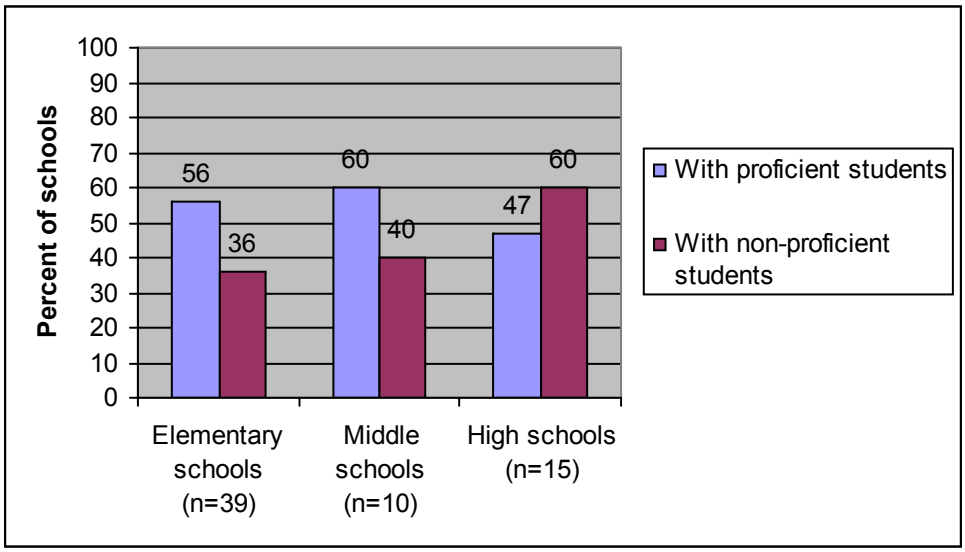
Factors That Influence Consistency in Using Instructional Resources

Two factors were strongly associated with the consistent use of instructional programs and materials. One factor was whether the school used one or more published literacy programs to guide instruction. In schools with a primary ELA program, teachers were more likely to follow a schedule to deliver lessons and to be more consistent in the instructional materials and programs used in the classrooms. A second factor was whether teachers were trained to use the programs and materials. More consistent use of programs and materials occurred in the schools in which training was provided.

Perceived Effectiveness of ELA Programs and Materials on Instruction

Interviewed teachers were asked about the effectiveness of their school's ELA programs and materials for meeting the needs of both their proficient and nonproficient students. Schools with high ratings on perceived effectiveness (that is, schools in which the majority of respondents responded *a great deal* when asked about the effectiveness of materials) are represented in Figure 4. As Figure 4 depicts, in elementary and middle schools, ratings indicate that teachers consider materials and programs to be more effective for proficient than nonproficient students. The opposite is true in the high schools.

Figure 4. Percentage of Schools in Which Effectiveness of Instructional Materials Is Rated as High



Of the 180 teacher interviews that were reviewed for explanations, approximately 120 responses offered explanations about the effectiveness of the instructional materials. The most commonly cited explanations are presented:

- **The Teacher Can Tailor Material to Meet the Needs of Diverse Students.** Approximately half the teachers said the literacy programs and materials provide options and materials for addressing the needs of students at different proficiency levels. A number of teachers in different schools said this situation is the case with the workshop models they use and with other programs and materials (such as leveled books) and tools (such as graphic organizers). In a number of schools, teachers use materials to develop minilessons that are tailored for individual students or groups of students. A teacher said the school instructional materials "allow me to meet the individual needs of the students, to raise or lower the bar, or to give them the push they need, or to coach them to slow down or work harder." Another teacher noted that with the school's resources, "the children have the opportunity because of the levels of books we have."

  Instructional programs such as writing workshops offer appropriate assignments for proficient students. Several teachers said proficient students are able to work on instructional tasks independently. One teacher said, "Because the proficient students are very capable or maybe more capable of being able to be independent, they don't need as much guidance. They are able to do things on their own, without so much guidance from me." Another teacher said that the writing workshop helps students explore writing, adding that, "I think that works especially well for proficient students, for them to be able to build on their skill level."

- **The Needs of Proficient Students Are Not Met.** A concern expressed in approximately one fourth of the teacher responses was that proficient students either are not challenged or are left alone while teachers attend to less proficient students—particularly when classrooms have a large number of nonproficient students and when schools focus on improving the academic performance of nonproficient students. "I think we forget about

the higher level kids," a teacher said. "Just because they're higher level doesn't always mean they don't want attention. We think that they are higher and they can be on their own, and that is not always the case because there are behavioral concerns with the higher level kids also and how they are working in their group dynamics."

Frequently, interviewed teachers stated that the more advanced students were "falling through the cracks," "forgotten," "left behind," and "getting lost in the shuffle." An elementary teacher said, "I don't think some of the programs give enough extensions or have enough open-ended questions to keep their interest.… It is very basic and there is not enough critical thinking. I have some [students] that are highly proficient.… It is boring for them." Another teacher said, "I feel that there is more that they [the programs and materials] could do.… Everything is geared toward helping those kids who are behind. For those kids who are above, there's not as much challenging work." In a Reading First school, a teacher said, "Most of the lessons and teachings are geared toward whole group. It's very hard to reach the higher level students when everything is whole group. We have to teach right in the middle to try to reach the average student. Advanced students may be a little bored."

- **Teacher Skill Is Needed to Effectively Use Instructional Resources.** Approximately one fourth of the responses noted that the effectiveness of the resources in meeting the needs of students requires teacher skill and experience. Resources alone are not sufficient. "I find that the burden to modify it [the program] is the teacher's," a respondent said, adding, "Balanced literacy is not a scripted program.… It is a skeleton where you have to fill in the extra things, which could be a problem for some people who don't really know how to do it." One teacher said teachers have to "put in the extra time and effort to really find ways to differentiate.… Then it can work a great deal." Another teacher made a similar statement, saying that the effectiveness of the instructional programs and materials "is up to the teacher." A high school teacher said, "I feel that you have to put in a little bit extra for the students that are high functioning. You have to use higher thinking questions in order to get them to that synthesis level, analytical level."

- **The Academic Needs of the Lowest Level Students Are Not Met by the Programs and Materials.** Approximately 15 percent of respondents noted that some of their students do not have adequate skills to understand and learn what is being taught in ELA sessions. Respondents mentioned students with individualized education programs (IEPs) or limited English proficiency, students who are well behind grade level, and students from homes in which there is no support for literacy. The respondents said the ELA program and materials are not effective for these students.

- **Even With Adequate Instructional Materials, Other Factors Related to ELA Sessions or the ELA Resources Were Identified as Challenging.** Approximately 20 percent of the responses referred to basic components either of the literacy sessions or of the program and materials. A diverse array of factors was mentioned. Among the most common was that the ELA sessions are not long enough to meet the needs of all students. This situation most often was a high school concern, with 40-minute literacy sessions described as too short. In some instances, elementary teachers whose ELA sessions are longer than those in high schools said it was challenging to include the many facets of balanced literacy in a single class session. Another concern was that there were too many

students in the classroom to meet the needs of all the students, particularly when the teacher was not supported by a paraprofessional or Academic Intervention Services (AIS) specialist. A third concern was that lower level students had not developed adequate word-study skills because these skills were not emphasized enough in the earlier grades. Yet another concern was that the workshop models were too loosely structured, which gives teachers too much discretion for designing lessons and which were not effective for high-risk students.

Use of Data From Formal and Informal Assessments

Interviews in the sample schools indicate that data use is a well-established instructional practice in most of the sample schools. In particular, teachers indicated a reliance on data from informal assessments such as quizzes, observations, and reviews of student work. In nearly all of the sample schools, teachers used informal assessment data frequently, at least several times a week. Data from periodic formal assessments, such as Acuity, Early Childhood Literary Assessment System (ECLAS), Scantron, and Dynamic Indicators of Basic English Literary Skills (DIBELS), also have a presence in many of the schools, although interview findings indicate that there are differences within and between schools related to the use of data from formal assessments and to teachers' perceptions on the utility of the data for instructional planning.

To assess the use of data by teachers in the sample schools, the school-level variables listed in Table 6 were examined on a school-by-school basis.

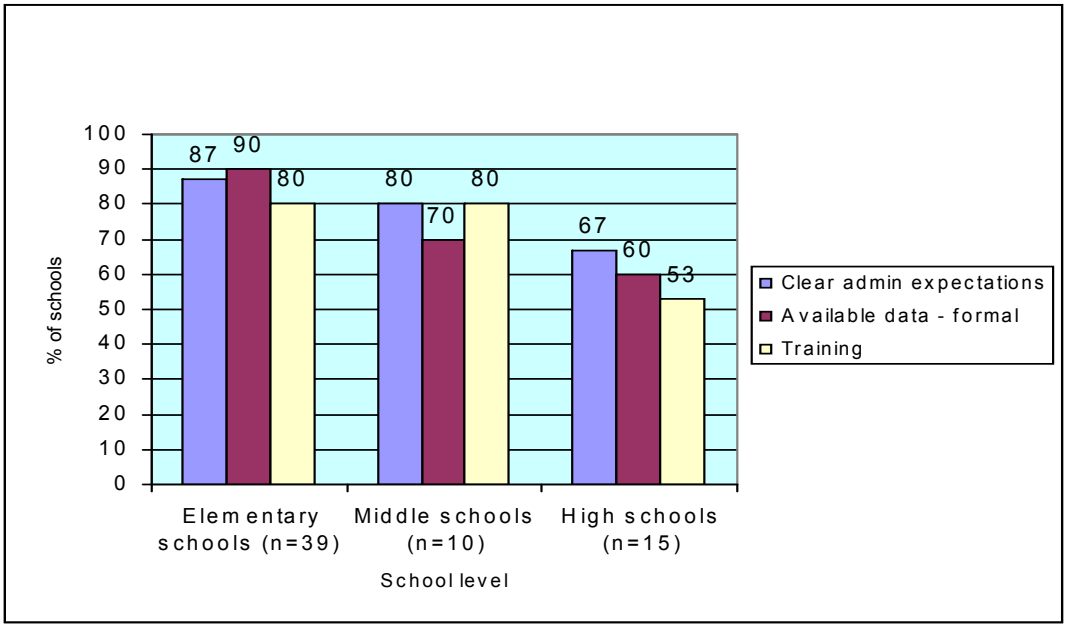
Table 6. Data Use Variables and Definitions

Variable Name	Definition
Use of formal assessments	Teachers use data from formal assessments to make instructional decisions.
Administrator expectations on data use	Administrators expect teachers to regularly monitor student progress and use information to improve instruction and learning.
Available data	Administrators and teachers have access to recent data from formal assessments.
Training on data and data use	Teachers have been trained on how to use data derived from formal assessments.
Perceived usefulness of data from formal assessments	Data from formal assessments are perceived by teachers to be helpful for planning instruction.
Perceived usefulness of data from informal assessments	Data from informal assessments are perceived by teachers to be helpful for planning instruction.

Support for Using Data

According to respondents, the majority of the sample schools have provided instructional support that focuses on data use. Higher levels of support were indicated in the elementary and middle schools than the high schools, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Instructional Support for Data Use From Formal Assessments



Administrative Expectations for Data Use. Respondents indicated that clear administrative expectations regarding data use were conveyed to teachers in 81 percent of the sample schools, including 87 percent of the elementary schools, 80 percent of the middle schools, and 67 percent of the high schools. In schools rated high on administrative expectations with respect to data use, principals and coaches described specific ways in which administrators expected student achievement data to be used by teachers, as well as by school administrators. The respondents described strategies such as using data to target students who scored at a certain level on the state exam, creating small student groups based on academic proficiency, monitoring the academic progress of students who receive extra support, deciding on the focus of professional development, and allocating resources. For the schools rated low on administrative expectations on data use, administrators offered general comments on the importance and potential of data to inform decisions but had no specific expectations of teachers or administrators.

Availability of Data From Formal Assessments. As indicated in Figure 5, according to respondents, data from formal assessments are reliably available to teachers in 80 percent of the schools. Data are more available in the elementary schools (90 percent) and middle schools (70 percent) than the high schools (60 percent).

Not illustrated in Figure 5 is the availability of data from informal assessments. Overwhelmingly, interviewed teachers indicated they had ready access to data from informal

assessments, such as student work, quizzes, tests, and their own observations of students in the classroom.

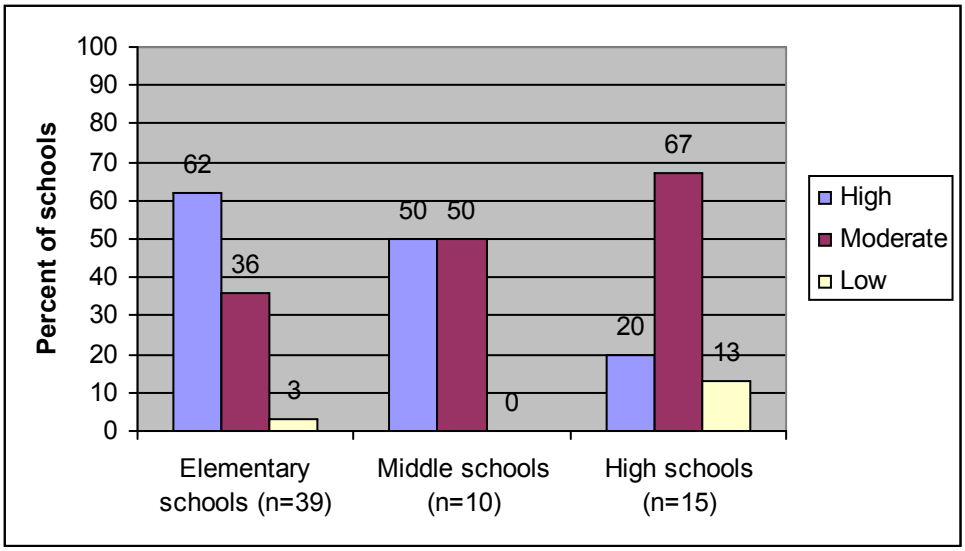
Training on Data and Data Use. Respondents reported that training on using data to make instructional decisions had been provided to all or nearly all of the interviewed teachers in 73 percent of the sample schools. In nearly 90 percent of the elementary schools, all or nearly all of the elementary teachers interviewed said they had been trained on using data from formal assessments to make instructional decisions. This situation was the case in 80 percent of the middle schools. On the other hand, in only 53 percent of the high schools did all or nearly all of the interviewed teachers report that they were trained to use data from formal assessments.

Teacher Practice

Teacher use of formal assessment data to plan instruction is a consistent practice in the majority of the sample schools. In half the schools, formal assessments are used by a majority of interviewed teachers at least two to three times a month. High schools account for nearly all the schools in which the majority of teachers use data from formal assessments infrequently (once a month or less); the exception is one elementary school.

Figure 6 depicts the percentage of schools across school levels in which use of data from formal assessments was reported by teachers to be *high* (with the majority of teachers using data two to three times or more per month), *moderate* (data use by most teachers at least once a month) or *low* (data use by the majority of teachers at less than once a month).

Figure 6. Use of Formal Assessments by Teachers in Sample Schools

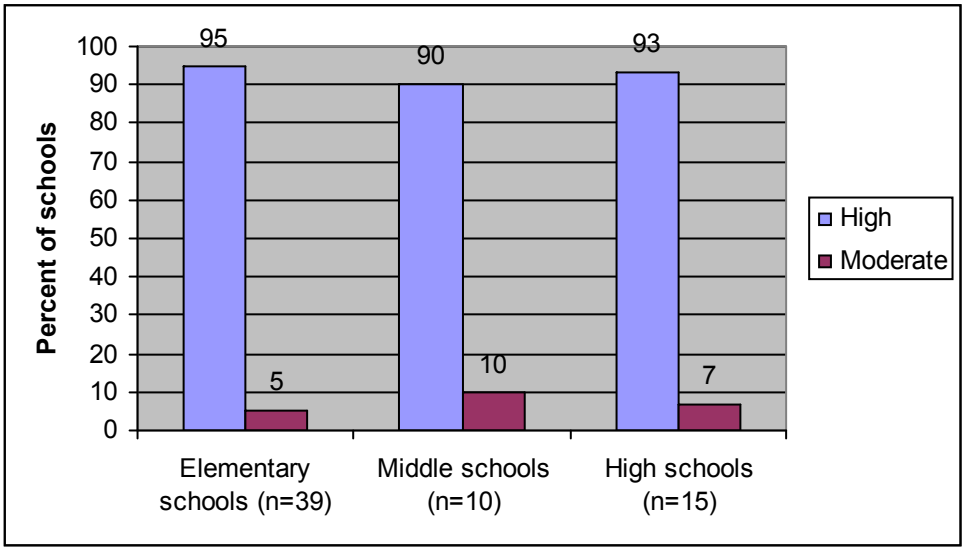


As Figure 6 conveys, use of data from formal assessments generally is higher in elementary schools than middle schools and higher in middle schools than high schools. More than 60 percent of the elementary schools provide evidence of high data use; this percentage compares to 50 percent of the middle schools and 20 percent of high schools. At the same time,

moderate data use by teachers is evident in 67 percent of the high schools. All but one school in the sample in which data use is low are high schools.

The level of use of informal assessments is high in the sample schools. Nearly all the schools were rated *high* on the use of informal assessments by teachers; none was rated *low*. Figure 7 illustrates the ratings.

Figure 7. Use of Informal Assessments by Teachers in the Sample Schools



Relationship of Instructional Support and Data Use

The relationship between instructional support for data use and regular use of data from formal assessments by teachers was examined to determine if those schools with higher support also exhibited higher levels of data use.

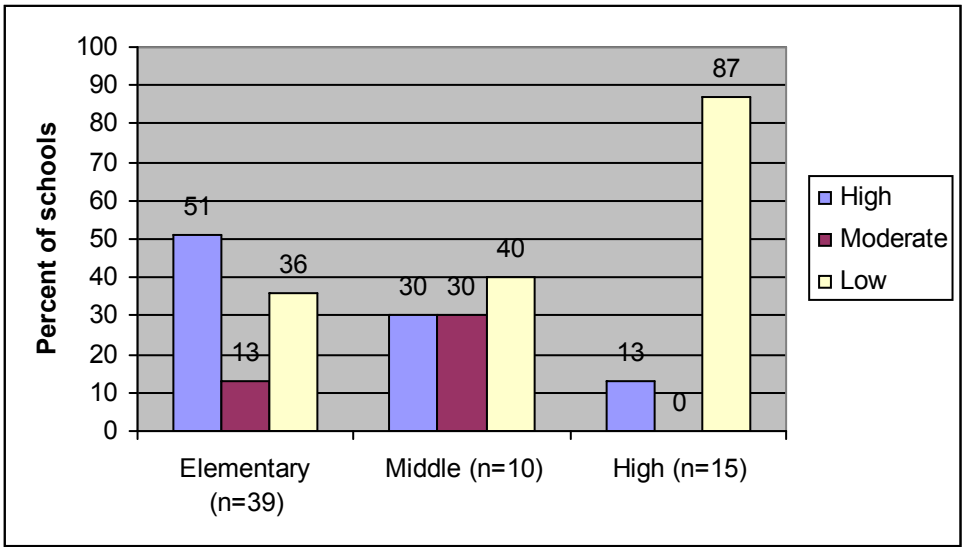
Each of the instructional supports (administrative expectations, availability of data, and training on using data) are correlated with higher levels of data use in this sample. The correlation was particularly strong between availability of data and data use; the correlation was moderate between data use and administrative expectations and between data use and specific training on using data.

It is likely that data use in high schools is lower than in elementary schools because in a greater proportion of high schools, administrative expectations regarding data use are not clear, data from formal assessments are not readily available, and training on data use was not provided to all or nearly all teachers.

Utility of Data From Formal and Informal Assessments. The interviewed teachers were asked about the utility of data from formal and informal assessments for planning instruction. As Figure 8 conveys, opinions on the utility of data from formal assessments were mixed. High assessments of utility were most evident in elementary schools, with 51 percent of the schools rated *high* on utility. *High* ratings were less frequent in the middle and high schools.

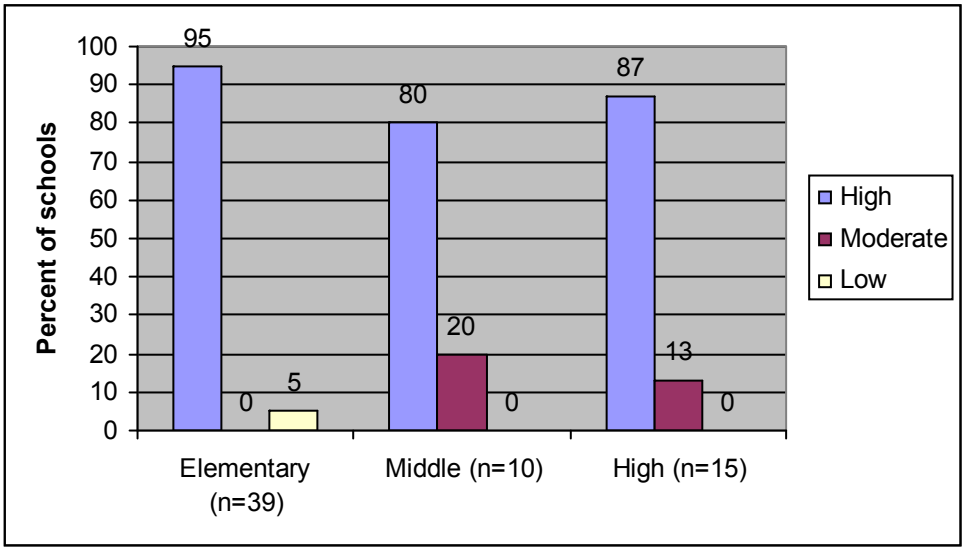
Utility was rated as *low* in 36 percent of elementary schools and 40 percent of middle schools. Among high schools, utility was rated as *low* in 87 percent of the schools.

Figure 8. Teacher Perceptions of Utility of Formal Assessments



In contrast to the mixed ratings related to the utility of data from formal assessments, informal assessments were noted to be very useful for informing instructional decisions. Of the 64 schools, 91 percent were given *high* ratings on utility of informal assessments. Figure 9 depicts the ratings on teacher perceptions of utility of informal assessments by school level.

Figure 9. Teacher Perceptions of Utility of Informal Assessments



Of the 180 teacher interviews that were reviewed, 100 responses to the question "What kinds of decisions do you make that are based on student data?" were examined. The responses indicate

that many decisions made by teachers are based on student data. These decisions are difficult to isolate because, as many of the teachers indicated, the use of data drives a sequence of related instructional activities. Students are grouped according to ability (ability grouping was the most frequently cited strategy) and are moved from one group to another with subsequent assessments. Teachers frequently mentioned that they use assessments to determine what they should emphasize, whether their teaching approach is effective, and whether they should work with students in whole groups (if a high percentage of students have not learned a specific literacy skill) or in small groups (if they need to devote more time to certain skills or if less time than anticipated is needed).

Though teachers were not asked to identify data sources used to make instructional decisions, among the 100 responses, approximately one third referred to the importance of informal assessments, such as quizzes, homework, observations of students, and student read-alouds. Prominent among the teacher responses was that the immediacy of the information gleaned from these assessments was valued. As one teacher said, "It is what I see on a daily basis." In addition, these assessments were aligned closely with lesson plans and objectives and student assignments.

Approximately one sixth of the teacher responses referred to using formal assessments to make instructional decisions—primarily to form ability-based groups, obtain a better understanding of the proficiency of the students in their classroom (particularly at the beginning of the year), and monitor student progress.

Factors That Influence Data Use

In many of the schools, respondents noted that teacher use of formal data to monitor progress and drive instructional decisions is uneven—usually more effective within certain teacher groups, grades, or subject areas than others. Principals and coaches identified several factors that influence data use:

- **The State Exam Requirements Influence Data Use.** In nearly half the elementary schools, the principal and/or the content coach said use of data from formal assessments is more consistent and more effective in the upper grades (Grades 3 and higher) than the lower grades (K–2). The most cited reason was that the upper-grade students take the annual state exams. Similarly, in four of the 15 high schools, use of formal assessment data drops off in Grade 12 because those students are "done with the Regents," as a principal said.
- **Experienced Teachers Are More Proficient in Using Data.** Across grade levels, a common theme was that experienced teachers are more effective than new teachers in using data. Principals and/or coaches in seven schools indicated that data were used less effectively in grade levels with inexperienced teachers. Respondents in 11 schools reported that either in the current or the past school year, at least 20 percent of their teacher force was new. As one principal said, "Using data takes a lot of work to learn, to build skills in using, so it means more professional development and time and gaining experience." Another principal said that in two grades with experienced teachers, "teachers know each other. They are the most consistent in planning lessons together in looking at data, in knowing the curriculum."

- **Tech-Savvy Teachers Are Comfortable With Formal Assessments.** Though a less prominent explanation, principals in two schools also mentioned that teachers who are computer literate—"tech savvy"—are more comfortable with formal assessments than other teachers.

Academic Support for Nonproficient Students

Support for nonproficient students typically is provided during the school day by an AIS specialist or other provider, during push-in sessions (i.e., the provider comes into the general education classroom), or during pull-out sessions (i.e., the student leaves the classroom to work with the provider). In addition, additional academic support is provided during sessions outside of the school day: before school, after school, and on Saturdays. Another resource for support is specific literacy programs that address remediation of students who are not proficient.

Typically, elementary schools in the sample offer high levels of support for nonproficient students, which include push-in and pull-out sessions, numerous published remediation instructional programs, and sessions outside regular school-day hours. More than 90 percent of the elementary schools had AIS specialists—usually more than one. In two elementary schools, principals said additional academic support for nonproficient students is limited because of budget cuts.

In middle schools, academic support is provided in most of the schools during the school day and in sessions outside of the regular school day. In 70 percent of the middle schools, respondents indicated that they have AIS specialists. In schools without AIS specialists, academic support usually is provided by paraprofessionals, literacy coaches, and teachers in the role of tutors. Principals in two middle schools said that academic support for nonproficient students had been recently reduced due to budget cuts.

Respondent descriptions of additional academic support offered in the high schools indicate an emphasis on reading skills, preparation for the Regents exam, and credit recovery, with opportunities offered during and outside of the school day. Twenty-seven percent of the sample high schools have an AIS specialist. Academic and other types of support generally are provided by a combination of two or more of the following: school-based paraprofessionals, volunteer tutors, reading specialists, social workers, teachers in the capacity of tutors, and staff members who specialize in special education, English as a second language, or counseling. In one of the high schools, the principal said academic support is limited to informal tutoring and preparation for the Regents exam because of budget constraints.

Data Used to Identify Students and Monitor Progress

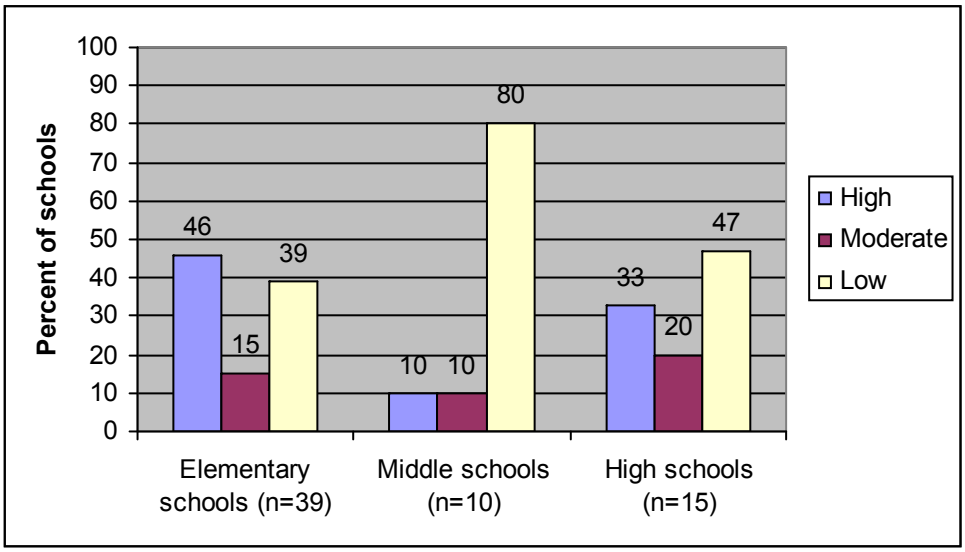
As noted, in nearly all the sample schools, principals and coaches stated that data from both formal and informal assessments are used to identify students for additional academic support. Nearly all of the schools use data from formal assessments: both annual state exams (from which student proficiency levels are identified) and more focused assessments (such as the Early Childhood Literary Assessment System, Writing Assessment Program, and Acuity).

In 81 percent of the sample schools, the principals reported that they consistently monitor the progress of students who have been referred to academic support services. There were no differences among the schools serving different grades. Although a range of monitoring approaches were mentioned, responses indicate a fairly heavy reliance on data from informal assessments (such as student work, grades, and teacher assessments) and, to some extent, the tests that accompany remediation programs. The majority of principals and coaches indicated that they use informal assessments in combination with results from annual state exams (the most commonly cited formal assessment) or other assessments. In 20 percent of the middle and high schools, principals and coaches did not mention using formal assessments to monitor progress.

Perceived Effectiveness of Academic Support Services

As presented in Figure 10, in 46 percent of the elementary schools and 33 percent of the high schools, teacher perceptions on the effectiveness of academic support services were rated as *high*. Ratings on effectiveness were low in 80 percent of the middle schools. Ten percent of the middle schools were rated *high* on effectiveness.

Figure 10. Perceived Effectiveness of Academic Support Services



Of the 180 teacher interviews that were reviewed, approximately 80 provided explanations of teacher opinions on the effectiveness of academic support for nonproficient students. The responses referred mainly to conditions and features of academic support programs that teachers consider necessary (and sometimes lacking) for student academic performance to improve:

- **Participation Is Key.** The importance of regular student participation in academic support programs was a prominent theme among the respondents. Approximately one third of the responses noted that regular participation in AIS is essential if students are to improve academically. Several respondents said that participating students earn higher scores on assessments. One teacher stated, "I found that as long as the students' attendance [in AIS] is good, they benefit a great deal from all of those programs. They're great." Another teacher said, "I have seen student progress via assessment tools as a result of their participation in the programs."

Participation in academic support programs is uneven, however. In 40 percent of high schools, 38 percent of elementary schools, and 80 percent of middle schools, the majority of teacher respondents indicated that student participation in academic support services is irregular. Nearly all of the secondary teachers who questioned the effectiveness of the programs identified low participation by students as a concern. Many offered a variety of reasons for low participation, such as lack of motivation, other commitments, and lack of parental support for participation. A number of comments from middle and high school teachers exemplify these concerns:

> Frequently, our students who are academically poor are also not the most motivated. It is very difficult to reach students who don't want to cooperate or participate in their own learning.
>
> You cannot force a kid to attend either the Saturday morning or afterschool programs.
>
> The students who are identified frequently will not come. We attempted to have afterschool tutoring a year ago…once-a-week afterschool tutoring. Through the entire life of that program, I never had a single student who was assigned to me show up for those programs. And calls home were either rebuffed or not answered.

- **More Programs and Program Hours Are Needed.** A frequently mentioned concern was that there are not enough programs or program hours to effectively meet the needs of students who are far below proficiency. This concern was mentioned as frequently as concerns about participation. As an elementary teacher said, "Because many of the children are so far behind, the programs are just a Band-Aid and do not really help."

  Related to this concern was the need to provide consistent support. A teacher said, "I think [programs and services] are effective if they're done consistently." However, approximately one fifth of the responses indicated that the programs and services are not offered consistently and, as a result, the effectiveness is low. One teacher said, "[Academic support] is usually not on a consistent basis because of the large number of students. It limits the amount of time they are getting attention so it could only be once a week." Another said, "Sometimes the schedule is not always adhered to. In the year, someone did pull out one or two of my children to work with but it never happened again."

- **Small-Group and Individual Instruction Are Helpful.** Small-group and individualized instruction offered to below-proficient students were identified as beneficial to students by approximately one fourth of the respondents. Elementary teachers in particular cited this benefit. One teacher said, "It works well because kids work in small groups." Another teacher said, "I think it works because it's a one-to-one interaction. They [intervention programs] are great."

- **Coordination With the Classroom Teacher Enhances Effectiveness.** Approximately one fifth of the respondents emphasized the importance of coordinating instruction provided in academic support services with that provided by the classroom teacher. For example, one teacher said, "The AIS teachers meet with the students every day and are reinforcing the same things that we're doing in the classroom, but in a different manner."

Frustration was expressed when such coordination did not occur. For example, a teacher noted that providers of academic support "are not using specific information to help the students. They are not using the children's specific information to help them on the strategies that they need." Another teacher said, "I would like more communication about which students are participating in the academic interventions programs. I would like more conversations with those people [who provide the interventions]."

Summary

Following are summaries of the four subsections within the Curriculum and Instruction section: curriculum alignment, instructional programs and materials, use of data from formal and informal assessments, and academic support for nonproficient students..

Curriculum Alignment

Although curriculum alignment has a presence in the sample schools, teacher practice in aligning lessons to state learning standards is influenced by multiple factors that appear to diffuse the impact of administrative direction. These factors include teachers' level of experience; grade-level collaboration among teachers; state exam requirements; and, to a lesser degree in the sample schools, the recentness of administrative focus.

Instructional Programs and Materials

Overall, the sample schools have an abundance of ELA programs and materials. Although nearly all schools have selected programs and materials for use within the schools, it is mainly elementary and middle schools that use published programs to guide instruction.

Opinions on the effectiveness of the programs for proficient and nonproficient students are mixed. Leveled materials, which are appropriate for students at different learning levels, were identified as a positive characteristic of the ELA programs and materials. Concerns were expressed about proficient students being given work to accomplish on their own while teachers worked mainly with nonproficient students. Concerns also were expressed about the instructional resources being appropriate for students whose literacy skills are very low. Teacher capacity and effort in designing differentiated lessons are necessary for effectively using and modifying instructional materials to meet the needs of diverse students, a number of respondents said.

Use of Data From Formal and Informal Assessments

The interviews provide evidence that the use of data from formal assessments is a factor in the schools, though use is uneven within and between schools. Teacher use of formal assessment data for instructional planning is more consistent in schools where data are readily available, training has been provided, and administrative expectations are clear.

Perceptions of teachers about the utility of formal assessments are more positive in the elementary schools than the middle schools and less positive in the high schools than in other school levels. At the same time, respondents in nearly all sample schools indicated that they

frequently use data from informal assessments to make instructional decisions and that the data, available daily and aligned to lesson objectives, are very useful for planning instruction. The most common factors influencing data use, according to principals and coaches, are the state exam requirements and teacher experience.

Academic Support for Nonproficient Students

Nearly all the sample schools provide multiple opportunities for nonproficient students to receive additional academic support both during and outside of the regular school day. AIS specialists are available in nearly all of the elementary and middle schools in the sample, though only in 27 percent of the sample high schools. Despite the numerous programs mentioned, teachers assessed effectiveness critically, particularly in the middle schools. The main reasons offered were low or inconsistent participation by students and not having enough programs and program hours to meet the needs of students who are far behind academically. Other concerns were the lack of consistency in the provision of services and the lack of coordination with the classroom teacher.

Professional Learning Opportunities

Professional learning opportunities are critical for supporting teacher learning and encouraging uniform implementation of instructional practices. This School Interview Report has discussed whether schools provide professional learning opportunities related to instructional practices, such as aligning the curriculum to state learning standards, using instructional materials, and using data to make instructional decisions. In some schools, professional development for teachers is a critical implementation strategy related to these practices—a strategy that signals the importance of the practice while also providing support for teachers as they learn how best to effectively implement the practice.

Availability of Professional Learning Opportunities

This section examines three types of professional learning opportunities available for teachers in the sample schools:

- **Professional Development:** Scheduled sessions for small or large groups of teachers, which are directed by a content expert such as a school literacy coach, outside consultant, or one of the teachers who is more informed about a specific topic than others.
- **Collaborative Sessions Among Teachers:** Scheduled times for teachers to collaboratively plan instruction and/or address instructional issues, usually in small group sessions, such as grade-level or multigrade-level meetings or department meetings.
- **On-Site ELA Content Coach:** Content expert who works individually and/or in group sessions to improve instructional practice.

The variables related to professional learning opportunities listed in Table 7 were examined on a school-by-school basis.

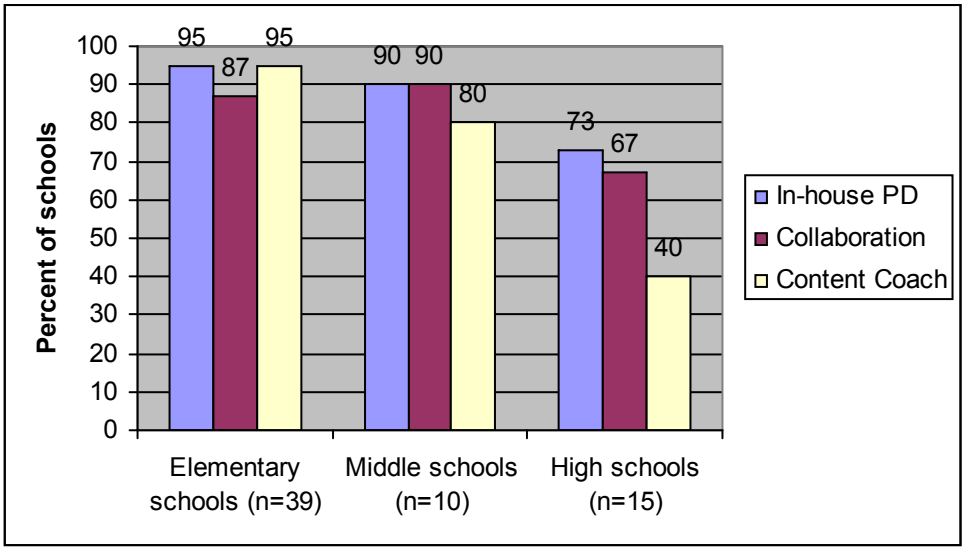
Table 7. Professional Learning Opportunities Variables and Definitions

Variable Name	Definition
Availability of professional learning opportunities	In-house professional development, collaborative sessions, and coach support are available.
Required attendance in professional development sessions	Teachers are required to attend professional development sessions.
Perceived effectiveness of professional development for instruction of proficient students	Teachers perceive that professional development is effective for their instruction of proficient students.
Perceived effectiveness of professional development for instruction of nonproficient students	Teachers perceive that professional development is effective for their instruction of nonproficient students.
Usefulness of collaboration for instructional planning	Teachers perceive that collaborative sessions with other teachers are useful for instructional planning.

Variable Name	Definition
Influence of coach on instruction	Teachers perceive that the coach has influenced their instruction.

Figure 11 depicts the percentage of sample schools per school level that provide three types of professional learning opportunities: in-house professional development sessions, collaborative sessions among teachers, and a full-time ELA content coach.

Figure 11. Prevalence of Types of Professional Learning Opportunities by School Level



In-House Professional Development

Respondents in 90 percent of the schools said that administrators provide teachers with time and multiple opportunities for participating in in-house professional development sessions. As Figure 11 depicts, these opportunities are somewhat more available in elementary and middle schools than in high schools (95 percent, 90 percent, and 73 percent, respectively).

In all but six of the 64 schools, professional development is offered in school during the school day. In 70 percent of the schools, the principals require teacher attendance at the sessions. There were no differences between elementary, middle, and high schools on this aspect of professional development.

Collaboration Among Teachers

Overall, 90 percent of the schools in the site visit sample provide scheduled opportunities for teachers to collaborate. In most of the schools, the majority of teachers indicated that they have such opportunities two to three times or more a week. In addition, in nearly all sample schools, teachers described other less formal opportunities to confer with other teachers, such as during lunch or during free periods before and after the school day.

Whether administrators clearly communicate the purpose of these collaborative sessions varies by school level. Administrators in 64 percent of high schools reported communicating the purpose of collaborative sessions; this amount compares to 47 percent of elementary principals and 30 percent of the middle school principals.

On-Site ELA Content Coach

Support from a full-time ELA content coach or equivalent (such as assigned staff developers) is available in 80 percent of the sample schools. As Figure 11 indicates, support varies by school level: a higher proportion of elementary schools (95 percent) than middle schools (80 percent) or high schools (40 percent) have a full-time ELA content coach. Approximately 70 percent of the teachers in the sample indicated they have at least weekly interactions with the ELA content coach.

Coach responses indicate that their roles and responsibilities within the school vary somewhat in emphasis but usually include the following types of teacher-focused activities:

- Directing the school ELA program.
- Observing instructions and demonstrating or modeling lessons.
- Helping teachers plan lessons that incorporate instructional strategies into their ELA instruction.
- Providing staff development, often at grade-level meetings.
- Working with teachers on scheduling and administering assessments.
- Reviewing student achievement data from periodic assessments.
- Helping teachers set up leveled libraries and organizing other materials.
- Providing teachers with instructional materials based on student needs and assessment results.

More specific help is provided by content coaches to new teachers, particularly early on in the school year. Coaches also provide focused support to veteran teachers who request specific help or who have been identified by coaches or administrators as needing additional assistance.

Approximately two thirds of the coaches are key members of the school administration team and/or are official members of the school cabinet. The majority of coaches reported that they meet with the principal and administrative staff on a weekly basis and, in some schools, meet with the principal on a daily basis. As one coach said, "I inform the principal on any information I gather outside of the building from meetings or training and see how to incorporate this in literacy instruction and learning." Another coach described communication with the principal and the school administrative team:

> My role is to keep them [the administrative team members] informed on teacher progress, to assist struggling teachers, and to also inform them on student success. I ensure that teachers are progress monitoring every week and analyzing data with administrators, by looking at goals weekly and letting them [administrators] know teacher concerns.

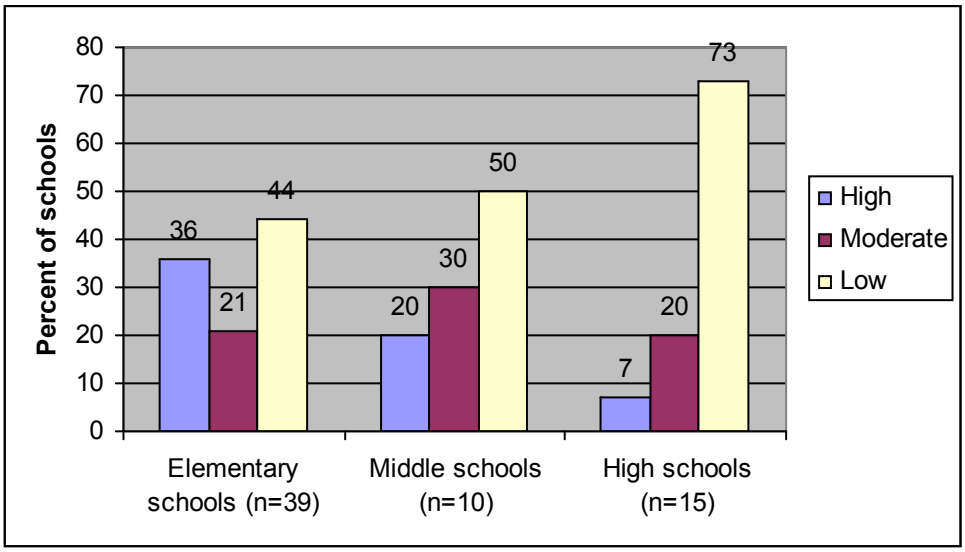
Teacher Assessment of Professional Learning Opportunities

Teachers were asked about three areas of influence: how helpful professional development sessions were for the instruction of proficient and nonproficient students, whether collaborative sessions supported instructional planning, and whether content coaches influenced instruction.

In-House Professional Development

Teachers were asked how helpful professional development was for their instruction of both proficient and nonproficient students. Figure 12 depicts the ratings for the variable referring to proficient students.

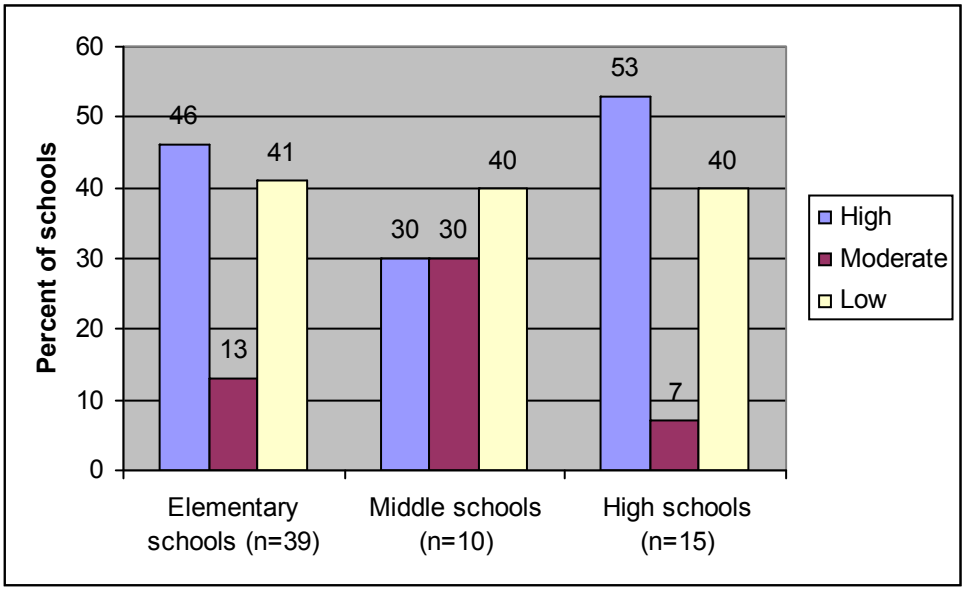
Figure 12. Professional Development Helpfulness for Instruction of Proficient Students



As Figure 12 shows, ratings vary by school level. Compared to middle and high schools, a larger proportion of elementary schools was rated *high* on the helpfulness of professional development for instruction of proficient students. Also, a smaller proportion of the elementary schools than middle and high schools was rated *low* on this variable. A very high proportion of high schools (73 percent) was rated *low* on professional development addressing instruction of proficient students. Similarly, only 7 percent of the high schools were rated *high* on the variable.

Figure 13 depicts the ratings for professional development helpfulness for instruction of nonproficient students. A comparison of Figure 13 with Figure 12 indicates that there are more positive than negative opinions about the helpfulness of professional development for instructing nonproficient than proficient students. This situation is true among all school levels, each of which has a larger percentage of *high* ratings on professional development associated with nonproficient than proficient students. In addition, a smaller percentage of schools was rated *low* on professional development associated with nonproficient than proficient students, particularly in high schools and middle schools.

Figure 13. Professional Development Helpfulness for Instruction of Nonproficient Students



Of the 180 teacher interviews that were reviewed, approximately 60 responses offered explanations about the effectiveness of the professional development for instructing proficient and nonproficient students.

Consistent with the information presented in Figures 12 and 13, the majority (approximately 60 percent) of the 60 open-ended responses indicated that the needs of nonproficient students are attended to more than the needs of proficient students. The following comments from teachers illustrate these opinions:

> We generally focus on the nonproficient students. We don't spend too much time worrying about the proficient students.
>
> The problem is usually the professional development is more focused on the low-performing kids than the high-performing kids.
>
> I don't really see a whole lot of new or innovative ideas coming along to address that particular group [proficient students].
>
> The proficient students are an afterthought. The teacher has to make sure to just keep pushing them because usually the concern is how to help the emerging and struggling ones.

Though fewer in number, teacher responses (approximately 30 percent of the 60 responses) note that more professional development is needed to effectively address the needs of nonproficient students. The following comments illustrate these concerns:

> [Professional development] is not really specific to those populations [nonproficient students]. It is more general and not focused on the strugglers.
>
> [Professional development is] not addressing the fact that these students are so far behind. Kids in fourth grade are so far behind, I don't feel they can catch up.

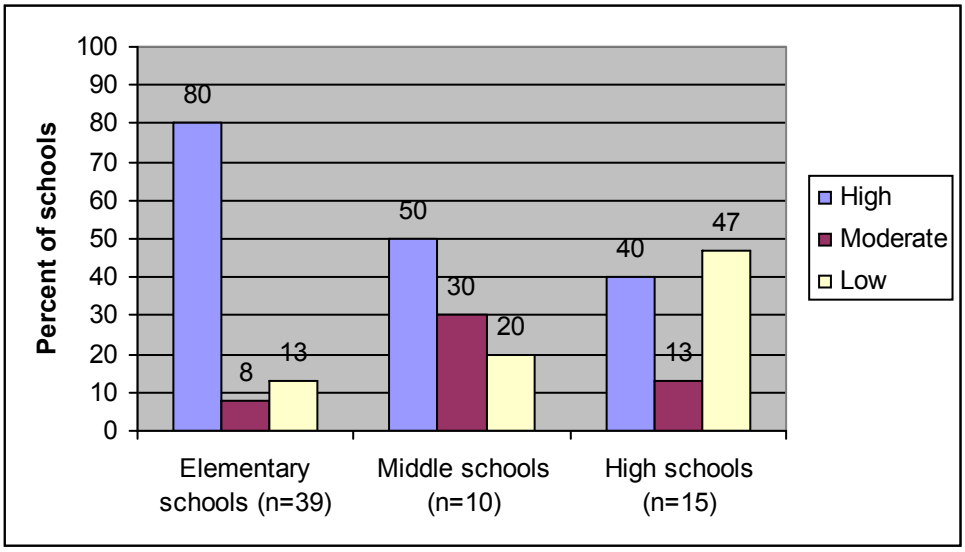
> It [students not being proficient] is like a mystery. Why aren't the kids succeeding? What can you do? So, you don't get enough information on what to do with those children.
>
> I think that professional development basically is geared toward the average student, the average proficiency. So, I don't feel that it helped the nonproficient student at all.

On the other hand, approximately one fifth of the 60 teacher responses indicated that sessions on differentiated instruction are useful for meeting the needs of both proficient and nonproficient students. This opinion is exemplified by a teacher who said, "Professional development is very helpful for all levels in the classroom. They do a good job of teaching you how to meet all the needs in your classroom." Another teacher said, "Professional development addresses the needs of all students including the gifted and advanced because we received training on how to develop different learning centers and motivate advanced kids to learn."

Collaboration Among Teachers

Teachers were asked about the helpfulness of collaborative sessions for instructional planning. Figure 14 depicts the ratings by school level for this variable.

Figure 14. Helpfulness of Collaboration for Instructional Planning



Perceptions about the helpfulness of the sessions were more positive in elementary schools (80 percent of the schools were rated as *high*) than in middle schools (50 percent rated as *high*) and high schools (40 percent rated as *high*). Similarly, lower ratings on utility were more frequent in the high schools, followed by the middle schools.

Of the 180 teacher interviews that were reviewed, approximately 100 responses offered explanations about the usefulness of collaborative sessions for instructional planning. Most of these explanations (61) referred to the benefits of collaboration, while 37 referred to concerns. The major benefits and concerns and their approximate proportions are presented as follows:

- **Collegial Exchange Is Valued.** Approximately half the teachers who referred to the benefits of collaboration mentioned collegial exchange. Teachers described collegial exchange and cited the opportunities they had to learn from one another by sharing professional experiences, ideas, information, and materials. The following quotes illustrate this finding:

  > We write lessons together. We write the curriculum together. We share instructional materials with each other. We give each other ideas. We give each other graphic organizers. We're a very interactive department.
  >
  > When we have the meetings, we're able to hear each other's problems and give helpful suggestions. I might be having a problem that another teacher can solve.
  >
  > We're on the same page, and maybe I've missed something that other teacher will give me information on things I need to know or vice versa.
  >
  > It's easier to plan lessons together. Bouncing ideas off of each other is also good.

- **Collaboration Supports Planning Across the School.** Among the benefits cited (15 percent of those cited) was that collaborative meetings provide teachers the opportunity to plan and coordinate instruction: creating timelines together, determining whether the same material is covered, and comparing notes on strategies.

- **Collaboration Requires Sufficient Time.** A common concern expressed by teachers is that the school does not provide sufficient opportunities for teachers to meet or does not allocate enough time for the sessions. Teachers noted that effective collaboration requires having adequate meeting time. Approximately one third of the concerns referred to insufficient meeting time. The following quotes illustrate this concern:

  > We meet but we do not plan. We were supposed to have double period planning.
  >
  > An hour a month isn't sufficient to really collaborate and plan together. That's why the other fifth-grade teacher and I sit together a couple of times a week.
  >
  > We only have one period a week, so if somebody is out or somebody has something else to take care of, they can't meet with us. So I guess that's the major issue. Our schedules don't coincide enough. We have that one day a week that we can meet, but it doesn't always happen.

- **Sessions Are Not Structured to Maintain Focus on Instructional Planning.** A second concern (approximately one third of the concerns mentioned) was that the sessions do not focus on instructional planning and instead turn to administrative matters or airing complaints. Concerns about sessions focusing on administrative matters rather than instruction were cited more frequently in high schools and middle schools than elementary schools. The following comments illustrate this concern:

  > Sometimes it turns into a gripe session, and I zone out and go back to my own lesson planning. I just wish that an administrator would always be present for those meetings; because when they're not there, it turns into a griping session. On days when they're present, it's completely effective.
  >
  > The meetings I feel can be almost too administrative. We all know that administrative matters have to be taken care of. I do wish that there were more

time somehow for teachers to talk about instruction, best practices, and what's working.

A lot of times we wind up talking about the nuts and bolts of school management issues and not instructional issues.

- **Collaboration Is More Effective When the Teacher Groups Are Homogenous.** Another one third of the responses noted that collaboration is difficult among teachers who are too diverse—that is, who teach different grade levels, use different materials, pace their lessons differently, and so forth. The following comments illustrate this concern:

  Because I'm the only second grade teacher … so, I'm basically teaching Balanced Literacy and I'm meeting with first grade teachers that are teaching *Voices* … we don't agree on certain things and in a way, we teach different things. So, it's hard to collaborate. We try—given what we have—but I would say it's difficult.

  While teachers are close on the curriculum map, they are not at the same place [on the pacing schedule] and cannot share ideas.

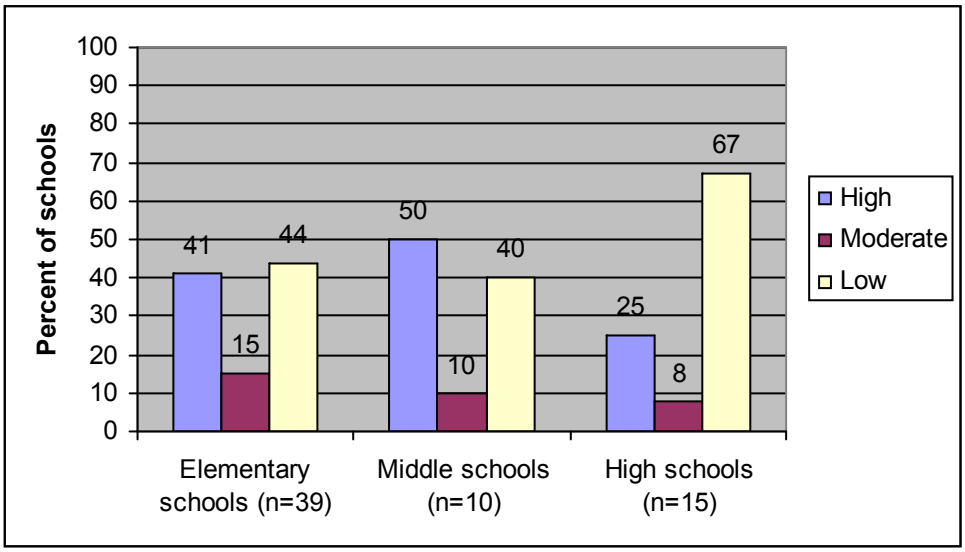
  Because it [collaboration] has to be [among teachers in] the same grade and the same program, or else you're not on the same page, so it doesn't really help.

  There is a difference in grade levels, so it's hard to collaborate on some things. My students are proficient to advanced/proficient, where other classes may not be working in that realm or have a high population of ELLs or kids with IEPs.

Influence of ELA Content Coach

Teachers were asked about the extent to which the content coach influenced their instruction. Figure 15 represents the ratings that summarize the teacher responses.

Figure 15. Influence of the Content Coach on Instruction



As Figure 15 depicts, the influence of the content coach is greater in the elementary and middle schools than in the high schools. Approximately the same percentage of elementary schools were rated low as *high* on coach influence. Among middle schools, more were rated *high* than *low* on coach influence. The high school ratings were predominantly *low*. As noted, 40 percent of the high schools had a full-time staff person dedicated to ELA coaching. From the 180 teacher interviews, 50 addressed the issue of coach influence.

- **Content Coaches Directly Support Instruction.** Approximately 70 percent of the 50 responses noted that the influence of the content coach was due to the coaches' focus on instruction and the provision of direct support for teachers through professional development sessions and individual work with teachers. Teachers across all school levels who perceived support from content coaches to be beneficial reported that the coach understands the needs of teachers and is available to answer questions and provide assistance. The most frequently cited types of support that teachers identified as influential follow in order of frequency:
  - Sharing with teachers new ideas and teaching strategies that focus on meeting the needs of diverse students—differentiating instruction and developing leveled lessons.
  - Providing teachers with resources and materials to facilitate lesson planning.
  - Conducting classroom observations and providing teachers with feedback based on those observations.
  - Modeling lessons—in particular, modeling ways to differentiate instruction.
- **Explanations for Low Coach Influence Varied.** Approximately 30 percent of the responses mentioned reasons that coach influence was relatively low. The explanations point to diverse reasons that the coach influence is low, including (in order of mentions) teachers being secure with their instruction and less likely to seek help or be influenced by a coach; coaches having responsibilities that make them unavailable when teachers want their help; coach support focusing on a limited number of teachers (usually new teachers and veteran teachers who are identified as needing additional support); and availability of support from sources other than coaches, such as mentors or other teachers.

Summary

Professional learning opportunities are offered in most of the sample schools, although a smaller proportion of high schools than other schools have dedicated ELA content coaches. Professional development received mixed reviews on its usefulness for instructing proficient and nonproficient students. However, professional development was perceived to be more helpful for instructing nonproficient students than proficient students among all school levels. A major concern expressed about professional development was that it is not focusing on proficient students. In high schools, perceptions of the helpfulness of professional development for instructing proficient students was particularly low.

Collaborative sessions among teachers were perceived to be more helpful in elementary schools than in middle schools and high schools. Cited benefits of collaboration primarily addressed opportunities for collegial exchange and opportunities to plan instruction. The most cited

concerns were that sessions were scheduled too infrequently, were not long enough, and/or were not structured.

The ELA coaches were rated *high* on influence in 40 percent and 50 percent of elementary and middle schools, respectively, but were much less influential in the high schools, in part because fewer high schools had a full-time ELA coach. Comments suggest that the coach influence is the result of providing direct support for teachers, but that such support is not needed by all teachers or is not available to all teachers when they need it.

Contextual Issues

This section describes three contextual issues that were prominent in the sample schools: space, (i.e., the school facility), teacher turnover, and discipline and behavior. Space and teacher turnover were topics specifically addressed in the principal interviews, largely because of their prominence in earlier audits in New York City. Questions about discipline and behavior were not asked directly; however, when teachers were asked about challenges in their schools, this topic was mentioned most frequently.

Space

Principals in 55 percent of the sample schools described problems with the school facility. The most commonly cited issues were crowded classrooms, not having enough rooms in a building, and separate buildings used for one school.

Crowded Classrooms

In 14 of the 35 schools that cited space problems, principals said classes were full and there is not enough space to add classrooms. In several schools, crowding is due to an influx of students (often due to students from low-performing schools transferring to higher performing schools) without a corresponding increase in the number of classrooms. For example, a middle school principal said the school is now 11 percent over capacity. In a middle/high school, the principal said there are now 36 or 37 students per class in Grades 6–8, "despite the UFT [United Federation of Teachers] agreements and despite the fact that they know instruction goes down in terms of effectiveness." In another high school, class sizes are "at the limit," according to the principal. In an elementary school, there are now 33 students per class due to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) choice options, the principal said. One school recently opened as a small school but has continued to add slightly more than 100 students a year, which is more than the space can accommodate.

Not Enough Rooms in a Building

A new high school that is adding one grade level each year is running out of space, the principal said. In one small school, having only 15 classrooms limits the courses the school can offer and makes it difficult to form ability-based groups. Space limitations also require teachers to provide instruction in rooms without adequate resources; for example, a cafeteria is used as a classroom.

In several schools, teachers, support personnel, and programs are housed in inadequate space or share space because there are not enough rooms. In one elementary school, for example, the principal said a recent change in policy regarding speech requirements resulted in the school adding speech teachers and then scrambling to find space for them to work with students. Currently, the principal said there are nine people working in a room that is suited for only three. In another school, enrichment teachers do not have their own room and have to travel from class to class to meet with students. In four schools, due to overcrowding, respondents said teachers do not have their own classrooms and have to share space. Also, teachers in a high school do not have a faculty lounge.

In the buildings in which more than one school is housed, schools have to share space, and respondents said it is challenging (and takes time on the part of the principals) to manage the use of shared space, such as cafeterias, gyms, and courtyards.

Some principals noted that older buildings and some of the newer school buildings are not designed to add or carve out additional rooms in order to meet new program requirements or to accommodate an increased number of students.

Separate Buildings Used for One School

Principals in three schools said that a number of classrooms are separate from the main school building. In a middle/high school, all the high school classes operate out of portable classrooms. The principal and coach said the portable classroom environment is distracting for students because the walls are thin and the classrooms are connected. Inclement weather makes it difficult for students to go from one portable building to another when classes change. Access to technology is limited. Lunch and physical education sessions are located in the middle school, which is in the main building. The high school students have no place to socialize and, therefore, stay in the classrooms to socialize, which often encroaches on teacher preparation periods.

In an elementary school, a principal said the portable classes seem distant from the rest of the school, despite administration efforts to bridge the gap between buildings. A similar remark was made by the principal of a school with an annex 1½ miles from the main building.

Teacher Turnover

Respondents in 11 schools reported that either in the current or the past school year, at least 20 percent of their teacher force was new. In the current year, respondents in six schools said at least one third of the teachers were new this year; among this group, the principals in three schools had more than 40 percent new teachers. Although many principals described the benefits of having new teachers on board, they also said it was a challenge to get new teachers up to speed. A principal of an elementary school said that the 2006–07 school year was very difficult because 50 percent of the teachers were new and required high levels of support from the coach and the assistant principals. As noted earlier in this report, principals and coaches also said that certain instructional practices such as curriculum alignment and data use are not implemented as well in grade levels with a high number of new teachers.

In addition to teachers leaving to take better paying jobs in towns surrounding New York City, three other explanations were offered for turnover:

- **Alternative Certification.** Principals in eight schools expressed concern about teachers from alternative programs who are required to teach for two years; these teachers often leave "once they do their time," as one principal said. One principal estimated that only 50 percent of the alternatively certified teachers remain long-term. "I have gotten some really good teachers who want to move on.… It has caused the school to have a high turnover." One principal said he no longer will hire teachers from alternative certification programs.

- **Grades Added.** A new high school is adding one grade level each year, which means bringing on new teachers. More than 40 percent of the teachers in this school were new in the 2007–08 school year. The principal said it is challenging to hire content-area teachers and to support a high number of new teachers each year.
- **Workload.** A middle school coach said the school has particularly high turnover in the ELA department because of the excessive workload:

> ELA requires more work than other departments. The teachers complain about the grading. They are having to spend their weekends marking 100 or 150 pages and still have to prepare their lessons. Anyone who can move into a different subject area does.

Discipline and Behavior

In 37 of the 64 sample schools (58 percent), at least one staff person (usually a teacher but, in some cases, the principal or coach) said student behavior is a significant challenge to instruction and learning. The number of teachers per school that identified behavior as a problem ranged from one to four teachers out of an average of six teachers interviewed.

Disruptive behavior, lack of interest or engagement, and irregular attendance were the most frequently cited problems. When teachers referred to disruptive behavior, they mostly focused on students acting out in class and distracting other students. A secondary teacher said, "Sometimes you have one or two students in the class that don't want to be there and it takes away from the class." Similarly, an elementary teacher said, "If you have two disruptive children, they might spoil your class for the whole day."

Another behavioral concern cited by teachers is lack of engagement (i.e., low levels of motivation and poor attitude). An elementary school teacher said, "No matter how many hours I could spend on planning something and how many activities I can create—if they don't care, it will stop them from performing, unfortunately."

Several teachers said student absenteeism and tardiness is a problem and disrupts instruction as well as those students' learning. In addition, several teachers in three schools (two high schools and one elementary school) expressed concern about antisocial behavior, which might be expressed by disrespect for the teacher or through assaults.

Summary

It is important to note that many of the respondents did not specifically state that instruction and learning were compromised because of contextual issues (space, teacher turnover, and discipline and behavior). However, in some cases the respondents mentioned that accommodations had to be made or that instruction was affected by these issues. For example, new teachers require more support and, as noted, grade levels with several new teachers usually were not as effective in aligning the curriculum, using the materials, or using data. Concerns about space and facilities were fairly widespread. Crowded classrooms, inadequate facilities, and inconvenient school configurations (e.g., portable classrooms or a single school situated in two buildings) may be

distracting for students and inconvenient for teachers and administrators. Student behavior was viewed as a problem by at least one teacher in more than half the schools; respondents cited concerns about disruptive student behavior as well as low engagement and motivation. The scope of this study was not such that these contextual issues could be addressed in depth; however, the issues were prominent enough to be mentioned.

Appendix A. Characteristics of Sample Schools

Table A1 provides information about the school characteristics that were prioritized for the selection of the school sample. The sample was drawn based on 2005–06 performance indexes, which were the most recent data available when the sample was drawn. Table A1 also includes 2006–07 performance indexes, which became available in June 2008.

Table A1. Characteristics of Sample Schools in New York City Audit

School Name	District	Population	% ELL	% SWD	Performance Index (2005–06)	Performance Index (2006–07)
PS 59	10	521	17%	27%	120	136
PS 396	10	260	29%	26%	121	116
PS 33	10	1,055	34%	13%	124	113
PS 09	10	697	35%	19%	125	135
PS 91	10	765	34%	16%	139	139
PS 340	10	522	25%	18%	147	153
PS 81	10	699	12%	15%	178	174
PS 306	10	719	23%	19%	114	122
PS/MS 20	10	1,198	24%	20%	138	140
PS/MS 280	10	782	14%	13%	164	170
MS/HS 237	10	470	10%	11%	127	140
MS/HS 368	10	991	12%	15%	127	137
MS 391	10	750	27%	23%	101	116
MS 331	10	493	17%	26%	124	125
MS 118	10	1,163	12%	13%	142	150
MS 308	10	290	11%	19%	133	139
HS 437	10	418	7%	23%	131	144
HS 433	10	523	14%	17%	155	142
HS 477	10	419	34%	2%	180	194
HS 549	10	441	11%	22%	*	173
HS 268	10	334	64%	1%	*	*
PS 112	11	619	8%	17%	112	120
PS 111	11	734	9%	19%	131	124
PS 87	11	512	3%	11%	128	147
PS 89	11	1,327	20%	18%	126	135
PS 96	11	1,039	16%	14%	147	141
PS 16	11	620	4%	15%	140	135

School Name	District	Population	% ELL	% SWD	Performance Index (2005–06)	Performance Index (2006–07)
PS 121	11	809	5%	12%	150	153
PS 76	11	1,000	11%	12%	157	154
MS 142	11	1,060	3%	20%	108	118
MS 180	11	773	4%	28%	143	146
HS 415	11	1,561	19%	23%	143	134
HS 542	11	460	2%	9%	175	192
HS 514	11	318	10%	20%	*	*
HS 249	11	350	6%	8%	*	*
PS 18	14	241	26%	6%	117	147
PS 34	14	449	22%	9%	184	184
PS 16	14	383	9%	20%	119	134
PS 196	14	418	13%	25%	173	159
PS 23	14	342	11%	14%	123	117
PS 132	14	665	6%	11%	151	160
JHS 50	14	697	14%	19%	107	118
IS 318	14	1,455	4%	10%	157	165
HS 610	14	1,109	6%	18%	140	172
HS 478	14	824	12%	12%	152	169
PS 219	18	829	3%	14%	135	145
PS 244	18	964	3%	17%	150	155
PS 268	18	621	4%	9%	146	145
PS 135	18	779	2%	8%	154	150
PS 115	18	1,179	4%	7%	155	162
PS/MS 66	18	685	2%	15%	133	148
PS/MS 235	18	1,385	1%	5%	182	181
IS 211	18	707	4%	22%	114	126
PS 181	29	506	2%	20%	133	142
PS 36	29	486	3%	17%	153	149
PS 95	29	1,254	32%	8%	148	153
PS 131	29	693	25%	7%	172	180
PS 35	29	649	11%	12%	142	143
PS 135	29	1,189	11%	10%	164	166
PS/MS 138	29	928	4%	11%	132	142
PS/MS 268	29	503	4%	14%	159	160
IS 109	29	1,471	6%	11%	136	147

School Name	District	Population	% ELL	% SWD	Performance Index (2005–06)	Performance Index (2006–07)
HS 496	29	*	*	*	131	152
HS 272	29	*	*	*	193	170

* Data are missing for self-assessed schools and from new schools that did not have 2005–06 data.

Appendix B. Assigning Values to Variables to Draw Comparisons of the Sample Schools

Values for approximately two thirds of the variables were determined by aggregating teacher close-ended responses to focused questions.

- **Ratings on Yes/No Items.** When aggregating teacher responses to yes/no questions, the mean was used to determine ratings of *high*, *moderate*, and *low*. Ratings of *high* were given when the mean per response per school was 0.8 or higher. A *moderate* rating was given if the mean was between 0.67 and 0.79. A *low* rating was given if the mean was less than 0.67. Thus, a *high* rating on teachers being trained to use the instructional materials was assigned when a mean of 0.8 of teachers responded affirmatively to the question. A *low* rating was assigned when a mean of less than 0.67 teachers responded affirmatively to the question.
- **Frequency Ratings.** When aggregating responses to frequency questions, distribution of responses was considered. The frequency questions had five response options: *never*, *less than once a month*, *two to three times a month*, *weekly*, and *daily*. Distribution cuts-offs varied depending on the content of the item.
- **Effectiveness Ratings.** For each of the domains, teacher interviews included close-ended items about the effectiveness, utility, helpfulness, or influence of instructional supports. The items offered four response options: *a great deal*, *moderately*, *minimally*, and *not at all*. For these items, the distribution of responses was examined to determine a value for each variable. Based on the distribution, the variables were assigned values of *high*, *moderate*, or *low* for each school. A variable was assigned a value of *high* when the majority of teachers gave the top response (*a great deal*). The variable was assigned a value of *moderate* when half the teachers chose *moderately* or *not at all*. Variables were assigned a value of *low* when the majority of the teachers chose *moderately* or *not at all*.

Content Analysis of Narrative Responses

For another group of variables, the content of narrative responses from principals, coaches, and teachers was examined to determine if the practice or resource represented by the variable was evident in the school.

Multiple Responses

For a small number of variables, responses to several questions by several respondents were examined and compared.

Quality Assurance Procedures

Variable values (either *yes*/*no* or *high*/*moderate*/*low*) were assigned by a team of analysts who conducted the following ongoing quality assurance checks: comparison of values assigned by several analysts for the first several schools that were examined; weekly conversations about decisions regarding assigned values, with corroborating qualitative evidence brought into those

conversations; postrating review of values and corroborating evidence by a reviewer; and independent reviews by the New York City data director. In addition, interviews that provided the basis for selecting variable values were referred to continually in the course of determining variable values and in conducting additional analysis. The frequent referrals to the interview data kept the analysts in close contact with the data and familiarized analysts with the characteristics of the schools.

Table B1 illustrates the variables, definitions, and rating decisions discussed above.

Table B1. Variables, Their Definitions, and Rating Decisions

Variable Name	Definition	Rating Decision Based On …
Administrative focus	The school administration has actively engaged teachers in curriculum alignment activities.	Content analysis of principal and teacher responses
Training	The teachers in the school have received training on aligning the curriculum.	Aggregated teacher responses to yes/no questions
Use of alignment tools	Alignment tools, such as pacing calendars and maps, are used by teachers to plan instruction.	Aggregated teacher responses on frequency scale
Types of ELA materials	Whether teachers use published ELA programs, no programs but school-selected ELA materials, or teacher-selected materials.	Content analysis of principal, coach, and teacher responses
Training on using ELA programs and materials	All or nearly all teachers have been trained on using the literacy programs and materials.	Aggregated teacher responses to yes/no question
Schedule guides use of programs and materials	The use of instructional programs and materials by teachers is guided by a school or a grade-level schedule.	Aggregated teacher responses to yes/no question
Evidence of consistency in use	The ELA programs and/or materials are used consistently by the teachers in the school.	Content analysis of teacher responses
Perceived effectiveness for proficient students	ELA programs and materials are perceived to be effective for proficient students.	Aggregated teacher responses on “how effective/useful” questions
Perceived effectiveness for nonproficient students	ELA programs and materials are perceived to be effective for nonproficient students.	Aggregated teacher responses on “how effective/useful” questions
Use of formal assessments	Teachers use data from formal assessments to make instructional decisions.	Aggregated teacher responses on frequency scale

Variable Name	Definition	Rating Decision Based On …
Administrator expectations on data use	Administration expects teachers to regularly monitor student progress and use information to improve instruction and learning.	Content analysis of principal and coach interview responses
Available data	Administrators and teachers have access to recent data from formal assessments.	Multiple responses—principal, coach, teachers
Training on data and data use	Teachers have been trained on how to use data derived from formal assessments.	Aggregated teacher responses to yes/no question
Perceived usefulness of data from formal assessments	Data from formal assessments are perceived by teachers to be helpful for planning instruction.	Aggregated teacher responses on "how effective/useful" questions
Perceived effectiveness of interventions	Academic support for nonproficient students is perceived as effective.	Aggregated teacher responses on "how effective/useful"
Participation by eligible students	All or nearly all referred/eligible students have access to and participate in interventions.	Content analysis of principal and coach responses
Availability of professional learning opportunities	In-house professional development, collaborative sessions, and coach support are available.	Content analysis of responses by principals and coaches
Required attendance in professional development sessions	Teachers are required to attend professional development sessions.	Content analysis of responses by principals and coaches
Perceived effectiveness of professional development for instruction of proficient students	Teachers perceive that professional development is effective for their instruction of proficient students.	Aggregated teacher responses on "how effective/useful"
Perceived effectiveness of professional development for instruction of nonproficient students	Teachers perceive that professional development is effective for their instruction of nonproficient students.	Aggregated teacher responses on "how effective/useful"
Usefulness of collaboration for instructional planning	Teachers perceive that collaborative sessions with other teachers are useful for instructional planning.	Aggregated teacher responses on "how effective/useful"
Influence of coach on instruction	Teachers perceive the coach has influenced their instruction.	Aggregated teacher responses on "how effective/useful"

Appendix C. Correlations Among Variables Within Domains

Tables C1, C2, and C3 indicate the correlations among curriculum alignment variables, instructional materials variables, and data use variables, respectively.

Table C1. Correlations Among Curriculum Alignment Variables

	Administrator—Engaged	Resources—Tools	Training	Practice
Administrator—Engaged	1.000	.068	.329(**)	.148
	.	.592	.008	.245
	64	64	64	64
Resources—Tools	.068	1.000	.055	-.058
	.592	.	.666	.649
	64	64	64	64
Training	.329(**)	.055	1.000	-.100
	.008	.666	.	.433
	64	64	64	64
Practice	.148	-.058	-.100	1.000
	.245	.649	.433	.
	64	64	64	64

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table C2. Correlations Among Instructional Materials Variables

	Administrator—Expectations	Resources—Primary	Resources—Supplement	Training	Practice—Schedule	Practice—Use of	Effect—Proficient	Effect—Nonproficient
Administrator—Expectations	1.000	.035	.274(*)	.332(**)	.257(*)	.518(**)	-.022	.071
Resources—Primary	.035	1.000	.125	.271(*)	.409(**)	.459(**)	-.032	-.162
Resources—Supplement	.274(*)	.125	1.000	.172	.292(*)	.165	.100	.133
Training	.332(**)	.271(*)	.172	1.000	.446(**)	.441(**)	.006	-.085
Practice—Schedule	.257(*)	.409(**)	.292(*)	.446(**)	1.000	.402(**)	-.076	-.139
Practice—Use of	.518(**)	.459(**)	.165	.441(**)	.402(**)	1.000	.129	-.003
Effect—Proficient	-.022	-.032	.100	.006	-.076	.129	1.000	.276(*)
Effect—Nonproficient	.071	-.162	.133	-.085	-.139	-.003	.276(*)	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table C3. Correlations Among Data Use Variables

	Administrator—Expectations	Resources—Formal	Training	Practice—Formal	Effect—Formal
Administrator—Expectations	1.000	.254(*)	.248(*)	.251(*)	.146
	.	.043	.049	.045	.249
	64	64	64	64	64
Resources—Formal	.254(*)	1.000	.251(*)	.530(**)	.252(*)
	.043	.	.046	.000	.045
	64	64	64	64	64
Training	.248(*)	.251(*)	1.000	.238	.246
	.049	.046	.	.058	.050
	64	64	64	64	64
Practice—Formal	.251(*)	.530(**)	.238	1.000	.519(**)
	.045	.000	.058	.	.000
	64	64	64	64	64
Effect—Formal	.146	.252(*)	.246	.519(**)	1.000
	.249	.045	.050	.000	.
	64	64	64	64	64

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).