

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

**East Ramapo Central School District
Final Report**

June 2009

**Submitted to
East Ramapo Central School District**

**Submitted by
Learning Point Associates**



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Introduction

This final report is the result of an audit of the written, taught, and tested English language arts (ELA) curriculum of East Ramapo Central School District conducted by Learning Point Associates. In 2008, five school districts and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) commissioned this audit to fulfill an accountability requirement of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act for local education agencies (LEAs) identified as districts in need of corrective action. These LEAs agreed, with the consent of NYSED, to collaborate on the implementation of this audit, which was intended to identify areas of concern and make recommendations to assist districts in their improvement efforts.

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

This report provides an outline of the process, data, and methods used as well as the key findings that arose through the co-interpretationSM process. The Recommendations for Action Planning section provides research-based recommendations to address the challenges identified by the prioritized key findings, as well as implementation considerations to support the action-planning process. The district is required to incorporate recommendations from the audit in their action plan, which is their deliverable to NYSED. Once approved by NYSED, the action plan is to be incorporated into the district's Comprehensive District Education Plan or Consolidated Application, as appropriate.

District Background

Overview

Geographic Description

East Ramapo Central School District is one of eight school districts in Rockland County, located in New York's southernmost county west of the Hudson River and about 12 miles northwest of New York City.¹ It is suburban in nature, with a considerable amount of scenic designated parkland. The district is situated in the towns of Ramapo and Clarkstown and the villages and hamlets within them, including Chestnut Ridge, Monsey, New City, Spring Valley, and Suffern. Spring Valley is described as a "busy crossroads in the middle of Rockland County" where "foreign-born residents are approaching half the population."² Spring Valley is described as a "cultural intersection of Haitians, Ecuadoreans, and orthodox Jews from Eastern Europe," among over 37 nationalities.² Languages spoken include Creole, Russian, Spanish, and Yiddish.² "Foreign-born residents in Spring Valley make up 49 percent of the village population. About 66 percent of village residents speak a language other than English at home."²

Student Population

The district is adjusting to significant demographic changes that are ongoing. Of those students enrolled, approximately 58 percent are African American or black; 25 percent are Hispanic or Latino; 10 percent are white; and 8 percent are Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. The district served a total of 8,003 K–12 students in 2007–08, but its enrollment has been contracting for several years.³ Meanwhile, there has been a steady rise in the proportion of students in the district who attend private schools; such students now comprise about two thirds of the total student population and are eligible for many of the services and resources that the district provides. There are also "some growing challenges for schools and community services, particularly with regard to language."²

Demographics

East Ramapo Central School District has 15 schools: 10 elementary schools, two middle schools, a freshman center, and two traditional high schools.⁴ Data from the 2005–06, 2006–07, and 2007–08 school years indicate that the majority of the student population was eligible for free or reduced-price lunch: 60 percent, 60 percent, and 63 percent, respectively; district data also indicate that the overall percentage of English language learners (ELLs) fluctuated between 11 percent and 14 percent during this time period.⁴ According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 25 percent of students in the district's public schools in 2006–07 had an individualized education program (IEP).⁵ The district's average spending per student was

¹ <http://www.co.rockland.ny.us/aboutus.htm>, retrieved April 27, 2009.

² <http://www.lohud.com/article/2008812150325>, retrieved May 15, 2009.

³ <https://www.nystart.gov/publicweb-rc/2008/43/AOR-2008-500402060000.pdf>, retrieved April 27, 2009.

⁴ <http://www.eram.k12.ny.us/education/components/scrapbook/default.php?sectiondetailid=33865>, retrieved April 24, 2009.

⁵ <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/districtsearch/index.asp>, retrieved April 27, 2009.

\$21,077 during the 2006–07 school year.

Student Academic Performance

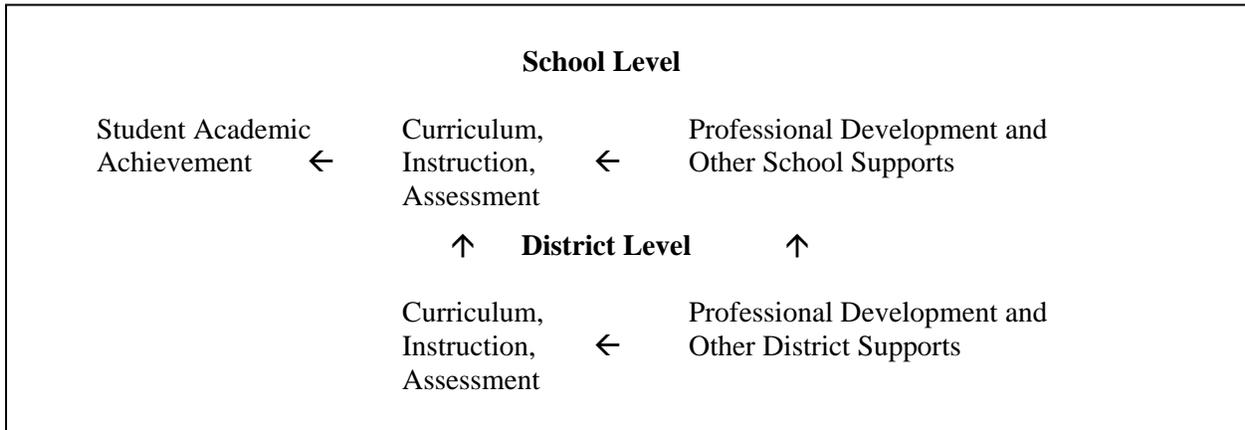
As of 2007–08, the NCLB accountability status of East Ramapo Central School District has been designated as a *district in need of improvement—Year 3* in the area of ELA, specifically for the subgroups of elementary, middle, and secondary ELLs and for secondary SWDs.

Theory of Action

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

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

Figure 1. Theory of Action



Guiding Questions for the Audit

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

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

Audit Process Overview

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

Phase 1: Planning

The purpose of planning was to develop a shared understanding of the theory of action and guiding questions for the audit. This phase also included reviewing the project plan, timeline, and expectations; selecting a school sample and teacher samples; and planning and delivering communications about the audit to the district's key stakeholders, including a kickoff meeting involving the larger district community.

Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis

To conduct this audit, Learning Point Associates examined district issues from multiple angles, gathering a wide range of data and using the guiding questions to focus on factors that affect curriculum, instruction, assessment, and other school supports. These data sources worked together to bring focus and clarity to the main factors contributing to the district's corrective-action status. Broadly categorized, information sources included NCLB accountability status, Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC), observations of instruction, educator surveys, interviews of school and district personnel, review of key district documents, alignment of the district's written ELA curriculum with state standards, and reviews of the special education and ELL programs.

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

NCLB Accountability Status

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

Surveys of Enacted Curriculum

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

Observations of Instruction

To examine instruction in general education classrooms, the School Observation Measure (SOM) was used to capture classroom observation data for the district audit. The SOM was developed by the Center for Research in Educational Policy at the University of Memphis. It groups 24 classroom strategies into six categories: instructional orientation, classroom organization, instructional strategies, student activities, technology use, and assessment.

The observations were collected from a representative sample of schools across the district to create a picture of the pedagogy within schools, including a snapshot of the instructional practices being used. They involved observing multiple classes, primarily in the identified subject area (i.e., ELA), during a three-hour block of time for each subject. While in schools, observers visited eight to 12 classrooms within this block of time, spending 15 minutes observing each classroom. Each individual classroom observation was aggregated with all of the others conducted in that school on that day to create a single school observation snapshot. Observation data were aggregated to the district by school grade levels: elementary, middle, and high school. For schools that span Grades K–8, observations were conducted in the elementary grade levels and the data were included with other elementary observation data. For schools that spanned middle through high schools, observations focused on Grades 9–12, and the data were included with other high school observation data.

Educator Surveys

Learning Point Associates developed a 20- to 30-minute educator survey for use in a curriculum audit context, focusing the questions on induction, professional development, school climate, and leadership development to complement the staffing profile section of the document review. Data were further enhanced by associated questions in the teacher interview protocols, which allow for more in-depth responses on each subject and related examinations of these issues in the district's key documents.

Interviews

To garner additional data concerning the alignment of the written, taught, and tested ELA curriculum, Learning Point Associates engaged school and district personnel in semistructured interviews. These interviews were based on predeveloped protocols that were designed to be approximately 40 minutes in duration for teachers and 60 minutes or more for content or instructional coaches, principals, and district staff. The protocols were developed specifically to address the guiding questions of the audit and to be comparable across the different types of interviews. As a result, the protocols covered the same topics; when appropriate, the same questions were asked on teacher, principal, content or instructional coach, and district personnel protocols.

The teacher interviews were tightly structured, primarily to elicit short responses that could be readily compared within schools and among schools. Principal and content or instructional coach interviews contained questions designed to elicit longer, more elaborate responses. District personnel interviews were even more open-ended.

When agreed to by the interviewees, interviews were taped and transcribed. Interview records, both notes and transcriptions, were imported into NVivo software, which supports the coding and analysis of interview data.

Key Document Review

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

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

Curriculum Alignment

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

Special Education Review

The purpose of the special education review was to provide information to the district regarding the curriculum, instruction, assessment, and improvement-planning practices related to its special education program. Data collection activities that informed the special education review included district or regional staff interviews; teacher interviews (including collaborative team teaching [CTT], Special Education Teacher Support Services [SETSS], and general education teachers who serve SWDs); school administrator interviews (including principals, assistant principals, and/or IEP teachers); classroom observations utilizing the Total School Environment Protocol; focus groups with parents of SWDs; a review of approximately 50 redacted IEPs; and a review of formal district documents to provide insight into the policies, plans, and procedures the district

has developed to ensure services to SWDs, as identified under the six guiding questions developed for the audit.

English Language Learner Review

The purpose of the ELL review was to provide a districtwide synthesis of data from multiple perspectives on the district’s curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student supports as they affect ELLs. Data collection activities that informed the ELL review included district or regional staff interviews; principal and teacher interviews (including both ELL program teachers and monolingual general education teachers who serve ELLs); classroom observations; and a review of formal district documents to provide insight into the policies, plans, and procedures the district has developed to ensure services to ELLs, as identified under the six guiding questions developed for the audit.

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

Table 1. Alignment of Data Sources With Guiding Questions

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

Phase 3: Co-Interpretation of Findings

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

The co-interpretation process consists of several steps, starting with the interpretation of the data within individual data sets, followed by the identification of key findings across data sets. These steps occurred during a two-day co-interpretation meeting with key district, school, and community stakeholders. Because this process was critical for identifying the priority areas for district improvement, the detailed approach is outlined here.

Interpretation of the Data

The co-interpretation process began with the study of the individual data reports (i.e., document review, curriculum alignment, interview data, SEC data, classroom observations, educator surveys, ELL review, and special education review), which took place in a small-group setting. Individual groups were assigned one or more data reports. Each group was asked to select the findings from its data report(s) that group members believed were most significant and to categorize those findings according to one of the six topic areas addressed by the guiding questions: curriculum, instruction, academic intervention services (AIS), professional development, data use, and staffing.

Identification of Key Findings

Participants then were assigned to topic-area groups for the purpose of grouping individual findings across data sets along common themes. From various data sources, participants used the method of triangulation (i.e., using supportive and explanatory data from multiple data sources or data collection methods that affirm findings and enhance understanding of those findings) to provide support for combining and subsuming some of the findings. As the investigative groups presented their findings to the whole group, some natural combining and winnowing of results occurred.

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

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

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

Identification of District Strengths

Identification of district strengths occurred during the kickoff meeting as part of the planning process. During this stage, participants brainstormed to generate a list of characteristics the district was proud of and identified those that would provide momentum for the audit process. These are listed in the Positive Key Findings and District Strengths section of this report.

Identification of Driving and Restraining Forces (Force-Field Analysis)

Identification of driving and restraining forces occurred next. During this brainstorming stage, participants created a list of district initiatives, programs, or other dynamics that were positively influencing the prioritized key findings. A second round of brainstorming resulted in a list of potential restraining forces that might be impeding progress on the key finding or might serve to maintain the status quo. Graphics of these driving and restraining forces appears in Appendix B.

Phase 4: Action Planning

Submission of the completed action plan to NYSED is the responsibility of the district.

Implementation of the Process

The recommended process for action planning includes the following steps: goal, objective, and strategy setting; action and task planning; integration and alignment of actions; and integration and alignment with other district plans in use, such as the Comprehensive District Education Plan or Consolidated Application.

For the goal, objective, and strategy-setting steps, the district team identifies what it wants to achieve during the next three years. For each goal, the team sets specific objectives and identifies key strategies, along with success indicators for each. Strategies drive more detailed action development by those who will be assigned to implement the plan. Learning Point Associates works not only with the action planning team but also with smaller teams and individuals responsible for developing actions and rollout plans.

Rollout of the Plan

Prior to submitting the action plan to NYSED, the district is encouraged to share it with the local board of education. The final component of the action planning process is communicating the audit action plan to the larger school community. This process is critical to ensuring that schools are aware of the district's action plan and are prepared to revise their Comprehensive Education Plans or other guiding plans as necessary to reflect it.

References

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

New York State Education Department. (2005). *English language arts core curriculum (prekindergarten–grade 12)*. Albany, NY: Author. Retrieved June 1, 2009, from <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/ciai/ela/elacore.pdf>

Positive Key Findings and District Strengths

This section indicates the positive key findings as well as the district strengths for East Ramapo Central School District. As indicated in the description process for Phase 3 (co-interpretation of findings), each key finding was generated through the co-interpretation process. In a facilitated process, groups of school and district administrators, teachers, parents, and district technical assistance providers identified these key findings across multiple data sets. (The complete list of key findings as well as the supporting findings, which can be mapped back to the original data sets, are included in the data map in Appendix A.)

Positive key findings and district strengths are listed before the prioritized key findings for two reasons. First, it is to the district's advantage to approach action planning from a strengths-based perspective and to leverage both what has been working and those areas in which the district is strong and solid. Second, positive key findings may indicate strength, success, talent, skill, or expertise in one or more aspects of an area that nonetheless is indicated in the Learning Point Associates recommendations. The district may determine that it does not necessarily have to start from square one in addressing the recommendation; perhaps it already is on the route to achievement. Learning Point Associates wants to encourage the district to realistically acknowledge what it is doing well and effectively, where it can point to success, and how it can use those strengths as a springboard for approaching recommendations-based action planning.

Positive Key Finding 1

The data portal is a powerful tool that is accessible to all administrators and teachers. Use of the data portal is inconsistent throughout the district, however. ELL teachers, special education teachers, and secondary-level teachers use the portal less frequently than general education teachers.

This positive key finding is supported by evidence from the Special Education Report, the English Language Learner Report, the Audit Survey Report, and the Document Review Report. It addresses Guiding Question 6: *What staffing practices and profiles are utilized to effectively support teaching and learning across the district?*

A review of key documents reveals that a data portal for teachers to access student information has been implemented across the district. Administrators and other staff reported in interviews that the portal enables teachers to have access to a variety of student data. In the Special Education Report, nearly all general education teachers reported that they use the data on the portal on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis; are comfortable or very comfortable using the portal; and find the information useful. However, many teachers working with special education students and ELLs are not using the portal often, if at all. In addition, the Audit Survey Report found that 83 percent of elementary teachers agree that data from formative assessments are available in a timely manner, while only 58 percent of secondary teachers agree that they have such data.

Positive Key Finding 2

The New Teacher Support Program, which is supported by the East Ramapo Teachers' Center, offers mentoring and workshops for new teachers. The district also has compiled a *New Teacher Handbook* that addresses district policies and procedures. However, there is an expressed need for more coordination between the district and the Teachers' Center for new teachers.

This positive key finding is supported by evidence from five reports: the Document Review Report, the Audit Survey Report, the Special Education Report, the English Language Learner Report, and the Interview Report. It finding addresses two guiding questions: *What professional learning opportunities that support instruction and student learning are provided to teachers?* (Question 4) and *What staffing practices and profiles are utilized to effectively support teaching and learning across the district?* (Question 6).

The Document Review Report noted that the district provides mentor support and professional development for teachers who are new to the profession and new to the district. The district also has compiled a *New Teacher Handbook* that addresses many commonly asked questions and describes district policies and procedures. According to the Interview Report, the New Teacher Support Program, operates out of the East Ramapo Teachers' Center, provides new teachers with a series of workshops, and pairs each new teacher with a mentor. Administrators who were interviewed for the English Language Learner Report stated that the Teachers' Center also offers book clubs, collaboration with English as a second language (ESL) teachers, professional development sessions, and ongoing meetings to discuss teacher concerns.

Several sources of support were described as *very helpful* by new elementary teachers who completed the educator survey. Veteran teachers were described as *very helpful* by 53 percent of the respondents, administrators were described as *very helpful* by 31 percent of respondents, and assigned mentors were described as *very helpful* by 28 percent of respondents.

Positive Key Finding 3

All buildings are clean, are uncrowded, and facilitate learning. The environment is respectful for both teachers and students.

This positive key finding is supported by evidence from the English Language Learner Report, the Special Education Report, and the Audit Survey Report. It addresses Guiding Question 6: *What staffing practices and profiles are utilized to effectively support teaching and learning across the district?*

The Audit Survey Report reveals that teachers have positive perceptions of the buildings in which they work. Most teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the building in which they work is not crowded and is well-maintained, and that class size is appropriate. The English Language Learner Report indicates that interactions between teachers and students and between students and their peers are respectful. Evidence from the ELL observations showed that the amount and quality of classroom space and basic facilities are adequate to facilitate learning.

District Strengths

During the East Ramapo Central School District kickoff meeting for the curriculum audit on November 3, 2008, participants responded to the following questions: *What is going on in your district that you are really proud of or passionate about?* and *What is going on in your district that is consistent with the audit of curriculum and will give the process momentum or will be enhanced by the audit of curriculum?* The following resources and characteristics were cited as strengths by principals, central office administrators, and members of the audit team:

Data Management System

- Staff are proud of the availability and management of data. A database system (i.e., the data portal) already exists, and staff are very comfortable using it.

Curriculum Guidance

- The ELA curriculum map was completed recently. Curriculum maps are detailed, aligned to state standards, and provide direction. There is an effort for K–6 articulation of curriculum, and staff perceive this effort as supporting recent improvements in student achievement.

Commitment to Improvement

- Staff are passionate about the restructuring effort and want to make sure the decisions are good for students.

Positive Orientation Toward Students and Parents

- Staff are passionate about the students and families with whom they work. They are supportive of students and make efforts to reach out to parents. Staff are excited about increasing the enrollment in full-day kindergarten classes.

Formative Assessment

- Staff are positive about increased training in and adoption of formative assessments to guide instruction. They perceive that teachers are working diligently on the response to intervention (RTI) approach. Similarly, staff are excited about the opportunity to differentiate instruction through technology (e.g., the data portal).

Technology

- Staff are excited about the introduction of state-of-the-art instructional technology, such as computers and interactive whiteboards. These resources are becoming part of the school's culture.

Balanced Literacy Approach

- Staff are excited about the growth in teacher acceptance, understanding, and use of Balanced Literacy.

Collaboration

- District staff are proud of their commitment to collaboration and their willingness to support one another. They mentioned the formation of professional learning communities in which teachers work together to solve problems and create goals for children. Teachers from “sister schools” work together professionally and collegially. This collaboration is characterized by reflective practice involving looking at data, deciding on interventions, and having conversations about it (see also Formative Assessment on the previous page).

Professional Development

- Staff are proud of the focused, meaningful, and data-driven professional development taking place in the district. The districtwide professional development addresses action plans. These sessions foster a common language for the staff.

Instructional Quality

- District staff are proud of the high degree of professionalism and experience of staff in the roles of instructional leaders. Mentioned among this group are the instructional facilitators who support teachers and guide them in best practices, the excellent reading teachers, and the teaching staff overall.

District Administration

- Staff expressed admiration for district administrators, praising their professionalism, hard work, and support for principals. District administrators (e.g., those from the curriculum office) and the superintendent articulate goals that provide direction for the district. Staff also singled out the instructional supervisor of ELA for special mention. The superintendent demonstrates commitment to supporting district initiatives. Staff also praised the quality of district programs and services themselves.

Commitment to Educate Diverse Learners

- The district is committed to educating learners from diverse backgrounds. Staff are passionate about diversity and cultural competence. Special education teachers are committed to modifying the curriculum without diluting it. Coteaching of inclusion classes is one approach to this goal of providing access to the curriculum. At the same time, staff note that it is important to take a closer look at both the ESL and special education programs in order to be sure that they are well aligned to the curriculum and are providing for differentiated instruction.

Special Projects and Events

- Staff mentioned several special projects and initiatives. These projects and initiatives include the annual science fair, which generates enthusiasm for the topic; arts programming, which they are trying to sustain even in the absence of external support; and teacher self-initiated projects.

Prioritized Key Findings

This section focuses on six priority key findings, which were prioritized by participant vote at co-interpretation and are listed in order. (The complete list of key findings is available in the data map in Appendix A.) As indicated earlier, the voting was based on each key finding being a critical problem faced by the district and addressed by the audit; this problem, if resolved, would improve student achievement, move the district out of corrective action, and have a measurable positive effect systemwide.

Priority Key Finding 1: Curriculum Access

K–12 curriculum maps and materials do not address differentiation with respect to struggling students (including SWDs, ELLs, and students with low proficiency). Teachers of ELLs and SWDs are not adequately employing differentiated instruction in their classrooms and have expressed interest in understanding and implementing differentiated instructional strategies.

To make the description broader and more encompassing, this priority key finding might alternatively read as follows: **SWDs and ELLs lack access to the general education curriculum because of infrequent or inadequate modifications to curriculum and instruction.** The original key finding focused on differentiated instruction—one strategy among several that would help provide access to the general education curriculum. The broadened version speaks to the lack of access and the inadequacy of modifications that could expand access.

This priority key finding is supported by evidence from the Interview Report, English Language Learner Report, Special Education Report, SEC Report, Curriculum Alignment Report, and Document Review Report. It addresses two guiding questions of the audit: *To what extent is a comprehensive, clearly articulated, and aligned curriculum guiding instruction across the district?* (Question 1) and *How does instruction focus on the effective delivery of the curriculum?* (Question 2).

Curriculum Modification

Teacher interviews provide evidence that teachers of special populations need more support in modifying the curriculum. Nearly all teachers interviewed for the English Language Learner Report indicated they adapt the curriculum in some manner for their ELLs. However, general education teachers at all levels, particularly at the secondary level, stated that they had limited information about how to make the curriculum more accessible for students in their classes with limited English proficiency. Teachers of SWDs perceived that they were providing such students with access to the general education ELA curriculum. However, four of nine teachers in self-contained settings reported using lower grade-level curriculum maps rather than the appropriate grade-level map. The same number of teachers reported needing further assistance in making adaptations to the ELA curriculum.

Observation data also provide evidence for this finding. As noted in the English Language Learner Report, lessons in general education classrooms tended to follow a more rigorous

curriculum than lessons in ESL classrooms. Across all types of classrooms, fewer than half of teachers provided language instruction effectively and frequently enough to simultaneously develop English proficiency and content-area knowledge. In summary, observation and interview data indicate that teachers need greater support in modifying the curriculum for ELLs and SWDs.

Instructional Modification

According to interview data, teachers of ELLs differ in the extent to which they modify instruction. Overall, ESL and elementary general education teachers listed multiple instructional strategies they use to deliver the curriculum to ELLs, whereas general education teachers at the secondary school levels could name few such strategies. Some teachers of SWDs did not appear to understand the distinction between differentiated instruction and testing accommodations, modifications to the curriculum, or cooperative activities.

Observations of teachers of ELLs indicated that ESL teachers modified instruction more frequently than general education teachers, with respect to integration of language learning goals, cultural awareness, and differentiated instruction. Across all teachers of ELLs, 44 percent did not employ effective differentiation techniques for their ELL students. According to the special education observations, in fewer than 15 percent of classrooms did teachers differentiate the content, process, or product. Even in inclusive classrooms, most of which had two teachers, the instruction observed in these classrooms typically was not differentiated.

Curriculum Guidance for Providing Access to the Curriculum

The Document Review Report and the Curriculum Alignment Report suggest a need for stronger guidance for curricular and instructional modifications. Across all grades, the curriculum map does not address how to provide access to the ELA curriculum through differentiated instruction. No district documents specified any policies or practices for Grades 8 or 10 in this regard. Across grades, there is no mention of certain instructional practices that support differentiation (such as diversified teaching contexts and materials or use of motivational strategies); nor is there mention for Grade 8 about adapting curriculum to the student's prior knowledge. The ELL interview findings indicate that there is no districtwide ESL curriculum. As one administrator said, "It is a huge problem, and many students' needs are not being met."

In summary, interviews, observations, and documents provide evidence that some teachers of SWDs and ELLs lack sufficient guidance and understanding to provide curricular and instructional modifications. One important support that was not reviewed under this finding is the lack of instructional materials to support instruction of these students. This situation is addressed separately in Key Finding 6.

Priority Key Finding 2: Professional Development

Teachers are requesting professional development in ELA in general and, in particular, on strategies for instruction and inclusion of special populations. Teachers desire improvement in professional development opportunities to make such opportunities more needs-based, streamlined, targeted to relevant topics, and sustained over time.

This priority key finding is supported by evidence from the Interview Report, English Language Learner Report, Special Education Report, SEC Report, and Audit Survey Report. It addresses Guiding Question 4: *What professional learning opportunities that support instruction and student learning are provided to teachers?*

Several data sources indicate that teachers see a need for greater overall emphasis on ELA instruction in professional development. However, this need is most commonly expressed by teachers at the secondary level, as indicated in the Audit Survey Report. About 30 percent of secondary-level respondents (compared to 12 percent of elementary-level respondents) indicated that professional development focuses minimally or not at all on ELA. Approximately 40 percent of elementary and secondary teachers indicated that the extent of professional development focus on ELA was minimal across a variety of topics (e.g., using the ELA instructional materials, designing standards-based lessons in ELA, differentiating instruction). SEC data similarly indicate a lower emphasis at the secondary level on professional development regarding state content standards.

Interviews of general education teachers provide further evidence of the need for greater content focus. In nine of 11 schools, teacher ratings of professional development ranged from minimally to moderately effective. The most frequent reason for the lack of effectiveness was lack of focus on content and corresponding low relevance to the classroom.

The Special Education and English Language Learner reports provide evidence that teachers do not receive professional development focusing on special populations. The Educator Survey Report indicates that 60 percent or more of elementary teachers stated that there is minimal or no focus on special populations in professional development; this finding excludes those teachers who perceived the question as not applicable to them. In the English Language Learner Report, administrators identified professional development of staff, with an emphasis on general education teachers working with ELLs, as a consistent need. General education teachers said they do not have the information they need to make the curriculum accessible to ELLs; this situation is especially true for secondary teachers. No general education secondary teachers and only half of the elementary teachers reported attending training sessions on teaching practices for ELLs and second language acquisition. Teachers reported that most of the professional development related to teaching ELLs is offered through one-time workshops rather than embedded and ongoing sessions. Finally, the segment of respondents to the SEC that had the highest proportion of ELLs perceived the fewest opportunities “to learn new things about teaching English.”

Similar findings are reflected in the teacher interview data summarized in the Special Education Report. Teachers frequently reported that further training on educating SWDs would be beneficial. Most special education teachers and general education teachers who teach SWDs noted that teaching in an inclusion classroom has been covered either minimally or not at all in their professional development. Along these lines, nearly all special education teachers who were interviewed perceived that the general education professional development should be more relevant to their circumstances. In particular, teachers expressed a need for more training related to students who perform below grade level, and they identified phonics and differentiating instruction as two important foci of this training.

Teachers’ concerns about professional development encompass not only its focus and amount but also its format and approach. As noted in both the Interview Report and Special Education Report, teachers want professional development to be more based upon “modeling or hands-on learning” rather than “sit and be lectured.” They also would like more time for “teacher sharing” of strategies, lessons, and experiences to be conducted during early release or inservice days. Three different sources of evidence revealed concerns about the coherence and long-term planning of professional development:

- Teacher respondents were split as to whether professional development topics built upon topics covered previously. (Audit Survey Report)
- Three teachers wished that the professional development was more focused, consistent, and cohesive. (Special Education Report)
- Teachers differed in their reports of the amount of follow-up activities relating to what they have learned, with high school teachers reporting less follow-up than elementary and middle school teachers. (SEC Report)

It also should be noted that the general education Interview Report indicated that school administrators set high expectations for teacher attendance at professional development sessions and monitored teacher follow-through. This is a strength upon which the district can build.

Priority Key Finding 3: Curriculum Alignment

The district’s K–12 ELA curriculum is not closely aligned to NYSED performance indicators, lacks sufficient detail to be prescriptive, and is incomplete for the high school level.

This priority key finding is based on evidence from the Curriculum Alignment Report, Document Review Report, SEC Report, Interview Report, and English Language Learner Report. It addresses Guiding Question 1: *To what extent is a comprehensive, clearly articulated, and aligned curriculum guiding instruction across the district?*

In Grade 10, district expectations for cognitive demand are not closely aligned with NYSED performance indicators, though they generally are aligned in the lower grades. In none of the sampled grades (i.e., Grades 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10) are student expectations explicitly linked to NYSED standards or performance indicators. The Curriculum Alignment Report also indicates a lack of vertical alignment in Grades 2–8. Across all sampled grades, student expectations do not advance from simple to complex during the course of the school year. Across most grades, the curriculum places greater emphasis on procedural knowledge than conceptual knowledge.

Findings from the SEC may be understood in light of this misalignment. For example, across many grade levels, teachers place less emphasis on comprehension and teach it at a lower cognitive level than is prescribed by the state standards and tested by the state assessments.

The review of key documents revealed that across most grades, curriculum documents lack clarity on most characteristics of a comprehensive, well-articulated curriculum. Overall, the East Ramapo Central School District curriculum documents can be described as follows:

- They do not suggest or address how schedule or pacing may be modified to accommodate students with varying developmental and learning needs.
- They do not clearly indicate how student learning of specific content or learning objectives will be assessed or how results will inform future instruction.
- They list some evidence-based practices but are not consistently clear regarding how these strategies will be used to teach content.
- They provide no guidance on how teachers should differentiate instruction.
- They provide suggestions for materials and texts but do not provide guidance on how to use such materials and texts.

As noted in the Document Review Report, the district did not submit a policy that states how or when the curriculum guide is distributed to teaching staff. The curriculum guide is incomplete for the high school grades. The secondary level is just beginning to create a written curriculum, according to district administrator interviews.

Considering the lack of clarity, it is not surprising that a lot of variability exists among teachers and schools in the use of these documents. According to the general education interviews, in about half the schools, teachers reported they have resources and support for curriculum alignment and are expected to use these resources consistently. In the other half of schools, resources are used inconsistently and expectations on use are not clearly communicated. Some ESL teachers indicated that they selectively use the curriculum guide.

Priority Key Finding 4: Academic Intervention Services

Secondary and elementary teachers stated that the academic intervention programs currently in place are insufficient and ineffective due to lack of frequency, availability, guidance, and training. A lack of procedural documentation is consistent with this finding.

This priority key finding is supported by evidence from the Audit Survey Report, the Document Review Report, the Special Education Report, and the Interview Report. It addresses Guiding Question 3: *What academic interventions are available for students who need additional academic support?*

Findings from the Audit Survey Report indicate that the majority of elementary and secondary school teachers do not believe that adequate academic support programs are available for nonproficient students. Roughly half of the teachers in elementary and secondary schools reported that they do not have the resources they need to work with nonproficient students. Even in cases where support is provided, almost half of the teachers reported that it is only minimally effective. Teachers often reported that they do not believe the programs are long or frequent enough to be effective.

Interview respondents at all schools reported that their schools do not have enough reading or AIS teachers to provide effective and adequate support for nonproficient students. In secondary schools, AIS classes often are taught by general education teachers. The majority of classroom

teachers (87 percent in elementary schools and 97 percent in secondary schools) reported that they are the main providers of academic support to nonproficient students. The Audit Survey Report corroborates these findings.

Submitted district documents do not address district assessment procedures or practices for identifying students who need additional support. The Special Education Report similarly found that the district lacks comprehensive intervention services for students at all levels.

There also was no evidence in submitted documents of a process to determine alignment of services to the district's ELA curriculum or to student needs. The use of student data to inform decisions regarding the effectiveness of AIS or to determine formative student progress throughout the school year is not evident in district documents. Although board policy indicates that compensatory education addresses the needs of students who are identified through test scores on state-required tests, as well as other educationally disadvantaged students, there was no evidence in the document review of plans for guiding, implementing, or monitoring the compensatory education policy.

Priority Key Finding 5: Equity and Sufficiency of Resources and Materials

Although board policy dictates equal distribution of resources and materials, these resources and materials are more available for all students at the elementary level than at the secondary level. However, there is a great need at all levels for more materials and resources for nonproficient students, SWDs, and ELLs, as well as clearer guidance on the use of materials that are available.

This priority key finding is supported by evidence from the Interview Report, the Audit Survey Report, the English Language Learner Report, the Document Review Report, the Special Education Report, and the Observation Report. It addresses two guiding questions of the audit: *To what extent is a comprehensive, clearly articulated, and aligned curriculum guiding instruction across the district?* (Question 1) and *How does instruction focus on the effective delivery of the curriculum?* (Question 2).

According to the Interview Report, in about half of the schools, several teachers reported that they have few resources available to support curriculum alignment and that the school administration does not communicate expectations or requirements related to use of alignment resources. The lack of resources and oversight is most pronounced at the secondary level, where the writing of the curriculum guide is still a work in progress (as discussed in Priority Key Finding 3).

The Interview Report also indicates that in almost every school, some teachers reported lacking guidance and having difficulty with finding or selecting ELA materials. Teachers typically reported that the lack of a coherent ELA program caused this difficulty. This problem appears to affect struggling readers the most, with content experts and teachers from all schools acknowledging that there should be more materials for students at the lowest reading level.

As reported in the English Language Learner Report, the majority of teachers indicated that there are no requirements guiding the use of instructional materials. Three quarters of all teachers interviewed (i.e., ESL, general education, secondary, and elementary teachers) said that not having ELL-specific materials is a significant problem. The majority of teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels (51 percent and 55 percent, respectively) reported in the Audit Survey Report that they do not have the materials needed to work with ELLs.

The Interview Report reveals that administrators do not believe they have the funds to obtain ELL-specific materials and resources. Administrators also said that the district needs an ELL-tailored curriculum, ELL-specific materials, afterschool programs for ELLs, and professional development addressing the instruction of ELLs for both general education and ESL teachers. Teachers said the district needs improved communication between school and home, reasonable curricular expectations for ELLs, more and better instructional materials, smaller class sizes, and more support staff to work with ELLs.

Similarly, the Audit Survey Report shows that the majority of elementary and secondary teachers (54 percent and 57 percent, respectively) do not believe they have the materials they need for teaching SWDs. General and special education teachers interviewed for the Special Education Report indicated that the lack of sufficient materials is a barrier to learning. Four of nine teachers in self-contained settings said they do not always receive the general education materials. One secondary teacher stated, “I use the general education materials when I can beg, borrow, or steal them.”

Priority Key Finding 6: Academic Support for ELLs and SWDs

ELLs and SWDs have low or inconsistent academic support. Several findings indicate that:

- **The district is reluctant to identify ELLs who are in need of special education services.**
- **SWDs are sometimes precluded from services.**
- **Academic intervention services do not consistently respond to the needs of ELLs and SWDs.**
- **A sizable minority of teachers at the elementary and secondary levels do not feel prepared to teach ELA to SWDs and ELLs.**
- **Elementary teachers have less collaborative time with ELL and SWD teachers than with their grade-level colleagues.**

This priority key finding is supported by evidence from the English Language Learner Report, Interview Report, Document Review Report, Special Education Report, and Audit Survey Report. It addresses Guiding Question 3: *What academic interventions are available for students who need additional academic support?*

According to interviews reported in the English Language Learner Report and Special Education Reports, there is a lack of extra support for struggling ELLs and SWDs. The Audit Survey revealed that while approximately two thirds of elementary and secondary teachers feel prepared

to teach students below proficiency, only about half or fewer indicate feeling prepared to teach SWDs and ELLs. Only 16 percent of elementary and secondary teachers reported that they collaborate with special education teachers, and only 12 percent of secondary and 6 percent of elementary collaborate with ESL teachers.

The Document Review Report shows that board policy addresses the distribution of IEPs to regular education teachers and related service providers. According to the Special Education Report, SWDs were precluded from receiving supplemental instruction provided by a reading specialist. An ELA Academy was offered to SWDs, but respondents reported that it did not meet student needs.

The review of key district documents did not find evidence that the district systematically provides data to teachers regarding the placement of ELLs in general education. The English Language Learner Report indicates that elementary teachers are more aware than secondary teachers of services for ELLs. These services include teaching assistants, speech and occupational therapy, social workers, and reading specialists. In general, teachers noted that more personnel support in the classroom would help ELLs improve academic performance.

Teachers expressed concern that ELLs do not have access to needed special education services. Although board policy states that ELLs have equal opportunities for special education referrals and access to appropriate instruction and support services, the English Language Learner Report indicates that most teachers are unaware that these services exist for ELLs. Administrators voiced concern about the length of time the testing (evaluation) process takes to properly distinguish between language acquisition and learning disabilities as well as a lack of specialized staff to address the needs of ELLs with disabilities. The Special Education Report notes that teachers feel inadequately prepared to instruct SWDs who also have limited English skills.

Interviews summarized in the English Language Learner Report indicate that administrators differ on support services available to students with interrupted formal education (SIFEs). One administrator stated that SIFEs have the same services as other students and that they have opportunities to be part of school in many ways. Another administrator stated, “We have a separate class for them. We seek alternative placement for them, like vocational programs.”

Additional Key Findings

Additional findings were identified by co-interpretation participants but were not prioritized for action planning. These findings are grouped according to the major domain they address.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Students’ background and culture are not taken into consideration when delivering instruction.
- A majority of teachers reported that collaboration is useful and effective and that their primary collaboration was with other colleagues. However, they expressed a need for more formal and scheduled time for collaboration. There are few formal opportunities for teachers of general education students, ELLs, and SWDs to collaborate.

- Observations showed that project-based learning, performance assessment strategies, independent inquiry and research, hands-on learning, and use of the technology were rarely used in the elementary settings. In the secondary settings, observations showed that higher-level questioning, systematic individualized instruction, independent inquiry and research, student assessment activities, student discussion, and sustained reading also were rarely used.
- There was more use of technology at the elementary level than at the secondary level. No assistive devices were observed; there was limited use of interactive whiteboards and other technology as instructional tools.
- Data indicate that secondary teachers are providing instruction at a lower cognitive level than prescribed by NYSED standards; higher-level questioning and student discussions were rarely observed in secondary classrooms.
- Mainstream classrooms with ELLs devoted the most percentage of time to test preparation, which diminished time for other instructional activities.

Academic Support for Nonproficient Students

- Students are either unwilling or unable to take advantage of nonmandated support such as afterschool or weekend sessions, due in part to transportation issues.

Professional Development and Learning

- Submitted documents do not provide a full picture of the policy, plans, or practices of the district regarding professional development.

Use of Data

- The district does not have a strong, clear expectation for the use of formative or summative data, how to access data (through the data portal and other tools), or how to monitor the use of data to facilitate instruction. This situation results in variation among schools and grade levels regarding expectations of and training on the use and interpretation of data; the use of data to drive instruction varies, in turn, with expectations and training.

Miscellaneous Findings

A number of findings were identified from the data sets by co-interpretation participants but ultimately were not included in the development of the key findings. Several findings were considered outliers if the observations seemed outside the intended focus of the audit. Others are listed as being for later consideration. These findings are outlined in more detail in the data map (see Appendix A).

Recommendations for Action Planning

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

The key findings that arose out of the co-interpretation with East Ramapo Central School District led Learning Point Associates to make four recommendations in the following areas: data use, curriculum alignment and materials, differentiated instruction, and professional development. These recommendations are interrelated, and the district’s success in addressing one certainly will enhance its success in addressing the others. For example, a strong and comprehensive curriculum with adequate materials that address the needs of a diverse student body will inform how data are utilized, how instruction is differentiated, and how professional development is designed. Curriculum development and materials selection, data use and application, and differentiated instruction will be strengthened by targeted and embedded professional development and teacher collaboration. The recommendations are intertwined and, when addressed, will result in a comprehensive ELA action plan for the district.

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

Recommendation 1: Data Use

East Ramapo Central School District should leverage the strengths of the current data portal to implement a districtwide systemic approach to data use and build personnel capacity in the practice of data-informed decision making. The requirements and methodology of this effort will allow for the following organizational conditions:

- **Districtwide awareness regarding the features, functionality, and content available through the district data portal**
- **Establishment of a cross-functional team of data leaders among existing district staff operating within and across all buildings to champion the use of the data portal and provide support for colleagues**
- **Clearly documented, implemented, and communicated expectations and monitoring practices from district- and building-level leadership regarding use of the data portal to access interim/benchmark, formative, and summative data for all students**
- **Clearly documented and communicated expectations from district- and building-level leadership regarding use of interim/benchmark, formative, and summative data to inform academic programming, planning, and instruction, including**

specifically identified interim/benchmark, formative, and summative assessments, with consistent protocol respective to each

- **Consistent implementation and monitoring of data-informed decision-making practices across all schools in the district**
- **Consistently available and effective support and professional learning opportunities for administrators and teachers related to use of the data portal, assessment review, and data analysis**

These organizational conditions will couple with the following practices specific to the district's ELA curriculum to consistently monitor student progress:

- Consistent use of data to monitor implementation of a fully articulated ELA curriculum
- Clearly documented expectations and consistently applied curricular strategies to use common interim/benchmark, formative, and summative data to inform instructional decisions for literacy
- Clearly documented and consistently applied common interim/benchmark, formative, and summative assessment tools that are closely linked to student outcomes and expectations
- Determination of program data measures based on their intended impact on student performance or other critical success factors

Link to Findings

During the co-interpretation process, district representatives and advocates identified one key finding (Key Finding 9 on the data map) that serves as the basis for this recommendation: The district does not articulate a strong clear expectation for data use (formative and summative), how data are to be accessed (through the data portal and other tools), or how data use is monitored.

This key finding is supported by evidence from the Interview Report, Audit Survey Report, Document Review Report, SEC Report, English Language Learner Report, Curriculum Alignment Report, and Special Education Report. It addresses Guiding Question 5: *To what extent do student achievement data (formative as well as summative) inform academic programming, planning, and instruction?* The key finding is supported by 31 supporting findings.

The lack of guidance regarding data use affects several aspects of how student achievement data are used to facilitate instruction. For example, expectations regarding data use and training in the use and interpretation of data vary among schools and grade levels. In addition, the use of data to drive instruction varies with expectations, interpreted relevance, and training.

Although the strength of the district's data portal is supported by a positive key finding (see Positive Key Finding 1), evidence from the Audit Survey Report, Document Review Report, and English Language Learner Report points to inconsistencies in how district personnel leverage this tool.

For instance, the Audit Survey Report notes that administrators believe teachers should be using the portal to guide instruction and that general education teachers believe the school expects them to use the portal. However, the Document Review Report indicates that it is not clear how the data from the portal are used to inform instruction, what data can be accessed through the portal, and whether the data are formative or summative.

The Audit Survey Report indicates that 83 percent of elementary teachers agreed or strongly agreed that formative assessment data are available in a timely manner. Conversely, ELL teachers, special education teachers, and secondary teachers use the portal less frequently than elementary teachers, and less than 25 percent of teachers interviewed for English Language Learner Report said they use the data portal. Likewise, special education teachers did not report using the data from the portal as often as general education teachers because, as found by the Special Education Report, the data do not measure students' progress.

According to the Interview Report, in the secondary school rated low for data use, teachers reported receiving no expectations for and little training on data use; they also indicated that they do not use formal data effectively. Furthermore, findings from the Interview Report show that in the secondary schools receiving moderate ratings, there were inconsistent communications and expectations concerning data use. In addition, the SEC Report reveals that teachers in Grades 9–12 reported spending less professional development time on interpreting assessment data than their K–8 counterparts. Also, the English Language Learner Report states that 70 percent of all elementary teachers attended training on using assessment data to inform instruction, compared to 24 percent of secondary teachers.

Evidence from the Document Review Report shows that the district did not address providing professional development to administrators and teachers in the analysis and use of student achievement data. Although the Document Review Report shows that the district is working toward ensuring that student achievement data are utilized to inform instruction, Interview Report evidence points to an apparent lack of coherence in data usage in the district at the secondary level. This idea is supported by the SEC Report, in which K–8 teachers reported that they reviewed student work or scored assessments more frequently than high school teachers.

The Interview Report and the English Language Learner Report corroborate that elementary teachers consistently use data for a variety of purposes, including diagnosing, determining reading levels and areas of weakness, planning minilessons, and differentiating instruction. The English Language Learner Report indicates inconsistency across grade spans, reporting that secondary teachers use the data they receive for placement, not instruction.

The Interview Report indicates that the same assessment tools are being utilized across a specific level (elementary/secondary) to determine individual student performance and growth. In accordance with this finding, six elementary schools all received a high rating for data use. These schools were consistent in the data types they used and the frequency with which they conducted formal assessments. Every elementary school administered several types of ELA assessments and provided the data to their teachers. Interview data reveal that administrators in the six elementary schools that received high ratings in data use communicate clear expectations for

data use and foster regular data discussions among teams. Likewise, teachers in these schools receive training on accessing and using data.

The Document Review Report found no documentation that the district adjusts curricular programming based on the monitoring of student progress. In addition, although board policy designates the principal as responsible for managing the implementation of an aligned curriculum at the building level (managing how it is taught through classroom activities, assessment data, and teacher observation; and providing opportunities for teachers to discuss and share ideas and strategies), no submitted documents illustrate how this policy ensures consistent delivery of ELA curriculum within individual schools. Submitted documents do not provide evidence of implementing or monitoring policy.

According to the Document Review Report, the Literacy Curriculum Guide states that data should be used to inform instructional decisions and lists possible classroom assessments—including running records, anecdotal records, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and rubrics. Despite this statement, there is no evidence on how the Literacy Curriculum Guide is used or implemented to ensure that the data are used. In addition, the Curriculum Alignment Report shows no evidence of how to apply literacy strategies or how to use formative or summative assessments.

On a positive note, the Audit Survey Report shows that administrators across the district use data to plan professional development and monitor overall student progress quarterly. Interview Report data indicate that classroom walk-throughs and observations are used by the majority of administrators, and data review of test results is the primary method of assessment used to measure student performance.

Link to Research

East Ramapo Central School District co-interpretation findings indicate that the district possesses a data management system. Many district staff members not only are aware of the system but also consider it a valuable asset for the district. Discussions of data-informed decision making in the district logically start at this point of merit and build from it. The review of current literature focuses on the following topics:

- Considerations for leveraging the benefits of a student data system (portal)
- The importance of a consistent culture of data-informed decision making for a school organization
- Professional learning and support for personnel in a data-focused organization
- The role of data in curricular and instructional decision making

Considerations for Leveraging the Benefits of a Student Data System (Portal)

Although East Ramapo's data management system is an important step in the right direction, research dictates that certain ideas must be considered for successful use of such a system. As Kimmelman (2006) states, "It is more important than ever to manage knowledge in schools—

that knowledge is primarily data encompassing staff and student demographic information, student achievement results, and research” (p. 70) The district already has invested in knowledge management through its data portal, so the focus for improvement should be on ensuring that all staff use it effectively.

A data system, like any other piece of technology, requires users to be properly trained in order to maximize effectiveness (Wayman & Cho, 2008). Daily use also is important, and “district personnel should clearly articulate how the system should be used to best fit district needs” (Wayman & Cho, 2008, p. 94). Long, Rivas, Light, & Mandinach (2008) conducted a three-year study of a home-grown technology-based data warehouse in Tucson, Arizona, and noted that “staff need to know how to access and interface with the warehouse and also need to be conversant with data inquiry skills” (p. 231). Training and guidance on data use should tie closely with professional learning about data analysis and informed decision making.

District and school leaders are essential to building support for the use of a data system. “Principals are often cited as players in the data process, and empirical research suggests that principals who are avid users of a data system find it easier to lead faculty in data use,” notes Wayman (2007, p. 159). Consistent use starts at the top. Wayman (2007) notes that principals can foster consistent use of a data system by “requiring data reports at all conferences, granting time and development to help teachers hone their skills at using the system, and meshing the different types of systems to meet specific situational needs” (p. 160).

During the co-interpretation process, East Ramapo Central School District also identified the disparate electronic systems in place to house general student data, special education data, and ELL data as an area of concern. Wayman (2007) similarly identifies this “interoperability” as a common issue and recommends that districts place emphasis on developing effective methods to “piece together” data from different systems (p. 161). Doing so would be especially helpful in East Ramapo Central School District.

The Importance of a Consistent Culture of Data-Informed Decision Making for a School Organization

Despite trends and emphasis on using data to drive decisions, educators still use instinct, intuition, and fads as the primary means of decision making (Slavin, 2002). This situation contrasts with the belief that a school district that effectively makes informed decisions using summative and formative information does so in a manner that touches all aspects of operation. Millhollen (2002) reminds us of Willa A. Foster’s comment, “Quality is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution. It represents the wise choice of many alternatives” (p. 86). Using data and research properly and consistently is the key to making wise choices. The results of the co-interpretation process clearly show that the district places high priority on moving in this direction.

Gallagher, Means, and Padilla (2007) describe data-driven decision making:

In an education context, data-driven decision making is the analysis and use of student data and information concerning educational resources and processes to inform planning, resource allocation, student placement, and curriculum and instruction. The practice

entails regular data collection and ongoing implementation of a continuous improvement process. (p. 1)

The key to building a school culture based on data-driven decision making is to identify the organizational outcomes desired upon adoption of this culture. Supovitz (2006) offers four components as the basis of districtwide data use system:

- Data to provide feedback to teachers and students in order to facilitate the learning of individual students
- The use of data to hold individuals or groups accountable for their performance
- Data to monitor the implementation and impact of programs in order to make decisions about maintaining, modifying, or eliminating them
- Data to facilitate organizational learning

Earl and Katz (2006) advance this concept by promoting a “culture of inquiry” in schools. They identify four key aspects of creating such an environment.

- “It is essential to involve others in interpreting and engaging with data so that groups of people develop a shared purpose and collaborative habits to reach goals.” (p. 20)
- “Data become a means for instilling a ‘shared urgency’ to fulfill the purposes of schooling.” (p. 21)
- “The use of data requires time that must be created within the regular schedules of schools.” (p. 21)
- “Organizations should develop critical friends who can help members reflect on data, ask questions, and probe for alternative interpretations.” (p. 21)

Organizational structures that support data use at the school level can include time set aside for teachers to review and discuss data in small groups, designated support staff, and the adoption of procedures for discussing data.

Implementing data-informed decision making requires what Knapp, Swinnerton, Copland, and Monpas-Huber (2006) call “an organizational culture” that “has evolved that encourages inquiry into problems and practice” (p. 25). Such a culture is more than a single policy or administrator memo and more than simply having a technology-driven data portal in place. Culture is pervasive in all parts of the organization in which it exists.

In a report about the effective use of data systems, Learning Point Associates and Educational Service Agency Alliance of the Midwest (2006) note:

Data make change visible. Data provide an empirical lens that magnifies objective detail while distancing us from personality. Data can confirm if there is change or not. The smaller, the tighter, the more frequent the feedback loops that the data system supports, the more staff can make decisions, the more frequently decisions can be made, and the more likely that the decisions made will be better ones. (p. 5)

Professional Learning and Support for Personnel in a Data-Focused Organization

Consistently implementing a system of data-driven decision making involves more than simply collecting data through a centralized portal and acknowledging the practice as important. Perie, Marion, Gong, and Wurtzel (2007) argue that “to support instructional purposes, an assessment system must go beyond simply providing data. It must include strong supporting materials for interpreting and using the data to effectively modify classroom instruction” (p. 9).

After the district has acquired the appropriate data and research and is managing it effectively, the next step is implementation. Knowledge implementation throughout the organization is conducted through targeted and high-quality professional development. Time and training are necessary for staff to use data effectively (Shannon & Bylsma, 2004).

Districts that hope for effective use of data to drive decision making must be prepared to make a significant commitment in terms of time and effort to support the teachers who translate district expectations into day-to-day classroom practices. East Ramapo Central School District must consider the specific needs of its population when determining which professional learning opportunities it should target to build capacity in data-informed decision making. Gallagher, Means, and Padilla (2008) offer several key considerations via their comprehensive 2007 survey of teachers with access to a student data system:

- Teachers indicated that professional development about “developing diagnostic assessments...and adjusting their instructional content and approach based on data” (p. 22) were of the highest need.
- “Even though nearly three quarters of all teachers (74 percent) reported having access to student data systems in 2007, the proportion of teachers with data system access who also have tools for making instructional decisions informed by data remains below 20 percent.” (p. 13)
- “Data systems can help promote data-informed decision-making by providing tools to help teachers improve decisions about instructional practice. Some of these resources include online assessments, formative assessment results linked to curriculum guides and instructional materials, and model lesson plans.” (p. 13)
- “Roughly 60 percent of teachers with access to electronic student data systems reported having received professional development on this topic at their school. A similar proportion reported having been encouraged by their principal’s support for data-informed decision making. In contrast, less than 10 percent of teachers with access to data systems reported having had formal coursework on the use of student data systems.” (p. 16)
- “Teachers’ use of electronic student data systems is significantly associated with both expressed confidence and with their perceived support for system use.” (p. 20)

Young’s (2008) case studies identify “four dimensions of trust” that suggest how culture may or may not support teachers using the data system. To the degree that teachers think in terms of these four dimensions, they will be more likely to utilize a data system:

- “Other teachers have high standards.”

- “Other teachers won’t think I’m incompetent.”
- “Others will participate/reciprocate in response to my engagement.”
- “Problems I raise will be seen as collective problems.” (p. 99)

The challenge of educating professionals about data capacity is not merely a knowledge issue but also a social issue. It includes “decision-making autonomy” for all stakeholders that empowers them to make decisions at their immediate level of influence (Wohlstetter, Datnow, & Park, 2008).

Wayman and Cho (2008) note:

A comprehensive professional development plan should support elements from the entire cycle of educator decision making, from access, to interpretation, to taking action and using feedback. This lens, coupled with knowledge that the backgrounds and needs of the district educators are as varied as the educators themselves, suggests that preparation offerings should be widely varied and offered at regular, frequent intervals. Educators should be provided whatever they need to continue to develop proficiency as data and data systems users. (p. 96)

Time is an important factor in professional support. Means, Padilla, DeBarger, & Bakia (2009) support their national study of implementing data-informed decision making with research from Choppin (2002) and Cromey (2000), which states that time to access, analyze, and plan with data is of the utmost importance. Means et al. (2009) also reference case studies showing that structuring time so that small groups can review and discuss data increases the likelihood that data will be reviewed and lead to decisions.

Lachat and Smith (2005) indicate that engaging teachers in the process of data analysis is essential. This engagement is best ensured through systematic professional development that allows them to learn about and practice data use in a variety of settings. The use of data coaches and other professional development methods can build teacher capacity for data use. In essence, “Teachers need to learn how to obtain and manage data, ask good questions, accurately analyze data, and apply data results appropriately and ethically” (Lachat & Smith, 2005, p. 336). Participation in professional learning communities is one means to this end, combining structured development, opportunity for professional collaboration, and hands-on practice.

The Role of Administrators. Although providing professional learning opportunities signifies the support of leadership, it is not the only means by which district and school administrators take responsibility for the ability of their staff. Administrators can clearly articulate expectations and ensure that these messages are disseminated consistently and completely throughout the district. Allotting time and resources also shows support to affected stakeholders. Learning Point Associates and Educational Service Agency Alliance of the Midwest (2006) stress the need to do the following:

Make sure all staff members understand what their core responsibilities are and what their obligations are for learning to do that work better. Understanding this will make a big difference in how staff will seek, manipulate, present, and use data. (p. 21)

In their study of data-informed decision-making implementation, Means et al. (2009) note:

District and school leaders need to issue the “call to arms” for improving education and using data as a tool to bring about that improvement. Typically, they play a major role in framing targets for educational improvement, setting expectations for staff participation in data-informed decision making, and making resources such as supported time available to support the enterprise. (p. 5)

Support for data use commonly occurs as a joint effort between district leaders and school leaders. Young’s (2008) study of schools within a California district found that a joint effort is required for successful implementation as well as teacher buy-in. Although district- and school-based leaders set the agenda and district leadership sets expectations about which data matter and how to use data to inform decision making and curriculum, building leaders are the primary source of articulation of this message in the form of “agenda-setting and norm-building efforts” (Young, 2008, p. 102). When district leadership, building administrators, and teachers support one another and the data-related goals of the district in the spirit of cooperation and learning, those goals will come closer to realization.

The Role of Data in Curricular and Instructional Decision Making

Data review and analysis as related to curriculum and instruction involve the district’s duty to ensure the delivery of high-quality instruction that improves student achievement. Active data monitoring is not isolated to the central district offices or individual classrooms but should be part of a system of assessment present throughout. A study by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003) of the effects of leadership practices on student achievement showed “the extent to which the principal monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student achievement” (p. 12) to be one of the 21 leadership responsibilities significantly associated with student achievement. Cotton (1988) agrees: “The careful monitoring of student progress is shown in the literature to be one of the major factors differentiating effective schools and teachers from ineffective ones” (p. 1).

Identifying key indicators of success and then building tools and systems to monitor those indicators is a unifying approach to school and district improvement. Districts that have put in place systemic and systemwide approaches to develop districtwide strategies to improve instruction have improved student achievement (Togneri & Anderson, 2003). Such approaches should include a clear vision focused on student learning and improving instruction, supported by multimeasure accountability, data systems, and coherent professional development.

Research increasingly points toward a balance between interim (or benchmark) assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments to inform varying levels of instructional decisions in a school district. Stiggins (2006) points toward this emerging need to “balance summative with formative applications and large-scale with classroom assessments” (p. 1) and the evolution of assessment from “isolated events” to “events that happen in ongoing series so as to reveal patterns in student learning over time” (p. 2). Gregory and Kuzmich (2004) note that “High-stakes data give us only one piece of evidence about student learning. Well-designed classroom data collection and analysis, the everyday information a teacher collects, forms the backbone of student growth” (p. 10).

Perie et al. (2007) offer concrete definitions of each type of assessment in the balanced spectrum. The authors define *summative assessment* as instruments that “evaluate students’ performance against a defined set of content standards” and “usually [are] used as part of an accountability program or to otherwise inform policy” (p. 1). They note that *formative assessment* allows for “ongoing” adjustment of instruction “embedded within the learning activity and linked directly to the current unit of instruction” (p. 1). Such assessments include observations, presentation and portfolio assessments, brief quizzes, classroom questions from teachers and from students to gauge understanding and comprehension, writing exercises, parent reports, and homework analyses.

Perie et al. also note that interim or benchmark assessments “fall between formative and summative assessment”; interim assessments “(1) evaluate students’ knowledge and skill relative to a specific set of academic goals, typically within a limited time frame, and (2) are designed to inform decisions at both the classroom and beyond the classroom level, such as the school or district level” (p. 1). Although interim assessments occur frequently in the classroom, the “timing of the administration is likely to be controlled by the school or district rather than the teacher” (p. 1), making the need for cooperation and transparency between teachers and leadership essential. This situation requires a move toward consistency at the classroom level. Although individual teachers retain a degree of control over formative practices, interim benchmarking represents a cooperative effort between leadership and teachers on common frequent assessment activities.

As it applies to an effective ELA curriculum, data-informed decision making based on a balanced system of assessment ties into established target outcomes. To this end, “the structural foundation of any assessment system is the framework of achievement expectations to be reflected in the exercises and scoring schemes of its various component assessments” (Stiggins 2006, p. 6). Stiggins adds that this situation is true “whether those guiding achievement expectations are framed as state standards, local standards, a teacher’s classroom standards, or the local curriculum designed to take students over time to those standards” (p. 6). Assessments and analysis of the data they yield are essential pieces of the curriculum and instruction puzzle. The data can provide a means of informing the effectiveness of instructional approaches and reveal whether the desired curricular outcomes are met by students.

Implementation Considerations

As evidenced throughout the curriculum audit process and during the co-interpretation activities, East Ramapo Central School District possesses several strengths and faces many challenges. In many cases, those strengths and challenges are intertwined. The district’s policy and practices regarding data use to inform decision making is no exception. School improvement is a function of change, both making positive change and adjusting to it. To continue toward successful change, the district needs to do the following:

- **Build a culture of data use that is thoroughly implemented and articulated in all buildings.** This change is not a choice for districts seeking to implement it. Bertfield and Merrill (2008) indicate that acceptance and use by all teachers and administrators is

required for establishing systemwide data use. For successful implementation, data-driven decision making is not an optional practice, and this idea starts with the support of leadership.

Learning Point Associates and Educational Service Agency Alliance of the Midwest (2006) identify a five-point theory of action that could help the district facilitate full realization of data-informed decision making at all levels of a school district:

- “The purpose of data are to make change visible. Data offer an objective lens, magnifying details sometimes unseen and distancing the more personal elements. This enhances richness of information and reduces ad hominem irrelevancies.
 - “Change requires understanding. Schools are ‘loosely coupled’ settings—once doors close, staffs are largely in control of their own work. Therefore, each staff member needs to come to understand in personal terms what changes are necessary. At the same time, as each person arrives at an understanding about change, these understandings need to align with the core issues of instructional productivity. When this happens, cacophony becomes chorus.
 - “Understanding requires feedback. Data can confirm that change is happening, what the direction of change is, and what the rate of change is. The smaller (fewer people, fewer issues), the tighter (the quicker) the feedback loop, the more frequently decisions can be made and the more likely decisions will be accurate. Monitoring becomes continual improvement.
 - “Information is social. Data must be visible to all. Data must be and remain at the center of ongoing conversations about the work and its importance. Data convert into information through social interaction. Information is a shared good: It has no value when restricted to one person.
 - “Change is local. At bottom, change is an individual event: One person acts, then another. In schools, it is the school community—the conversing unit of interconnected individuals whose work is aligned because of common understanding—that breathes life into change.” (p. 21)
- **Build awareness and expectations for using the data portal among all staff at all buildings.** Although data suggest that the district’s data portal is an excellent resource for district staff, it is clear that use of the portal is not reaching its full potential. Staff should have awareness of the portal, competency in using the portal, knowledge of what the portal provides, and clearly dictated expectations for use. A possible means to accomplish this goal is to develop a cross-functional team consisting of representatives from all relevant stakeholder groups (e.g., district administrators, building leaders, grade-level leaders including ELL and SWD staff, teachers union leaders, information systems personnel) to market the features and advantages of the portal across the district community and develop an action plan to ensure that district staff take full advantage of the tremendous investment made to develop the portal. Bertfield and Merrill (2008) point to Kotter’s (1995) “structure for successful change,” which outlines a linear process for change management as it relates to emerging use of data in school districts; this process includes the recommendation of “forming a powerful guiding coalition” (Kotter, 1995, cited in Bertfield & Merrill, 2008, p. 196).

Another of Kotter's recommendations is "empowering others to act on the vision" (Kotter, 1995, cited in Bertfield and Merrill, 2008, p. 196). Part of this recommendation involves providing professional learning opportunities, as discussed earlier, but East Ramapo Central School District also may consider establishing a data team and/or a set of data coaches. Lachat and Smith (2005) suggest establishing a data team and identifying a data coach who can help school staff stay focused on using data for continuous school improvement. Their study found that "the activities of the data teams were central to increasing communication among school staff about the trends and issues shown in the data" (p. 344). The work of a data coach can improve the data literacy skills of staff members who have little or no experience using data.

- **Provide professional learning on data use for all teachers.** The order to build capacity in teachers is a tall one. East Ramapo Central School District should begin by selecting professional learning activities that create data-savvy teachers. Noyce, Perda, and Traver (2000) suggest the establishment of inquiry skills, examining data through the following questions:
 - "How does performance for individuals and groups relate to state standards?"
 - "Is there a variation across content areas?"
 - "How does the performance compare with other like groups, such as among students, schools, and districts?"
 - "Are there data trends over time?"
 - "Are there existing initiatives in the school, district, or classroom that might help improve student performance? On the basis of what evidence?"
 - "What are the implications for your instructional practices or for your curriculum?"
 - "Do your findings suggest that you need more professional development?"
 - "How might other stakeholders benefit from this information?" (p. 55)
- **Review the current assessment practices in the district.** Full implementation of this recommendation dictates a review of current assessment practices as related to the district's ELA curriculum. The district should view these assessments practices and consider the potential for change. This consideration could mean an increased presence of common assessments in each classroom and should result in increased focus on assessment data by teachers. In pursuit of a balanced assessment, additional interim assessment tools may be implemented. Perie et al. (2007) suggest that interim assessment data be "made public within the district but not used for accountability" (p. 8). This suggestion means a push toward more common assessments directed by the district, administered frequently, and used in all classrooms.

The increased presence of common interim assessments must couple with regular and agreed-upon measures of student proficiency. Bernhardt (2009) states: "For schools to see student achievement increases in every subject, at every grade level, and with every student group, educators must look at big-picture data. They must understand what is being implemented to know what needs to change" (p. 26). This effort requires buy-in from all district leaders and effort by those leaders to clearly articulate the requirements of it to all other staff.

Findings generated during the district's co-interpretation process centered on the variances in behavior throughout the district. The district has great tools in the data portal and many district stakeholders who believe in data-informed decision making and practice it. Conversely, some staff reported limited awareness of the function and value of the portal and do not approach data practices in the same manner as their peers. A variety of factors may create these variances, but an emphasis on using data to drive instruction points to three areas directly in the control of East Ramapo Central School District: expectations, training, and monitoring. By establishing clearly defined and fully implemented expectations for data use, training all personnel in a way that allows them to successfully meet those expectations, and monitoring these practices, the district can strive to attain a high level of focus to implement this recommendation in a way that engages all district staff and fully ingrains the practice of data-informed decision making in a district culture of improvement.

Conclusion

Multiple data sources indicate that East Ramapo Central School District has invested in supporting a culture of data-informed decision making, particularly in the establishment of the district's data portal. Data also indicate, however, that these investments are unable to deliver maximum returns due to inconsistent communication, articulation, and implementation across schools, grade levels, and teacher groups based on student categories. Establishing clearly defined expectations at the district level should direct use of the portal and analysis and decision-making activities at the school level. Data from the co-interpretation indicate that this approach must be accompanied by a comprehensive professional support system to build staff capacity and ensure capability and capacity. By increasing emphasis in this area, the district can realize a return on existing data-focused investments and move toward creating an informed approach to making progressive improvement.

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Additional Resource

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Recommendation 2: Curriculum Alignment and Materials

It is recommended that East Ramapo Central School District continue its progress to revise and develop a clearly articulated, comprehensive, districtwide ELA curriculum for all students, Grades K–12. Specifically, the district should:

- **Review and revise district-level ELA curriculum materials for Grades K–8 (currently in draft form), so all components are complete and visibly interrelated.**
- **Create district-level ELA curriculum materials for high school (Grades 9–12), preferably adopting the format used by Grades K–8 for the purpose of consistency.**
- **More closely align district-created student expectations (i.e., educational objectives) with NYSED ELA performance indicators (i.e., global objectives) in terms of knowledge level and cognitive demand for Grades K–12.**
- **Ensure that all district students (especially SWDs, ELLs, and those eligible for AIS) have full and equitable access to the general ELA curriculum, including but not limited to resources and instruction based on their academic needs.**
- **Develop and execute a curriculum management system to ensure that the district’s K–12 ELA curriculum policies and plans are effectively and efficiently implemented, monitored, and periodically revised in order to have a positive impact on students’ ELA learning and achievement.**
- **Incorporate the use of instructional materials (e.g., text levels, text types, writing materials, technology) and research-based instructional strategies to engage all students in learning.**

Link to Findings

The Curriculum Alignment Report, Document Review Report, and Interview Report indicate that the district has developed new ELA curriculum maps and related resources, which are works in progress, for the grade levels targeted in the audit (i.e., Grades 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10). Representatives agreed that these curriculum materials represent a commendable effort and an important step in the right direction toward preparing a comprehensive, well-articulated curriculum. For example, each targeted grade level included documents identifying thematic units, unit objectives, suggested texts, and daily reading and writing goals. These reports also indicate that further development and refinement of Grades K–8 ELA curriculum materials are necessary. For example, how are specific objectives targeted by specific assessment tools and procedures, and what provisions are made to ensure that nonproficient students (i.e., SWDs, ELLs, and students eligible for AIS) are provided with equal and unhindered access to the curriculum?

Co-interpretation participants also confirmed from these reports that the district’s high school ELA curriculum (i.e., Grades 9–12) presents generalized student expectations that do not appear to be based on any specified local curriculum plan (e.g., content, skills, student expectations, assessment tools and procedures related to skills, student expectations, links to relevant state performance indicators). Participants reported that a high school ELA curriculum development process has not yet formally commenced.

The Curriculum Alignment Report reveals that district-level student expectations for the five target grade levels did not align consistently with NYSED ELA performance indicators in terms of knowledge level (i.e., factual, conceptual, procedural, metacognitive) and cognitive demand (i.e., *remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, create*). Although perfect alignment may not be desirable or feasible, this finding suggests that the wording of many district-level student expectations may result in an imbalance or lack of emphasis being devoted to certain knowledge levels and cognitive demands. For example, analysis conducted by Learning Point Associates revealed that in Grade 2 and Grade 4, NYSED ELA performance indicators placed more emphasis than district student expectations on evaluate, and that in Grade 4 and Grade 6, there was an inverse relationship between conceptual knowledge and procedural knowledge given state-level and district-level expectations. The district-level Grade 10 expectations appear to devote disproportionate weight to *apply*, possibly leaving less opportunity to engage in the other five cognitive demands. Likewise, Grade 10 placed far more emphasis on conceptual knowledge, potentially resulting in less attention being given to procedural, metacognitive, and factual knowledge.

The Curriculum Alignment Report, Document Review Report, Special Education Report, English Language Learner Report, Observation Report, and Interview Report, along with SEC data, reveal that curriculum maps and related materials did not clearly and consistently indicate if or how all students are given equal and complete access to the general ELA curriculum. Interview and observational data seemed to indicate more accommodations for SWDs and ELLs within self-contained classroom settings, particularly at the elementary level but far fewer accommodations in inclusive or general education classroom settings and in any setting at the secondary level. General education educator interviews, along with findings presented in the Curriculum Alignment Report, Document Review Report, and English Language Learner Report, expressed concern about equitable access, appropriate modifications to instruction, and adequate quantity and quality of curricular and instructional materials and practices to fairly and consistently meet the academic needs of the district's divergent student population across all grade levels and district buildings.

In addition, the Curriculum Alignment Report, Document Review Report, Special Education Report, English Language Learner Report, Interview Report, and SEC Report indicated that the district does not have an effective, districtwide system to ensure that curriculum policies and plans are adequately implemented, monitored, and periodically renewed based on students' academic needs. Board policies do not necessarily translate to practice. For example, one board policy states that a districtwide curriculum guide will inform instruction and ensure continuity across the district; but this guide is incomplete, and there is no plan for how or when it will be distributed to district personnel. In addition, although the board has defined the curriculum, no formal system is in place for implementing and regularly monitoring it or for periodically renewing it.

Finally, in terms of sufficient and equitable materials, evidence shows that teachers have limited access to and knowledge of differentiated instructional strategies and that current materials and resources do not address differentiation or are not readily available for nonproficient students. The Audit Survey Report revealed that 80 percent of elementary teachers and 67 percent of

secondary teachers agreed that they have resources for proficient students, yet fewer (51 percent of elementary teachers and 48 percent of secondary teachers) agreed that they have the resources for struggling students. The percentage of teachers who agreed that they have resources for ELLs and SWDs dropped from the elementary level to the secondary level.

In summary, the review of the data reports during the district co-interpretation yielded six substantive findings regarding the district's K–12 ELA curriculum:

- Noticeable progress has been made on devising a viable and comprehensive districtwide ELA curriculum for Grades K–8, but more development and refinement is still needed.
- There is currently no formal, viable districtwide written ELA curriculum for Grades 9–12, and development appears to be in the early stages.
- There appears to be inconsistent alignment between district-level student expectations and objectives and state-level expectations and objectives in terms of knowledge level and cognitive demand.
- Interviews, observations, and reviews of curricular documents reveal that the district's written ELA curriculum documents for Grades K–12 do not clearly and consistently indicate how all students in the district, especially nonproficient students (i.e., SWDs, ELLs, and students eligible for AIS), are provided with fair and unrestricted access to the general ELA curriculum, including resources and instruction that specifically target their academic needs.
- The district lacks a lucid, definitive system for ensuring that its ELA curriculum policies and plans are consistently and adequately implemented and monitored and that provisions are made for reviewing and renewing these policies and plans as needed.
- Teachers lack the materials and resources to effectively teach ELA to all students, particularly at the secondary level.

Link to Research

The review of literature pertaining to the co-interpretation findings and Recommendation 2 focuses on the following four areas of research:

- Components of a comprehensive, well-articulated, and aligned K–12 ELA curriculum
- Equal access to the general ELA curriculum for all students
- Implementation, monitoring, and renewal of curriculum policies and plans
- Adequate instructional materials and resources to meet the needs of all students

Components of a Comprehensive, Well-Articulated, and Aligned K–12 ELA Curriculum

Although the world presents an immeasurable amount of knowledge that students can learn (Glatthorn, Boschee, & Whitehead, 2008), narrowing the focus to create a guaranteed and viable curriculum is key to improving student achievement (Marzano, 2003). A *guaranteed curriculum* presents the essential content that all students need to know, understand, and be able to do; this

essential content is gleaned from a thoughtful analysis of state-level student learning standards and indicators, which inform the development of district-level student expectations and objectives (Marzano, 2003). A *viable curriculum* is attained by ensuring a feasible timeframe for teaching the essential knowledge; the amount of time needed to teach the essential content cannot exceed the time available for instruction (Marzano, 2003).

A comprehensive, well-articulated written curriculum has a results focus rather than a content focus design. It thoughtfully and intentionally presents a blueprint that explains how topics, skills, and materials as well as assessments and instructional strategies are selected, organized, and implemented in order to achieve specific understanding of important ideas and essential questions (Glatthorn et al., 2008; Marzano, 2003; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In other words, the curriculum provides a roadmap for teachers, complete with the resources, references, and guidelines they need to assist them in planning and implementing instruction so students can meet the intended objectives. A key indicator of quality curriculum materials, including curriculum maps, is that readers can comprehend and use these materials without consulting the author (Hale, 2007). Of course, a quality written curriculum can be experienced by teachers and students only if it becomes the taught and learned curriculum—the curriculum that teachers actually teach and students actually learn (Glatthorn et al., 2008).

Unfortunately, in searching for a roadmap, many educators and school systems have come to rely on commercial textbooks or programs alone to serve as their curriculum plan and to consider coverage of these materials as evidence of effective implementation of a curriculum (Ben-Peretz, 1990; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2007; Ornstein, 1994). Although commercial programs and materials may be important curriculum resources, they do not, in and of themselves, constitute a curriculum (English, 2008). Curricular pressures to use and cover certain materials, implement certain methods, and measure student performance on high-stakes assessment, among other concerns, can and do have potentially negative effects on the quality of instruction provided to students (Jackson, Harper, & Jackson, 2002). Furthermore, although district-level student objectives should be inspired by and aligned to state-level standards and indicators, the two levels of objectives are not interchangeable or equal (Anderson, 2002; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). A quality curriculum must be led by local vision, decisions, and leadership regarding the selection, organization, and implementation of specific content, instructional methods, guidelines, and related resources (Glatthorn et al., 2008).

A well-crafted curriculum needs clearly stated objectives (Danielson, 2002; English, 2000; Marzano, & Kendall, 2007; Squires, 2009). Krathwohl and his colleagues (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Krathwohl & Payne, 1971) identified three levels of objectives: global, educational, and instructional:

- **Global objectives** identify broad statements of what students need to know after one or more years; these types of objectives typify most state-level standards and indicators. State-level standards are intended to present uniform goals for school systems on which to build their curricula (Sandholtz, Ogawa, & Scribner, 2004).
- **Educational objectives** present a more focused statement of what students need to know, understand, and be able to do at the unit level with a timeframe of weeks or months. These “unit level” educational objectives are commonplace and desirable for district

curriculum maps. Educational objectives should clearly indicate what students need to learn (i.e., the knowledge) and how they need to learn it (i.e., the cognitive process used to learn the knowledge). Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) have identified four levels of knowledge (i.e., factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive) and six levels of cognitive processes (i.e., *remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create*). Some state-level objectives may emulate educational objectives in that they indicate the knowledge that students need to know as well as allude to how they need to learn it (i.e., cognitive process), but these state-level objectives are broadly phrased and do not accurately represent student expectations for specific units at the district level.

- **Instructional objectives** embody the most focused view of what students need to know, understand, and be able to do. Teachers use instructional objectives to design and deliver individual lessons. Ideally, districts align their educational objectives to global objectives and teachers align instructional objectives to educational objectives, so that the instruction provided by teachers ultimately is aligned to district-level and state-level expectations of student learning.

It is essential that school systems develop district-level educational objectives and align them to state-level standards and indicators. Educational objectives, along with their state-level counterparts and other local curricular components (e.g., content, assessments, instructional resources and strategies) may be aligned horizontally and vertically (Case & Zucker, 2005). *Horizontal alignment* relates to the organization, consistency, and flow of the curriculum within a grade level, whereas *vertical alignment* examines these factors across grade levels. Substantial evidence indicates that an aligned curriculum results in improved teaching, learning, and student achievement (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2003; The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2006; Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Danielson, 2002; Edvantia, 2005; English, 2000, 2008; Glatthorn et al., 2008; Linn & Herman, 1997; Marzano, 2003; Porter & Smithson, 2001; Squires, 2009).

Curriculum maps should provide teachers with a variety of examples and samples of various instructional methods and materials, with suggestions of how to use them to help all students actively engage the curricular content and the learning process and, in turn, meet district and state learning objectives and standards (Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2000). In short, a successful school system's curriculum should embody the essential content that students need to be taught and to learn within the instructional time available (Marzano, 2003) and should include the many resources, tools, examples, and other supports necessary to effectively implement the curriculum.

NYSED's ELA Core Curriculum document (2005) identifies the grade-level ELA objectives for all students in the state, Grades PK–12. School districts are charged with crafting and implementing a local curriculum that results in their students meeting or exceeding these state-level objectives. Although objectives are important components of any curriculum, other factors such as the identification of essential content, a viable pacing schedule, and instructional resources also are necessary (Marzano, 2003; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In addition, literacy experts (Gambrell, Morrow, & Pressley, 2007; Pearson, 2001; Rasinski & Padak, 2004; Taylor, Pressley, & Pearson, 2002; Tompkins, 2009) have identified many characteristics of a comprehensive, well-articulated ELA curriculum, including diversified teaching contexts and

materials, use of evidence-based practices to accommodate the diverse strengths and needs of students, acknowledgement that reading and writing are reciprocal processes, engagement of students in meaningful literacy tasks that require critical thinking, building upon students' backgrounds and interests, and linking formative assessment and instruction.

In summary, a comprehensive, well-articulated, district-level written ELA curriculum presents a plan that clearly identifies what students need to learn and what teachers need to teach at each grade level; it also offers a host of resources, schedules, examples, and guidelines that educators may access and employ to successfully implement the plan. State-level objectives should inform the development of district-level educational objectives, but it is crucial for school systems to customize these educational objectives with respect to the specific content of their curriculum. District-level and state-level objectives should be closely aligned with regard to knowledge level and cognitive process. Components of a well-designed curriculum are aligned horizontally (within each grade level) and vertically (across grade levels). Finally, a quality written ELA curriculum is readily available, understandable, and user-friendly for educators, without the need to consult the curriculum authors, and it serves as the basis for the ELA instruction and learning that occurs in all classrooms across a district.

Equal Access to the General ELA Curriculum for All Students

SWDs, ELLs, and students with other learning and academic challenges traditionally have not been granted equal access to the general ELA curriculum because it was believed these students were not capable and could not be expected to meet the same expectations as general education students (Allington, 2006; Cummins, 1994; Dong, 2006; Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006; Scanlon, Vellutino, Small, Fanuele, & Sweeney, 2005). However, much has changed in recent years.

Federal laws such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act mandate that all students, particularly those with special needs, be provided with full access to the general curriculum. In other words, all students are required to meet the same educational expectations. In an effort to achieve this goal, school systems have dismantled self-contained special education and ESL classrooms and established inclusive classroom settings in which specialist and general education teachers collaborate to provide quality equal education for all students (Fisher & Frey, 2007; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

Substantial research evidence has determined that all students—including SWDs, ELLs, and other underperforming students—are successful when provided with equal access to the general ELA curriculum, namely through appropriate and differentiated instruction provided by highly qualified teachers (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Browder et al., 2007; Cunningham & Allington, 2007; Duffy, 1994; Edwards, Turner, & Mokhtari, 2008; Fisher & Frey, 2001, 2007; Graham & Perrin, 2007; International Reading Association, 2000; Jackson et al., 2002; Jofus, 2002; Kamil, 2003; King-Sears, 2001; Langer, 2002, 2004; Scammacca et al., 2007; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2000; Taylor, Peterson, Pearson, & Rodriguez, 2002; Torgesen, Houston, & Rissman, 2007; Torgesen, Houston, Rissman, et al., 2007). Although all students are expected to meet the same educational objectives or outcomes, well-designed curriculum plans (and subsequent instruction) explicitly state how educators may and should

modify the materials used, the methods and approaches employed, and the products that students create or demonstrate as evidence of their learning based on student need (King-Shaver & Hunter, 2003; Tomlinson, 2001; Tomlinson & Strickland, 2005; Walpole & McKenna, 2007).

Implementation, Monitoring, and Renewal of Curriculum Policies and Plans

A curriculum typically is viewed as a plan for guiding instruction in school systems. This plan incorporates guidelines and tools that teachers may use to plan and deliver effective lessons, assess student progress, and ensure they are meeting local and state expectations (Brown, 2004; Glatthorn, 1994, 1995; Glatthorn et al., 2008; Glatthorn, Carr, & Harris, 2001; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). This plan also needs to exist within a larger curriculum management system, which not only incorporates what needs to be taught and the requisite guidelines and support materials and resources but also presents the means and benchmarks for ensuring that the plan is effectively implemented and monitored.

Implementing the curriculum means putting the written curriculum into action or making it what might be more commonly referred to as the *taught curriculum* (Glatthorn et al., 2008; Marzano, 2003). Monitoring the curriculum is part of the process of examining the relationship between the written and the implemented curriculum. It involves asking questions such as the following: To what extent are the expectations expressed in the written plan being realized in practice? Are the specified student objectives, instructional methods and approaches, assessment tools, and practices being implemented as intended?

After a curriculum is implemented, it also needs to be reviewed and refreshed. *Curriculum renewal* embodies the practice and importance of continuously reviewing and refreshing curriculum policies and plans to ensure they reflect current needs regarding such things as state standards, students' learning needs, best practices, instruction and assessment tools, and processes (Brown, 2004). In other words, an effective curriculum is periodically reviewed, strengthened, and revised.

Professional literature offers advice for implementing, monitoring, and renewing the curriculum. A successful curriculum and curriculum management system is highly dependent on competent, compassionate, and committed leaders who take necessary steps to ensure that effective plans and processes are in place and who keep a vigilant watch to maintain those plans and processes (Brown, 2004; Fullan, 2007a, 2007b; English & Larson, 1997; Glatthorn et al., 2008; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Sullivan & Glanz, 2004). Successful school leaders form curriculum advisory committees, regularly meet with and observe teachers' instruction, and review curriculum and lesson plans as well as student work samples. They also ensure that the district's curriculum is aligned to, but does not merely replicate, external standards such as state learning standards (Anderson, 2002).

Marzano (2003) identified the following five steps for successfully implementing and monitoring such a curriculum:

- Step 1 is to clearly differentiate the essential content that all students must learn from supplemental content that also may be addressed with certain student populations.

- Step 2 involves ensuring that essential content can reasonably be covered during the school year. If there are only 180 instructional days in an academic year, one would not propose to cover material that will take 200 days.
- Step 3 calls for school systems to design a scope and sequence that provides students with opportunities to access and learn the essential content in the most efficient manner possible.
- Step 4 directs administrators to devise a means for monitoring the implementation of the essential content. Marzano stresses that although this process may involve some classroom observations, it also must include other components, such as having teachers provide documented evidence of their teaching (e.g., plans, samples of student work, periodic teacher conferences to discuss their instruction and possible questions) or providing what Blase and Blase (cited in Marzano, 2003) refer to as “reflective supervision.”
- Step 5 requires school systems to maximize the instructional time provided to teachers and students by minimizing interruptions or other infringements on the limited number of hours available each school day. This includes, but is not limited to, taking steps to avoid phone calls, public announcements, and student pull-outs.

Marzano’s five steps for implementing and monitoring the curriculum are strikingly similar to advice and research offered by others. For instance, school system stakeholders need to identify essential content to teach, agree on a common vision for reform and improvement, and affirm that all students (regardless of background, disabilities, or other challenges) are viewed as capable and deserving learners and will be taught well (Brown, 2004; English & Larson, 1997; Glatthorn et. al, 2001; Glatthorn et al., 2008; Newmann, 2002; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Furthermore, a school system’s curriculum needs to be nurtured and regularly reviewed to ensure that it continues to reflect the essential knowledge and skills needed to learn and be able to demonstrate. The curriculum also must adequately assist teachers to plan and align instruction that meets curricular goals and to work effectively with all students. Teachers may monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum plan and of their resulting instruction by meeting regularly and formally with colleagues to discuss these issues, such as in teacher learning communities (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006) or professional learning communities (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005; Stoll, Bolam, McMahan, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). Teachers need to be thoughtful, engaged, and reflective curriculum developers and implementers. They also need to be mindful of their effectiveness in teaching what needs to be taught while ensuring that students learn what they need to learn (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005).

Adequate Instructional Resources to Meet the Needs of All Students

In terms of instructional material and resources, some methods and programs have been studied and deemed effective based on evidence of student achievement (Gambrell et al., 2007). Research indicates, however, that the most effective teachers of literacy recognize that methods and materials must be tailored to students’ unique and ever-changing needs and interests (Allington, 2006; Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Graham & Perin, 2007; Hall, 2002; Kamil, 2003; Taylor, Peterson et al., 2002). With respect to reading, teachers who engage their students in using an abundant supply of quality and diverse literature have been found to improve student achievement (Topping, Samuels, & Paul, 2007).

Ever-emerging technology is creating a need for individuals to learn and employ new forms of literacy (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Teachers must incorporate authentic instruction and other learning opportunities for using computers into their curriculum in order to foster children's literacy development for an ever-changing and increasingly technological society. To take adequate advantage of technology, sufficient technological literacy is important for teachers as well as students. Teachers require adequate staff development to feel comfortable with technology and use it in the way it was intended in order to gain maximum effect (Learning Point Associates, 2007).

A school system needs clear curriculum policies and plans before it can develop procedures to ensure that those policies and plans are effectively implemented and monitored. A curriculum represents a blueprint of what teachers are expected to teach and students are expected to learn. It includes resources, tools, and examples to guide teachers in designing and delivering effective instruction to meet a variety of student needs, including SWDs, ELLs, and nonproficient students. An effective curriculum embodies essential content that all students must learn. It presents a viable scope and sequence that teachers may use to plan and deliver instruction during the school year. Teachers may submit their lesson plans and student work samples to administrators and participate in conferences with school leaders and professional learning community meetings with colleagues as evidence of curriculum implementation and monitoring. Administrators need to demonstrate leadership by serving as knowledgeable, compassionate, and dedicated change agents dedicated to long-term improvement; by providing teachers with the curricular and instructional resources they need, including sustained and differentiated professional learning opportunities; and by protecting valuable instruction time from interruptions and distractions.

Implementation Considerations

East Ramapo Central School District has made noted progress in revising its ELA curriculum materials for Grades K–8. For example, it has developed multiple ELA units for each grade level and prepared documents for each unit listing suggested texts, minilessons, and reading and writing aims for each day. The district also developed a Literacy Curriculum Guide for Grades K–6, which presents a host of information regarding the district's ELA program, such as an overview of the literacy program, defined units of study, and components of reading instruction, writing instruction, and assessment.

This progress notwithstanding, co-interpretation participants acknowledged that work on the Grade K–8 materials is in progress and that further work is needed and planned. Participants also acknowledged that work is needed to develop a written ELA curriculum at the high school level, because one presently does not exist. At all grade levels, the district may want to more closely align district-level student expectations with state-level student expectations, expressed as performance indicators, in terms of knowledge level and cognitive demand. In addition, the district should ensure that all students have full and equal access to the general ELA curriculum, including materials and instruction based on students' individual needs that will allow them to meet the same common grade-level outcomes. Finally, the district would do well to create and execute a system ensuring that it effectively implements and monitors its ELA curriculum policies and plans.

Learning Point Associates offers the following practical suggestions to assist the district in addressing the provisions of this curriculum recommendation:

- **Modify the curriculum maps.** Ideally, the same format for curriculum maps and much of the related materials will be utilized in Grades K–12 to provide consistency across the district and to make it easier to check horizontal and vertical alignment.

East Ramapo Central School District needs to review all existing and new district-level student expectations for each grade level on the curriculum maps to ensure they align with their respective NYSED ELA performance indicators for knowledge level and cognitive demand. The district may find Anderson and Krathwohl’s (2001) taxonomy table useful in this process. For instance, the district should select a NYSED ELA indicator and plot it on the table. Next, the district should examine all district-level objectives to be linked to that indicator to ensure that they closely match for knowledge level and cognitive process. It is likely and desirable for district objectives to gradually build up to the knowledge level and cognitive process presented in each NYSED indicator. For example, the NYSED indicator may require students to apply procedural knowledge. However, it is reasonable for district-created objectives to provide opportunities to first require students to understand the conceptual knowledge that underlies the procedure, then to apply this knowledge, and also to understand the procedural knowledge in the course of applying it.

Presently, state-level standards, indicators, and objectives and district-level objectives appear on separate documents. The district should devise a means for clearly and visually linking each district-level objective to the state-level objective or objectives that it addresses in a single document, preferably the grade-level curriculum maps.

Currently, the one-page Grades K–8 at-a-glance curriculum map lists unit topics and grade levels. East Ramapo Central School District should consider modifying this document to allow for comparison of other pertinent information across grade levels (e.g., instructional or unit timelines, formative assessments, summative assessments, instructional methods, and important ideas and essential questions).

Each grade-level curriculum map lists the unit topic (in order of instruction), the type of writing within each unit, the suggested time frame, and a reference that teachers will incorporate up to three 1- to 2-week miniunits based on individual class needs and interests. This information is valuable to have in graphic form, but the district also should consider modifying this map to provide a concise depiction of other pertinent information (such as instructional resources and methods, important ideas and essential questions, formative and summative assessments, and specific content).

- **Address high school curriculum issues.** East Ramapo Central School District submitted a map listing general ELA objectives for Grade 10 for each of the four NYSED learning standards, along with a partial document dated Spring 1999 titled *ELA Grade Level Objectives* as evidence of its high school ELA curriculum. Co-interpretation participants confirmed that the district currently does not have a uniform, written high school (Grades 9–12) ELA curriculum. Participants also stated that they have not been able to create a high school curriculum because NYSED has not delineated a curriculum. (It should be noted that NYSED does not prescribe a curriculum per se; rather, it presents grade-level

performance indicators and literacy competencies around which districts need to construct local ELA curricula.)

Although NYSED did not identify literacy competencies for Grades 9–12 in its 2005 ELA core curriculum document, it did list performance indicators. Therefore, East Ramapo Central School District should refer to the performance indicators to determine what students need to know, learn, and be able to do and to construct a local curriculum accordingly. For consistency purposes, the district should consider using the new draft curriculum templates for Grades K–8 and the suggestions above as a starting place for creating the high school curriculum materials. For instance, the high school ELA curriculum might be organized by theme, important ideas, and essential questions. It should present district-level educational objectives that are linked and aligned to NYSED performance indicators. Content should be identified, along with instructional methods and strategies and sample lesson plans that educators may use to teach it. There should be a tentative timeframe for completing each unit, along with suggestions for how to differentiate instruction and provide additional time for students based on diverse academic needs. Formative and summative assessment tools and procedures should be matched to the district-level educational objectives to demonstrate how student learning will be tracked. Whenever possible, curricular and instructional resources (e.g., variety of texts on unit topics, preferably identified by genre and difficulty level; sample lesson plans and activities; samples of student work; and references to electronic and print support materials) should be provided to teachers to assist them in designing and delivering curriculum-based lessons.

The district also should consider creating a literacy resource guide for Grades 7–8 and Grades 9–12, similar to the draft document for Grades K–6 that presents this information. Resources such as Hinchman and Sheridan-Thomas (2008) on best practices in adolescent literacy may aid the district in designing an effective high school ELA curriculum. In addition, Glatthorn et al. (2008) offer many practical solutions for developing, implementing, and monitoring a curriculum.

- **Create educational objectives.** Ideally, the district will compose district-created educational objectives for each unit within each grade level. Presently, each unit lists essential questions and goals for reading and writing (but not for listening and speaking). If these goals are, in fact, unit objectives, the district should label them as such and revise them as necessary to ensure they clearly state the specific knowledge that students will learn and how they will learn it with respect to the unit topic and essential questions (i.e., cognitive process: *remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, create*). The district also should consider adding relevant objectives for listening and speaking.

Also, East Ramapo Central School District should create and include sample lessons and examples of student work for the suggested unit components listed on unit documents. For instance, it would be helpful to provide a sample lesson for a Grade 2 “word wall” minilesson or a “how do we treat books” reading minilesson. New teachers especially will appreciate these examples. As these units are taught, the district should consider building a resource library of electronic and/or print documents of actual lesson plans, resources, and related information that teachers may consult and share.

The district's sample unit documents list daily reading and writing aims and other statements that appear to indicate what students will learn and what teachers should do. It is unclear, however, whether the student statements represent suggested or required instructional-level objectives or whether the teacher statements represent suggested or required instructional approaches. It is important for the district to clarify these terms. The district should consider devising a glossary in which it defines its ELA curriculum terminology. In addition, within the Grades K–6 Literacy Curriculum Guide or framework section on “units of study,” the district should clearly explain how unit documents are organized and how they are to be used.

- **Utilize the Literacy Framework.** The Grades K–6 Literacy Curriculum Guide or framework document presents many useful suggestions pertaining to units of study, reading and writing instruction, and assessment. With the exception of some general lesson templates and schedules, the district should consider ways to make more specific connections between the information in this guide and each grade level. In other words, for example, flexible grouping can be used in Grades 2, 4, and 6, but the district should clarify what might be similar and different about how it is used at each grade level. Also, the district should be more explicit about how teachers may and/or should use this guide to plan and implement their ELA instruction. In addition, the district might find it helpful to create one or more similar resource guides for teachers in Grades 7–8 and 9–12.
- **Align district-created student expectations with NYSED ELA performance indicators.** East Ramapo Central School District should ensure that it has district-created ELA student expectations for all grade levels, K–12, that are linked to the specific topics and content of its curriculum. The data reports found that such expectations exist for Grades 2, 4, 6 and 8, but not for Grade 10. Next, the district should compare the knowledge levels and cognitive processes expressed in the NYSED ELA performance indicators with the knowledge levels and cognitive processes expressed in the district's student expectations. There should be close alignment between these two sets of expectations. The district may wish to use a tool like Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) taxonomy table as a framework for this review.
- **Improve access to the general education curriculum materials and resources.** All teachers need to be provided with curriculum and instruction materials and resources of sufficient quantity and quality that they need to serve and accommodate their students' diverse ELA needs. For example, a Grade 3 teacher likely needs reading materials spanning reading levels from Grades K–6.

Curriculum maps should offer specific examples and guidelines to teachers regarding how they may differentiate instruction (i.e., vary the content of what they teach, the processes they use to teach, and the products they have students create as evidence of their learning) in order to provide all students with access to the general ELA curriculum. Note that it is instruction, not the outcomes or objectives of the curriculum, that is being differentiated. Teachers need to receive sustained professional development and support from the district on how to operationalize the differentiated instruction recommendations included on the curriculum maps.

- **Improve the curriculum management system.** The revised Grades K–12 ELA curriculum should embrace a guaranteed and viable curriculum. It should ensure that the

essential content that all students must know, learn, and be able to do is identified and included in the plan. Next, the proposed timeframe for the proposed written curriculum needs to be feasible, so that what is expected to be taught realistically can be taught in the time allotted.

The district should consider establishing and maintaining districtwide K–12 curriculum development teams to ensure that curriculum maps and materials are developed for all grade levels and are disseminated and readily available to all teachers across the district. This process needs to include continued development and refinement of the district’s K–12 curriculum maps using a single system and format.

Strong leadership is needed to develop and enact successful curriculum reform and school improvement (e.g., Brown, 2004; Fullan, 2007a, 2007b; Glatthorn et al., 2008; Marzano, 2003). East Ramapo Central School District might charge a districtwide committee with the responsibility for overseeing the revision of the curriculum maps and related documents and ensuring that all teachers are provided with the curricular, instructional, and assessment materials they need based on their students’ actual needs (not based on grade level). This committee could advise the district on creating and maintaining procedures for monitoring the curriculum, such as establishing policies for teachers to periodically submit plans and student work for review and to build a collection of evidence of what teachers are teaching and students are learning; creating plans for teacher and administrator conferences and administrator walk-throughs of classrooms; and ensuring that teachers receive curricular and instructional materials and resources necessary to serve their students’ diverse ELA needs.

- **Provide sufficient curriculum resources and materials.** A critical implementation consideration is to provide teaching staff with an adequate quantity and variety of ELA instructional resources. To meet students’ diverse literacy needs and interests, all teachers must be provided with a sufficient quantity of high-quality instructional resources. To support instruction, such resources should include multiple copies of reading materials from multiple genres for independent and guided reading, core reading program materials, and instructional resource guides based on written curriculum, including samples of materials and approaches that teachers may use to teach and meet the goals and objectives stated in the curriculum. Reading materials should cover a range of student achievement levels (i.e., at, above, and below grade level). The district should consider organizing titles on grade-level book lists by reading level or categories such as “below grade level,” “grade level,” and “above grade level.” Such a system will assist teachers in matching students to appropriate leveled books and will help the district identify gaps in available resources. Several book-leveling resources are available that assign levels or may be used to calculate levels (see, for example, Lexile Framework for Reading, Guided Reading Level, Fry Readability Scale).

Conclusion

As East Ramapo Central School District moves forward with Recommendation 2, it is important to recognize that the district has developed a draft Literacy Curriculum Guide for Grades K–6. Moving forward and implementing this document will support the progress of the district in

implementing instructional models for these grades. However, a secondary-level instructional guide has not been developed; this guide will need to be undertaken as the district pushes ahead.

The co-interpretation meeting revealed East Ramapo Central School District's drive to meet the needs of all students. Impressively, the district went so far as to include a student in the co-interpretation process. This valuing of student learning and enthusiasm to address students' needs will be an asset as the district develops its plan.

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Recommendation 3: Differentiated Instruction

It is recommended that the district ensure collective responsibility among all teachers and staff for improving the performance of the ELL population by developing an ELL Services Plan, as the task of a district or school collaborative community. Components of the plan should include the following:

- **Provision of ELL-related professional learning opportunities for all teachers and staff responsible for ELLs**
- **Guidance on differentiation for ELLs of varying English proficiency levels within the ELA curriculum maps**
- **Approaches for providing articulation time among ESL, general education, and special education teachers**
- **Identification and provision of sufficient, level-appropriate, ELL-specific classroom resources for all teachers responsible for ELLs**
- **Development and implementation of policies that make ELLs eligible for additional academic intervention services during the regular school day**

Link to Findings

During co-interpretation, district staff emphasized that differentiated classroom instruction and support services are among the district's priorities. However, findings from observations in general education and ESL classrooms indicate that a differentiated approach for ELLs is not implemented effectively or consistently across the district. More specifically, data show that observed lessons did not promote student learning in three areas shown by the literature to increase achievement for ELLs: integrating English language development goals into content area instruction, demonstrating culturally responsive teaching techniques, and adjusting the delivery of the curriculum to suit the specific learning needs of individual students. General education teachers tended to employ differentiated teaching practices less frequently than ESL teachers. Furthermore, district data from the Interview Report and the English Language Learner Report indicate that the additional academic services currently offered during the regular school day are not consistently made available to meet the needs of ELLs. In some schools, ELLs were precluded from receiving additional academic intervention support from special education staff and reading specialists, although they may have benefited from these additional targeted forms of support.

Low evidence of differentiated instruction and academic support is not surprising, given the absence of key district structures and activities that build capacity for teachers and staff to differentiate. The co-interpretation process revealed the following findings:

- **Minimal Preparation and Training in Teaching ELLs.** Data from the Audit Survey Report, the Interview Report, the English Language Learner Report, and the Special Education Report indicate that teachers across grade levels and program types (ESL, general education, and special education) do not feel adequately prepared to teach ELLs. In addition, data show that the district has provided limited professional learning opportunities on this topic, with some teachers reporting no training experience in

instructional strategies for ELLs. In particular, general education teachers at the secondary level indicated that they do not have the requisite training to know how to use differentiation to make the curriculum accessible to the ELLs in their classes.

- **Limited Collaboration Among Teachers Who Provide Instruction for ELLs.** According to teacher and administrator data from the English Language Learner Report, Special Education Report, Interview Report, SEC Report, and Document Review Report, there are few formal opportunities for general education, ESL, and special education teachers to collaborate, even when they teach the same students.
- **Lack of Guidance for Differentiating Instruction in the ELA Curriculum Maps.** Administrator and teacher interview data from the English Language Learner Report, the SEC Report, and the Curriculum Alignment Report confirm that the ELA curriculum maps do not provide guidance on differentiation for ELLs of varying English proficiency levels.
- **Minimal Materials and Resources to Assist Teachers in Differentiating Instruction for ELLs.** Interview and observation findings from the English Language Learner Report as well as data from the Document Review Report, Curriculum Alignment Report, Interview Report, and Audit Survey Report confirm that access to ELL-specific instructional materials and classroom resources is a significant issue. According to observation and interview data, ELL resources are lacking or nonexistent in nearly all general education classrooms, despite the presence of ELLs. Furthermore, some ESL teachers reported that the ELL-specific materials they have been given are not complete or level-appropriate. (See also Recommendation 2.)

Overall, district data illustrate that individual teachers are primarily responsible for providing differentiated support and that the form this support takes depends solely on the initiative, skills, and abilities of individual teachers. But without training to address ELL learning needs, guidance on differentiation included in curriculum maps, built-in collaboration time, and sufficient and level-appropriate resources, teachers are likely to be ill-prepared to make instructional decisions that benefit ELLs. Likewise, operating without these district structures in place, the administrators and staff who are responsible for making programming and service decisions may be hard-pressed to provide additional academic support that meets the learning needs of ELLs.

Link to Research

There is growing consensus among researchers and educators that a one-size-fits-all approach to classroom instruction and academic support services does not work, particularly with students who are linguistically and culturally diverse (August & Shanahan, 2006; Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, Kieffer, & Rivera, 2006; Garcia & Ortiz, 2006; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2006; Goldenberg, 2008; Schmoker, 2005). ELLs, more specifically, have the double challenge of acquiring content-area knowledge while simultaneously developing proficiency in a second language (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). The specific learning needs of ELLs require teachers to possess a specialized toolkit for providing differentiated support, including a firm understanding of what to differentiate, for whom, and how.

Much of the current research suggests that the development of precursor literacy and word-level skills such as phonemic awareness, knowledge of print conventions, and decoding for ELLs follows a similar pattern as with monolinguals. However, as grade level increases and the focus of ELA lessons transitions from learning to read to reading to learn, there are distinct differences between the educational needs of ELLs and of monolingual English speakers. According to two recent meta-analyses of literacy development in a second language (August & Shanahan, 2006; Genessee et al., 2006), nonnative speakers tend to encounter more difficulty with text-level comprehension and writing skills than do native speakers. This situation is reportedly due to a lack of familiarity with academic language forms, differing reservoirs of background experience, and a limited range and depth of vocabulary knowledge in English. Additional instructional time devoted to the development of vocabulary, academic language, and background knowledge has been shown to improve ELL student outcomes. Studies from these two meta-analyses also have shown that ELLs benefit from additional focus on oral language development and, more generally, from classroom instruction and academic support services that integrate language learning objectives in all four modalities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) with learning targets for content-area instruction.

Although some instructional strategies (such as explicit instruction in phonological awareness, modeling and demonstrating, scaffolding, repeated readings, and peer-learning opportunities) work well with both ELLs and their monolingual peers, other methods of delivering content have been shown to be particularly effective with ELLs. The most significant finding is that literacy instruction in the native language has a consistently positive impact on the development of reading and writing in English (August & Shanahan, 2006; Genessee et al., 2006; Goldenberg, 2008). Other instructional methods with demonstrated benefits for ELLs employ a differentiation approach that takes into account varying levels of English proficiency. Some of these strategies that help teachers differentiate instruction include the selection and use of level-appropriate reading material, monitoring of reading progress with measures that distinguish between English language proficiency and core reading skills, adjustment of teachers' instructional talk (i.e., rate of speech, vocabulary, and grammatical complexity), and the incorporation of repetition of key content and language forms into lessons and units of study (Francis et al., 2006; Goldenberg, 2008).

The ELL population itself is a growing segment in U.S. schools; ELL students are linguistically and culturally diverse, with varying learning needs (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007; Zehler et al., 2008). East Ramapo Central School District certainly reflects these national demographic trends. Multiple language groups are represented in the district, and within these language groups are many distinct cultures. Furthermore, ELLs arrive in the district with varying levels of content-area knowledge and literacy proficiency in English and their native language. Research has shown that prior academic experience and literacy development in the native language have an impact on student readiness to actively participate in content-area classes (Goldenberg, 2008). Moreover, depending on the typological similarity of the native language to English, ELLs may be able to build on existent language skills in the native language when developing English proficiency. Due to the diverse backgrounds of the ELL population, not all ELL needs are the same; it is crucial for the district to customize services that suit the needs of each individual student rather than ELLs as a group.

Implementation Considerations

Evolving into a paradigm shift, a systemic attitudinal, or cultural change is an important step for East Ramapo Central School District. This focus should be clearly articulated as a statement of educational philosophy, intent, and practice at the beginning of the proposed ELL Services Plan and reiterated in professional development and academic supports sections.

Decisions about differentiating instruction and academic support should reflect the specific area of difficulty that each student is encountering and adapt over time to accommodate phases of individual literacy and language development. In order for teachers and staff to have the capacity to implement a differentiated approach in instructing and providing academic services for ELLs, however, the district must address several important issues:

- Ensuring access to and use of assessment data for ELLs
- Increasing teacher expertise regarding differentiated instruction for ELLs
- Expanding teacher and staff responsibility for ELL education
- Increasing collaboration time for teachers of ELLs
- Including guidance regarding differentiation in ELA curriculum maps
- Expanding ELL access to AIS

Note that the following implementation considerations apply in all instructional settings, regardless of whether instruction is delivered in the mainstream classroom, in a pull-out or self-contained format, or as additional remedial support received during the regular school day (Francis et al., 2006).

- **Ensure access to and use of assessment data for ELLs.** (For additional information, please refer to Recommendation 1 on data use.) The initial building blocks for a teacher or staff member to differentiate instruction are access to accurate assessment data and knowledge of how to use these data to craft customized instructional plans. Differentiation begins and ends with assessment data. At the classroom level, it is especially important for teachers to be aware of students' English proficiency levels in all modalities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and understand how English proficiency can confound standard measures that assess mastery of key content. It also is important to distinguish between difficulties in English and difficulties in mastering underlying concepts and skills. This approach takes sensitive assessment instruments, and both teachers and administrators must be armed with the knowledge of how to use them properly. Other useful tools include assessments in the native language. For example, an ELL student may have a firm understanding of how to make predictions or draw inferences from text in the native language, but he or she may not yet be able to fully demonstrate that ability in English. Unfortunately, if a student has low levels of literacy in the native language or if the native language is uncommon in the region (Farsi speakers, for example), native language assessments are not a reality. Consequently, the district is encouraged to consider that all reading specialists and other staff responsible for working with low-performing students (including ELLs, of course) receive training on

linguistically and culturally responsive prereferral interventions (see Garcia & Ortiz, 2006).

The key point is that English proficiency data (including the New York State English as a Second Language Test [NYSESLAT] and the Language Assessment Battery–Revised [LAB–R]) are crucial, but so are the more formative assessments of the four modalities of English (speaking, listening, reading, and writing). All teachers and staff who provide instructional services to ELLs should have access to English proficiency data and know how to interpret it. Data for ELLs and SWDs should reside in the district’s data portal. A relatively easy step for the district would be to include NYSESLAT and LAB–R information in its data portal. Currently, English proficiency data are in a separate portal maintained by the ESL director.

At the district level, administrators and board members also should review policies regarding screening and referrals to special education services. District data indicate that there is a reluctance to test ELLs for learning disabilities and that ELLs who may need additional interventions may not be receiving them. All staff members who make instructional and policy decisions for ELLs should be knowledgeable of how to distinguish between typical language development and learning disabilities. They also should be aware of effective prereferral strategies that prevent overrepresentation and underrepresentation of ELLs in special education.

- **Increase teacher expertise regarding differentiated instruction for ELLs.** A second component in the implementation of differentiation is teacher expertise. Research has shown that teacher knowledge of ELLs’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the second-language acquisition process, and specialized teaching methods that help students access learning standards all have a significant impact on ELLs’ achievement and teachers’ ability to meet individual student needs (August & Shanahan, 2006; Facella, Rampino, & Shea, 2005; Genesee et al., 2006; McClure, 2008; Schmoker, 2005; Tellez & Waxman, 2006; Williams et al., 2007; Zehler et al., 2008). Professional development that targets teachers’ beliefs and attitudes about ELLs also has shown positive results in student achievement and teaching practice (August & Shanahan, 2006; King, Artiles, & Kozleski, 2009). To support the district goal of differentiated instruction and academic services for ELLs, a comprehensive professional learning plan targeting ELL-related topics such as those listed above should be disseminated throughout the district.
- **Expand teacher and staff responsibility for ELL education.** ELLs (as well as SWDs) are more apt to succeed when their academic success is perceived to be the shared responsibility of all educators (Francis et al., 2006; Garcia & Ortiz, 2006; King et al., 2009). Thus, professional development should be offered and mandated for all teachers and staff who address ELL educational needs, whether they work with the students themselves or with the students’ families. Such professional development should be offered not only to general education, ESL, and special education teachers but also to administrative staff at the school and district levels, as well as school support staff such as secretaries, psychologists, and social workers.

Many mechanisms exist for providing training and support related to ELL issues. The professional development programs that are most effective in producing sustainable changes in teacher practice and student achievement are implemented over a lengthy time

period and are structured into the regular routines of teachers and staff (Francis et al., 2006; McClure, 2008). There are no shortcuts to building teacher expertise in differentiated instruction. Implementing a professional development plan to help teachers address the individual learning needs of ELLs may require the district to modify existing schedules so that all teachers will have an opportunity to acquire expertise in differentiation strategies for ELLs. Implementing a professional development plan of this magnitude also may necessitate alterations in staffing structures. For example, the district may decide on an embedded coaching approach in which an ELL resource coach with specialized knowledge of ELL learning needs assists teachers in designing differentiated lesson plans, coteaches, offers feedback on the implementation of differentiation, and provides general guidance and support. The district can certainly build on its tradition of reflective teaching when developing and implementing professional learning opportunities on differentiated instruction for ELLs. Also, the district can work in concert with the East Ramapo Teachers' Center to provide intensive ELL-related support for new teachers.

- **Increase collaboration time for teachers of ELLs.** District data show that ESL teachers typically are not included in instructional planning meetings with general education and special education teachers who provide instruction to ELLs. To promote a district philosophy in which all educators take collective responsibility for the ELLs in their classes, all teachers who share children should have regular and formalized articulation time during which they align lessons, discuss instructional strategies that work with groups of ELLs, and create individualized learning plans integrated across classroom settings. Provisions for formal collaboration time have been demonstrated to build expertise among educators (Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; McClure, 2008). As with the implementation of professional learning opportunities, the implementation of formalized collaboration time may require significant adjustments to school schedules, particularly at the secondary level.
- **Include guidance regarding differentiation in ELA curriculum maps.** (For additional information, please refer to Recommendation 2 on curriculum alignment and materials.) According to multiple district data sources, the current ELA curriculum maps are works in progress and currently provide no guidance to teachers on how to provide access to the curriculum and standards through differentiation. During the co-interpretation process, the district indicated that providing written guidance in the ELA curriculum maps on differentiation for ELLs, SWDs, and low-performing students is a top priority. English proficiency levels in all four modalities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and prior school experience (including native language literacy levels) are crucial considerations and should drive decisions regarding how this differentiation guidance is structured and articulated in the curriculum maps. Assuming that the district can allocate staff with expertise in second-language acquisition and ELL learning to the curriculum development process, initial guidance on differentiation for ELLs in the ELA curriculum maps could be offered to teachers for the 2009–10 school year. Following the development of written guidance on differentiation, the curriculum maps should be reviewed for clarity and appropriateness for each grade and English proficiency level.

Classroom materials and resources, such as leveled classroom libraries and audio-visual equipment are critical tools that teachers can use to differentiate instruction for ELLs (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003; Zehler et al., 2008). District data indicate that teachers, particularly general education teachers, have minimal access to and information about such materials, however. East Ramapo Central School District is encouraged to provide ELL-specific materials and identify how these resources can be utilized to differentiate instruction. Materials such as texts and leveled readers should be aligned with grade-level expectations in the ELA curriculum maps and tailored to specific English proficiency and literacy levels. All teachers who provide instruction and academic support to ELLs should have full access to and knowledge about these materials.

- **Expand ELL access to AIS.** All low-performing students who meet Title I criteria, including ELLs, are mandated to receive additional academic support from a reading specialist or other staff with expertise in literacy development. According to district data, however, these additional academic services offered within the school day are not consistently available to ELLs. Rather, it is assumed that ESL teachers are providing targeted literacy instruction to individual students. But when low-performing ELLs are identified as needing additional support, they may require intensive small-group or one-on-one interventions from specialized staff, just as general education students do. The district should examine policies and procedures at both the school and district levels that restrict low-performing ELLs from receiving AIS during the school day. Expanding the eligibility of ELLs to participate in AIS may necessitate restructuring of staff roles and schedules and could result in larger case loads for reading specialists and other AIS staff. The district may want to reconsider how staff are utilized across the district and whether current structures best meet the needs of ELLs and other low-performing students.

Conclusion

Taken together in the context of a thoughtful ELL Services Plan that includes professional development for staff, all of these components interwoven will build capacity for teachers and staff to adapt instruction and AIS that suit the diverse learning needs of their ELLs. Success will depend upon the district effectively integrating these recommendations in order to truly increase differentiation in the classroom, including academic intervention settings. A limited focus on only one of these components, such as professional development, will not produce the results that the district wants and has committed to achieve. With all of these components integrated and in place, teachers and staff will be better prepared and more likely to differentiate instruction and academic support services so as to target the needs of ELLs.

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Additional Resources

The following resources also may be useful for district staff in creating guidance on differentiation for ELLs:

New York State Education Department. (2004). *The teaching of language arts to limited English proficient/English language learners: Learning standards for English as a second language*. Albany, NY: Author. Retrieved June 1, 2009, from <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/biling/resource/ESL/standards.html>

NYSED has developed state ESL standards (which align with the state ELA standards) and corresponding performance indicators grouped by English proficiency level and grade.

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)
Website: <http://www.cal.org/siop/about/index.html>

This protocol was codeveloped by the Center for Applied Linguistics and The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence. It provides a model for teachers to address the learning needs of ELLs and specifically integrates language-acquisition objectives with content-area learning.

Recommendation 4: Professional Development

It is recommended that the district provide ongoing and targeted professional development to general education, ELL, and special education teachers, which will increase their ability to provide effective differentiated instruction, improve their knowledge of literacy strategies for nonproficient students, and enhance their skills in participating in effective collaboration. In addition, teachers in self-contained settings should participate in professional development activities to increase their understanding of how to provide their students with access to the general education curriculum.

Link to Findings

District data point to a need to improve the performance of SWDs across the district. The Special Education Report and English Language Learner Report indicate that teachers do not understand how to effectively implement differentiated instruction in the classroom or how to best provide access to the general education for SWDs. Specifically, the co-interpretation process revealed several findings related to SWDs:

- **General and special education teachers demonstrate a lack of use and understanding of differentiated instruction.** Observation data indicate that few general education or special education teachers differentiate their instruction. Of the 31 teachers interviewed, 10 revealed that they did not understand what differentiated instruction is, nor do they implement this practice. It was further noted that although most inclusive classrooms had two teachers, the instruction observed typically was not differentiated.
- **Misunderstanding exists among teachers in self-contained settings about providing access to the general education curriculum for students in self-contained settings.** Four of nine interviewed teachers in self-contained settings reported needing further assistance with the topic of access to the ELA curriculum, despite having the special education curriculum map. Some teachers in self-contained settings reported using lower grade-level curriculum maps rather than the appropriate grade-level map.
- **There is a need for ongoing and targeted professional development to address the following:**
 - Teaching literacy to students who perform below grade level
 - Collaboration for coteaching teams
 - Differentiated instruction

Special education teachers reported that they want general education professional development to have more relevance to their role. Specifically, teachers in resource and self-contained settings expressed a need for professional development to have direct application to the varying student performance levels present within these settings.

- **Current data on the district portal are not responsive to measuring the progress of SWDs.** Special education teachers reported using the data less often than general education teachers. They also found the data on the portal less useful than their general education colleagues.

- **There is a lack of instructional materials and supplies, such as leveled materials, to address the needs of nonproficient students.** This lack was noted as an instructional barrier by general and special education teachers. Teachers in self-contained settings also reported that they did not always have grade-level materials.
- **Secondary special education teachers have fewer formal opportunities for collaboration with general education teachers than those at the elementary level.** More collaboration exists between general and special education teachers at the elementary level because coteaching teams followed the same schedule. In addition, most elementary schools included all special education teachers in grade-level meetings with instructional facilitators. In contrast, no consistent structure was present at the secondary level to support collaboration between general and special education teachers.

These findings point to the need for a more targeted and comprehensive professional development program that will result in improved quality and effectiveness of instruction for all students, including SWDs and ELLs. The professional development should be relevant to and support collaboration between general, ELL, and special education teachers.

Link to Research

The following research review consists of several topics: effective professional development, differentiated instruction, implicit literacy instruction, and progress monitoring.

Effective Professional Development

To be considered effective, professional development should not consist of the typical one-time workshop or even a short-term series of workshops. Instead, professional development should be ongoing, which is more likely to promote lasting changes in teacher knowledge and practice. “Teachers must have frequent and ample opportunities and resources to enhance and refresh their knowledge,” notes the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2009).

Professional development appears to be most effective when it is embedded within the curriculum and context of how students learn, uses active learning opportunities (e.g., reviewing student work, reviewing lessons, obtaining feedback on teaching), and is ongoing and in-depth (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon 2001). Wenglinsky (2000, 2002) found evidence that professional development influenced classroom practices and improved student achievement. A study that used multilevel modeling with data from the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress in mathematics revealed that professional development in higher-order thinking skills, diversity, and hands-on learning was positively associated with achievement (Wenglinsky, 2000, 2002). Summarizing the results of Wenglinsky’s 2000 publication relating to mathematics, Sparks (2001) indicates the following:

Students whose teachers received professional development in working with special populations outperformed their peers by more than a full grade level, and students whose teachers received professional development in higher-order thinking skills outperformed their peers by 40 percent of a grade level.

Professional development should be based on the principles of adult learning and conditions needed to sustain change. It should be integrated into the regular school schedule, with time to implement and reflect upon new ideas. Moreover, professional development must focus on research-based strategies that are associated with student achievement and emphasize access to the general education curriculum for SWDs. According to The Access Center (n.d.), “access to the general education curriculum occurs when students with disabilities are actively engaged and learning the content and skills that define the general education curriculum.” Such access is most likely to happen when the following conditions are present:

- “The general education curriculum is operationalized in terms of appropriate, standards-based instructional and learning goals for individual students with disabilities, including appropriate scope and sequence.”
- “Research-based instructional methods and practices are being used that have a track record of helping students with disabilities learn general education content and skills.”
- “Appropriate research-based materials and media are being used that have evidence documenting their effectiveness in helping students with disabilities learn general education content and skills.”
- “Research-based supports and accommodations are being used that have a track record of helping students with disabilities learn general education content and skills.”
- “Appropriate tools and procedures are used for assessing and documenting whether students with disabilities are meeting high standards and achieving their instructional goals” (The Access Center, n.d.).

Professional development should focus on strategies such as differentiated instruction, explicit literacy instruction, and progress monitoring. Considerations regarding mechanisms for implementing effective professional development for these research-based instructional strategies are discussed below in the section on Implementation Considerations.

Differentiated Instruction

The Access Center (2005b) describes differentiated instruction:

Differentiation is a process through which teachers enhance learning by matching student characteristics to instruction and assessment. Differentiation allows all students to access the same classroom curriculum by providing entry points, learning tasks, and outcomes that are tailored to students’ needs. In a differentiated classroom, variance occurs in the way in which students gain access to the content being taught (Hall, Strangman, & Meyer, 2003). Teachers can differentiate content, process, and/or product for students (Tomlinson, 1997). Differentiation of content refers to a change in the material being learned by the a student. Differentiation of process refers to the way in which the student accesses material. Differentiation of product refers to the way in which the student shows what he or she has learned.

When teachers differentiate, they do so in response to students’ readiness, interest, and/or learning profile. Readiness refers to the skill level and background knowledge of the

child. Interest refers to topics that the student may want to explore or that will motivate the student. Finally, the student’s learning profile includes learning style (for example, is the student a visual, auditory, tactile, or kinesthetic learner), grouping preferences (for example, does the student work best individually, with a partner, or in a large group), and environmental preferences (for example, does the student need lots of space or a quiet area to work). When a teacher differentiates, all of these factors can be taken into account individually or in combination (Tomlinson, 1997). Differentiated instruction addresses issues of diversity in the classroom, as students’ characteristics provide the basis for planning and instruction.

When instruction or materials are differentiated to meet students’ needs, academic gains have occurred (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993; Kulik, 1992; Lou et al., 1996; Tomlinson et al., 2003). According to The Access Center (2004), “differentiation strategies applied to reading can be designed to help students learn a range of skills, including phonics, comprehension, fluency, word prediction, and story prediction” (p. 2).

The Access Center (2004, pp. 2–4) also developed the following chart (see Table 2) of strategies that can be used to teach reading content.

Table 2. Differentiation Strategies for Teaching Reading

Strategy	Focus of Differentiation	Definition	Example
Tiered Assignments	Readiness	Tiered assignments are designed to instruct students on essential skills that are provided at different levels of complexity, abstractness, and open-endedness. The curricular content and objective(s) are the same, but the process and/or product are varied according to the student’s level of readiness.	Students with moderate comprehension skills are asked to create a story-web. Students with advanced comprehension skills are asked to re-tell a story from the point of view of the main character.
Compacting	Readiness	Compacting is the process of adjusting instruction to account for prior student mastery of learning objectives. Compacting involves a three-step process: (1) assess the student to determine his/her level of knowledge on the material to be studied and determine what he/she still needs to master; (2) create plans for what the student needs to know, and excuse the student from studying what he/she already knows; and (3) create plans for freed-up time to be spent in enriched or accelerated study.	A student who can decode words with short vowel sounds would not participate in a direct instruction lesson for that skill, but might be provided with small group or individualized instruction on a new phonics skill.

Strategy	Focus of Differentiation	Definition	Example
Interest Centers or Interest Groups	Readiness Interest	Interest centers (usually used with younger students) and interest groups (usually used with older students) are set up so that learning experiences are directed toward a specific learner interest. Allowing students to choose a topic can be motivating to them.	Interest Centers - Centers can focus on specific reading skills, such as phonics or vocabulary, and provide examples and activities that center on a theme of interest, such as outer space or students' favorite cartoon characters. Interest Groups – For a book report, students can work in interest groups with other students who want to read the same book.
Flexible Grouping*	Readiness Interest Learning Profile	Students work as part of many different groups depending on the task and/or content. Sometimes students are placed in groups based on readiness, other times they are placed based on interest and/or learning profile. Groups can either be assigned by the teacher or chosen by the students. Students can be assigned purposefully to a group or assigned randomly. This strategy allows students to work with a wide variety of peers and keeps them from being labeled as advanced or struggling.	The teacher may assign groups based on readiness for phonics instruction, while allowing other students to choose their own groups for book reports, based on the book topic.
Learning Contracts	Readiness Learning Profile	Learning contracts begin with an agreement between the teacher and the student. The teacher specifies the necessary skills expected to be learned by the student and the required components of the assignment, while the student identifies methods for completing the tasks. This strategy (1) allows students to work at an appropriate pace; (2) can target learning styles; and (3) helps students work independently, learn planning skills, and eliminate unnecessary skill practice.	A student indicates that he or she wants to research a particular author. With support from the teacher, the student determines how the research will be conducted and how the information will be presented to the class. For example, the student might decide to write a paper and present a poster to the class. The learning contract indicates the dates by which each step of the project will be completed.
Choice Boards	Readiness Interest Learning Profile	Choice boards are organizers that contain a variety of activities. Students can choose one or several activities to complete as they learn	After students read <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , they are given a choice board that contains a list of possible activities for each of

Strategy	Focus of Differentiation	Definition	Example
		a skill or develop a product. Choice boards can be organized so that students are required to choose options that focus on several different skills.	the following learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile. Students must complete two activities from the board and must choose these activities from two different learning styles.

* More information about grouping strategies can be found in *Strategies to Improve Access to the General Education Curriculum*. Available at http://www.k8accesscenter.org/training_resources/curricular_materials.asp

Source: This chart was reprinted from *Differentiated Instruction for Reading* (The Access Center, 2004, pp. 2–4).

Explicit Literacy Instruction

The Access Center (2005a) emphasizes the importance of reading as a foundational skill for learning:

“Since reading is the foundational skill for all learning, it is essential that children with disabilities receive targeted and effective instruction that addresses their core weaknesses in reading” (Lloyd, 2005)... [Instruction must cover] each of the five essential components of reading as identified by the National Reading Panel... 1) phonemic awareness, 2) phonics, 3) fluency, 4) vocabulary, and 5) comprehension.

Focusing on only one component does not make a complete reading instructional program. The Access Center (2005a) has developed a list of explicit instructional strategies to teach key elements for each component; selected strategies are noted below.

The Access Center (2005a) lists the following instructional strategies to teach **phonemic awareness**:

- “Teach systematically and explicitly.”
- “Focus on just a few types of skills.”
- “Remember that blending and segmentation are the two most critical skills required for phonemic awareness.”
- “Teach to small groups rather than individuals or entire classes.”
- “Add the manipulation of letters to the phonemic awareness tasks. (Big Ideas in Beginning Reading... [Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement, 2002])”

The Access Center (2005a) lists the following instructional strategies to teach **phonics**:

- “Teach systematically and explicitly starting with sound/symbol relationships (if not mastered).”
- “Model/demonstrate how to blend letter-sounds to pronounce known words, and how to segment sounds in known words to write letters representing these sounds.”

- “Separate auditorially and visually similar letters.”
- “Introduce letters that can be used to build many words.”
- “Introduce lowercase letters first unless uppercase letters are similar in configuration.”

The Access Center (2005a) lists the following instructional strategies to teach **vocabulary**:

- “Students learn new vocabulary from oral language experiences such as listening to adults read to them. Teachers should read aloud to students, no matter what grade they teach:
 - “Reading aloud works best when the teacher discusses the selection before, during and after reading, talking with students about new vocabulary and concepts and helping them to connect the words to their prior knowledge and background.”
- “Teachers should provide many opportunities for students to read in and out of school. The more students read on their own, the more words they will encounter and the more word meanings they will become familiar with.”
- “Because it is not possible to directly teach students all the words in a text that they are not familiar with, teachers should focus on teaching three types of words.
 - “Important words: words that are critical for understanding a concept or the text
 - “Useful words: words that students are likely to see and use again and again
 - “Difficult words. Direct instruction should be provided for words that are particularly difficult for your students (e.g., words with multiple meanings, idiomatic expressions) (Armbruster et al., 2001).”
- “Students learn vocabulary more effectively when they are actively and directly involved in constructing meaning rather than in memorizing definitions or synonyms (Baker et al., 1997).”

The Access Center (2005a) lists the following instructional strategies to teach **fluency**:

- “Give students opportunities to reread passages out loud (Armbruster et al., 2001).”
- “Provide feedback on student fluency skills (Armbruster et al., 2001).”
- “Provide daily opportunity for fluency building (Armbruster et al., 2001).”
- “Allow students to listen to books on tape (Gilbert et al., 1996).”
- “Identify target reading rates (Armbruster et al., 2001).”
- “To determine an appropriate text level, have a student read a passage from the text. Calculate the number of words read correctly and divide by the total words read. This will give you the student’s accuracy level (Mather [& Goldstein], 2001).
 - “Higher than 97% accuracy = independent reading level.
 - “94–97% accuracy = instructional level (when working on fluency, materials should be at this level or above).
 - “93% or below = frustration level”

The Access Center (2005a) lists the following instructional strategies to teach **comprehension**:

- Explicit comprehension strategy instruction
- Cooperative learning
- Comprehension monitoring
- Graphic organizers
- Answering questions
- Summarization (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; National Reading Panel, 2000)

Progress Monitoring

Progress monitoring is a scientifically based assessment practice that is used to determine the extent to which students are benefiting from classroom instruction and for monitoring effectiveness of curriculum (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998). Bootel, Holland-Coviello, and Lee (2007), describe progress monitoring:

[Progress monitoring]...is an alternative to commercially prepared traditional assessments that are administered at only one point in time. [It] provides teachers with an easy and quick method of obtaining empirical information on the progress of their students. With frequently obtained student data, teachers can analyze student scores to adjust student goals and revise their instructional programs. That way, instruction can be tailored to best fit the needs of each student.

Students are given progress monitoring tests “at regular intervals (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly) [across the entire school year] to produce accurate and meaningful results that teachers can use to quantify short- and long-term student [achievement].... Teachers establish...goals indicating the level of proficiency students will demonstrate...by the end of the school year.

[Progress monitoring tests] are relatively brief and easy to administer.... [They] have been prepared by researchers or test developers to represent curriculum passages...[with] equivalent difficulty from passage to passage within each grade level.... [Progress monitoring tests] are scored for reading accuracy and speed, and student scores are graphed for teachers to consider when making decisions about the instructional programs and teaching methods for each student in the class....

Research has demonstrated that when teachers use [progress monitoring] to inform their instructional decision making, students learn more, teacher decision making improves, and students are more aware of their own performance (e.g., [Fuchs et al., 1994;] Fuchs, Deno, & Mirkin, 1984; [Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986; Hosp & Fuchs, 2005; Stecker & Fuchs, 2000]).... Research, conducted over the past 30 years, has also shown...[progress monitoring] to be reliable and valid (e.g., Deno, 1985; Germann & Tindal, 1985; Marston, 1988; Shinn, 1989).

Implementation Considerations

Professional development must be ongoing rather than a series of workshops. Two strategies for providing ongoing professional development that reflect adult learning theory (i.e., active engagement and opportunities for implementation, reflection, and sharing) are lesson study and professional learning communities. These strategies have been associated with increased teacher collaboration and improved student outcomes.

- **Implement lesson study as a professional development strategy.** Lesson study is a type of professional development in which “the workday of teachers includes time for meeting together to analyze recent lessons and to plan for upcoming lessons” (Ross, 2000; see also Ma, 1999; Rock & Wilson, 2005; Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). Within these lesson study meetings, teachers plan a lesson and revise it collaboratively with colleagues. They often teach the revised lesson, evaluate and reflect again, and share the results in written form. The purpose of the lesson study is to analyze lessons and predict what groups of students will do when presented with particular tasks. This type of professional development allows teachers to be actively engaged in learning and in interacting with their colleagues on a regular basis to discuss their work and their students’ learning, which is needed to develop a deeper understanding of how children think and learn (Desimone et al., 2002).
- **Implement professional learning communities as a professional development strategy.** Professional learning communities, another strategy for providing professional development, help teachers develop a common understanding of what each student should learn and how to respond when students experience difficulties in learning. These communities are designed to give teachers regular opportunities to collaborate to improve their teaching and expertise with the ultimate goal of improving student learning and achievement (DuFour, 2004, 2007; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006; Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2005). Communities that are focused on teaching practices, student performance, and analysis of student work are effective mechanisms for developing collaborative working relationships among a group of teachers (Bolam et al., 2005; DuFour, 2004; Hord, 1997; Zorfass, Shaffer & Keefe-Rivero, 2003). Several studies have found that professional learning communities are associated with positive outcomes such as instructional improvement, school culture changes, and improved student learning at both the elementary and secondary levels (Berry, Johnson, & Montgomery, 2005; Bolam et al., 2005; Phillips, 2003; Strahan, 2003; Supovitz, 2002; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2006). Several studies also have found that students scoring at the proficient level on standardized tests increased by 25 percent to 40 percent over a three- to four-year period in schools with professional learning communities (Berry et al., 2005; Phillips, 2003; Strahan, 2003).

Professional learning communities also are associated with changes in teaching practices and school culture. For example, schools that have strong professional learning communities use more authentic pedagogy including higher-level thinking, construction of meaning through conversation, and development of knowledge for use beyond the classroom (Louis & Marks, 1998). Teachers who participate in professional learning communities make substantive changes in their instruction by using more student-centered techniques and fewer individual skill sheets and isolated instructional activities (Dunne, Nave, & Lewis, 2000; Englert & Tarrant, 1995). In addition, as teachers

participate in professional learning communities over time, the discussion changes from focusing on the challenges of teaching low-achieving students to designing and using a variety of instructional processes and products (Hollins, McIntyre, DeBose, Hollings, & Towner, 2004). Professional learning communities contribute to changes in professional culture in schools because they promote collaboration and reflection (Vescio et al., 2006). They also enable teachers to address personally meaningful, classroom-based concerns and to solve problems (Zorfass et al., 2003). Moreover, professional learning communities promote collaboration between general and special education teachers because teachers can share and learn from each other.

Lesson studies and professional learning communities should be implemented within the existing East Ramapo Central School District schedule (e.g., monthly early-release days, grade-level and department meetings). These mechanisms can be used to develop teachers' knowledge of differentiated instruction, reading instruction, and progress monitoring. Using these approaches to deliver professional development would permit teachers across the district to become more actively engaged, which was a desire expressed by teachers during interviews, as noted in the Special Education Report.

Conclusion

Providing targeted and ongoing professional development on differentiated instruction, explicit reading instruction, and progress monitoring to general and special education teachers as well as those teaching ELLs is essential to making instructional improvements.

In order to implement progress monitoring to determine if these strategies are, indeed, improving student learning, East Ramapo Central School District will need to provide teachers of SWDs with assessment measures that are more sensitive to monitoring their progress. The current data on the portal are not appropriate for the purpose of progress monitoring. The National Center on Response to Intervention has completed a review of progress monitoring tools (see Additional Resources for this recommendation), which can assist the district in selecting a progress-monitoring tool based on its identified needs. The data obtained from progress monitoring tests should be integrated into the data portal so that all data are stored in one central location. The district portal then would have SWD data that are more relevant and useful to teachers, which responds to the needs identified by special education teachers during interviews, as noted in the Special Education Report. After the new data-driven assessment tools are selected, the district may need to provide additional training on how to use and access the data to make the data useful for teaching and monitoring the progress of SWDs.

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Additional Resources

- The National Center on Response to Intervention (<http://www.rti4success.org>) has an online library of resources and documents about progress monitoring, including professional development modules. In addition, see the NCRTI Technical Committee’s review of reading screening and progress monitoring measures.
- The National Center on Student Progress Monitoring (<http://www.studentprogress.org>) provides information and resources related to progress monitoring, including a review of tools.
- The Access Center (<http://www.k8accesscenter.org/index.php/>) has several resources and professional development modules related to reading instruction, differentiated instruction, and coteaching.

Appendix A. Data Map of Co-Interpretation Key Findings

East Ramapo Central School District: April 6–7, 2009

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

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

Key

Report Abbreviations

AS—Audit Survey Report

CA—Curriculum Alignment Report

DR—Document Review Report

ELL—English Language Learner Report

INT—Interview Report

OBS—Observation Report

SE—Special Education Report

SEC—Surveys of Enacted Curriculum Report

Voting Colors

Red votes = areas for improvement

Green votes = positive areas

Key Findings

Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>Data from the document review, curriculum alignment, interviews, and observations support the findings that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K–12 curriculum maps and materials do not address differentiation with respect to struggling students (including students with disabilities [SWDs], English language learners [ELLs], and students with low proficiency). • Teachers of ELLs and SWDs are not adequately employing differentiated instruction in their classrooms and have expressed interest in understanding and implementing differentiated instructional strategies. <p>(Curriculum and Instruction)</p> <p>29 red votes</p>	1. Curricular adaptations were seen most frequently in elementary-level and English as a second language (ESL) classes: 63% of ESL teachers compared with 42% of general education teachers utilized process adaptations.	ELL, p. 27
	2. Most classrooms received moderate to high ratings for following instructional strategies shown to promote learning.	ELL, p. 25
	3. Lessons did not promote student learning in three areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of language learning goals • Cultural awareness • Differentiated instruction 	ELL, p. 25
	4. ESL classrooms tended to score higher than classrooms of general education teachers on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of language learning goals • Cultural awareness • Differentiated instruction 	ELL, p. 25
	5. 54% of ESL teachers and 32% of general education teachers employed learning environment adaptations (e.g., native language support visual aids).	ELL, p. 27
	6. In 47% of the classrooms across grade level and program type, teachers provided language instruction effectively and frequently enough to simultaneously develop English proficiency and content-area knowledge.	ELL, p. 25
	7. 44% of all teachers did not employ effective differentiation techniques for their ELLs.	ELL, p. 26
	8. Observation data revealed that few teachers differentiated their instruction.	SE, p. 8
	9. 10 of 31 interviewed teachers revealed that they did not understand what differentiated instruction was or did not implement this practice.	SE, p. 9
	10. Observational data indicated that few teachers differentiated content (15.2%), process (12.1%), or product (12.1%).	SE, p. 9
	11. During interviews, many teachers confused providing modifications or accommodations with differentiating instruction.	SE, p. 8

Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	12. Even though most inclusive classrooms had two teachers (a general education teacher and a special education teacher), the instruction observed in these classrooms typically was not differentiated.	SE, p. 9
	13. District administrators reported that ESL teachers have requested guidance on differentiating instruction for their students.	ELL, p. 10
	14. In the Grade 10 ELA curriculum, there is no mention of reciprocal processes with regard to reading and writing (characteristic 9) or the incorporation of critical thinking (characteristic 10).	CA, p. 62
	15. There appears to be no ELL modifications to curriculum maps that span across the district.	ELL, p. 4
	16. District documents do not address if or how pacing would be modified to accommodate varying student development backgrounds in Grade 8.	SEC, p. 2
	17. As students' grade levels increase, alignment of instruction to curriculum decreases.	SEC, p. 42
	18. Every individual interviewed believed that SWDs have access to the general education ELA curriculum.	SE, p. 5
	19. All administrators reported that there is no districtwide ESL curriculum. One administrator said, "It is a huge problem, and many students' needs are not being met."	ELL, pp. 3, 4
	20. There is no evidence in the district's Grade 10 ELA curriculum that addresses how instruction will be differentiated (characteristic 7).	CA, p. 62
	21. Alternate curricular programs or materials were used in the elementary and secondary self-contained classrooms. For example, teachers in self-contained settings reported using Spector Phonics, Orton-Gillingham, Wilson, Globe Fearon, and <i>Shakespeare Without Fear</i> .	SE, p. 7
	22. Some teachers in self-contained settings reported using lower grade-level curriculum maps rather than the appropriate grade-level map.	SE, p. 5
	23. With the exception of reading and writing across the curriculum, there is no evidence of diversified teaching contexts and materials in the district's ELA curriculum (characteristic 5) or use of motivational strategies.	CA, p. 63

Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	24. General education teachers were less likely to incorporate small-grouped pair work than ESL teachers, while general education teachers were more likely to provide individualized instruction than ESL teachers.	ELL, p. 26
	25. Most teachers reported that they adapt the curriculum and modify their instruction to make it more accessible for the ELLs in their classes. Observation data indicate that this is not necessarily the case.	ELL, p. 27
	26. 77% of the observed teachers monitored student performance and adjusted their lessons to reteach part of the lesson if necessary.	ELL, p. 28
	27. In the Grade 8 map, student interest and motivation are not specifically addressed in unit documents.	CA, p. 57
	28. The Grade 8 curriculum documents do not explicitly discuss if or how students' prior knowledge informs the overall Grade 8 ELA curriculum.	CA, p. 60
	29. Software packages are not specific to ELLs but offer basic or beginner-level capability that could be applicable for ELLs.	ELL, p. 4
	30. The majority of secondary school administrators reported that teachers design the ESL curriculum individually by school and follow a Balanced Literacy approach or <i>Visions</i> text series.	ELL, p. 3
	31. Document review data suggested that the district curriculum was used for SWDs in self-contained classrooms but was modified by the individual teacher.	SE, p. 6
	32. Administrators said that self-contained teachers were expected to follow the general education curriculum by modifying the curriculum and instruction, pacing, or providing accommodations so that SWDs could access the curriculum.	SE, p. 6
	33. Secondary ESL teachers do not use a district curriculum. Many teachers reported that they create their own curriculum based on ELA and ESL standards.	ELL, pp. 11–12
	34. A range in the level of curricular modification was observed across teachers in self-contained settings.	SE, p. 6
	35. In Grade 4, the curriculum map does not address how to provide differentiation for ESL students, special education students, or struggling readers.	CA, p. 52
	36. Elementary ESL teachers use the curriculum maps provided by the district. They adapt the curriculum.	ELL, p. 12

Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	37. Observational data supported the reports of administrators and teachers that SWDs in general education classrooms accessed the ELA curriculum.	SE, p. 6
	38. The district did not submit key documents showing sufficient curricular materials for ELLs.	DR, p. 3
	39. Most teachers acknowledged the need to conform in some basic way to the curriculum materials. In one secondary school, discretion to change the curriculum is balanced with oversight by the ELA department chair, who approves changes.	INT, p. 15
	40. District documents do not discuss specific policies or practices with respect to differentiated instruction in the Grade 8 ELA curriculum.	CA, p. 60
	41. The Grade 2 curriculum map does not address how to provide differentiation for ESL students, special education students, or struggling readers.	CA, p. 37
	42. Although teachers reported that content does not change for SWDs, the curriculum tracking at the secondary level may cause variations in curriculum coverage for students with and without disabilities.	SE, p. 6
	43. ELLs have varying proficiency in English and varying content knowledge. Because of this situation, they have a range of needs.	ELL, p. 11
	44. Lessons in general education classrooms tended to expose students to a more rigorous curriculum that did lessons in ESL classrooms.	ELL, p. 23
	45. The majority of ELLs are Haitian Creole and from countries in Latin America and Caribbean; others are from other countries such as Ukraine and Vietnam.	ELL, p. 11
	46. Students within classrooms generally were treated with equity.	ELL, p. 23
	47. All administrators responded that ELA standards are incorporated into ESL and general education lessons as matters of standard practices.	ELL, p. 23
	48. The Grade 6 curriculum map does not address how to provide differentiation for ESL, special education students, or struggling readers.	CA, p. 52
	49. Overall, more specific adaptations (including grouping, visuals, pace of instruction, and emphasis on language development) were mentioned both by ESL teachers and general education teachers of ELLs in the elementary schools.	ELL, p. 12
	50. Classroom teachers reported that they “will vary the approach, but not content” for SWDs.	SE, p. 5
	51. One quarter of all administrators responded that they rely on the expertise of their ESL staff to adapt the curriculum.	ELL, p. 4

Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	52. Observational data suggest that the district curriculum was used for SWDs in self-contained classrooms but was modified by the individual teacher.	SE, p. 6
	53. There is little documentation of how curriculum materials for ELLs and SWDs are provided in the general education setting.	DR, p. 4
	54. Interviews with teachers revealed that SWDs participate in state testing and receive accommodations during classroom and standardized testing.	SE, p. 5
	55. Certain elementary teachers augment their curriculum by adding the <i>Rigby Leveled and Guided Reading</i> series provided by the ESL coordinator.	ELL, p. 3
	56. Four of nine teachers in self-contained settings who were interviewed reported needing further assistance with the topic of access to ELA curriculum despite having the special education maps.	SE, p. 6

Key Finding 2	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>Teachers expressed the need that professional development should be needs based and streamlined, targeting relevant topics, sustained over time, within focused consistency. More specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General education and ELL teachers requested professional development in strategies that deal with implementing and fostering ELL teaching. Special education and general education teachers requested professional development in strategies that deal with 	1. Almost all teachers reported that they have attended professional development activities with other teachers from their schools (although less frequently in higher grade levels).	SEC, p. 41
	2. Teachers indicated that there were many opportunities for professional development throughout the district as well as workshops from the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).	SE, p. 15
	3. Three teachers wished that the professional development was more focused, consistent, and cohesive.	SE, p. 16
	4. Some teachers expressed a need to receive training on collaboration and coteaching.	SE, p. 16
	5. 62% of special education teachers and general education teachers who taught SWDs believed that teaching in an inclusion classroom was not covered at all in their professional development; 24% thought it was covered only minimally.	SE, p. 15
	6. Teachers most frequently reported that further training on educating SWDs would be beneficial for them. Teachers need more training in teaching reading and writing skills related to students who perform below grade level. Teachers need more training to determine when both a disability and language problem exist and how to best teach such students.	SE, p. 17

Key Finding 2	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>implementing and fostering inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary teachers requested more professional development in ELA. Elementary and secondary teachers expressed a need to acquire professional development related to ELLs. <p>(Professional Development)</p> <p>22 red votes</p>	7. General education teachers do not have the information they need to make the curriculum accessible to ELLs. This situation is especially true for secondary teachers.	ELL, pp. 11–12
	8. Several general education teachers stated that they were not aware of the LEP status of their students.	ELL, p. 11
	9. Elementary ESL teachers offered more detailed examples than secondary ESL teachers of how they adapt the curriculum for their students.	ELL, pp. 11–12
	10. Teachers whose classes consist of more than 50% LEP students reported that they have fewer opportunities to learn new things about teaching English.	SEC, p. 35
	11. Nearly all special education teachers who were interviewed wanted the general education professional development to have more relevance to their circumstances.	SE, p. 16
	12. Elementary teachers wanted more training in phonics while general special education teachers also saw the benefits of learning about differentiating instruction.	SE, p. 17
	13. Evidence suggested that strategies discussed during professional development sessions were used by teachers in the district.	SE, p. 17
	14. Elementary teachers indicated that ELA is a strong focus of professional development. Only 12% of respondents indicated that ELA is focused on minimally or not at all.	AS, p. 15
	15. Professional development is geared toward the new curriculum maps and assessment. Professional development for teachers is prescheduled and mandatory.	SE, p. 11
	16. No secondary teachers (general education) and half the elementary teachers attended training sessions on teaching practices for ELLs and second-language acquisitions.	ELL, p. 18
	17. Effectiveness of professional development is directly correlated with degree of focus on content applicability to the classroom.	INT, p. 40
	18. Elementary teachers indicated that topics related to data are covered more extensively than other topics in professional development sessions. Nearly 40% of respondents indicated that using data to monitor student progress or diagnose student challenges is covered “a great deal.”	AS, p. 15
	19. Teachers in Grades K–4 use teacher resource centers or Internet resources to enrich their knowledge or skills less than teachers in other grade levels.	SEC, p. 38

Key Finding 2	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	20. In the one elementary school with a low rating, teachers reported having received little training on the Balanced Literacy approach. Teachers at the six moderately rated schools perceived professional development to be minimally to moderately effective, noting the effectiveness of outside consultants but insufficiently sustained.	INT, p. 39
	21. Teachers whose classrooms consist of 10% to 50% ESL students reported that they are required to follow rules that conflict with their professional development more often than teachers whose classrooms consist of less than 10% and more than 50% ESL students.	SEC, p. 35
	22. Limited opportunities exist for ELL-specific professional development.	ELL, p. 6
	23. Teachers at four high-rated elementary schools (out of six schools) and at two high-rated secondary schools (out of five schools) reported that there is ongoing training on curriculum alignment and that the content expert serves as a resource for teachers.	INT, p. 15
	24. No specific descriptions of professional development opportunities or their alignment to ELA is covered in the documents submitted by the district.	DR, p. 12
	25. The major types of professional development for both elementary and secondary teachers are sessions provided in the school and by the district.	AS, p. 13
	26. Board policy addresses personal development plans for staff working with SWDs and focuses on acquiring knowledge and skills to meet the needs of SWDs.	DR, p. 12
	27. District documents did not address how the district provides professional development to teachers regarding ELA curriculum, content, or related expectations for student learning.	DR, p. 11
	28. In the four schools that rated professional learning opportunities as high, teachers indicated that the professional development ranged from moderate to highly effective. In the six schools that rated professional learning opportunities as moderate, teachers indicated that the professional development ranged from minimally to moderately effective.	INT, pp. 35, 38
	29. District documents did not address how the district provides professional development to teachers in the use of instructional strategies to support delivery of ELA curriculum.	DR, p. 11
	30. Most of the professional development related to teaching ELLs is offered through one-shot workshops rather than embedded, ongoing professional development sessions.	ELL, p. 19

Key Finding 2	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	31. A webpage from the district website shows that the district intends to provide staff development for general education teachers of ELLs to help them learn about strategies to support ELLs. It does not specify that the professional development is based on ELA.	DR, p. 11
	32. Principals are given the opportunity to attend conferences on topics of their choices or to participate in district professional development days.	INT, p. 12
	33. Areas for improvement cited by administrators include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELL-tailored curriculum and materials • Afterschool programs for ELLs • ELL-related professional development for both general education and ESL teachers 	INT, p. 8
	34. Support programs (e.g., ESL workshops, language courses, summer school enrichment programs) are offered to parents.	INT, p. 8
	35. Teachers in Grades 9–12 reported less professional development time on interpreting assessment data than their counterparts in Grades K–8.	SEC, p. 43
	36. In most schools in the district (10 of 11), school administrators set high expectations for teacher attendance at professional development sessions and monitored teacher follow-through.	INT, p. 35
	37. Almost half of the secondary respondents reported not having enough time to adequately cover topics during professional development.	AS, p. 20
	38. Teachers reported that professional development provided by outside consultants is more effective than in-house professional development when provided on an ongoing basis.	INT, pp. 38–39
	39. Teachers in Grades 9–12 reported that they receive fewer college-level ELA courses than teachers Grades K–8.	SEC, p. 37
	40. According to secondary teachers who responded, professional development opportunities do not focus at all on teaching the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELLs in general education (44.9%) • SWDs in a special education classroom (37.3%) • ELLs in an ESL classroom (33.3%) 	AS, p. 18

Key Finding 2	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	41. 60% of secondary respondents indicated that the topics covered in professional development were related to school academic goals and that professional development sessions provide information and skills that can be used in the classroom.	AS, p. 20
	42. Secondary respondents noted less focus on ELA in professional development than did elementary respondents: 30% of secondary school respondents indicated minimal or no focus on ELA compared to 12% in elementary school.	AS, pp. 15, 17
	43. Between 32% and 39% of secondary teachers responded that the extent to which professional development opportunities focus on ELA topics was minimal.	AS, p. 17
	44. Teachers in Grades 9–12 reported fewer instances of follow-up activities relating to what they have learned than did teachers in Grades K–8.	SEC, p. 40
	45. Respondents from two of three secondary schools stated that professional development was minimally helpful due to low relevance and lack of opportunity for collaboration.	INT, p. 39
	46. Secondary teacher respondents were split as to whether professional development topics built on prior professional development experiences or topics.	AS, p. 20
	47. Teachers in Grades 9–12 reported a lower level of emphasis on professional development on state content standards than their counterparts in Grades K–8.	SEC, p. 42
	48. Of the secondary teachers who responded, 35.7% stated that minimal focus was placed on ELA standards at the professional development sessions.	AS, p. 17

Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>According to document reviews, observations, curriculum alignment, reports, surveys of enacted curriculum (SEC), and interviews, the district’s K–12 ELA curriculum is a work in progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The district’s existing student ELA expectations 	1. The district’s Grade 6 cognitive demand expectations for <i>apply</i> exceed the performance indicators from NYSED by 16% (33% compared to 17%).	CA, p. 23
	2. For the cognitive demand <i>evaluate</i> , the district has an emphasis of only 3% while the state has an emphasis of 9% (Grade 4).	CA, p. 18
	3. NYSED emphasizes metacognitive knowledge more so than the district (6% compared to 0%).	CA, p. 31
	4. The district emphasizes cognitive demands more so than NYSED (11% compared to 2%).	CA, p. 33

Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>are not aligned to NYSED performance indicators for knowledge level (metacognitive, procedural, conceptual, and factual) and cognitive demands (create, evaluate, analyze, apply, understand, and remember).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a K–8 curriculum map that is more suggestive than prescriptive. • A Grades 9–12 curriculum has some elements of classroom expectations but is incomplete. • The curriculum maps for Grades 2–8 do not link the ELA curriculum to other content areas or grade levels. <p>(Curriculum)</p> <p>22 red votes</p>	5. Grade 6 NYSED performance indicators appear to place more emphasis than district expectations on <i>remember</i> by 9 percentage points.	CA, p. 23
	6. Grade 6 NYSED performance indicators appear to place more emphasis than district expectations on <i>evaluate</i> by 12% points (14% points compared to 2% points).	CA, p. 23
	7. Grade 2 NYSED emphasis on cognitive demand for <i>evaluate</i> is two times higher than the district’s emphasis on cognitive demand for <i>evaluate</i> (8% versus 4%).	CA, p. 13
	8. In the Grade 8 curriculum for the district and NYSED, little emphasis is placed on “factual” performance indicators.	CA, p. 26
	9. Compared to units for Grades 2, 4, and 6, Grade 8 units appear to be in an early stage of development overall.	CA, p. 58
	10. The curriculum maps for Grades 2, 4, 6, and 8 provide the instructional units in order of instruction and suggested time frame for instruction.	DR, p. 6
	11. The curricular units for Grades 2, 4, 6, and 8 provide essential questions for reading and writing as well as possible content.	DR, p. 7
	12. Genre-based curriculum maps designed by the district for Grades K–8 are followed by general education and ESL teachers alike in the elementary grade levels.	INT (administrators), p. 3
	13. According to the Grade 6 heat map, the district is to show clarity of evidence for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiated instruction • Knowledge that students bring to school • Reading and writing as reciprocal processes • Meaning construction/critical thinking • Formative assessment 	CA, p. 47
	14. According to the Grade 2 heat map, the district needs to show clarity of evidence for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiated instruction • Knowledge that students bring to school • Reading and writing as reciprocal processes • Meaning construction/critical thinking • Formative assessment 	CA, p. 37

Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	15. In the Grade 10 ELA student expectation (knowledge level), the district emphasizes procedural knowledge 23% more than NYSED (76% compared to 43%).	CA, p. 31
	16. The district emphasizes procedural knowledge 10% more than NYSED for Grade 2.	CA, p. 11
	17. The district’s Grade 6 metacognitive knowledge level expectations are almost double the NYSED metacognitive knowledge level indicators (13% versus 7%).	CA, p. 21
	18. The district’s Grade 8 curriculum appears to require more metacognitive knowledge than NYSED (17% versus 5%).	CA, p. 26
	19. The district places 24% less emphasis on conceptual knowledge in comparison to NYSED.	CA, p. 31
	20. The Grade 2 expectations of knowledge level for NYSED and the district share the same order of emphasis on procedural and conceptual knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedural: state 44%, district 54% • Conceptual: state 42%, district 35% 	CA, p. 11
	21. In Grade 8, district student expectations and NYSED performance indicators both place conceptual knowledge at the top of the order of emphasis.	CA, p. 25
	22. The district’s emphasis on Grade 2 conceptual knowledge is 7% lower than NYSED.	CA, p. 11
	23. In Grade 8, NYSED’s emphasis on conceptual knowledge is slightly greater than the district’s (by 9 percentage points).	CA, p. 25
	24. In the Grade 6 curriculum for the district and NYSED, little emphasis is placed on factual performance indicators.	CA, p. 21
	25. In both Grade 2 and 4 curricula, the district and NYSED place little emphasis on factual performance indicators.	CA, pp. 11, 16
	26. Grade 6 NYSED conceptual knowledge indicator exceeds the district’s knowledge expectations by 26 percentage points.	CA, p. 21
	27. Grade 11 teachers place emphasis on elements of presentation and writing applications that are not being assessed by the Regents exam.	SEC, p. 23
	28. Across all grade levels, teachers place less emphasis on comprehension than the assessments, so the assessments are not aligned well to tests.	SEC, pp. 17–23

Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	29. District expectations for procedural knowledge level for Grade 4 are 15% higher than NYSED expectations.	CA, p. 16
	30. Grade 8 teachers reported a higher level of emphasis on comprehension than prescribed by state standards.	SEC, p. 11
	31. Middle schools and high schools are beginning to create a written curriculum.	INT, p. 7
	32. It is unclear how the district will ensure that ELA curricular materials are utilized in the classroom.	DR, p. 4
	33. District board policy defines curriculum as “planned instruction that is coordinated, articulated, and implemented to result in achievement of specific knowledge and skills, and application of such knowledge and skills by all students.”	DR, p. 7
	34. Board policy indicates that principal management and teacher implementation of the curriculum at the building level will be based in data analysis, teacher observation, and providing staff with discussion opportunities.	DR, p. 4
	35. The district’s ELA curriculum briefly mentions the importance of background knowledge (characteristic 8) but does not address how it should be used.	CA, p. 62
	36. No district documents were provided that address plans or practices to enact policy set forth by the district board. Documents do not provide evidence of implementing board policy or evidence of monitoring the implementation of ELA curriculum.	DR, p. 4
	37. It is not evident who has been provided with the draft ELA curricular materials and what supporting materials have been provided to accompany them. It also is not clear how the district intends to use these draft materials to address sufficiency of ELA curricular materials.	DR, p. 4
	38. The Literacy Curriculum Guide K–6 includes curriculum frameworks that provide guidance to help teachers effectively teach literacy.	DR, p. 6
	39. In Grade 4, the curriculum map does not show a connection between ELA and other content areas.	CA, p. 52
	40. The Grade 8 curriculum map does not appear to link to ELA curriculum of the other grade levels.	CA, p. 58
	41. In Grade 2, the curriculum map does not show a connection between ELA and other content areas.	CA, p. 52

Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	42. In Grade 6, the curriculum map does not show a connection between ELA and other content areas.	CA, p. 47
	43. Teachers take the curriculum map and pick the most pertinent pieces of it that they believe are relevant. The understanding is that the map is not completely definitive but teachers need to cover the basics and move on.	ELL, p. 3
	44. The Grade 8 curriculum map does not appear to link the Grade 8 ELA curriculum to other grade-level subjects.	CA, p. 58
	45. Documents do not describe who is working from the Literacy Curriculum Guide draft at this time, though the documents mention that teachers are reviewing, adding to, and revising the curriculum guide this school year.	DR, p. 4
	46. Board policy states that curriculum guides will include “information to direct instruction and ensure continuity among and between grade levels” and that curriculum should focus on content standards and reflect current research and best practice.	DR, p. 5
	47. There is mention of “evidence-based practices” in the district’s ELA curriculum but no direction on how to use it.	CA, p. 62
	48. Documents provided for the curriculum alignment report revealed that the district is working toward developing curriculum guides.	DR, p. 3
	49. Board policy addresses having a “centralized curriculum articulated among and between grade levels.”	DR, p. 6
	50. The district did not submit a policy that states how or when the curriculum guide is distributed to teaching staff.	DR, p. 3
	51. District documents do not appear to explain how materials and texts will be used within each unit in Grade 8.	CA, p. 59
	52. District documents state that curriculum maps describe the instructional units for Grades K–8 and the sequence of instruction for those units. Sample units, which guide daily instruction, have been incorporated in to each grade. These sample units include essential questions, possible content, and mentor texts.	DR, p. 3
	53. For Grade 4, the district emphasizes the cognitive demand <i>create</i> less than NYSED (4% versus 9%).	CA, p. 18

Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	54. The Grade 2 expectations of cognitive demand emphasize the demands of <i>apply</i> and <i>understand</i> (<i>apply</i> : district = 42%, state = 38%; <i>understand</i> : district = 28%, state = 30%).	CA, p. 13
	55. The district does not address student evaluation in the area of cognitive demand (0% compared to 14% in NYSED).	CA, p. 33
	56. The district places twice as much emphasis on applying knowledge than NYSED (63% compared to 31%).	CA, p. 33
	57. ESL lessons focused more on knowledge, understanding, and application of skill-based material while general education lessons centered on higher-order conceptual work.	OBS, p. 24
	58. NYSED places more emphasis than the district on <i>analyze</i> in the area of cognitive demand (19% compared to 13%).	CA, p. 33
	59. Grade 8 NYSED performance indicators give more attention than the district to <i>create</i> (20% compared to 7%).	CA, p. 28
	60. The district’s Grade 8 curriculum expectations appear to place more emphasis than NYSED on <i>analyze</i> (14% compared to 10%).	CA, p. 27
	61. Grade 3 teachers reported instruction in comprehension to be at a lower cognitive level (<i>perform procedures/explain</i>) than prescribed by state standards (<i>evaluate/investigate</i>).	SEC, p. 14
	62. The district’s Grade 6 “procedural” expectations exceed NYSED knowledge performance indicators by 21% points (54% compared to 33%).	CA, p. 4
	63. Grade 4 teachers reported instruction in comprehension at a lower cognitive level (<i>perform procedures/explain</i>) than prescribed by state standards (<i>analyze/investigate</i>).	SEC, p. 9
	64. The district’s emphasizes Grade 4 the cognitive demand <i>apply</i> level more so than NYSED (39% compared to 29%).	CA, p. 18
	65. The ELA curriculum for Grade 10 is not aligned with the standards and indicators in NYSED ELA core curriculum.	CA, p. 62
	66. The Grade 6 “expectations” document provides a summary list of outcomes that students should meet by the end of Grade 6. However, these goals do not spiral from simple to complex ideas across Grade 6.	CA, p. 48
	67. The relationship between the district’s student learning indicators and state indicators are not evident for Grade 6.	CA, p. 48

Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	68. The Grade 4 “expectations” document provides a summary list of outcomes that students should meet by the end of Grade 4. However, these goals do not spiral from simple to complex ideas across Grade 4.	CA, p. 43
	69. Grade 2 learning objectives are not linked to the maps.	CA, p. 52
	70. In the Grade 8 curriculum map, it does not appear that the goals build from simple to complex within or across units.	CA, p. 58
	71. Relationships between the district’s student learning objectives and state indicators are not evident for Grade 2.	CA, p. 37
	72. Classroom observation findings indicated that across the district, 88% of the observed lessons were closely aligned with ELA standards.	OBS, p. 23
	73. No provided documents illustrate how the district will select and align ELA materials.	DR, p. 3
	74. Grade 6 learning objectives are not linked to the maps.	CA, p. 52
	75. Grade 4 learning objectives are not linked to the maps.	CA, p. 42
	76. Quantity, sources, and clarity of evidence regarding the relationship between the district’s student learning indicators and goals and state content standards are not shown.	CA, p. 52
	77. The relationship between the district’s student learning expectations and state indicators is not evident for Grade 4.	CA, p. 42
	78. There was no evidence of “clarity” in the district’s ELA curriculum for any characteristic.	CA, p. 62
	79. The district’s curriculum guide has not yet been finalized.	DR, p. 3
	80. The Grade 2 “expectations” document provides a summary list of outcomes that students should meet by the end of Grade 2. However, these goals do not spiral from simple to complex ideas across Grade 2.	CA, p. 38
	81. NYSED competencies and indicators are not linked to the district’s Grade 8 student expectations in any district document.	CA, p. 58
	82. The ELA curriculum for Grade 10 is general and not clear in its expectations.	CA, p. 62
	83. Grade 7 and 10 teachers reported a higher level of emphasis on vocabulary than the assessments or standards emphasize.	SEC, pp. 12, 21
	84. On the skill set of listening and viewing, Grade 7 teachers placed less emphasis than the exam emphasis and they teach it at a higher cognitive level.	SEC, p. 21

Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	85. NYSED emphasizes student actual knowledge more so than the district (2% compared to 0%).	CA, p. 31
	86. Grade 4 district expectations for conceptual knowledge are 15 percentage points lower than NYSED (40% compared to 55%).	CA, p. 16

Key Finding 4	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>Secondary and elementary school teachers stated that the academic intervention programs currently in place are insufficient and ineffective due to lack of frequency, availability, guidance, and training. A lack of procedural documentation is consistent with this finding.</p> <p>(Academic Intervention)</p> <p>21 red votes</p>	1. Submitted district documents do not address specific district assessment procedures and practices for identifying students who need additional support.	DR, p. 8
	2. No documents were provided for the process in place to determine alignment of AIS to the district ELA curriculum.	DR, p. 8
	3. The district did not provide documents indicating that there is a process in place to determine alignment of AIS to student needs.	DR, p. 8
	4. Documents did not address student achievement data used to inform decisions regarding the effectiveness of AIS.	DR, p. 8
	5. No documents address AIS for SWDs.	DR, p. 9
	6. 83% of elementary school teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they receive data from formative assessments in a timely fashion.	AS, p. 2
	7. 37.7% of elementary teachers reported that they regularly receive data reflecting their students' progress in academic support programs.	AS, p. 8
	8. 64.6% of secondary teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that there are enough academic support programs to meet the needs of their nonproficient students. 15% of the respondents said they are not sure if there are enough programs or if these programs are applicable.	AS, p. 10
	9. 70.6% of elementary teachers reported that they work toward the same objectives for nonproficient students as the providers of academic support. However, 49.4% of them reported that they communicate about student academic performance with academic support providers.	AS, p. 8
	10. 43% of secondary teacher respondents indicated that academic support for nonproficient students is effective.	AS, p. 10

Key Finding 4	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	11. Two interventions are available across the district in both elementary and secondary schools: tutoring and ELA Academy.	SE, p. 13
	12. When asked if providers of academic support for nonproficient students worked toward the same academic objectives as the teacher, 28.8% of teachers indicated <i>not sure</i> or <i>not applicable</i> .	AS, p. 9
	13. 74% of elementary teachers stated that academic support services are not frequent enough to be effective for their nonproficient students.	AS, p. 8
	14. 46% of elementary teachers indicated that academic support for nonproficient students is minimally effective, while 3% indicated that it is not at all effective.	AS, p. 9
	15. Although academic support programs are available, 80.8% of elementary teachers reported that there are not enough to meet the needs of nonproficient students.	AS, p. 8
	16. The district lacks comprehensive intervention services for students at all levels.	SE, p. 14
	17. It is not clear what AIS are available to students.	DR, p. 9
	18. 97% of respondents said that the main provider of academic support for nonproficient secondary students is the classroom teacher.	AS, p. 6
	19. District documents provided did not address what AIS are available to students outside of the regular school day.	DR, p. 8
	20. Provided documents do not address how the compensatory education policy is enacted by the district.	DR, p. 8
	21. 5.9% of secondary teachers perceived the effectiveness of support for nonproficient as being greatly effective. Other responses were as follows: moderately effective = 36.8%, minimally effective = 47.1%, not at all effective = 1.5%, and not sure or not applicable = 8.8%.	AS, p. 10
	22. A majority of secondary teachers reported that support programs are not long enough or frequent enough and that there are not enough programs to be effective to meet the needs of nonproficient students.	AS, p. 10
	23. In elementary schools, the following percentages of teachers reported having academic intervention specialists (46%), special education teachers (44%), ESL teachers (37%), and volunteer tutors (34%) as providers of academic support for nonproficient students.	AS, p. 5

Key Finding 4	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	24. Apart from the classroom teacher (97%), other providers of support for nonproficient students in secondary schools include special education teachers (56%), ESL teachers (53%), coteachers (49%), paraprofessionals (33%), reading specialists (31%), and academic intervention specialists (31%).	AS, pp. 6–7
	25. Secondary teachers were evenly divided (about 48% in each case) about whether they have or do not have the needed resources for their nonproficient students.	AS, p. 3
	26. Roughly half of all elementary teachers reported that they have the resources needed for their nonproficient students, but roughly half reported that they do not.	AS, p. 2
	27. More than 50% of the secondary teachers reported that they use a variety of academic support (such as computer-based programs, afterschool state exam preparation, and tutoring programs) for nonproficient students.	AS, p. 6
	28. The district did not address in its documents that AIS are monitored to determine formative student progress throughout the school year.	DR, p. 8
	29. Apart from the classroom teacher (87%), the main providers of support for nonproficient students in elementary are reading specialists (71.5%).	AS, p. 5
	30. Elementary school teachers said that the most prevalent types of academic support for nonproficient students occur through push-in/pull-out programs (86.5%), tutoring programs (80.6%), computer (78%), and reading materials (75.6%).	AS, p. 4
	31. Respondents from all schools reported that they do not have enough reading or AIS teachers.	INT, p. 31
	32. The barriers to using data, as reported by general education and special education teachers, were timelines of the data and time to access and use the data.	SE, p. 20
	33. 40% of elementary teachers reported that some support is given to nonproficient students, while 15% reported that no support is provided.	AS, p. 5
	34. AIS classes are taught by general education teachers. Respondents noted the need for more guidance and training.	INT, p. 33
	35. 31% of secondary teacher respondents said that a reading specialist is available in school.	AS, p. 6
	36. There is no evidence of plans for guiding, implementing, or monitoring the compensatory education policy.	DR, p. 9
	37. AIS was not mentioned as part of the compensatory education program.	DR, p. 9

Key Finding 4	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	38. District board policy indicates that compensatory education addresses the needs of students who are identified through test scores on state-required tests as well as other educationally disadvantaged students.	DR, p. 8
	39. 41% of secondary teachers indicated that all or most of the academic support for nonproficient students focuses on remediation of literacy skills, compared to 70% of elementary teachers who focus on remediation.	AS, pp. 5, 7

Key Finding 5	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>Although board policy dictates equal distribution of resources and materials, these are more available at the elementary level for all students. However, there is a great need at all levels for more materials and resources for nonproficient students, SWDs, and ELLs, as well as clearer guidance on the use of materials that are available.</p> <p>(Curriculum and Instruction)</p> <p>18 red votes</p>	1. The district did not submit key documents to show sufficient curricular materials for SWDs.	DR, p. 3
	2. According to teachers, more and better materials are needed for ELLs to improve academic performance.	ELL, p. 21
	3. Areas for improvement cited by administrators include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELL-tailored curriculum and materials • Afterschool programs for ELL • ELL-related professional development for both general education and ESL 	INT, p. 8
	4. Nearly half of all administrators said they had limited budgets to attain what was necessary for teachers when it came to ELL-specific materials and resources. One administrator stated, “Teachers are willing to learn how to work with ELLs, but they suffer from a lack of materials. When I request more from the district, the usual response is, ‘Your budget is your budget.’ I will spend some, but it’s not enough.”	ELL, p. 4
	5. Teachers in two moderately rated schools said they received curriculum materials that they were expected to follow, but they described less clearly administrative support or follow through on expectations of using these materials. Two schools, both in the elementary level, received moderate ratings for curriculum alignment.	INT, p. 16
	6. Three secondary schools received low ratings for curriculum alignment. Teachers reported few available resources to support curriculum alignment and no expectations or requirements for using alignment resources.	INT, p. 16
	7. Nearly all teachers of four highly rated elementary and two secondary schools said they receive resources to support (curriculum) alignment.	INT, p. 16

Key Finding 5	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	8. Four of nine teachers in self-contained settings who were interviewed said they did not always receive the general education materials. One secondary teacher said, “I use the general education materials when I can beg, borrow, or steal them.”	SE, p. 7
	9. Teachers discussed the following issues as the most critical challenges in improving the performance of ELLs in the district: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging home and school communities and increasing parent participation in their child’s education. • Implementing grade-level and curriculum expectations for ELL students who lack a foundation in the basics. • Overcoming a lack of curricular materials to make the curriculum more accessible for ELL students. • Addressing large class sizes and high student/teacher ratios with students of diverse needs. 	ELL, pp. 21–22
	10. 75% of all teachers interviewed (ESL, general education, secondary, and elementary teachers) said that not having ELL-specific materials is a significant problem. No general education teachers have access to ELL-specific materials.	ELL, p. 14
	11. The majority of teachers indicated that there are no requirements for what materials to use.	ELL, p. 12
	12. Elementary school ESL teachers said that materials are not complete or age-appropriate. ESL teachers in secondary schools made a similar observation.	ELL, p. 14
	13. ELL resources were lacking or nonexistent in 94% of general education classrooms compared with 58% of ESL classrooms.	ELL, p. 30
	14. District board policy addresses equivalence in instructional staff and materials. Board policy states that it will ensure equivalence among district schools in teaching and administrative staff.	DR, p. 16
	15. Although 80.2% of elementary teachers agreed that they have the resources needed for their proficient students, 67.2% of secondary teachers reported that they do.	AS, p. 2,3
	16. Secondary teachers agreed or strongly agreed (67%) that they have the resources needed for their proficient students.	AS, p. 3
	17. 56.7% of secondary teachers disagreed that they have the materials for their SWDs.	AS, p. 3

Key Finding 5	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	18. Secondary teachers were evenly divided (about 48% in each case) about whether they have or do not have the needed resources for their nonproficient students.	AS, p. 3
	19. 54.5% of secondary teachers disagreed that they have the needed materials for ELL students, compared to 28.8% who reported that they do have needed materials.	AS, p. 3
	20. A majority of elementary teachers disagreed that they have the needed materials to meet the needs of ELLs and SWDs (50.8% and 53.8% respectively).	AS, p. 2
	21. 80% of elementary school teachers agreed or strongly agreed they have the resources needed for their proficient students.	AS, p. 2
	22. Although 75% of elementary teachers reported that they have access to instructional technology, 57% of their secondary colleagues reported that they felt that way.	AS, pp. 2, 3
	23. Roughly half of elementary school teachers reported that they have the resources needed for their nonproficient students, but nearly half reported that they do not.	AS, p. 2
	24. 74.6% of elementary teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they have access to instructional technology.	AS, p. 2
	25. Many teachers described having an extensive array of materials. Some teachers at each school reported either lacking guidance on the selection of the materials with which they are provided or having to spend time finding material on their own.	INT, p. 19
	26. Materials such as dictionaries and pencil sharpeners typically were available at the elementary level, but a number of classrooms at the secondary level had only a limited supply.	OBS, p. 31
	27. Two barriers to instruction were reported by general and special education teachers: students' attitudes and lack of sufficient materials.	SE, p. 11
	28. Content experts and some teachers acknowledged that there should be more reading materials for students at the lowest levels.	INT, p. 18
	29. One elementary school and one secondary school were rated low for instructional resources. Both follow the Balanced Literacy approach. A majority of teachers reported a lack of availability, guidance, and training with respect to curriculum materials. This problem was most severe for struggling readers.	INT, p. 20

Key Finding 5	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	30. One of six elementary schools received a high rating for instructional resources. At this school, the majority of teachers reported having access to a plethora of school-provided materials. In this school, veteran teachers have more discretion than less experienced teachers in selecting materials. Administration provided more direction and support for less experienced teachers.	INT, p. 18
	31. Board policy addresses equal distribution of staff, curricular materials, and instructional supplies.	DR, p. 6
	32. Four of the six elementary schools and four secondary schools rated materials as moderate or very effective for proficient readers and minimally to moderately effective for nonproficient readers.	INT, p. 9
	33. The lowest ratings that were given to classroom observations were in the area of ELL classroom resources, such as visual aids, picture and bilingual dictionaries, and leveled texts and readers.	OBS, p. 31

Key Finding 6	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>ELLs and SWDs have low or inconsistent academic support. Several findings indicate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The district is reluctant to identify ELLs who are in need of special education services • SWDs are sometimes precluded from services. • AIS do not consistently respond to the needs of ELLs and SWDs. • Secondary teachers feel less prepared to teach SWDs and ELLs. • Elementary teachers have 	1. Administrators’ opinions differed on support services for students with interrupted formal education (SIFEs). One administrator stated that SIFEs have the same services that the other students do and that they have the ability to be part of school in many ways. Another administrator stated, “We have a separate class for them. We seek alternative placement for them, like vocational programs.”	INT, p. 6
	2. Board policy addresses the distribution of individualized education programs (IEPs) to regular education teachers and related service providers.	DR, p. 14
	3. Elementary teachers are more aware than secondary teachers of services for ELLs. Services mentioned include teaching assistants, speech and occupational therapy, social workers, and reading specialists.	ELL, p. 16
	4. Although the ELA Academy was offered to SWDs, it did not respond to their needs.	SE, p. 13
	5. SWDs were precluded by the reading specialist from receiving supplemental instruction.	SE, p. 14
	6. There are inconsistencies within the administrative team as to availability of academic support services for ELLs.	ELL, p. 5
	7. There is a lack of extra support for struggling students (ELLs and SWDs).	INT, p. 10

Key Finding 6	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>less collaborative time with ELL and SWD teachers than with grade-level colleagues.</p> <p>(Academic Intervention)</p> <p>8 red votes</p>	8. The district is reluctant to identify ELLs who may be classified for special education: “ELLs are not typically identified for having disabilities.”	ELL, p. 17
	9. There is concern about the length of time the testing (evaluation) process takes to properly distinguish between language acquisition and learning disabilities as well as about a lack of specialized staff to support their needs.	ELL, p. 6
	10. Board policy states that LEP students have equal opportunities for special education referrals.	DR, p. 9
	11. Board policy indicates that LEP students have access to appropriate instruction and support services.	DR, p. 8
	12. Areas for improvement cited by administrators include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELL-tailored curriculum and materials • Afterschool programs for ELLs • ELL-related professional development for both general education and ESL teachers 	INT, p. 8
	13. 64.2% of secondary teachers responded that they are prepared to teach students below proficiency, 52.3% are prepared to teach SWDs, and 47.8% agreed and strongly agreed that they are prepared to teach ELLs.	AS, p. 11
	14. 63% of elementary teachers reported that they collaborate with their “same grade level” colleagues, 16% collaborate with special education teachers, and 12% collaborate with ESL teachers.	AS, p. 22
	15. The documents do not address providing data to teachers regarding the placement of ELLs in general education.	DR, p. 14
	16. Teachers reported that more classroom staff support would help ELLs improve academic performance.	ELL, p. 22
	17. One respondent noted that self-contained ESL classrooms should be smaller.	INT, p. 10
18. Teachers reported that they are inadequately prepared to meet the needs of SWDs who also have limited English skills, because special education teachers were not familiar with ELLs.	SE, p. 11	

Key Finding 7	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>Students' background and culture are not taken into consideration when delivering instruction.</p> <p>(Instruction)</p> <p>7 red votes</p>	1. In more than 80% of the classrooms observed, attempts to relate the lesson to students' backgrounds were infrequent or ineffective, or no such attempts were made at all.	OBS, p. 25
	2. The instructional strategy that received the lowest rating is cultural awareness.	OBS, p. 25
	3. Students who no longer receive ESL support are not tracked by half of the district's administrators.	INT, p. 8

Key Finding 8	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>A majority of teachers reported that collaboration is useful and effective. They reported that their primary collaboration was with other colleagues. However, they expressed a need for more formal and scheduled time for collaboration. There are few formal opportunities for teachers of general education students, ELLs, and SWDs to collaborate.</p> <p>(Instruction)</p> <p>5 red votes</p>	1. Fewer than half of the teachers reported that they are sharing the professional development they are receiving with other teachers who did not attend the activity.	SEC, p. 41
	2. Teachers were unanimous in believing that collaborative planning is effective.	INT, p. 41
	3. Teachers whose classrooms have more than 50% ESL students perceive that they share ideas and materials less regularly.	SEC, p. 35
	4. In both elementary (37.9%) and secondary (41.7%) settings, an important part of instructional support is provided by colleagues (teacher choice).	AS, p. 21
	5. 61.8% of secondary teachers cited their school department chair as a major source of professional development while only 5% of elementary teachers cited their department chair as their source of professional development.	AS, pp. 13–14
	6. Effective coteaching was observed in many of the inclusive classrooms.	SE, p. 22
	7. There are no opportunities for common and meaningful collaboration between general education and ESL teachers. One exception is grade-level meetings in the elementary schools, which ESL teachers attend, but ESL teachers said the meetings are not useful.	ELL, p. 15
	8. Where common preparation exists, teachers were nearly unanimous in perceiving collaboration on planning as useful and effective and a feature of effective professional development sessions.	INT, p. 41
	9. Even though elementary teachers felt that opportunities to collaborate were frequent, 56.4% felt collaborative sessions were extremely or moderately helpful while 41% felt they were minimally helpful or not helpful at all.	AS, pp. 22, 24

Key Finding 8	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	10. 78% of elementary teachers use their ELA coach or specialist to the highest degree, while 75% of secondary teachers use their department chair for the provision of instructional support.	AS, p. 21
	11. 21.4% of secondary teachers indicated <i>not sure/not applicable</i> regarding “sufficient opportunities to collaborate.”	AS, p. 25
	12. At the secondary level, teachers in the self-contained setting were invited to department or grade-level meetings, but these meetings conflicted with the time that special education department meetings occurred.	SE, p. 23
	13. In elementary classrooms, the two teachers (the general education teacher and the special education teacher) remained with each other throughout the day and reported a stronger working relationship than did secondary levels.	SE, p. 22
	14. Teachers at all grade levels reported that they worked on a committee or task force regarding curriculum and instruction never, once, or twice a year.	SEC, p. 38
	15. 86% of secondary teachers reported that they have informal, unscheduled collaborative opportunities.	AS, p. 23
	16. Some secondary general education teachers noted that their special education teacher did not share responsibilities nor did they have sufficient knowledge or skills training in teaching reading and literacy.	SE, p. 22
	17. 40.5% of elementary teachers reported that formal opportunities to collaborate occur weekly or more often; 47.7% reported that formal opportunities to collaborate occur monthly or less often.	AS, p. 22
	18. Even though elementary teachers felt that opportunities to collaborate were frequent, 73% still felt that opportunities to collaborate were not sufficient.	AS, pp. 22, 24
	19. The topic of collaboration generated mixed responses among administrators about the effectiveness and amount of professional development available for ESL and general education teachers.	ELL, p. 6
	20. Secondary teachers were paired for a class period and often did not have the same preparation time. All secondary teachers commented that collaboration was not supported by the schools.	SE, p. 22
	21. 53.6% of secondary teachers reported that professional development helps teachers understand the needs of students.	AS, p. 20

Key Finding 8	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	22. 48% of secondary teachers reported that formal opportunities to collaborate occur weekly or more often; 45% reported that formal opportunities to collaborate occur once a month or less frequently.	AS, p. 23
	23. The collaboration that occurs between ESL and general education teachers is informal. The sessions are not part of the regular schedule.	ELL, p. 15
	24. 87% of elementary teachers reported that they have informal, unscheduled collaborative opportunities at least weekly.	AS, p. 22
	25. Elementary teachers reported that they seek instructional support first from ELA coach or specialist (78.4%), second from colleagues (37.9%), and third from principals (24.6%) or other administrators.	AS, p. 21
	26. Collaboration was referenced as formal and informal meetings or planning times. However, one third of all administrators, mostly from secondary schools, either gave inconsistent remarks regarding the frequency and nature of collaboration between ESL and general education teachers or reported that they were unable to coordinate schedules to include ESL teachers in common planning time.	ELL, p. 4
	27. 64% of secondary teachers perceived that collaborative sessions are moderately to extremely helpful.	AS, p. 24
	28. 42% of elementary special education teachers and 0% of secondary special education teachers reported that they have scheduled opportunities to collaborate with other teachers.	SE, p. 23
	29. High school teachers reported observing demonstration of teaching techniques more frequently than K–8 teachers.	SEC, p. 38
	30. Teachers in special education settings reported no collaboration with ESL teachers, even when they shared students.	SE, p. 23
	31. 37.9% of elementary school respondents and 41.7% of secondary school respondents reported that an important part of instructional support is provided by their colleagues.	AS, p. 21
	32. Teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels felt there was general support for instruction and learning in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with other teachers to accomplish objectives • Being trusted to make decisions about instruction and learning • Feeling that the school is a safe place for faculty and students • Feeling supported by the school administration 	AS, pp. 28–30

Key Finding 8	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	33. 48.9% of elementary teachers are prepared to teach ELA to ELLs in the classroom, and 59.4% are prepared to teach ELA to SWDs in the classroom.	AS, p. 11
	34. 68.7% of elementary teachers agreed that they are prepared to teach ELA to students who are far below proficiency in the classroom, while 27.5% indicated that they are not prepared to teach nonproficient students.	AS, p. 11
	35. There are no opportunities for common and meaningful collaboration between general education and ESL teachers. One exception is between self-contained ESL and elementary general education teachers during grade-level meetings, but ESL teachers said that these meetings are not useful.	ELL, p. 15
	36. 78% of elementary teachers reported that they use their ELA coach or specialist to the highest degree, while 75% of secondary teachers reported that they use their department chair for the provision of instructional support.	AS, p. 21
	37. The only collaboration that occurs between ESL and general education teachers is informal; the sessions are not part of their regular schedule.	ELL, p. 15

Key Finding 9	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>The district does not have a strong, clear expectation for data use (formative and summative), how data are to be accessed (via portal and other tools), or how data use is monitored. This situation affects several aspects of how student achievement data are used to facilitate instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations for data use vary among schools and grade levels. 	1. In one secondary-level school rated low for data use, teachers reported receiving no expectations for and little training on data use and they do not use formal data effectively.	INT, p. 24
	2. There is an apparent lack of coherence in data usage in the district in the secondary level.	INT, p. 8
	3. The same assessment tools are being utilized across a specific level (i.e., elementary or secondary) to determine individual student performance and growth.	INT, p. 7
	4. Secondary teachers use the data they receive for placement, not instruction.	ELL, p. 19
	5. Teachers in Grades 9–12 reported less professional development time on interpreting assessment data than their counterparts in Grades K–8.	SEC, p. 43
	6. 70% of elementary teachers attended training on using assessment data to inform instruction, compared to 24% of secondary teachers.	ELL, p. 19
	7. In the schools that received high ratings for data use (all elementary schools), teachers receive training on accessing and using data.	INT, p. 23

Key Finding 9	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in the use and interpretation of data varies among schools and grade levels. • Use of data to drive instruction varies with expectations and training. <p>(Data)</p> <p>5 red votes</p>	8. In the schools that received high ratings in data use (all elementary schools), administrators communicate clear expectations for data use and foster regular data discussions among teams.	INT, p. 23
	9. In the schools that received high ratings for data use (all elementary schools), teachers reported consistent use of data for different instructional purposes.	INT, p. 23
	10. Teachers in elementary schools use data for a variety of purposes: diagnosing, determining reading levels and areas of weakness, planning minilessons, and differentiating instruction.	ELL, p. 20
	11. Classroom walk-throughs and observations are used by the majority of administrators, while data review of test results is the primary method of assessment used to measure student performance.	INT, p. 7
	12. Administrators believe that teachers should be using the portal to guide their instruction. General education teachers believe that the school expected them to use the portal.	SE, p. 19
	13. Teachers in Grades K–8 reported that they review student work or score assessments more frequently than high school teachers.	SEC, p. 39
	14. The district is working toward ensuring that student achievement data are utilized to inform instruction.	DR, p. 14
	15. It is not clear how the data from the portal are used to inform instruction.	DR, p. 14
	16. No district documentation shows that the district adjusts curricular programming based on the monitoring of student progress.	DR, p. 14
	17. The district did not address providing professional development to administrators and teachers in the analysis and use of student achievement data.	DR, p. 14
	18. Administrators across the district used data to plan professional development and monitor overall student progress quarterly.	SE, p. 21
	19. In the secondary schools that received moderate ratings, there were inconsistent communications and expectations concerning data use.	INT, p. 24
20. The six elementary schools all received high ratings for data use. These schools were consistent in the data types and frequency of formal assessments. Every elementary school administered several types of ELA assessments and provided the data to their teachers.	INT, p. 21	

Key Finding 9	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	21. It is not clear which data can be accessed through the portal and whether the data are formative or summative.	DR, p. 14
	22. Board policy designates the principal as responsible for managing the implementation of an aligned curriculum at the building level; managing how it is taught through classroom activities, assessment data, and teacher observation; and providing opportunities for teachers to discuss and share ideas and strategies.	DR, p. 6
	23. No submitted documents illustrate how policy ensures consistent delivery of ELA curriculum within individual schools. Submitted documents do not provide evidence of implementing or monitoring policy.	DR, p. 6
	24. There is no evidence of how to apply literacy strategies or how to use formative or summative assessments.	CA, p. 62
	25. For Grade 2, there needs to be more evidence of formative and summative assessments and tools provided and linked to student outcomes and expectations, topics and unit, and curricular material.	CA, p. 37
	26. According to the Grade 4 heat map, the district does not show clarity of evidence for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior knowledge • Reading and writing as reciprocal processes • Meaning construction versus process critical thinking • Formative assessment 	CA, p. 42
	27. In the Grade 8 curriculum map, there is no evidence of how formative and summative assessments and tools will be used to assess Grade 8 students' learning of specific content and their progress regarding specific learning expectations.	CA, p. 61
	28. For Grade 6, there needs to be more evidence of formative and summative assessment tools and linking them to student outcomes and expectations, topics and unit, and curricular material.	CA, p. 42
	29. 83% of elementary teachers agreed or strongly agreed that formative assessment data are available in a timely manner.	AS, p. 2
	30. For Grade 4, there needs to be more evidence of formative and summative assessments and tools and linking them to student outcomes and expectations, topics and unit, and curricular material.	CA, p. 42

Key Finding 9	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	31. The Literacy Curriculum Guide states that assessment data should be based to inform instructional decisions and also lists possible classroom assessments, including running records, anecdotal records, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and rubrics. But there is no evidence on how the Literacy Curriculum Guide is used or implemented to ensure that the data are used.	DR, p. 14

Key Finding 10	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>Observations showed that the following instructional strategies were rarely used in the elementary settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project-based learning • Performance assessment strategies • Independent inquiry/research • Hands-on learning • Use of technology <p>Observations showed that the following instructional strategies were rarely used in the secondary settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher-level questioning • Systematic individualized instruction • Independent inquiry/research • Student assessment activities • Student discussion 	1. In the majority of classrooms observed, large-group instruction was used for half or more of the class period.	SE, p. 10
	2. Student assessment activities were never or rarely observed in the secondary schools.	OBS, pp. 8–9
	3. No prevalent activities with assessment were observed at the secondary level.	OBS, p. 8
	4. Integration of subject areas was rarely or not observed 100% of the time.	OBS, p. 6
	5. Academic focus and student engagement were observed frequently or extensively at a high level.	OBS, p. 7
	6. The most prevalent practice observed in district schools was higher-level questioning strategies (17.6%).	OBS, p. 5
	7. The most prevalent practices observed in district schools show ability grouping at 17.6%.	OBS, p. 5
	8. Multiage/multigrade grouping was rarely or not observed 100% of the time in elementary schools.	OBS, p. 6
	9. Project-based learning was rarely or not observed 100% of the time in elementary schools.	OBS, p. 6
	10. Performance assessment strategies was rarely or not observed 100% of the time in elementary schools.	OBS, p. 6
	11. Independent inquiry/research was rarely or not observed 94.2% of the time in elementary schools.	OBS, p. 6

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained reading (Instruction) 4 red votes	12. Experiential hands-on learning was rarely or not observed 100% of the time in elementary schools.	OBS, p. 6
	13. There was great variation in the quality of the instruction at the secondary level in general and special education classes.	SE, p. 8
	14. There is a high level of direct instruction in the secondary schools.	OBS, p. 8

Key Finding 11	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
There was more use of technology at the elementary level than at the secondary level. No assistive devices were observed. There were limited use of interactive white boards and other technology as instructional tools. (Instruction) 1 red vote	1. Technology and computer resources generally were available at the elementary level. At the secondary level, especially in secondary ESL classrooms, technological resources were limited, out-of-date, or nonfunctional.	OBS, p. 31
	2. General education teachers receive limited support in terms of materials, collaboration, or professional development to inform their instruction for ELLs.	INT, p. 8
	3. In many classrooms, no ELL resources were available for implementing the curriculum. In 74% of classrooms, ELL resources were limited.	OBS, p. 29
	4. It is not evident who has been provided with the draft materials pertaining to the delivery of the curriculum across schools and how these materials are being used to ensure consistent delivery of curriculum.	DR, p. 7
	5. No assistive technology devices were evident during observations.	SE, p. 8
	6. The district did not provide documents to support how equal distribution of ELA curricular materials impacts delivery of curriculum.	DR, p. 6
	7. Teachers reported that secondary classrooms had fewer instructional resources, such as leveled materials, than elementary classrooms.	SE, p. 8
	8. Observational data showed that students and teachers had the materials needed for the lessons (e.g., textbooks, worksheets, pencils).	SE, p. 8
	9. Leveled readers were the most frequently requested instructional resource by elementary and secondary schools and by cross-program type.	ELL, p. 14
	10. In secondary schools, there is low use of computers for instructional delivery and as a learning tool or resource.	OBS, pp. 8–9
	11. Observations indicated that teachers used interactive white boards as overhead projectors and did not take advantage of the multimedia features of this technology.	SE, p. 8

Key Finding 11	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	12. Technology use is reported as frequently or extensively observed in 35.3% of the elementary schools.	OBS, p. 5
	13. The level of teachers who feel that they have adequate curriculum material drops as the number of ESL students increases.	SEC, p. 36
	14. Teachers at all levels report that 13% of instructional time is spent on the use of computers or other technology to learn, practice, or explore language arts content.	SEC, p. 25
	15. Classes with 20% of ELL students spend less than 10% of instructional time on the use of computers or other technology to learn, practice, or explore language arts content.	SEC, p. 30

Key Finding 12	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>Data indicate that secondary teachers provide instruction at a lower cognitive level than prescribed by NYSED standards.</p> <p>Higher-level questioning and student discussions were rarely observed in secondary classrooms.</p> <p>(Instruction)</p> <p>1 red vote</p>	1. Grade 10 teachers reported instruction in most content areas to be at lower cognitive levels to those prescribed by state standards, especially for comprehension, critical reasoning, writing, and speaking.	SEC, p. 12
	2. Grade 7 teachers reported instruction in speaking or presenting at lower cognitive levels (<i>perform procedures, explain</i>) than prescribed by state standards (<i>analyze and investigate</i>).	SEC, p. 16
	3. A low percentage of higher-level questioning was observed in secondary classrooms.	OBS, p. 8
	4. The following instructional practices were rarely or never observed at the secondary level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student discussion • Systematic individual instruction • Sustained reading • Independent inquiry/research 	OBS, p. 9
	5. Students do not do self-assessment; therefore, they will not learn from their work or mistakes.	OBS, p. 6
	6. Regarding comprehension, the district has different levels of cognitive demand than the NYSED standards in Grades 2–6.	SEC, pp. 8–10
	7. Regarding vocabulary, the district has different levels of cognitive demand than the NYSED standards in Grades 2, 4, and 5.	SEC, pp. 8–15
	8. Regarding speaking, the district has different levels of cognitive demand than the NYSED standards for all grades except Grade 5.	SEC, p. 15

Key Finding 12	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	9. Regarding writing, the district has different levels of cognitive demand than the NYSED standards for Grades 4 and 5.	SEC, pp. 9, 15
	10. Regarding listening and viewing, the district has different levels of cognitive demand for Grades 3 and 6 as compared to NYSED standards.	SEC, pp. 10, 14
	11. Regarding phonemic awareness, the district has different levels of cognitive demand than the NYSED standards for Grade 2.	SEC, p. 8

Key Finding 13	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>The submitted documents do not provide a full picture of the policy, plans, or practices of the district related to professional development</p> <p>(Professional Development/ Staffing)</p> <p>No votes</p>	1. The district did not provide documents indicating that the district measures the impact of ELA professional development or classroom instruction.	DR, p. 11
	2. No documents addressed district participations of staff in professional development opportunities.	DR, p. 11
	3. Little documentation was provided regarding how staff are supported or the roles of staff within the district.	DR, p. 17
	4. No document addressed the district’s ELA professional development opportunities in a variety of setting and venues.	DR, p. 11
	5. No documentation was submitted that showed a plan for monitoring whether special education teachers were highly qualified.	SE, p. 22
	6. No documents were provided that indicate how the district facilitates the retention of experienced teachers.	DR, p. 16
	7. No documents were provided that explain how the district assesses the performance of principals across the district, relative to the district’s mission.	DR, p. 16
	8. No documents were provided by the district that clearly define expectations for leadership roles at all levels.	DR, p. 16
	9. The district did not provide documents explaining how the district facilitates the retention of experienced administrators (including school principals).	DR, p. 16
	10. The district did not supply documents explaining how the district actively identifies, develops, and supports content coaches and instructional leaders.	DR, p. 16
	11. District policy and plans that guide staffing practices are not addressed in the documents. Evidence of implementing or monitoring staffing practices is not addressed.	DR, p. 17

Key Finding 13	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	12. No documents were provided that indicate how or whether the district offers support for new principals.	DR, p. 16
	13. The district did not provide documents indicating that the district provides professional development to principals in the use of instructional strategies to support delivery of ELA curriculum.	DR, p. 11
	14. The district did not provide documents indicating that the district provides professional development to principals regarding ELA curriculum, content, and related expectations for student learning.	DR, p. 11

Key Finding 14	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>Students are either unwilling or unable to take advantage of nonmandated support, such as afterschool or weekend sessions, due in part to transportation issues.</p> <p>(Academic Intervention)</p> <p>No votes</p>	1. Services for ELLs outside of the regular school day are rarely provided. When they are, lack of transportation is a substantial barrier to participation.	ELL, p. 16
	2. The amount of academic support services is influenced by transportation and staffing.	ELL, p. 5
	3. The lack of transportation services may limit student participation in intervention services programs, especially for SWDs because some were placed outside their neighborhood school.	SE, p. 13
	4. 18.7% of elementary teachers indicated that their nonproficient students participate in programs outside of the regular school day.	AS, p. 8
	5. 30.5% of elementary teachers indicated that Saturday programs are available to provide academic support for nonproficient students.	AS, p. 4
	6. Respondents indicated that students are either unwilling or unable to take advantage of nonmandated support such as afterschool or weekend sessions.	INT, p. 33
	7. Services for ELLs outside of the regular school day are rarely provided. When they are, lack of transportation is a substantial barrier to participation.	ELL, p. 16
	8. The amount of academic support services is influenced by transportation and staffing.	ELL, p. 5
	9. Secondary teachers reported that student participation in programs outside the school day is not consistent for a majority of the time.	AS, p. 10

Key Finding 15	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
Mainstream classrooms with ELLs devoted a greater percentage of time to test preparation, which diminishes time for other instructional activities. (Instruction) No votes	1. Teachers whose classrooms consist of 10% to 50% ESL student disagreed with the statement “Students learn English in classes with similar abilities.”	SEC, p. 34
	2. The use of graphic organizers decreases with the presence of more than 10% ESL students.	SEC, p. 33
	3. All teachers reported that classes with 10% to 50% LEP students spend a higher percentage of time on practicing test-taking strategies than those whose classrooms are comprised of more than 50% or less than 10% of ELLs.	SEC, p. 30
	4. All teachers reported that as the percentage of LEP students decreases, the percentage of time spent on maintaining and reflecting on a portfolio increases.	SEC, p. 29
	5. All teachers reported that classes with fewer than 10% of ELLs increases the percentage time spent on test-taking strategies.	SEC, p. 30
	6. The percentage of time spent learning how to prepare students for state assessments drops as the students’ grade levels increase.	SEC, p. 43

Positive Key Findings

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

Positive Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
The data portal is a powerful tool that is accessible to all administrators and teachers. The use of portal is inconsistent throughout the district. ELL teachers, special education teachers, and secondary	1. Special education teachers did not report using the data from the portal as often as general education teachers because the data did not measure their students’ progress.	SE, pp. 19–20
	2. A variety of achievement data were available on the district portal to administrators, teachers, and school psychologists.	SE, p. 21
	3. Fewer than one quarter of teachers interviewed for the English Language Learner Report said that they use the data portal.	ELL, pp. 19–20
	4. One third of administrators reported that teachers have access to the instructional information portal located at the district office; however, not all teachers are familiar with how to use the system, and some choose not to use it.	ELL, p. 7

Positive Key Finding 1	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
teachers use the portal less frequently than general education teachers. (Data) 25 green votes	5. 83% of elementary teachers agreed that data from formative assessments are available in a timely manner, while 58.2% of secondary teachers agreed that they have such data.	AS, pp. 2, 3
	6. Nearly all the general education teachers reported that they used the data on the portal on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis, that they were comfortable or very comfortable using it, and that they found the information useful.	SE, p. 19
	7. The New York State English as a Second Language Test (NYSESLAT) results are not available to teachers: “I’ve never seen it or the results,” a teacher said.	ELL, p. 19
	8. The district has implemented the instructional information portal for teachers to access student information.	DR, p. 14

Positive Key Finding 2	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
The New Teacher Support Program, which is supported by the East Ramapo Teachers’ Center, offers mentoring and workshops for new teachers. The district also has compiled a <i>New Teacher Handbook</i> that addresses district policies and procedures. However, there is an expressed need for more coordination between the district and the Teachers’ Center for new teachers. (Staffing) 16 green votes	1. New elementary teachers felt they were getting support that was “very helpful” from veteran teachers (53%), school administrators (31%), and assigned mentors (28%).	AS, p. 26
	2. The district provides both mentor support and professional development for teachers who are new to the profession and to the district.	DR, p. 16
	3. Criteria for evaluating teacher performance are not addressed.	DR, p. 17
	4. It is unclear what policy or plans guide the implementation of support for new teachers.	DR, p. 16
	5. The East Ramapo Teachers’ Center operates a New Teacher Support Program that provides new teachers with a series of workshops and pairs them with mentors.	INT, p. 12
	6. Administrators reported lukewarm feelings concerning the mentoring program, primarily because they were not involved.	SE, p. 23
	7. New secondary teachers reported that the help and support they receive comes mostly from veteran teachers who provide informal support (62.1%) and from lead teachers or department chairs (37.9%).	AS, p. 27
	8. A mentor program was provided by the district for new staff members who found it helpful.	SE, p. 24
	9. The district has compiled a <i>New Teacher Handbook</i> that covers many commonly asked questions and goes over district policies and procedures.	DR, p. 16

Positive Key Finding 2	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
	10. Administrators spoke about the support that schools provide to new teachers in terms of workshops and institutes (e.g., a mentoring program offered through the Teachers' Centers, book clubs, collaboration with ESL teachers, professional development sessions, and ongoing meetings to discuss teacher concerns).	ELL, p. 8

Positive Key Finding 3	Supporting Findings	Source/Page
<p>All buildings are clean, are not crowded, and facilitate learning. The environment is respectful for both teachers and students and teachers.</p> <p>(Instruction)</p> <p>12 green votes</p>	1. The majority of classrooms at all levels were characterized by respectful teacher–student interactions.	ELL, p. 31
	2. Effective instructional delivery skills were observed across elementary general and special education classes.	SE, p. 8
	3. Elementary and secondary teachers have positive perceptions of the three building issues. They agreed or strongly agreed that their building is not crowded (elementary: 77%, secondary: 78%); their building is well maintained (elementary: 85%, secondary: 66%); and their class sizes are appropriate (elementary: 77%, secondary: 63%).	AS, pp. 29–30
	4. The amount and quality of classroom space and basic facilities (e.g., desks, chairs, chalkboards) was observed to be adequate in facilitating learning for ELLs.	ELL, p. 31

Miscellaneous Findings

These findings were identified from the data sets by co-interpretation participants but ultimately were not included in the development of the key findings. Findings are considered outliers if the observation seemed outside the intended focus of the audit.

Instruction Outliers

Miscellaneous Findings	Source/Page
1. Elementary and secondary teachers seemed to agree and disagree in about equal numbers in terms of general support for instruction in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The atmosphere of trust and respect within the school The faculty and staff being recognized for a job well done 	AS, pp. 28–30
2. The majority of instructional time was spent in a whole-class format as opposed to small-group or one-on-one instruction.	OBS, p. 26
3. Teachers at all levels reported that the percentage of time engaged in the writing process decreases as the grade level increases.	SEC, p. 24

Miscellaneous Findings	Source/Page
4. All teachers reported that student time engaged in journal or free expressive writing decreases as the grade increases.	SEC, p. 28
5. As the percentage of ESL students increases, the percentage of journal or free writing decreases.	SEC, p. 33
6. For the question of “all students can learn challenging content,” teachers agreed at a higher level if they have 10% to 50% ESL students in their classrooms, while classes with more than 50% ESL students in their classrooms agreed at the lowest level.	SEC, p. 34
7. Teachers at all levels reported that 4% of instructional time is spent on engaging or participating in a language arts activity outside the classroom.	SEC, p. 25
8. All teachers reported that the percentage of time spent listening to outside speakers in class decreases as the grade increases.	SEC, p. 27
9. Checking of homework or grade assessments decreases in classrooms with more than 10% ESL students.	SEC, p. 33
10. Teachers at all levels reported that 10% of ELA and reading instructional time is spent on collecting, summarizing, and/or analyzing information from multiple sources.	SEC, p. 24
11. In a self-contained classroom, listening was observed 44.4% of the time compared to 0% for sustained reading and 11% for sustained writing.	SE, p. 11
12. Parent and community involvement in learning activities was not observed 100% of the time.	OBS, p. 6
13. Student engagement was recorded as high 50% of the time, though teachers were academically focused extensively or frequently 100% of the time in secondary schools.	OBS, p. 10
14. 69.7% of elementary teachers focus most or all of their academic support for nonproficient students on the remediation of literacy skills.	AS, p. 5

Curriculum Outliers

Miscellaneous Findings	Source/Page
1. ELLs and SWDs are not making adequate yearly progress in the district.	INT, p. 10
2. Administrators clearly state their expectation for curriculum alignment in using available resources and follow through on their expectations by conducting classroom observations and reviewing lesson plans.	INT, p. 15
3. The main provider of academic support for nonproficient secondary students is the classroom teacher, according to 97% of responses.	AS, p. 6
4. Self-contained ESL elementary classrooms ranged from 13 to 26 students. ESL resource room teachers work with 40 to 54 students in elementary schools and 7 to 60 students in secondary schools.	ELL, p. 11

Miscellaneous Findings	Source/Page
5. The district has a lower level of emphasis on listening and viewing than required by state standards on the elementary level.	SEC, pp. 8–22
6. The district has a lower level of emphasis on speaking and presentation than required by the state standards.	SEC, pp. 8–22
7. The district places more emphasis on phonics in Grades 4 and 5 than required by state standards.	SEC, pp. 4–5
8. The district has a higher emphasis on the writing process than required by the state in Grades 4 and 5.	SEC, pp. 8–22
9. As grade levels progress, so does the emphasis on vocabulary instruction (the district’s emphasis in Grade 1 is lower than the state; emphasis in Grade 3 is the same; and emphasis in Grades 4–12 is higher).	SEC, pp. 8–22
10. Teachers in both the elementary and secondary levels felt by margins of 57.4% and 53.6% that they do not have a voice in important school decisions.	AS, pp. 28, 30
11. K–4 teachers reported more instances of developing curriculum than their Grades 5–12 counterparts.	SEC, p. 39
12. The district places the same emphasis on comprehension as required by NYSED for Grades 3, 4, and 6.	SEC, pp. 17–19
13. The district places more emphasis on phonemic awareness in Grades 2–4 than required by state standards.	SEC, pp. 8–9

Data Outliers

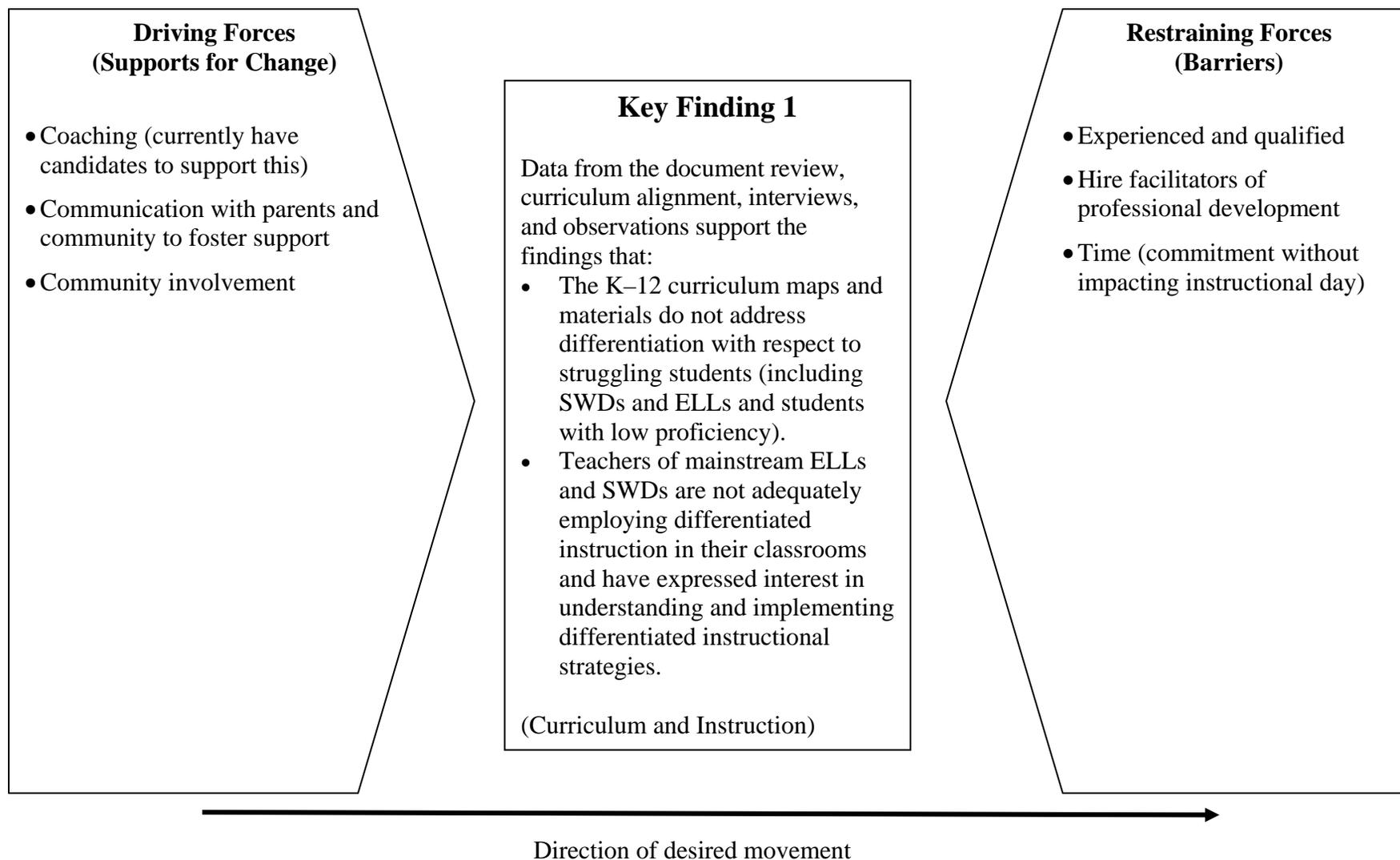
Miscellaneous Findings	Source/Page
1. There was a discrepancy regarding newly hired teachers working with ELLs: Most administrators said teachers must be certified, while a few said it was not the case and it could vary.	ELL, p. 8
2. 14% of staff responding to the survey are currently certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.	AS, p. 8
3. Administrators reported that there was no difficulty recruiting fully certified special education teachers.	SE, p. 21
4. Methods of informal assessments vary widely across school levels and programs.	ELL, p. 20
5. Principals make classroom observations of teachers.	DR, p. 17
6. The percentage of teachers who studied how children learn particular topics decreases as the students’ grade level increases.	SEC, p. 42
7. The barriers reported by general education and special education teachers were timeliness of the data and time to access and use the data.	SE, p. 20
8. Of all schools where interviews were conducted, only one school did not have a content expert providing instructional support.	INT, pp. 34, 40
9. In the area of content experts, the four schools that rated it high stated that content experts were highly visible and	INT, pp. 35–38

Miscellaneous Findings	Source/Page
active in their classrooms. The six schools with moderate ratings varied greatly in the degree of availability of the content expert and were inconsistent in their description of availability.	
10. The number of ELLs per school ranged between 22 and 143 students.	INT, p. 3
11. Students represent up to 28 different countries of origin.	ELL, p. 3
12. The district has a computer program by which special education professionals can access SWD data.	DR, p. 14
13. Administrators noted that they reach out to parents through written communication in various languages, parent activities, and events.	ELL, p. 8

Academic Intervention Outliers

Miscellaneous Findings	Source/Page
1. High school teachers reported that absenteeism and mobility rate are problems more frequently with teachers of elementary and middle school classes.	SEC, p. 36
2. Teachers with more than 50% ELLs in their classes indicated that absenteeism and mobility rate are problems to a greater degree than reported by teachers with fewer than 50% ELLs.	SEC, p. 36
3. 80% of elementary teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they have the resources needed for their proficient students.	AS, p. 2
4. Administrators seemed to be aware of the process for student enrollment for academic support services but were less informed about the number of ELLs participating in programs.	ELL, p. 5
5. The board policy adopted in December 2004 addresses an alternative education program that focuses on students who need various approaches to learning.	DR, p. 8
6. 67% of secondary teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they have the resources needed for proficient students.	AS, p. 3
7. Although 75% of elementary teachers reported that they feel they have access to instructional technology, only 57% of their secondary colleagues felt that way.	AS, pp. 2, 3
8. Scheduling problems exist for Grades 10 and 11 for students to receive enrichment classes.	INT, p. 31
9. 69.7% of elementary teachers focus most or all of their academic support for nonproficient students on the remediation of literacy skills.	AS, p. 5
10. 41% of secondary teachers indicated that all or most of the academic support for nonproficient students focus on remediation of literacy skills, compared to 70% of elementary teachers who focus on remediation.	AS, pp. 5, 7
11. The most prevalent practice observed in district schools shows teacher direct instruction at 94.2%.	OBS, p. 5

Appendix B. Force-Field Analysis



**Driving Forces
(Supports for Change)**

- Instructional leadership to coach and support
- Commitment and follow through
- Build staff capacity regarding materials and supplies
- Sustainability
- Staff support and/or participation (buy-in)
- Parent involvement and support
- Continuation of professional development time already built in
- Needs-based teacher survey
- Following curriculum guide
- Lobbying the board for meaningful professional development (teachers and principals)
- Cultural awareness and data use in instruction
- Better communication between all (i.e., school, parents, and media), via a variety of media
- Community involvement

Key Finding 2

Teachers expressed the need that professional development should be needs based and streamlined, targeting relevant topics, sustained over time, within focused consistency. More specifically:

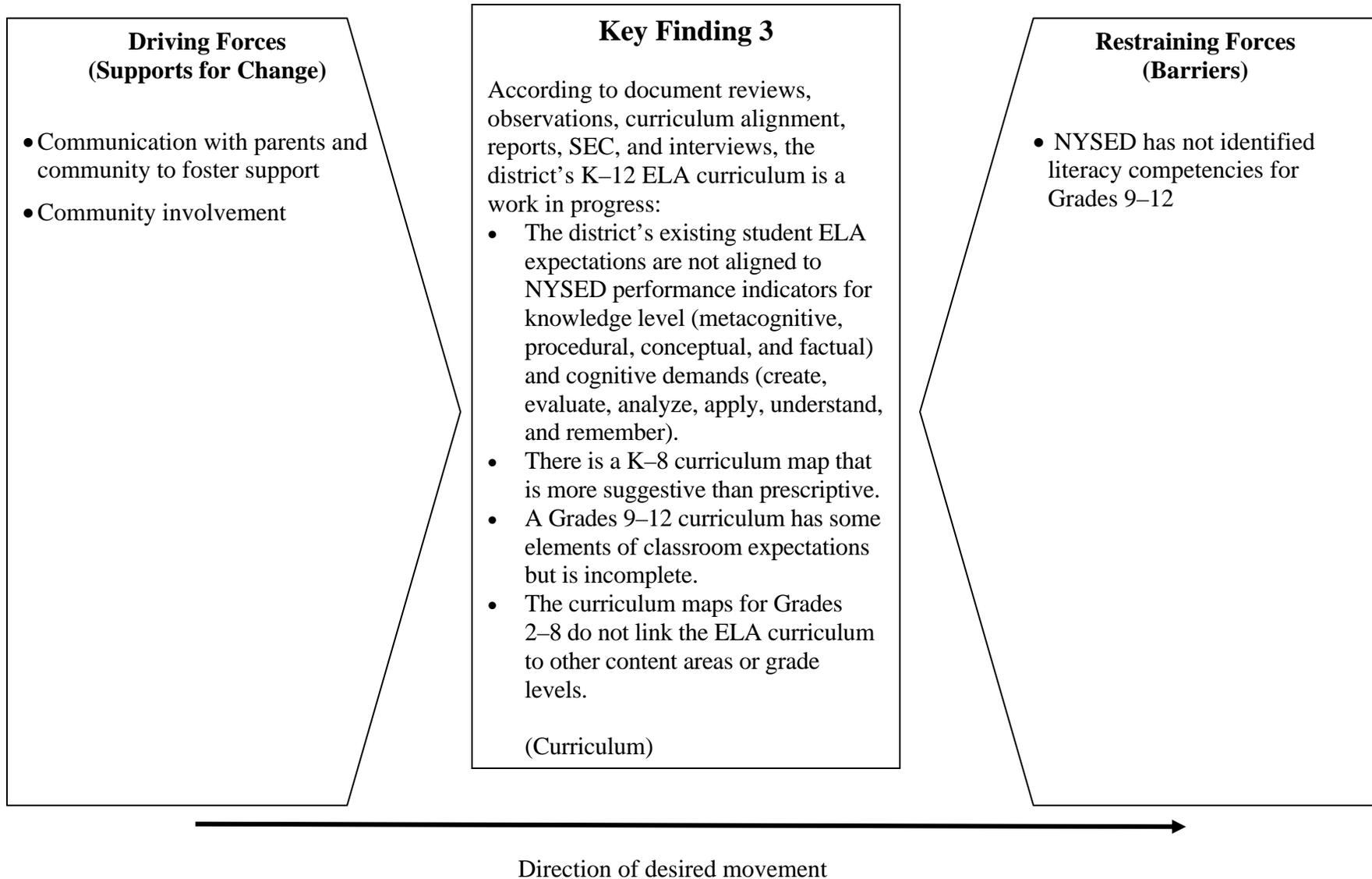
- General education and ELL teachers requested professional development in strategies that deal with implementing and fostering ELL teaching.
- Special and general education, teachers requested professional development in strategies that deal with implementing and fostering inclusion.
- Secondary teachers requested more professional development in ELA.
- Elementary and secondary teachers expressed a need to acquire professional development related to ELLs.

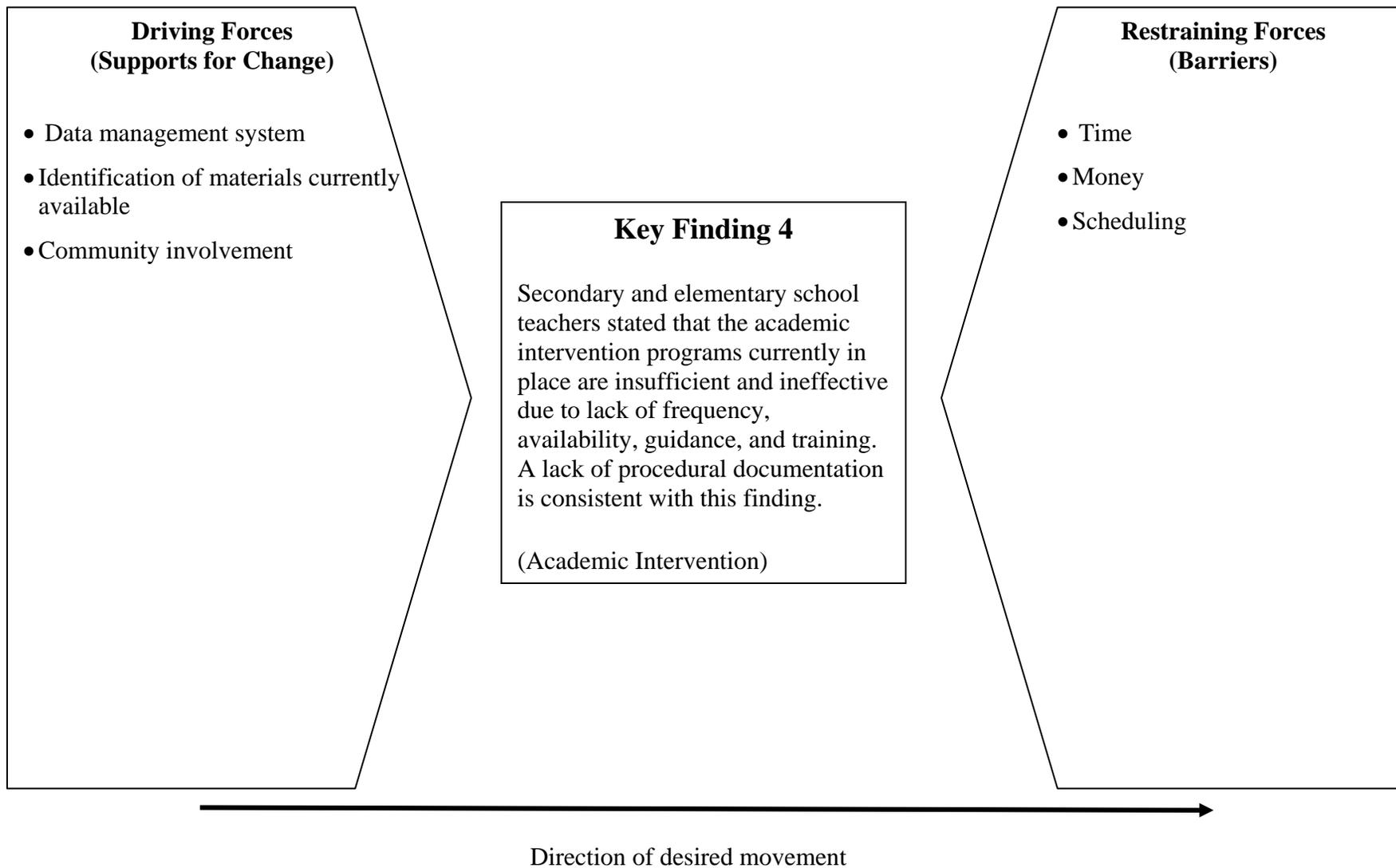
(Professional Development)

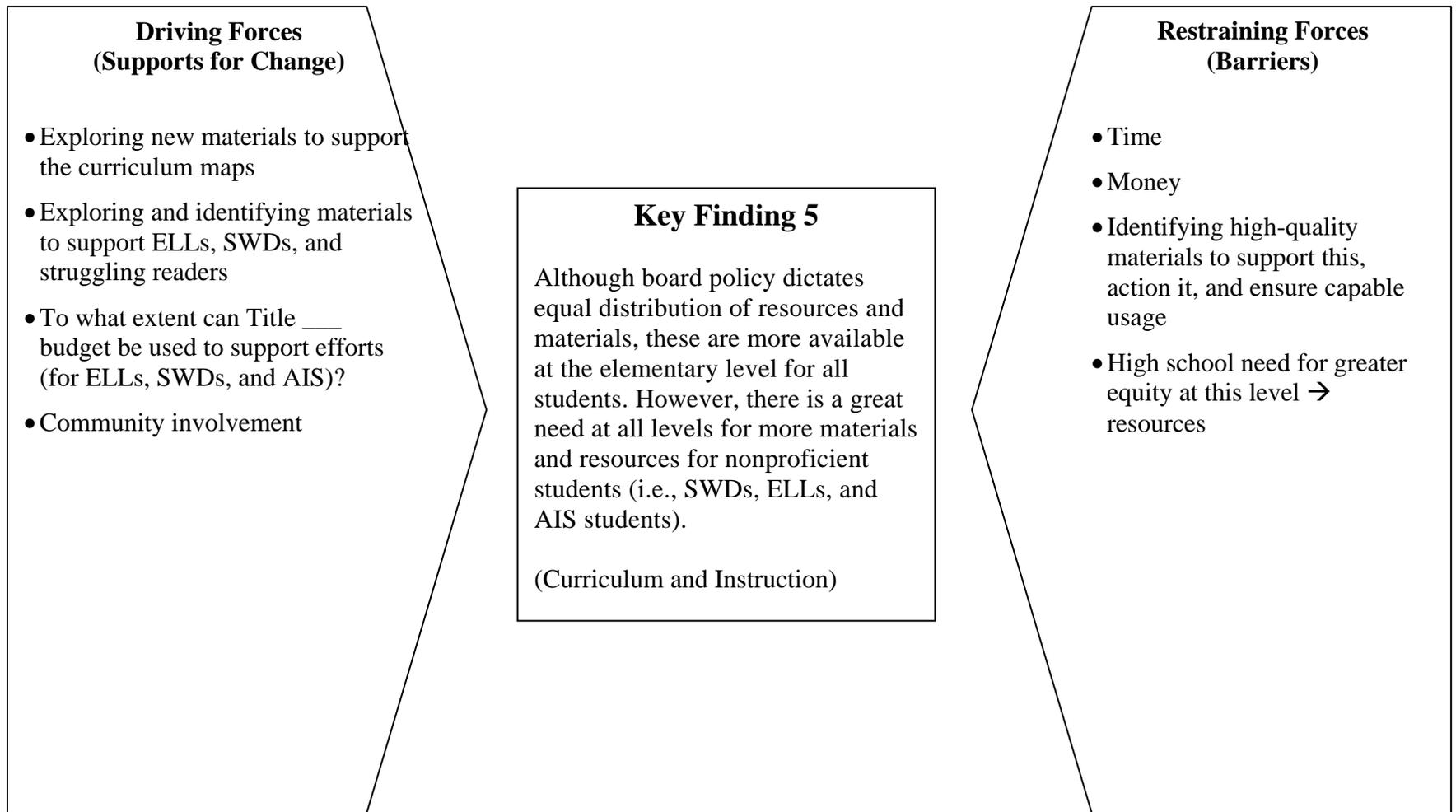
**Restraining Forces
(Barriers)**

- Budget
- Commitment and follow-through
- Needs to be offered in a timely manner
- Lack of parental support and awareness
- Money available for outside professional development
- Need for training on culturally relevant pedagogy

Direction of desired movement







Direction of desired movement