

Hempstead Union Free School District: Final Report

June 2006



1120 East Diehl Road, Suite 200
Naperville, IL 60563-1486
800-356-2735 • 630-649-6500
www.learningpt.org

Copyright © 2006 Learning Point Associates. All rights reserved.

This work was originally produced in whole or in part by Learning Point Associates with funds from the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The content does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of NYSED, nor does mention or visual representation of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement.

Learning Point Associates is a trademark of Learning Point Associates.

1181_03/06

Contents

	Page
Introduction.....	1
District Background.....	2
Overview.....	2
Student Academic Performance.....	2
English Language Arts and Mathematics District Strategies and Practices	3
District Resources	4
Theory of Action.....	5
Guiding Questions for the Audit.....	6
Audit Process Overview	7
Phase 1: Covisioning	7
Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis	7
Phase 3: Cointerpretation of Findings.....	10
Phase 4: Action Planning	11
Key Findings and Problem Statements	13
Problem Statement 1	13
Problem Statement 2	15
Problem Statement 3	18
Problem Statement 4	21
Problem Statement 5	23
Additional Auditor’s Findings	26
Recommendations for Action Planning	28
Recommendation 1	28
Recommendation 2	31
Recommendation 3	32
Recommendation 4	37
 Appendices	
Appendix A: Data Maps	38
Appendix B: Action Planning.....	46

Introduction

This interim report is the result of an audit of the written, taught, and tested curricula of the Hempstead Union Free School District by Learning Point Associates. In mid-2005, eight 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 English language arts curriculum for all students, including students with disabilities and English as a second language (ESL) students. The audit examined curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, management, and compliance through multiple lenses of data collection and analysis. These findings acted as a starting point to facilitate conversations in the district to identify areas for improvement, probable causes, and ways to generate plans for improvement.

This report contains an outline of the process, data, and methods used as well as the key findings from the data collection and the associated problem statements generated through the cointerpretation process for Hempstead Union Free District Schools.

Finally, a Recommendations for Action Planning section provides advice for the district in planning actions for each critical problem area. Learning Point Associates provides recommendations as well as more specific advice to consider in the action-planning process. While the recommendations may be considered binding, the specific advice under each area should not be considered binding. Through the remaining cointerpretation and action-planning steps, the specific steps for action will be outlined with the district and upon completion and approval by State Education will be considered a binding plan.

District Background

Overview

Hempstead is a suburban school district located in Nassau County, one of two counties in Long Island, New York. The current population is approximately 755,924 with a year 2000 median household income of \$69,083. It currently serves approximately 6,675 students in 10 schools: one prekindergarten, two kindergartens, five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The district student body is largely minority (54 percent black and 46 percent Hispanic) with 75 percent of students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch. About 12 percent of students are disabled and 22 percent are English language learners (ELLs). Hempstead describes its mission: “to ensure that students achieve personal growth and academic success and become productive citizens in a global society by engaging students, staff, family, and community in a comprehensive, challenging curriculum and effective instructional program which responds to each student’s needs and aspirations in a safe and nurturing environment.” Toward this goal, two elementary schools were honored by the U.S. Department of Education as Blue Ribbon Schools in 2003 and 2004. Conversely, the Hempstead High School is a School Under Registration Review and the Alverta B. Gray Schultz Middle School has been identified as a “School In Need of Improvement, Year 2”.¹

Student Academic Performance

On October 14, 2005, New York designated the accountability status of Hempstead as a district “In Need of Improvement, Year 4” for English language arts. Overall, Hempstead fourth-grade 2003–04 students made annual measurable objective (AMO)/adequate yearly progress (AYP) for English language arts and mathematics; however, the students with disabilities subgroup did not make AMO/AYP for English language arts. Overall, eighth-grade 2003–04 students made AMO/AYP for English language arts and mathematics; however, the economically disadvantaged student subgroup did not make AMO/AYP for English language arts. Overall, 12th-grade 2003–04 students made AMO/AYP for English language arts; however the students with disabilities, Hispanic, limited English proficient (LEP), and economically disadvantaged student subgroups did not. Overall, 12th-grade 2003–04 students did not make made AMO/AYP for mathematics, including the subgroups: students with disabilities, black, Hispanic, LEP, and economically disadvantaged students.²

¹ This data from this section came from the document, “Request for Proposals Application to Implement the New York State Education Department Sanctioned Audit of the Written, Taught, and Tested Curriculum as Required by No Child Left Behind Regulations” provided to Learning Point Associates and from City-Data.Com, retrieved Mary 6, 2006, from <http://www.city-data.com/city/Hempstead-New-York.html>.

² This data from this section came from the New York Sate Department of Education 2005 District Accountability Status report, retrieved March 6, 2006, from http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/school-accountability/2005/district-accountability-masterlist10-14-05_alpha.pdf and from the document, “Request for Proposals Application to Implement the New York State Education Department Sanctioned Audit of the Written, Taught, and Tested Curriculum as Required by No Child Left Behind Regulations” provided to Learning Point Associates.

Between 2002 and 2004, the percentage of fourth-grade students who either met or exceeded standards for both English language arts (69 percent, 75 percent, and 64 percent, respectively) and mathematics (76 percent, 85 percent, and 78 percent) remained relatively stable. The percentage of eighth-grade students who either met or exceeded standards between 2002 and 2004 remained significantly low for English language arts (17 percent, 29 percent, and 20 percent) and decreased for mathematics (47 percent, 41 percent, and 38 percent). Cohort data from 1998–2000 indicated an increasing percentage of students (44 percent, 39 percent, and 51 percent) who achieved a 65 percent “passing score” or higher in the Regents examination area of comprehensive English, with a decreasing percentage of students (37 percent, 37 percent, and 33 percent) who achieved a passing score or higher in the area of mathematics³. For 2001–02 high school graduates, 23 percent earned their Regents diplomas; for 2002–03, the rate was 14 percent; and for 2003–04, the rate was 18 percent. Between 2001 and 2004, the rate of high school noncompletion rose from 10 percent to 21 percent while the suspension rate remained about 10 percent.⁴

English Language Arts and Mathematics District Strategies and Practices

The entirety of this section is based upon data provided from Hempstead Union Free District. All instructional methods are based upon proactive teaching and learning and Blooms taxonomy with weekly departmental meetings to chart the progress and impact of instruction. For both English language arts and mathematics, K–8 grade-level expectations aligned with the state learning standards identify the minimum skills students should possess. Grades PK–6 pacing guides are used to reinforce the English language arts and mathematics curricula. An afterschool learning academy for Grades 1–12 ensure that students who scored below state standards and local assessments in English language arts and/or mathematics receive extra instruction. For Grades 2–12, students are given biweekly and quarterly mastery exams in English language arts and mathematics that help determine students’ subject matter understanding. For Grades 8–12 mock Regents examinations in English language arts and mathematics simulate what students will experience during an actual exam while Grades 8–12 Regents preparatory classes also are offered.

As its prime mathematics strategy, Hempstead has stated that the district participates in a PK–12 Math and Science Partnership sponsored by the National Science Foundation. For English language arts, Hempstead uses the direct instruction teaching approach of Open Court

³ The data from this sentence was not provided by Hempstead, and so was taken from the February, 2005 report, *Overview of District Performance in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Analysis of Student Subgroup Performance for Hempstead Union Free District* prepared by the University of the State of New York, the State Education Department. Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/reprcd2004/overview-analysis/280201030000.pdf>

⁴ The data from this section came from *New York State District Report Card Comprehensive Information Report* and *Overview of District Performance in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Analysis of Student Subgroup Performance for Hempstead Union Free District*, both prepared by the University of the State of New York, the State Education Department. Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/reprcd2004/cir/280201030000.pdf> and <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/reprcd2004/overview-analysis/280201030000.pdf>, respectively. Data also came from the document, “Request for Proposals Application to Implement the New York State Education Department Sanctioned Audit of the Written, Taught, and Tested Curriculum as Required by No Child Left Behind Regulations” provided to Learning Point Associates.

Reading in Grades PK–1. Grades 2–6 utilize balanced literacy where the focus is on deriving textual meaning at the word, sentence, paragraph, and book level; texts are connected to students’ lives. For Grades 4–5, students use the Inside Writing Program, where seven units from composition structure to responses to literature are offered. The Cornell Note-Taking system is used in Grades 9–12 to develop students’ acumen to organize new knowledge.

The district reports its K–12 bilingual and ELL English language arts instruction to be based upon constant diagnostic information about students’ proficiency levels. As much as possible, English language arts are integrated across the curriculum. A K–8 and 9–12 ESL textbook series aligned with the state standards is used along with an accompanying writing component. There is coordination between ESL and content-area teachers, family involvement, and an extended day program for ELL students. K–12 students with disabilities receive instruction via the Orton-Gillingham and Wilson Language systems.

Hempstead students’ English language arts and mathematics results from various assessments are maintained in the Student Administrative Student Information system as reported by the district. Teachers may access this information when needed and have been trained to use these data for improving student performance. A data warehouse used through the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) also is used to identify student academic needs. In addition to the New York State Testing Program at Grades 4 and 8 and Regents exams, state and local assessments include prekindergarten progress checklist for English language arts and mathematics; Dial 3, a prekindergarten screen for cognitive, speech, and motor development; Open Court, PK–1; an early literacy profile, PK–2; Classroom Reading Inventory and Running Records for early readers; and Test of New York State Standards, Grades 2–3 and 5–7.⁵

District Resources

For 2003–04, Hempstead had 114 administrative and professional staff, 482 teachers and 217 paraprofessionals. The majority of teachers were teaching within in their field, with only 2 percent of teachers “teaching out of certification.” In 2002–03, the district received \$38,025,275 in total aid; in 2003–04, the total aid was \$38,477,749; and in 2004–05, the total aid increased to \$55,329,308.⁶

⁵ Data from this section came from the document, “Request for Proposals Application to Implement the New York State Education Department Sanctioned Audit of the Written, Taught, and Tested Curriculum as Required by No Child Left Behind Regulations” provided to Learning Point Associates.

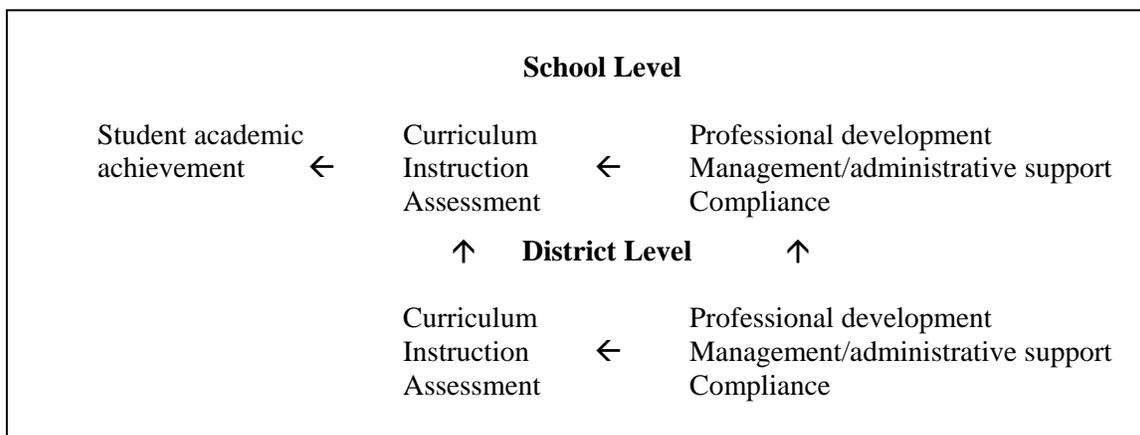
⁶ Data from this section came from the document, “Request for Proposals Application to Implement the New York State Education Department Sanctioned Audit of the Written, Taught, and Tested Curriculum as Required by No Child Left Behind Regulations” provided to Learning Point Associates.

Theory of Action

The theory of action starts from student academic achievement in relation to the New York 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 of each study school. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment at the school level are supported and influenced by professional development, management and administrative support, and compliance at the school level; and by curriculum, instruction, and assessment at the district level. Finally, school-level professional development, management and administrative support, and compliance are supported and influenced by their district-level counterparts.

The theory of action reviewed in the cointerpretation meeting identified that change (i.e., actions needed to improve student achievement) occurs at both the school and the district levels. Therefore, the audit gathered information at both levels. A graphic representation of the Theory of Action dynamic is shown in Figure 1. A more detailed explanation is provided in the Preliminary Report in the accompanying Addendum.

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 seven essential questions for the focus of the audit:

1. Are the written, taught, and tested curriculum aligned with one another and with state standards?
2. What supports exist for struggling students, and what evidence is there of the success of these opportunities?
3. Are assessment data used to determine program effectiveness and drive instruction?
4. Does classroom instruction maximize the use of research-based strategies?
5. Is the district professional development focused on the appropriate content areas, and are there strategies in place to translate it into effective classroom practice?
6. Do management and administrative structures and processes support student achievement?
7. Is the district in compliance with local, state, and federal mandates and requirements?

Audit Process Overview

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

Phase 1: Covisioning

The purpose of covisioning is to develop a shared understanding of the theory of action and guiding questions for the audit. Outcomes included agreement on the theory of action and guiding questions, which were included in the Preliminary Report to the district. This phase also included the planning and delivering of communications about the audit to the district's key stakeholders.

Phase 2: Data Collection and Analysis

To conduct this audit, Learning Point Associates examined district issues from multiple angles, gathering a wide range of data and using the guiding questions to focus on factors that affect curriculum, instruction, assessment, management, and compliance. (A separate evaluation of professional development was performed by Education Resource Strategies.) Like the lens of a microscope clicking into place, all of these data sources work together to bring focus and clarity to the main factors contributing to the districts' corrective-action status. Broadly categorized, information sources include student achievement data, the *Surveys of Enacted Curriculum* (SEC), observations of instruction, semistructured individual interviews and focus groups, and analysis of key district documents.

Student Achievement Data

To provide a broad overview of district performance, student achievement data from the New York State Testing Program assessments were analyzed for Grades 4, 8, and 12 for the past three years. This analysis shows aggregate trends in performance and with NCLB subgroups.

SEC

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 enacted (taught) curriculum to standards (intended) and assessed curriculum (state tests), using teachers' self-assessments. The data for each content area 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

A sample of classrooms in the district was observed using a structured observation system. This observation system was not designed to serve as an evaluation of instruction in the classroom

or a comparison of instruction within and across classrooms, but to record exactly what occurs in the classroom. Observations lasted approximately 45–60 minutes in each classroom during which the observer collected data in 10-minute segments. Observations focused on both student and teacher behaviors as well as particular instructional components.

The data then were analyzed using descriptive statistics in several areas, including classroom demographics, environment, instructional materials, lesson content, purpose, and activities conducted.

Semistructured Individual Interviews and Focus Groups

People who are involved integrally in a district (e.g., students, teachers, district staff) have unique insights into a school system, including its strengths and operational challenges. While data of this type are necessarily subjective—representing the views of the speakers—they are nonetheless highly informative. Rigorously analyzed, these data provide various viewpoints. When this information aligns with more objective information, it can provide rich insights into issues and possible solutions. When this information does not align with more objective information, it can lead to fruitful discussions to identify the cause of the discrepancy.

To tap into stakeholders' perceptions of issues concerning curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, management, and compliance, the views of teachers, students, principals, district administrators, service providers, and community leaders were gathered through semistructured interviews and focus groups.

In the data interpretation and reporting process (interview and focus-group data sets in the accompanying Addendum), the emphasis is on common themes and divergent cases to exemplify commonly reported characteristics and challenges occurring in the sampled schools. This process encourages sensitivity to emergent patterns, along with irregularities within and across school sites (Delamont, 1992). This process also supports a report that included descriptions rich in context and interpretations, which connected with and extended the district's contextual knowledge about what they perceive as working and not working across their schools.

Analysis of Key District Documents

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

A document review scoring rubric was developed and used to synthesize document information within each of the six strands of the audit (i.e., curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, management, compliance). The rubric was designed to measure whether each district document contained sufficient information across each strand. The degree to which each respective document addressed the strand was evaluated by two to three content experts to ensure multiple perspectives during the process. Components of each strand were given a 0–3 rating based on its level of coverage within the document. Once ratings were completed, a consensus meeting was held and a report was generated by all reviewers.

Table 1 lists the key data sources and how they were used by the Hempstead Union Free District schools to review the district during the cointerpretation process.

Table 1. Alignment of Data Sources With Key Questions

Guiding Questions	Student Achievement Data	<i>Surveys of Enacted Curriculum</i>	Observations of Instruction	Semistructured Individual Interviews and Focus Groups	Analysis of Key District Documents
1. Are the written, taught, and tested curriculum aligned with one another and with state standards?	X	X	X	X	X
2. What supports exist for struggling students, and what evidence is there of the success of these opportunities?	X		X	X	X
3. Are assessment data used to determine program effectiveness and drive instruction?	X	X		X	X
4. Does classroom instruction maximize the use of research-based strategies?		X	X	X	X
5. Is the district professional development focused on the appropriate content areas, and are there strategies in place to translate it into effective classroom practice?	X	X	X	X	X
6. Do management and administrative structures and processes support student achievement?	X			X	X
7. Is the district in compliance with local, state, and federal mandates and requirements?	X			X	X

Phase 3: Cointerpretation of Findings

The purpose of cointerpretation is to interpret the data collected, which were grouped into three priority areas: professional development; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and management and compliance. This guided the action-planning process for the system.

The initial cointerpretation had several steps, starting with the interpretation of the data, followed by the development of problem statements, and concluding with the identification and prioritization of hypotheses specific to each problem statement. These steps occurred in a two-day meeting with key school and district staff. After the meeting, district staff edited and agreed on the problem statements and hypotheses. The synthesized information will be developed into a presentation for a broader school and community audience. Because this process was critical in identifying the priority areas for district improvement, the detailed approach is outlined here.

Interpret Data

The cointerpretation process began with the study of the individual audit reports (i.e., school analysis report, documentation report, achievement report, district interview data, SEC data, compliance and management report [interview, focus groups, and document], classroom observation report) to do the following:

1. Identify data and information related to the assigned team priority area (i.e., professional development; curriculum, instruction, assessment; management and compliance).
2. Select key data points or messages.
3. Categorize or cluster and agree upon the critical data points or messages.
4. Identify patterns and trends across reports.
5. Present and defend critical data points or messages.
6. Respond to clarifying questions.
7. Refine and reach consensus on key findings.

In the cointerpretation meeting in Hempstead, as the three investigative groups (i.e., professional development; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; management and compliance) presented their findings to the whole group, some natural combining and winnowing of results occurred. From various data sources, the participants utilized the method of triangulation to provide support for combining and subsuming some of the findings. The following set of three criteria enabled the participants to examine the prioritized list of findings:

- Does the list respond to the essential questions?
- Does the list respond to the subgroup and content areas identified as not meeting AYP?
- Does the list capture the most important findings?

From this process, which required considerable thought and discussion, key findings emerged. All participants agreed to support key findings in the action-planning meetings with the community, parents, teachers, and students.

Develop Problem Statements

The cointerpretation process continued with the development of problem statements. Teams reviewed the key findings to accomplish the following:

- Generate problem statements by taking the critical data points or messages and identifying problems supported by evidence.
- Prioritize problems using specific criteria, such as those that have the greatest likelihood of increasing student achievement if resolved.
- Reach consensus on the top problems facing the district.

Identify and Prioritize Hypotheses

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

- Identify a set of hypotheses supported by evidence in the three priority areas for each identified problem.
- Prioritize hypotheses using specific criteria—such as those over which the district has control—and determine which hypotheses, if addressed, can leverage the most change.
- Reach consensus on a set of hypotheses for each problem statement.

A subset of participants met again after the initial cointerpretation meeting to further define these statements and hypotheses.

Align and Synthesize Cointerpretation Results

The final steps of cointerpretation included refining the problem statements and hypotheses and developing a synthesis of the cointerpretation information (i.e., a district profile that will be presented to a broader group of school and community representatives during action planning).

Phase 4: Action Planning

The last step in the audit process is action planning. This process will result in an action plan focused on the areas identified in the audit. The key actions in the plan will be considered binding recommendations.

The process entails initial goal and strategy setting by a core district team, followed by engaging with a carefully selected stakeholder group that includes district staff, parents, and community leaders. This group will provide input into the success indicators and potential barriers to success and will serve as champions for the district. Finally, action planning requires detailed planning meetings with groups or departments in the district to determine action steps and associated financial implications and timelines for implementation. Once this process is complete, the audit action plan should be aligned with other district plans.

Reference

Delamont, S. (1992). *Fieldwork in educational settings: Methods, pitfalls, and perspectives*. London: Falmer Press.

Key Findings and Problem Statements

As described in the Phase 3 process description, each problem statement was generated through the cointerpretation process. In a facilitated process, groups of district administrators and staff identified key findings across multiple data sets to develop the district problem statements. With each problem statement that follows, the key supporting findings and hypothesis are included. These can be mapped back to the original data sets using the data map in Appendix A. A short review of research is included, which is intended to begin informing the action planning processes.

Problem Statement 1

Data collection and interpretation are not consistently used to make decisions related to policy, program, and practices at all levels.

While findings showed that district and school staff administer multiple state, district, and classroom-based assessments to track student progress, central office staff and school administrators reported significant challenges in the systemic use of this data to (1) inform school-level decision making, (2) guide student placements, and (3) differentiate classroom instruction. Data sources pointed to four major reasons to explain these challenges. First, although the data sources indicate that the district does administer a local assessment schedule, the review of district documents showed limited evidence of alignment between local and state assessments. Furthermore, the review of key district documents indicates that there is limited evidence of screening, diagnoses, and outcomes assessments, and that there is no evidence that the assessments are used to make adjustments to curriculum decisions.

School-level interviews revealed that there has not been recent professional development that connects assessment data use to district curriculum implementation. Although interviews indicate that teachers use assessment data to reteach as necessary, there is no evidence of a policy to guide monitoring processes to ensure teachers interpret or use data to make instructional decisions. School-level interviews reveal similar results, suggesting that data use and interpretation that occurs among teachers is done independently and with little consistency across classrooms or grade levels.

The hypotheses developed around this issue revealed that a lack of staff development focusing on data collection, interpretation and application for instructional differentiation. In addition, cointerpretation participants indicated the need for more district and school personnel to help interpret and disseminate the data consistently. In essence, hypotheses point to a lack of standardization and evaluation of data interpretation and analysis programs and/or processes across the district.

Research

Research supports that consistent use of data collection as a valuable tool for making decisions on policy, programs, and practices both at the school and district level. High-performing districts tend to set clear expectations for schools to meet state and federal growth targets, provide schools with consistent and reliable achievement data on an ongoing basis, and ensure that

district assessments and curriculum are aligned with state standards (Williams et al., 2005). Districts that use a data-driven system follow these steps: set a vision, collect and analyze data to determine strengths and challenge areas, develop an action plan, and assess progress on a regular basis (Deligiannis, 2004).

Systemic use of data and data interpretation in schools helps support and inform school-level decision making, student placements, and differentiating classroom instruction. When identifying informational needs, one must consider that different types of data need to be gathered for different purposes or to answer different guiding questions. Successful schools draw on three major sources of data: state and district tests, individual teacher assessment data; and schoolwide assessment data (Deligiannis, 2004). Using current data is important to the decision-making process (Noyce, Perda, & Travers, 2000).

“An open, reflective, decision-making process” based upon relevant data that are linked to educational outcomes and are used to inform the educational improvement planning is happening at the school level and has the potential to have a large positive impact on student learning (Thorn, 2002, p. 10). This research gives direct support to continued professional development regarding data interpretation and decision making, providing for a collaborative environment with regards to data use.

Research supports that data-driven decision making requires professional development and continued support (Holloway, 2003). Many times, using data for making decisions is a cultural shift for schools and districts as it forces reconsideration of a number of aspects of schooling, including allocating time and resources to data use. Additionally, schools and districts may need to develop the organizational capacity to effectively identify, collect, and analyze data decision making. Building expertise is important because although there is no single best approach to using data for decision making within a school or district, there are approaches to data collection and analysis that are more rigorous and would provide more sophisticated and specific information fueling the data for the decision-making process.

References

- Deligiannis, J. (2004). *Data to inform school improvement: A review of the literature*. Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates.
- Holloway, J. (2003). Linking professional development to student learning. *Educational Leadership*, 60(5), 74–76.
- Noyce, P., Perda, D., & Travers, R. (2000). Creating data-driven schools. *Educational Leadership*, 57(5), 52–56.
- Thorn, C. A. (2002, April). *Data use in the school and classroom: The challenges of implementing data-based decision making inside schools*. Presentation given at the American Education Research Association Convention, New Orleans, LA. Retrieved March 6, 2006, from http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/mps/AERA2002/data_use_in_the_classroom.htm

Williams, T., Perry, M., Studier, C., Brazil, N., Kirst, M., Haertel, E., et al. (2005). *Similar students, different results: Why do some schools do better? A large-scale survey of California elementary schools serving low income students*. Mountain View, CA: EdSource. Retrieved February 3, 2006, from <http://www.edsource.org/pdf/SimStu05.pdf>

Problem Statement 2

The district does not consistently provide culturally relevant curriculum, activities, and programs to support its diverse population.

Inconsistent Curriculum Implementation

Data sources suggest that the district’s written curriculum, supporting programs, and materials can be significantly improved to support teachers’ instructional practices or the needs of their diverse student population. A review of key district documents provided by the district reveals there is limited evidence that the district’s K–12 curriculum is clearly articulated within and across grade levels. Forty-seven percent (n=47 of 98) of Hempstead teachers across grade levels (K–12) reported that the district’s curriculum framework, standards, and guidelines had a “strong positive influence” on their teaching, with 44 percent reporting “somewhat of an influence” and the remaining 8 percent reporting its influence as “little,” “none,” or “somewhat negative.” Teachers at the high school level were *least* likely to report the curriculum having a “strong” emphasis on their instructional practices (20 percent, n=2 of 10).

District and school interviews supported these findings. According to school-level staff, inconsistent curriculum implementation increases as grade levels rise. The lower grade elementary teachers, most intensely in Grades K–2, expressed confidence that their reading program (Open Court) is mapped to the state standards. Upper elementary grade staff reported that they did not follow a core reading program with the same consistency as early elementary teachers. The majority of middle school staff indicated that they tried to use a curriculum grid to guide their instruction but found it difficult to follow the grid because they had large class sizes and often did not have access to appropriate materials. High school staff indicated that the majority of teachers referred to the district curriculum “loosely” or not at all. District staff reported that the curriculum is not unified and that fragmentation is most evident when students move from elementary to middle school. In addition, district and school staff reported that a wide variety of materials and resources are used in middle and high school level English language arts classrooms with little discretion over their alignment to standards or benchmarks.

Hypotheses centered on the need for a more comprehensive and clearly articulated curriculum within and across grade levels. In addition, cointerpretation participants called for higher standards and more challenging academic programs for students. Finally, participants reported that stronger monitoring procedures needed to be developed and implemented in schools.

Challenges Serving LEP Students

In addition to their challenges supporting the overall student population, data sources suggest that the district is struggling to meet the demands of English language learners. According to key district documentation, limited-English-proficient students made up approximately 21.5 percent (n=1,534) of the entire district population in 2003–04. For 95 percent of these students, Spanish is their native language. The other 5 percent speak Urdu, Arabic, and Haitian Creole. While the percent of LEP students meeting or exceeding state standards in 2002 through 2004 approached or exceeded results for the overall student population, these percentages were below 50 percent at the high school level (39 percent and 47 percent). Staffing and curriculum implementation are two significant areas in which the district is struggling to meet LEP students' needs.

According to district and school documents and interviews, the district has experienced challenges finding and keeping highly qualified teachers and staff. The Comprehensive Education Plan Activity Update of August 2005 indicated that several bilingual positions still needed to be filled (both certified and noncertified). Although all but one of these positions was filled at the time this report was written, staff openings in other areas often pull special area teachers and assistants from their regular duties. For instance, the Report on State Education Department Team Visit (2004) stated that LEP and special education paraprofessionals are regularly pulled from duties to substitute teach and, in some cases, to fill long-term teacher vacancies.

Interview responses revealed that an internally appointed group of administrators and teachers worked with an external consultant to draft a revised ESL K–8 curriculum in 2004–05; however, budget shortages prevented this group from finalizing and distributing the curriculum to all K–8 ESL staff. At the secondary level, the 2004 Report on State Education Department Team Visit noted that English language arts curriculum documents for middle school and high school were developed in isolation without collaboration among buildings and with little input from bilingual, ESL, and special education faculty.

Hypothesis directed toward supporting LEP students included (1) the need for cultural sensitivity training for all teachers; (2) higher quality materials that are aligned to a new, more comprehensive district curriculum, which addresses all student populations; (3) the need for increased community-based partnerships and ongoing parent workshops; and (4) the implementation and use of alternative and portfolio assessments to support differentiated instructional practices.

Research

With one fifth of Hempstead's students being identified as English language learners, the district faces challenges similar to those many other districts face as more than three million students of English as an additional language are attending U.S. schools (Meyer, Madden, & McGrath, 2004). This change in student demographics requires a focused approach to provide appropriate programs, instruction, curriculum, and assessment to meet *all* students' needs.

Problem Statement 3 addresses the need to align the English language arts curriculum both vertically and horizontally for all students. Content, instructional strategies, and assessments will be addressed during the alignment process. Once expectations have been indicated for students by grade levels, teachers of ESL students will need to decide on instructional strategies and approaches. Reports and reviews of best practices and practitioner knowledge offer a number of methods to inform the district's curriculum and instruction for learners of ESL (Crandall et al, 2002; Helm & Wilson, 2003; Short & Echevarria, 1999).

Professional development is needed for school personnel in the areas of cultural sensitivity, second language acquisition, reading and writing in a second language, alternative assessments, and sociocultural issues in education (Intercultural Development Research Association, 2002; Coady & Latina, 2003). Research on second language learners notes the benefits students receive when teachers are well informed and respond appropriately to students' needs and strengths (Carter, & Chatfield, 1986; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990).

References

- Carter, T. P., & Chatfield, M. L. (1986). Effective bilingual schools: Implications for policy and practice. *American Journal of Education*, 95(1), 200–232.
- Crandall, J., Jaramillo, A., Olsen, L., & Peyton, J. K. (2002). Using cognitive strategies to develop English language and literacy. (ERIC Document No. EDOFL0205). Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.cal.org/ericcl/digest/0205crandall.html>
- Coady, M., & Latina, K. (2003). *Claiming opportunities: A handbook for improving education for English language learners through comprehensive school reform*. Providence, RI: The Education Alliance at Brown University.
- Helm, J. H., & Wilson, R. A. (2003). Supporting second-language learners. In J. H. Helm & S. Beneke (Eds.), *The power of projects: Meeting contemporary challenges in early childhood classroom—Strategies and solutions*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Intercultural Development Research Association (2002). *Good schools and classrooms for children learning English: A guide*. San Antonio, TX: Author.
- Lucas, T., Henze, R., & Donato, R. (1990). Promoting the success of Latino language-minority students: An exploratory study of six high schools. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60(3), 315–340.
- Meyer, D., Madden, D., & McGrath, D. J. (2004). *English language learner students in U.S. public schools: 1994 and 2000* (Issue Brief, NCES 2004-035). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004035.pdf>

New York State Education Department. (2004, December). *Report on State Education Department team visit*. New York: Author. Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/nyregion/hempstead-fullreport.htm>

Short, D. J., & Echevarria, J. (1999). *The sheltered instruction observation protocol: A tool for teacher-researcher collaboration and professional development* (ERIC Document No. ED436981). Santa Cruz, CA, and Washington, DC: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence. Retrieved March 6, 2006, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/2a/2f/c3.pdf

Problem Statement 3

There is no comprehensive K–12 English language arts curriculum that is aligned horizontally and vertically to state standards and assessments.

While a review of district documents showed evidence that K–12 benchmarks, assessments, and pacing guides are available to support teachers' curriculum enactment, other sources consistently reported fragmentation within the district English language arts curriculum. District administrators have indicated that the curriculum is not vertically aligned and that it is not aligned from school to school. Administrators indicated that low levels of district curriculum implementation are in part due to a lack of monitoring and oversight, particularly at the secondary school levels. Parent focus groups revealed similar findings as parents reported that instructional content within grades vary widely, depending on the teacher. District staff, school staff, and students all expressed concern regarding the scarcity of materials for students to take home.

SEC survey results reported during fall 2005 further informed the findings in regard to areas of instructional emphasis. There are moderate to significant differences in areas of emphasis within instructional practices and state standards at several grade levels. Specifically, SEC survey and classroom observation results revealed an overemphasis on comprehension during instructional time in elementary and middle grades as compared to the state standards. However, this emphasis is supported by assessment data showing weakness in comprehension.

While school administrators are reportedly given final approval on text selection, new materials are not always used for a number of reasons. According to the December 2004 Report on State Education Department Team Visit, teachers were reported to be reluctant to change and persisted in using old materials when new texts and materials were introduced into the school. District and school interviews revealed similar results, particularly at the high school. Several school administrators and teachers at all levels indicated that they often needed to revert to using old materials because they did not have enough new materials—including books, workbooks and other consumables—to provide their students. According to SEC survey results, one-third of teachers surveyed (n=29 of 87) disagreed or strongly disagreed that adequate curriculum materials were available for instruction.

District administrators indicated that professional development was sporadic in nature and not clearly focused around key objectives. Yet document reviews show that there is evidence that the district has policies, plans, and resources to build both content knowledge and pedagogical

knowledge in English language arts instruction. This evidence includes the documentation of a data-based needs assessment to determine appropriate professional development topics.

Hypotheses centered around (1) the lack of a comprehensive vertically and horizontally standards-aligned K–12 English language arts curriculum; (2) the lack of a continuous, systemic process to ensure that the district’s curriculum is clearly articulated and aligned; (3) the apparent incongruence of instructional emphasis and standards emphasis, with many teachers implementing programs and practices that may not be aligned with school goals; and (4) the need for embedded professional development to support teachers’ curriculum implementation. In addition, participants reported that the curriculum is driven by short-term programs and goals with inconsistent curriculum monitoring practices within the schools. Participants indicated the need for stability in district and school leadership positions, along with the implementation of consistent monitoring and accountability practices, to support consistent curriculum implementation districtwide.

Research

A written curriculum that is explicit, specific, and aligned between grade levels provides teachers with a set of common expectations for all students. Curriculum needs both depth and coverage, but teachers need to decide on priorities or critical standards in order to make the curriculum viable for learning (Marzano, 2003). Curriculum also must be clearly aligned to state standards, state assessments, local assessments, instructional strategies, and professional development (Burger, 2002). Districts should have both vertical and horizontal alignment.

Standards-based curricular reform offers teachers a guide for their instructional practices by pointing to what knowledge or skills students must demonstrate (Darling-Hammond, 1997). This focus is believed to lead to improved and equalized student achievement. Using a standards-based curriculum aligns, integrates, and connects assessments, curriculum, and instruction (Burger, 2002). Standards alignment uses local content standards to foster the use of multiple assessment sources, describes how classroom instruction and assessment relate to each other, and aligns assessment with learner outcomes (Burger, 2002).

Once each of the grade levels has aligned its English language arts curriculum, vertical alignment can begin. In a vertical alignment, multiple grade levels collaborate to plan and implement curriculum (Robinson, 2000). In this model, the benchmark used to align the curriculum is one that anchors student outcomes. Skills and content are identified so that students can successfully meet the higher expectations. For example, a small group of kindergarten through third-grade teachers would look at the third-grade benchmark and then backwards map earlier grade-level benchmarks to this outcome. This allows learners to build on previously taught skills. Clustering small groups of teachers will allow a district to develop vertical alignment from kindergarten through high school over time.

Having a usable and clearly articulated curriculum allows grade-level teachers to make decisions about differentiation based on student needs. Because students vary in readiness, interests, and learning style, appropriately differentiated instruction allows teachers to vary instructional approaches by varying the content, the process, or the product (Tomlinson & Strickland, 2005).

Choosing to vary the process as a method of differentiation allows schools to choose a variety of instructional strategies while holding the same content standards for all students.

At the elementary level, literacy instruction should include a balance of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). More developed readers need instruction the areas of comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, phonics, and writing (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Research suggests that teachers who view reading as a process requiring readers to develop knowledge and skills allow students to become strategic in their thinking. Research indicates that readers can be taught to be strategic in their approach to reading (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1996). Effective instructional methods use teacher explanation, modeling, guided practices, and discussion throughout the process. Students are asked to reflect on the use and effectiveness of the strategy while constructing meaning (Duffy et al., 1987).

Tying student learning or achievement to professional development makes it imperative that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the goal (Guskey, 2000). While teachers are learning and trying different strategies, they need support from building and district-level leaders. Continuous and consistent curriculum implementation requires knowledgeable, skilled, committed, and supportive building and district-level leaders (Fullan, 1997). This leadership consist of leaders working together to motivate others and monitor curriculum implementation.

It is important to note that programs should be considered as supportive materials for the actual curriculum; programs are vehicles that help students reach mastery of the intended (written) curriculum. Programs need to be aligned to a written curriculum that includes specific benchmarks. Alignment to benchmarks ensures that all programs are complementary and comprehensive so that all students have access to the full written curriculum (Webb, 1997).

References

- Burger, D. (2003). *Using standards-led policy to align assessment and accountability systems*. PREL Briefing Paper. Honolulu, HI: Regional Educational Laboratory at Pacific Resources for Education and Learning.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *The right to learn: A blueprint for creating schools that work*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Duffy, G., Roehler, L., Sivan, E., Rackliffe, G., Book, C., & Meloth, M. et al. (1987). Effects of explaining the reasoning associated with using strategies. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 22(3), 347–368.
- Fullan, M. (2003). *The moral imperative of school leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Guskey, T. (2000). *Evaluating professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Marzano, R. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence based assessment on the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/smallbook.pdf>
- Paris, S. G., Wasik, B. A., & Turner, J. C. (1991). The development of strategic readers. In R. Barr, M. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research, Volume II* (pp. 609–640). Marwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Robinson, A. (2000, March). *Connecting the curriculum for excellence: English vertical teams*. Paper presented at the National Curriculum Network Conference, Williamsburg, VA (ERIC Document No. ED452652). Retrieved March 6, 2006, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2/content_storage_01/0000000b/80/25/9f/47.pdf
- Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.) (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Tomlinson, C.A., & Strickland, C.A. (2005). *Differentiation in practice: A resource guide for differentiating curriculum, grades 9–12*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Webb, N. L. (1997). *Research monograph no. 6: Criteria for alignment of expectations and assessments in mathematics and science education*. Washington, D.C.: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Problem Statement 4

There is no consistent and uniform policy for monitoring curriculum implementation districtwide.

According to the Report on State Education Department Team Visit (2004), “a lack of clarity of instructional leadership roles” have contributed to the sustained inconsistencies regarding district English language arts curriculum implementation, English language arts program implementation, and the sporadic use of instructional materials. In addition, the Hempstead School District 2005–06 priorities indicate that the district has a goal to monitoring classroom curriculum practices, and plans were evident to show how these goals would be carried out or who would be responsible for their implementation. The district is missing a comprehensive K–12 plan to show how school administrators and teachers monitor curriculum and instruction through the use of assessment data. Interviews supported the lack of clarity in leadership roles. In addition, district and school staff reported that assessment data were not being used in a formative way to improve programs and teacher practice.

Participants at cointerpretation generated several hypotheses to explain why monitoring policies and practices needed to be consistently implemented and improved. First, participants indicated that the district’s curriculum is not written clearly enough and does not provide teachers with

supportive materials. Without a clearly written curriculum, participants indicated that principals would continue to find it difficult to consistently monitor its implementation. Second, participants reported that high district and staff turnover rates have made it difficult to sustain improvements. Finally, participants indicated the need for the Board of Education to work more collaboratively with the superintendent to establish and support a comprehensive curriculum.

Research

The district indicates that the need for monitoring of curriculum and instruction is high, but that monitoring has not occurred to the extent necessary for instructional change to take place systemwide. A key mechanism for improved monitoring is a focus on instructional leadership. Part of the problem is its complexity. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) identifies six core tasks of instructional leaders: (1) focusing on student and adult learning, (2) holding high performance expectations, (3) helping teachers understand the value of standards, (4) fostering professional collegiality and culture, (5) using data to guide decisions, and (6) tapping into community resources to improve school functioning. While instructional leadership typically is principal centered—or principal motivated—tasks associated with instructional leadership should be dispersed among school-site staff (Elmore, 2000). This does not mean that specific people have specific unrelated instructional tasks to complete in isolation; rather, good instructional leadership depends upon interrelated activities such as involving teachers in mentoring or professional development presentations (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2000). In other words, instructional monitoring involves the principal working in conjunction with site instructional staff.

Districts are essential to the process of developing principals into site instructional leaders. Fink and Resnick (1999) identify a model that both demonstrates the value of instructional improvement and allows all management staff to understand current classroom issues. The model calls for all certified staff to engage in specific classroom activities and to provide training and feedback in instructional practice. Many models exist to promote district emphasis on instructional leadership—including structured classroom walk-throughs, principal support groups, and principal peer observations. What is most important, though, is that the district models to site leaders (and site leaders model to teachers) the importance of good instruction (Blase & Blase, 2000).

References

- Blase, J., & Blase, J. (2000). Effective instructional leadership: Teachers' perspectives on how principals promote teaching and learning in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(2), 130–141.
- Elmore, R. F. (2000). *Building a new structure for school leadership*. Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute. Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.shankerinstitute.org/Downloads/building.pdf>
- Fink, E., & Resnick, L. B. (1999). *Developing principals as instructional leaders*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh. Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.lrdc.pitt.edu/hplc/Publications/FinkResnick.PDF>
- National Association of Elementary School Principals. (2001). *Leading learning communities: NAESP standards for what principals should know and be able to do*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- New York State Education Department. (2004, December). *Report on State Education Department team visit*. New York: Author. Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/nyregion/hempstead-fullreport.htm>
- Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2000). *Distributed leadership: Toward a theory of leadership practice*. Evanston, IL: Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern University.

Problem Statement 5

The professional development plan does not build capacity relative to duties and responsibilities of all members of the school community.

According to 2005-2006 district documents, policies and plans have been developed to support effective school and classroom strategies. What appears to be missing is direct evidence from the previous years to show that the plans are being carried out and evaluated, and that professional development plans are aligned with the district's written curriculum and state standards. For instance, there is documented evidence through district plans and school plans that leadership encourages and fosters an environment of continuous professional development. District interview participants upon reflection on the 2004-2005 school year described professional development for teachers as sporadic and not organized around clearly defined objectives. No direct evidence was observed to show that professional development in 2004-2005 was occurring as directed by the district plan or that change in classroom practices and student learning had taken place. In 2005-2006 there is some evidence of change in classroom practices; however, it must be district wide.

In general, concerns were that the professional development did not address the needs of teachers. Most respondents indicated that upon reflection on the 2004-2005 school year, when

professional development was provided, there was often little in-school follow-through to deepen learning, apply newly learned information to instruction, or share what was learned with colleagues. SEC survey results supported these perspectives by providing evidence that professional development is not aligned with the district's curriculum or consistently implemented across K–12 grade levels. For instance, 30 percent (n=29 of 98) of teachers indicated that professional development activities during the past 12 months were either “rarely” or “never” designed to support the school's improvement plan. Twenty-three percent (n=23 of 98) indicated that professional development “rarely” or “never” built on what they learned in previous professional development activities. Thirty percent (n=29 of 98) indicated that the district “rarely” or “never” provided follow-up activities that related to what teachers learned. Finally, district and school interviews as well as SEC results indicated the need to build a stronger professional learning community within the district. SEC results showed that 45 percent (n=45 of 98) of teachers did not believe they actively contributed to making decisions about the curriculum. In addition, 50 percent (n=49 of 98) reported the need for more time during the regular school week to work with colleagues on English language arts curriculum and instruction.

Hypotheses suggest that board policies regarding professional development in 2004-2005 were not implemented and monitored effectively. In addition, cointerpretation participants reported that professional development needs more focus in the district, and that clear procedures are needed to implement and monitor a consistent professional development plan. This hypothesis suggests that although a 2005-2006 professional development plan exists and is being implemented, many at the district and school level may not have been aware of its implications for schools during data collection in the fall of 2005. Another hypothesis included the need for a long-term, collaborative approach to professional development, with an evaluative component included to measure the extent to which professional development impacts teachers' instruction and student performance. Participants indicated that the use of resources available to support district professional development—such as BOCES, Teachers College (TC), and curriculum coaches—could be improved. Finally, participants reported that the district's collective bargaining agreement makes it difficult to implement professional development consistently across schools, as stipulations often prevent all teachers from receiving the same amounts or types of training.

Research

Successful professional development programs successfully utilize available resources through clear organizational structures and specific guidelines for teachers, administrators, and staff developers (Joyce & Showers, 2002). When designing a professional development plan analysis of student achievement data as well as the instructional practices of teachers in the district must be a central component to the process. This is the time to align professional development to curriculum, assessments, and needs. When evaluation is tied to professional development, structures for feedback and follow-up are included in the process.

Monitoring professional development is significant to a new plan's success. Instructional leadership must be a priority for a school in the process of improvement. The principal does not need to be the only figure in the monitoring of professional development and its instructional

effects; he or she needs to set the standard of continued progress toward higher student achievement and improved instructional practices.

Many school districts find using different types and formats for professional development allows more staff members to participate in these activities. Often these professional developments are offered before, after, or during the school day. Some teachers prefer to meet during the day. Using a job-embedded professional development format includes coaching, peer modeling, study groups, and critical friends groups.

Teacher involvement in the planning process is critical for teacher buy-in, knowledge base and appropriate format (Bodilly, Keltner, Purnell, Reichardt, & Schuyler, 1998; Clark, 1992). Research indicates that district cohesiveness in professional development is important for successful school-based implementation.

References

- Bodilly, S., Keltner, B., Purnell, S., Reichardt, R., & Schuyler, G. (1998). *Lessons from the New American Schools' scale-up phase: Prospects for bringing designs to multiple schools*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
- Clark, C. M. (1992). Teachers as designers in self-directed professional development. In A. Hargreaves (Ed.), *Understanding teacher development* (pp. 75–84). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Joyce, B. R., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Additional Auditor's Findings

This section includes findings that did not emerge as key findings in the cointerpretation, but that Learning Point Associates views as critical enough to warrant district-level recommendations in the section Recommendations for Action Planning. As such, we have included a summary of the findings here. In Hempstead, there were only two such areas that emerged.

1. There has been significant conflict in recent years between the School Board and the district employees and between and among Board members that is detrimental to the functioning of the district.

- All respondents who discussed the current Board of Education said governance is a major challenge for the district.

In many school districts, school boards are so focused on the minutiae of operational detail that the superintendent is seen as more as a distraction, or worse, than as a leader of change (Dawson & Quinn, 2004). The key to turning around such a dysfunctional relationship is effectively creating a new relationship between the school board and the superintendent that is clear in terms of the board's governance responsibility and the superintendent's operational responsibility for students' academic success (Dawson & Quinn, 2004). School boards in the Dawson and Quinn study (2004) recognized the need to change their focus from daily operations to long-term student achievement gains and have built success with strong, proactive relations with the communities they serve.

Beyond clarification of the top administrative roles, another aspect of this problem area could be a breakdown in communication between district, school personnel, and the community. In this case, perhaps parents do not know where to turn so they are turning to the school board rather than a more appropriate channel. Administrators are the educational focal point between the school and the local community so they must be able to communicate effectively any concerns, ideas, or news and receive feedback (Rowicki, 1999). In fact, it has been recommended that administrators actively seek feedback (Bolman & Deal, 1993). This may entail some outreach by the schools and district to parents to get them involved. This has been done by fostering a climate where parental involvement is valued, providing professional development on effective communication between school and family, and equipping staff with strategies to engage parents (Mississippi Department of Education, 2004).

References

- Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (1993). *The path to school leadership: A portable mentor*. Newberry Park, CA: Corwin Press.
- Dawson, L. J., & Quinn, R. (2004). Coherent governance: A board-superintendent relationship based on defined goals can raise achievement. *School Administrator*, 61(10), 29–33.
- Mississippi Department of Education. (2004). *Getting involved: The parent, school, and community involvement guide*. Jackson, MS: Author (ERIC Document No. ED486620).

Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED486620>

Rowicki, M. A. (1999). *Communication skills for educational administrators* (ERIC Document No. ED432830). Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED432830>

Recommendations for Action Planning

In this section, we use the problem statements and key findings, along with research on literacy best practice and district improvement, to suggest implications for the district's efforts during the next three years. A general recommendation is provided to address each problem statement, followed with a set of specific actions for the district to consider during the action-planning process. The diversity and complexity of each problem statement places limits on the extent to which we can discern their relative impact on the district's improvement process. For this reason, recommendations are firm, but the associated actions for implementation should be considered points of reference for further discussion.

Recommendation 1

Design and implement a plan that will result in the systemic use of data to drive decision making related to policy, programs, and practices in the area of English language arts. (Problem Statement 1)

Hempstead Union Free School District has many programs in place that will support data use. The district gives state, district, and local assessments that will provide the raw data to inform instructional decisions. Hempstead High School has increased accountability for student achievement by creating clear methods of assessment regarding staff and student performance. Priority areas for the district in its 2005-2006 Professional Development Plan are Use of District Data for Instructional and Curriculum Planning, and Use of Student Performance Data—Attendance, Discipline, School Safety and School Completion. The Hempstead Union Free School District/Network has formed a committee on Student and District Data, and that committee has created a strategic plan. Finally, the district has completed all district actions under the priority area of Data Management in its last Performance Plan status update.

There is a need for a systemic approach to data use. This recommendation has a complexity that directly impacts many aspects of the district, including personnel, infrastructure, instruction, curriculum, and professional development.

To systemically use data to drive decisions, the district will need to consider how to do the following:

- Determine the essential data elements that are needed at the district, school, and classroom levels.
- Develop operational processes and procedures that ensure data are collected, analyzed, and disseminated or reported, and programmatic and instructional decisions are made at all levels in the district in an efficient and timely manner.
- Ensure that schools and staff have equitable access to the technology needed to collect and report data.
- Provide the support (i.e., technology assistance, development of “user-friendly” reporting mechanisms, and professional development at multiple levels) needed to make the systemic use of data possible, understood, and valued.

- Develop the requisite organizational and staffing structures needed at the district and school levels to carry out the actions necessary for the systemic use of data.

To improve performance in English language arts, the district will need (1) administrators and teachers trained to understand the data sources, how to use data from various sources, and how to more effectively implement data-driven decision-making practices; (2) procedures for administrators to support and monitor effective data use in the classroom; (3) an integration and streamlining of various assessments that provide similar information; (4) to implement new and different kinds of classroom-based assessments in a consistent manner districtwide, which are then reported up to the school and district and provide user-friendly information for teachers (e.g., running records, observation logs, etc.); (5) to improve communication between the district and schools to promote a deeper understanding of the importance of data and how to interpret and use the data on an ongoing basis; (6) to create guidelines and professional development to support the use of data to restructure curriculum and instruction to meet students' needs; and (7) to align the school improvement planning process to include the use of newly created data templates to fully analyze student achievement in English language arts.

In order to utilize data to assess the performance of students across the district, a similar assessment must be utilized across buildings. These assessments must be both formative and summative. Hempstead should examine the current local assessments to determine the type and purpose of the assessments and the alignment with the overall learning objectives. Achievement test data should be used as a component of assessment. Effective data-driven decision making requires the use of not only the standardized test data but also formative assessments conducted throughout the academic year to accurately represent a student's reading achievement and growth (Afflerbach, 2004).

The district may want to consider the following additional ideas:

- A districtwide committee that would create an assessment plan. This committee would determine what assessments should be used for progress monitoring, screening, diagnostic testing, eligibility for additional services, and program evaluation. This committee's job also would include determining what assessments are required districtwide and what assessments are recommended that schools and teachers can choose from in addition to the districtwide assessments. The plan would include processes and procedures for the reporting of results and supporting the interpretation and sequent action planning (i.e., creation, implementation, and monitoring of those actions).
- A series of common reading assessments that are given three to four times a year as progress monitoring to identify students in need of additional support and for program or intervention evaluation. The results of these assessments should be used at the district level to refine the district curriculum.
- Timelines for assessment administration and reporting that are set and followed.
- Data analysis, data display, and interpretation of common district-level assessments conducted at the district, school, and teacher level.
- Professional development to build school capacity and expertise in the area of assessments and interpretation.

- Examining how language and literacy acquisition is being monitored and assessed for linguistically and academically diverse students.

Reference

Afflerbach, P. (2004). *High stakes testing and reading assessment* (National Reading Conference Policy Brief). Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.nrconline.org/publications/HighStakesTestingandReadingAssessment.pdf>

Recommendation 2

Improve the supports for students from diverse populations: (1) *as related to LEP students* (a) ensure consistent staffing in the area of ELL, (b) ensure the English language arts curriculum is developed with input from ELL teachers, (c) adopt higher quality instructional materials that are culturally sensitive, and (d) introduce effective strategies for and provide time for ELL and classroom teachers to meet, plan, and teach together; (2) *as related to students from various cultures including the culture of poverty* (a) increase professional development including cultural sensitivity training, and (b) hold teachers accountable for adjusting their classroom environments, lessons, and instructional practices to correspond appropriately to their students' cultures. (Problem Statement 2)

Hempstead Union Free School District has many programs in place to address this recommendation. They have held parent forums regarding supplemental education services. The Hempstead Union Free School District/Network has formed committees on Bilingual/ESL, and also Special Education and those committees have created a strategic plan. Hempstead Union Free School District is a member of the Long Island Regional Strategic Planning Network, and that group includes support and technical assistance in the areas of Bilingual/ESL and Special Education. Hempstead Union Free School District holds regular subject matter specialists meetings with updates from the Bilingual/ESL and Special Education departments. Finally, the district has made progress on or completed all district actions under the priority areas of ESL/Bilingual Program Mandates and Special Education Mandates in its last Performance Plan status update.

Recommendation 2 represents solid measures to address the need for immediate districtwide change in the attention and direction for students from various cultures as described in Problem Statement 2. A number of ideas are presented here for the district to consider in implementing the recommendation.

For English language learner students, ideas include the following:

- Examine students served by BOCES and provide services locally for students, when appropriate.
- Create additional student support systems (e.g., afterschool programs) for students and their parents.
- Create a districtwide commitment to and plan for ELL students and instill the concept that *all* teachers are responsible for the success of *all* learners.
- Increase professional development for content-area teachers related to instructional practices for and understanding the needs of ELL students.
- Provide time and instruction to improve the communication, coplanning, and coteaching of ELL teachers and content-area teachers. (Hollingsworth, 2001)
- Complete the ELL curriculum, which is based on scientifically based research and aligns to the New York State ESL Standards. (Problem Statement 3)

- Increase programs for and involvement of parents of ESL students, with a focus on providing for parents who speak neither English nor Spanish.
- Routinely disaggregate the data for academic achievement and English language acquisition, graduation rate, attendance, disciplinary action, length of time in the LEP program, and enrollment of LEP students in special education and gifted and talented classrooms to evaluate programs, services, and compliance. (Problem Statement 1)

For students from various cultures including the culture of poverty, ideas include the following:

- Establish a professional development theme of “culture” to counter myths and assumptions, to change attitudes and beliefs, and to provide teachers with assistance in creating culturally responsive classrooms (Pajkos & Klein-Collins, 2001).
- Implement systems of monitoring and mentoring teachers in the establishment of culturally responsive classrooms.

References

Hollingsworth, H. L. (2001). We need to talk: Communication strategies for effective collaboration. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 33(5), 4–8.

Pajkos, D., & Klein-Collins, J. (2001). *Improving upper grade mathematics achievement via the integration of a culturally responsive curriculum*. (ERIC Document No. ED460853). Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED460853>

Recommendation 3

Fully implement a English language arts curriculum that includes the following: explicit alignment to the state standards; mapping and articulation at all grade levels; teacher supports including training on specific literacy skills; monitoring processes to ensure consistent curriculum implementation and delivery across the district; and sufficient materials (books, workbooks, etc.) for teachers and students to successfully implement the curriculum. (Problem Statements 3, 4, 5)

Hempstead Union Free School District has programs in place already to address this issue. The district has developed grade level expectations and identified curriculum strategies for bilingual, special education and general education students that are aligned with the research based approach to early literacy education as outlined in “A Framework for Early Literacy Instruction” by Bodrova, Leong, Peynter, and Semenov (2000). Priority areas of Differentiated Instruction, Essential Elements of Instruction, and Methods for Adopting Curriculum and Instructional Technique have been identified in the district’s Professional Development plan for 2005-2006. The district has also adopted a contingency budget that allows for school level staffing as well as ordering of sufficient textbooks and instructional materials needed to begin the 2005-2006 school year. The Hempstead Union Free School District/Network has formed a committee on Curriculum and Professional Development and this committee has created a strategic plan. Hempstead Union Free School District is a member of the Long Island Regional Strategic

Planning Network, and that group includes support and technical assistance in the areas of curriculum and professional development. Hempstead High School has established benchmarks that reflect progress towards reaching student proficiency performance levels, and is exposing teachers to research based professional development models that will address changes in teaching practice. A committee has begun meeting to articulate middle and high school curriculum. Finally, textbook selection and adoption policies are in place at the board level.

Multiple data sets confirm that while benchmarks, assessments, and pacing guides exist for Grades K–6 in literacy, they are not consistently utilized, and they may not be aligned horizontally and vertically. Furthermore, there is not a written curriculum that includes the standard, the performance indicators, the key concepts, and/or sample tasks. As such, the existing pacing guides do not provide sufficient guidance for teachers, and the use of these is not monitored. Further, a written curriculum is not in place for Grades 9–12. While there are several detailed documents at the course level, these are not aligned across grades.

The conclusion of Marzano’s (2003) research synthesis is explicit—“guaranteed and viable curriculum” is the most important factor impacting student achievement. We suggest that Hempstead Union Free School District do the following:

- Develop a literacy curriculum across K–12 that has horizontal consistency and is vertically aligned. The existing state standards and benchmarks that are in the current pacing guides can be used as a starting point for this process in the lower grades, and the Literacy Benchmark Expectations for Grade 9–12 can be used as a starting point for the upper grades. The curriculum should (1) be standard based, (2) have benchmarks, (3) be based on scientific reading research, and (4) include performance benchmarks and aligned assessments to monitor student progress, instructional practices, and programs. This process also should begin to address the current misalignment between local and state assessments.
- Engage teachers in the development of tools such as curriculum maps, written scopes and sequences including suggested pacing guides (weekly or monthly), and documented district guides for instructional strategies which will aid teachers in fully implementing the curriculum.
- Include suggestions for modified and differentiated instruction to address the needs of ELL, special-needs, and culturally diverse learners.
- Develop processes for data collection, analysis, reporting and interpretation. This is addressed in more detail in the recommendation addressing data.
- Support teachers in the implementation of curriculum with adequate professional development and materials.

Problem Statements 3 and 4 identify the lack of effective tools for monitoring of curriculum implementation as a root cause of this issue. There are several approaches to monitoring curriculum implementation. Actions for consideration include the following:

- Prioritize instructional leadership in literacy as a core responsibility for administrators and teacher leaders. This may include instructional leadership training for administrators

and teachers to support consistent English language arts curriculum implementation, as well as a modified evaluation process that includes an associated performance measure.

- Revise or create instruments (i.e., observation protocols, curriculum review protocols) to conduct reliable review and assessments of English language arts curriculum as follows:
 - Develop peer review and observation structures that allow teachers within and across schools to provide one another with critical feedback on the quality of English language arts curriculum implementation.
 - Tie administrator and teacher evaluation procedures to curricular and instructional implementation of the defined district curriculum.
- Consider hiring an English language arts specialist for the district.

Finally, Problem Statement 5 discusses the need for professional development. Problem Statement 3 identifies the need for professional development as a part of the writing of a comprehensive English language arts curriculum as well as for implementation and monitoring of said curriculum. Problem Statement 2 identifies the need for professional development focused on instructing students from diverse populations. This professional development is needed for all teachers, not just those serving special needs. Given limited resources, Hempstead Union Free School District should consider focusing the majority of its professional development resources in literacy as well as literacy in the content areas. We recognize that there will always be a need for some professional development in other areas, but we also know that if too scattered, professional development activities have little chance to change teacher behavior. Weglinsky (2002) found that when teachers spend time on professional development that is not focused on content, there is little impact on student outcomes. It is critical that this focus is agreed upon and communicated across the district.

Once a fully articulated English language arts curriculum is in place, this curriculum—along with strategies for content-area literacy instruction and instruction for special education and ESL students—should provide a framework for the agreed-upon practices. With a framework for literacy practices in place, the district can then determine where to prioritize professional development offerings. While the district may want to conduct a more focused needs analysis in this area, findings from this audit reveal a need for targeted professional development in the following areas:

- Reading methods at all grade levels and across subject areas, with a targeted focus at the upper grades (5–12).
- Differentiation of instruction for students with disabilities.
- Specific research-validated teaching strategies.

In addition, we recommend that the noncontent-based professional development be focused on exploring cultures and experiences of the students within the district.

It also is important that the methods used for professional development are conducive to improving instruction and developing and retaining high-quality teachers. Job-embedded professional development is regarded by experts as a strong approach that offers multiple

pathways. Professional learning communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998), schoolwide study groups (Taylor, 2004), literacy coaching, using specialists, (Walploe & McKenna, 2004), Lesson Study (Lewis & Tsuchida, 1998), mentoring and induction (Boyer, 1999, as cited in Holloway, 2001), and a myriad of other systemic initiatives have a strong research base and require similar elements for successful implementation. The elements needed for successful implementation of professional development resemble those needed for developing a data-driven organization and should include supporting common articulated goals, and building professional knowledge as well as providing support to teachers, especially those new to the profession, during the change process.

Finally, the district needs a cohesive plan for the development of high-quality teachers with focused and targeted professional development activities. Hempstead's current plan should be assessed for the following focus areas:

- **Administrator and faculty buy-in:** How will the plan elicit principals' and teachers' interest?
- **Sustainability:** What are the implementation timelines? Does the plan have a cohesive focus that helps teachers build on knowledge and skills over a long period of time?
- **Monitoring:** How will the district determine at multiple points within a school year and across school years if the professional development is impacting instruction? How will site administrators monitor the implementation of skills learned in professional development?
- **Addressing the right needs:** How will the district collect data to determine the content needs of professional development? Data sources should include a combination of student achievement data, teacher and principal recommendations, and data from analyses of enacted curriculum as compared to written curriculum (i.e., whether teachers are teaching to standards and state tests).
- **Research-based content:** Initiatives should be guided by research. They should be creating an aligned set of research-based strategies that are implemented in content-based classrooms.
- **Appropriate and varied methodologies:** Methodologies for professional development should consider more than just informational sessions—peer review models, coaching programs, or other job-embedded programs can be added to increase staff buy-in, sustainability, and effectiveness. The district may consider creating communities of practice that meet (with release time or other incentives) to engage in continuous, structured meetings to assess instructional practices, analyze data, read relevant research, and share knowledge.
- **Cohesiveness:** How will the district ensure that the professional development plan cohesively serves the entire district? What policies should be in place to ensure that all schools have access to the same level of professional development activities?

References

- Bodrova, E., Leong, D. J., Paynter, D. E., & Semenov, D. (2000). *A framework for early literacy instruction: Aligning standards to developmental accomplishments and student behaviors*. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.
- DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.
- Holloway, J. (2001). Research link: The benefits of mentoring. *Educational Leadership*, 58(8), 85–86.
- Lewis, C., & Tsuchida, I. (1998, Winter). A lesson is like a swiftly flowing river: Research lessons and the improvement of Japanese education. *American Educator*, 14–17, 50–52.
- Marzano, R. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Taylor, B. (2004). Schoolwide study groups. In D. S. Strickland & M. L. Kamil (Eds.), *Improving reading achievement through professional development*. Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon.
- Walpole, S., & McKenna, M. C. (2004). *The literacy coach's handbook: A guide to research-based practice*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Weglinsky, H. (2000). *How teaching matters: Bringing the classroom back into discussions of teacher quality*. Princeton, NJ: ETS.

Recommendation 4

Provide a structure for the effective functioning of the Board of Education, instituting the following:

- A published calendar of board meetings and other functions that is widely distributed. Distribute notices of meeting and agendas with results to be achieved in accordance with state requirements at least two work days prior to the meeting.
- Established agendas, with meeting start and stop times defined and respected.
- An action plan to establish a more functional and productive relationship between the Board of Education and district administrators.

Appendix A

Data Maps

Hempstead Union Free School District Cointerpretation Key Findings, Problem Statements, and Hypotheses

During the cointerpretation process, participants analyzed 12 individual reports (data sets). Participants identified findings from across the data sets under each of the six strands examined through the audit: curriculum, instruction, professional development, assessment, management, and compliance. Participants worked together to identify which findings were most significant. The key findings were then translated into problem statements. The participants articulated hypotheses on what the root cause of each problem is. The following tables document the results of this cointerpretation process. Table A1 lists the final problem statements.

Table A1. Final Problem Statements

Problem Statement	Key Findings
1. Data collection and interpretation are not consistently used to make decisions related to policy, program, and practices at all levels.	B—8 and 9
2. The district does not consistently provide culturally relevant curriculum, activities, and programs to support its diverse population.	E—7
3. There is no comprehensive K–12 English language arts curriculum that is aligned horizontally and vertically to state standards and assessments.	A—1, 2, and 6
4. There is no consistent and uniform policy for monitoring curriculum implementation districtwide.	A—1, 2, and 6
5. The professional development plan does not build capacity relative to duties and responsibilities of all members of the school community.	C—3 and 11

Table A2 lists each of the problem statements identified by cointerpretation participants, followed by the hypothesized root causes. The hypotheses followed by a + are those that received enough support to move on in the process.

Table A2. Problem Statements and Hypotheses

Problem Statement 1. Data collection and interpretation are not consistently used to make decisions related to policy, program and practices at all levels.				
Rank	Hypothesis	C1	C2	C3
5	No staff development on interpretation of data.	+	+	+
5	Lack of consistently shared data with staff.	+	+	+
1	Lack of available assessment data.	+	+	+
2	Lack of personnel to analyze, interpret, and disseminate data throughout district.	+	+	+
4	Staff resistant to change instructional techniques (by use of data).	0	+	0
3	Format of data not user friendly.	+	+	+
6	Need for periodic evaluation of programs, curriculum, etc.	+	+	+
2	Lack of understanding (districtwide) of the value of utilizing data.	+	+	+
Problem Statement 2. The district does not consistently provide culturally relevant curriculum, activities, and programs to support its diverse population.				
Rank	Hypothesis	C1	C2	C3
1	Lack of comprehensive curriculum (K–12).	+	+	+
1	Alignment of diverse resources and/or materials.	+	+	+
1	Need for cultural sensitivity training for all (language, customs, and/or traditions).	+	+	+
1	Diversity embedded in comprehensive curriculum is needed—address all populations.	+	+	+
5	Need for increased community-based partnerships.	+	+	+
4	Need for ongoing parental workshops.	+	+	+
5	Strongly held beliefs about educating ELL students (immersion).	+	+	+
2	Lack of constant monitoring requirements to change curriculum, activities, and programs that align with the changing demographics of the district.	+	+	+
1	Set higher standards for all students.	+	+	+
1	More challenging academic programs are needed.	+	+	+
3	Development of alternative assessments and portfolio assessments are needed.	+	+	+

Problem Statement 3. There is no comprehensive K–12 English language arts curriculum that is aligned horizontally and vertically to state standards and assessments.				
Rank	Hypothesis	C1	C2	C3
1	No consistent leadership at central office.	+	+	+
3	Program driven rather than research based, according to the needs of our district.	+	+	+
2	Too short-term duration of adopted instructional programs.	+	+	+
1	There are indications that cronyism and nepotism have impacted the purchasing of programs and equipment and the hiring of key personnel.	+	+	+
3	Lack of resources needed to continue implementation of program.	+	+	+
4	Lack of appropriate professional development to write and implement curriculum.	+	+	+
6	Little funding given to curriculum writing.	+	+	+
5	Demographics changed but the process of writing curriculum did not change to meet student needs.	+	+	+
1	There is no system for writing, monitoring, implementing, evaluating, and revising curriculum.	+	+	+
Problem Statement 4. There is no consistent and uniform policy for monitoring curriculum implementation districtwide.				
Rank	Hypothesis	C1	C2	C3
1	There is no curriculum to monitor.	+	+	+
1	Change in leadership has negatively impacted development of comprehensive K–12 English language arts curriculum.	+	+	+
1	The Board of Education needs to establish and support superintendent initiatives to develop a comprehensive curriculum.	+	+	+

Problem Statement 5. The professional development plan does not build capacity relative to duties and responsibilities of all members of the school community.				
Rank	Hypothesis	C1	C2	C3
2	Collective bargaining agreement does not include a clause to implement professional development.	+	+	+
3	Board policies don't exist regarding professional development.	+	+	+
4	No procedures are established to monitor and implement professional development.	+	+	+
1	General fund budgeting is required.	+	+	+
4	Professional development has not been a focus.	+	+	+
6	Staff development has no focus.	+	+	+
7	Not all available professional development resources (BOCES, TC, vendors, curriculum coaches) are used.	+	+	+
5	Professional development has been last minute, administratively controlled, and done without a needs assessment.	+	0	+

Table A3 lists the key findings identified by cointerpretation participants. The key findings were chosen from all of the findings the group identified through two rounds of voting and informal discussion. Some of the key findings were produced by combining multiple findings identified during the first stage of the co-articulation process.

Table A3. Key Findings

Letter	Finding	Votes
A	2. Lack of a well-written K–12 English language arts curriculum aligned to state standards and state assessments, along with monitoring system that ensures consistent and uniform implementation across all grade levels including general education, ELL, and students with disabilities.	20
	<i>plus</i> 1. Teachers’ reported areas of instructional emphasis do not correspond to the state’s desired emphasis of the standards or the state’s assessments.	5
	<i>plus</i> 6. There is a lack of vertical and horizontal K–12 curriculum alignment with state standards and assessment.	16
B	8. We need current and accurate data to make informed instructional decision and to evaluate program effectiveness.	10
	<i>plus</i> 9. We need accurate and complete data and the involvement of stakeholders to identify appropriate instructional resources.	3
C	3. We need staff development: professional development done at building level. Professional development not tied to curriculum. Data not being used to drive professional development and curriculum implementation.	8
	<i>plus</i> 11. There is a need for ongoing and consistent professional development in implementing curriculum, instruction, assessment and the use of technology.	7
D	5. A lack of strict guidelines for code of conduct at all Board of Education meetings.	5
	<i>plus</i> 4. 4. A lack of Board of Education cooperation with the central office administration, building administration, staff, and community.	15
E	7. District is not adequately meeting the demands of its diverse population.	4

Table A4 lists all of the findings identified by cointerpretation participants. Findings were pulled from various data sets, which are available in the supportive documentation section of this report. The data sets include the following:

- PR—Preliminary Report (Supportive Document A)
- SA—Student Assessment Report (Supportive Document B)

- KDD—Key District Document Review Summary (Supportive Document C)
- DS—Key Findings from District Interviews (Supportive Document D)
- TP—Teacher and Principal Report (Supportive Document F)
- PS—Findings from Student Focus Groups and Findings from Parent Focus Groups (Supportive Document I)
- SEC—*Surveys of Enacted Curriculum* Reports for Schools and Districts (Supportive Document Q)
- CO—Classroom Observation Data Report (Supportive Document J)
- MC1—Management and Compliance Document Review Summary (Supportive Document K)
- MC2—Management and Compliance Findings from Administrator and Board Interviews (Supportive Document L)
- MC3—Management and Compliance Findings from Principal and Teacher Interviews (Supportive Document M)
- SWD—Special Education Report (Supportive Document)

An indication of where support for each finding is supported can be seen in Table A4. The numbers indicate the page number in the original draft where the cointerpretation participants found support for this finding. Multiple drafts mean that these page numbers do not necessarily align with the page numbers in the documents as they exist. They still serve to let the reader know approximately where in the document participants found support for a given finding.

The final column in the chart indicates the number of participants who felt that each finding should be included in the key findings. Some findings were considered in two separate votes, thus two vote counts are included in this column. Finally, the reader will notice that some of the key findings were chosen through discussion, rather than the voting process. These key findings are included even though they did not receive the required number of votes during either round of voting.

Table A4. Supportive Documents

Findings	Data Sets												Vote	
	PR	SA	KDD	DS	TP	PS	SEC	CO	MC1	MC2	MC3	SWD		
1. Teachers’ reported areas of instructional emphasis do not correspond to the state’s desired emphasis of the standards or the state’s assessments.							15, 16							5
2. Lack of a well-written K–12 English language arts curriculum aligned to state standards and state assessments; along with monitoring system that ensures consistent and uniform implementation across all grade levels including general education, ELL and students with disabilities.	6	1, 2	1–3	2										20
3. We need staff development: professional development done at building level. Professional development not tied to curriculum. Data not being used to drive professional development and curriculum implementation.					x									8
4. A lack of Board of Education cooperation with the central office administration, building administration, staff, and community.						x				1				15
5. A lack of strict guidelines for code of conduct at all Board of Education meetings.						x				1				5
Professional Development	PR	SA	KDD	DS	TP	PS	SEC	CO	MC1	MC2	MC3	SWD	Vote	
6. There is a lack of vertical and horizontal K–12 curriculum alignment with state standards and assessments.			2, 3	2			6 to 18							16
7. District is not adequately meeting the demands of its diverse population.				3	2									4
8. We need current and accurate data to make informed instructional decisions and to evaluate program effectiveness.		x		4										10

Findings	Data Sets												Vote
	PR	SA	KDD	DS	TP	PS	SEC	CO	MC1	MC2	MC3	SWD	
9. We need accurate and complete data and the involvement of stakeholders to identify appropriate instructional resources.			1		2		12, 18	7					3
10. There is limited evidence of collaboration between content-area teachers and other key stakeholders.									3				0
11. There is a need for ongoing and consistent professional development in implementing curriculum, instruction, assessment, and the use of technology.				4	2-4	2		2					7

Appendix B

Action Planning

Action Planning Process Overview

Hempstead Union Free School District followed the recommended action planning process we provided. A brief description of the steps taken, along with the agreed upon goals and strategies are included here. Submission of the completed action plan is the responsibility of the district.

Goal and Strategy Planning

The April 2006 Hempstead Union Free School District: Interim Report was completed by Learning Point Associates and received by the District. The Audit Action Planning Process was initiated by scheduling Goals and Strategy Planning meetings.

Learning Point Associates facilitated meetings on April 28th, May 10th, and May 12th with three Central Office Administrators: Rebecca Skinner, -Funded Programs, Compliance & School Improvement, Sally Thompson, Assistant Superintendent-Elementary Education and Marianna Steele, Assistant Superintendent -Secondary Education. At these meetings, Learning Point Associates and the three administrators reviewed and reflected on the April 2006 Interim Report recommendations for the district and discussed establishing goals, strategies and success indicators. Learning Point Associates provided templates for this process.

Through subsequent emails and phone calls, Learning Point Associates continued worked with the District Central Office to refine the Action Plan's goals, strategies and to ensure alignment of these strategies with the Interim Report recommendations. After this step, a Hempstead Union Free School District K-12 English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Committee was formed. This Committee met on May 15, 2006 to review the "Draft" action plan, goals and strategies and helped refine them. The goals and strategies were solidified by May 31, 2006.

Action and Task Planning

Learning Point Associates facilitated a meeting on May 22nd to assist the district in completing the Action and Task Planning process. After the Hempstead Union Free School District identified goals, strategies, and success indicators, they began to create required action steps to fulfill meeting the district goals.

Learning Point Associates provided feedback through email and phone calls on the identified action items, task descriptions and how the district proposed to monitor its progress through the utilization of the success indicators. After this step, Hempstead Union Free School District held a Community Forum on June 6, 2006 to share the Goals, Strategies, and Actions with the larger Hempstead community.

Integration and Alignment Actions

Learning Point Associates encourages articulation and collaboration of action steps across areas of concentration. The Hempstead Union Free School District Action Plan for their goals will be reviewed across groups to identify areas of overlap, commonality, and difference with regards to their action steps and timelines.

Hempstead Union Free School District has taken all required Curriculum Audit actions within the required timeframe. Learning Point Associates anticipates that other District actions will occur in a timely manner once the goals and strategies are approved by NYSED.

Integration and Alignment of Audit Action Plan with Other District Plans and/or School Plans

The final component of the Action Planning process involves the integration and alignment of the audit action plan with other district and school plans. Hempstead Union Free School District has begun to address this process with the 2006-2007 Comprehensive Education Plans and will continue all required District alignments once the goals and strategies are approved by NYSED.

**HEMPSTEAD SCHOOL DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACTION PLAN
YEAR 1: 2006-2007**

Goal #1: By the end of the 2008-2009 school year, Hempstead Union Free School District will ensure consistent implementation of a vertically and horizontally aligned, standards and research based K-12 English Language Arts curriculum.						
Goal #2: By the end of the 2008-2009 school year, Hempstead Union Free School District will use formative and summative data to drive instruction in ELA.						
Strategy	How: (Major Activities/Tasks)	Who (Target Population)	When (Time Frame)	Support (Resources to be used)	Responsibility (Accountability)	Indicators of Success
1. Restructure the school setting to support student's literacy development as learners (e.g. classrooms, offices, parent rooms, resource rooms).	A. Generate a rubric for supervisors to assess the degree and evidence of appropriate literate environments in the school settings. B. Provide professional development to facilitate the implementation process. Additional professional development will address: The multicultural classroom environment; the environment & self esteem; the environment & learning outcomes. C. Develop a cadre of reading teachers and teaching assistants to support the literacy programs in Grades K-3 classrooms	- All schools	9/06 – 12/06	Tax Levy Title I	Superintendent Assistant Superintendents Principals Assistant Principals	<u>Strategy #1</u> --Hempstead Classroom Rubric is developed --Results of Rubric information is reviewed --Record of Professional Development provided is maintained –Topic, attendance, Date(s), Attendees Feedback Survey --Twenty Teaching Assistants trained.
		-Principals -Subject Matter Specialists -Classroom Teachers -Reading Teachers -Teaching Assistants	9/06 - 12/06	Tax Levy Title I	Director of Bilingual Education	
		10/06-04/07 monthly schedule to be developed	IDEA, Title III, Tax Levy, College/University course	Director of Fine Arts & Media Special Education Supervisors		
2. Focus on effective Grades K-3 and 6-12 instructional approaches for literacy development & promote literacy across the curriculum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades K-3: *Reading First- Predicated on getting Reading First grant. If not, 2006-2007 is a Planning Year. • Grades 6-12: Literacy in the Content Areas- student comprehension, word study and fluency in reading and writing. 	A. Provide professional development for supervisory staff. B. Create a checklist to be used to monitor implementation of effective instructional approaches & provide technical assistance where necessary. C. Create & establish family literacy initiatives. D. Establish a district Curriculum Action Plan Team with all involved stakeholders to review literacy initiatives (i.e. Literacy Calendar of Events, mini-grant initiatives, review of professional resources/ELA Curriculum/professional development needs) E. Hire a Director of English Language Arts- Predicated on Governance Approval F. Customize Districts' ELA Curriculum in alignment with the NYS Performance Standards & Assessments. G. Implement and monitor "Literacy in the Content Areas" instructional strategies. H. Monitor & support school Comprehensive Educational Plan. I. Implement & monitor Literacy Blocks	-Principals -Assistant Principals -Central Administrators -Special Education Supervisors	10/06-06/07	Title I, IDEA, Title IIA, Nassau B.O.C.E.S. *LIRSPN	Superintendent Assistant Superintendents Principals Assistant Principals	<u>Strategy #2</u> -- Record of Professional Development provided is maintained –Topic, attendance, Date(s), Attendees Feedback Survey --Hempstead checklist created: Technical assistance offered and provided is recorded. --All schools with Grades K-3 have at minimum one Family Literacy Initiative. --Records & agendas of meetings with Content Area and Literacy Teachers – Elementary & Secondary --Use of checklists linked to implementation of selected programs --CEP's monitored in conjunction with SED liaison oversight through monthly status reports submissions and Public/School Board CEP progress presentations. --Director of English Language Arts recruited and hired. --District Curriculum Action Plan Team developed. Meeting agendas and documentation is available. --Vertical articulation for K-3 and 6-12. --Evidence of Curriculum Maps for Grades K-3 & 6-12.
		-All schools	09/06-06/07	Title I, Title V	Director of Bilingual Education	
		-All Elementary Schools	10/06-06/07	Title I	Director of Fine Arts & Media	
		-Representation from schools, parents, public library, a university and/or college, district office staff, B.O.C.E.S.	10/06-06/07	Public Libraries, Universities & Colleges Title I, Tax Levy	Special Education Supervisors	
		*Use of LIRSPN Reading First regional assistance is predicated on getting 2006-2009 Reading First grant.	10/06-06/07	Title I, IDEA, Title III, Tax Levy		
		-Middle School & High School	10/06-06/07	Title I, IDEA, Title III, Tax Levy		
-Middle School & High School	10/06-06/07	Title I, IDEA, Title III, Tax Levy				
-Elementary Schools - Middle School	09/06-06/07	Tax Lev				

*******DRAFT-- AWAITING SED APPROVAL*******
HEMPSTEAD SCHOOL DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACTION PLAN
YEAR 1: 2006-2007

Strategy	How: (Major Activities/Tasks)	Who (Target Population)	When (Time Frame)	Support (Resources to be used)	Responsibility (Accountability)	Indicators of Success
3. Provide additional literacy supports for all low performing students.	A. Implement extended day program by providing training, ongoing monitoring & supplemental materials.	-All schools	10/06-05/07	Title I, Tax Levy, Extended School Day Grant, SURR and SINI grants, Title III	Superintendent Assistant Superintendents Principals Assistant Principals	<u>Strategy #3</u> --Professional Development agendas, monitoring Extended Day program student results, all materials received & distributed --Summer School Plan developed and approved --AIS Prescriptive Plan documents services offered --Documentation of required SES information: parent notification, SES providers, students receiving service --Pre-referral procedures developed and implemented. Documentation of adherence to these procedures.
	B. Plan for the 2007 summer school programs	-Elementary, Middle School, High School	03/07-06/07	Tax Levy	Director of Bilingual Education	
	C. Provide Academic Intervention Services –for students at Levels 1 & 2; students who have not passed a Regents in two years.	-Eligible Elementary, Middle School and High School students	09/06-06/07	Title I, Tax Levy	Director of Testing, Research & Evaluation	
	D. With parental permission, initiate Supplemental Education Services (SES) process for eligible Middle School and High School students.	-Eligible Middle School and High School students	09/06-05/07	Title I	Director of Management Information Systems & Technology	
	E. Establish pre-referral intervention strategies for students at risk for Special Education placement.	-Elementary, Middle School, High School	10/06-06/07	IDEA, Tax Levy	Special Education Supervisors	

*******DRAFT-- AWAITING SED APPROVAL*******
HEMPSTEAD SCHOOL DISTRICT CURRICULUM ACTION PLAN
YEAR 1: 2006-2007

Strategy	How: (Major Activities/Tasks)	Who (Target Population)	When (Time Frame)	Support (Resources to be used)	Responsibility (Accountability)	Indicators of Success
4. Consistently monitor the academic performance of all students using multiple forms of assessment.	<p>A. Assist schools in using assessments to guide instruction.</p> <p>B. Provide & administer screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome assessments.</p> <p>C. District will create a written mechanism for documenting, collecting & recording information reflecting the literacy development of students.</p> <p>D. Provide multiple opportunities for professional development (i.e. monthly, onsite, BOCES)</p>	<p>- School Administrators -Teacher Trainers</p> <p>-Grades K-12</p> <p>-Principals -Classroom Staff -Parents</p> <p>-School Administrators -Classroom Staff</p>	<p>10/06; 02/07; 05/07</p> <p>4 times a year</p> <p>10/06-06/07</p> <p>10/06 – 06/07</p>	<p>Title I, IDEA, Title III,</p> <p>Tax Levy</p> <p>Title I, IDEA, Title III, Nassau B.O.C.E.S.</p> <p>Title I, Title V, IDEA, Title III</p>	<p>Superintendent Assistant Superintendents Principals Assistant Principals</p> <p>Director of Bilingual Education</p> <p>Director of Testing, Research & Evaluation</p> <p>Director of Management Information Systems & Technology</p> <p>Special Education Supervisors</p>	<p><u>Strategy #4</u> Documentation of Professional Development support, attendance records, feedback surveys. --Hempstead Assessment Manual developed. Documentation of adherence to the Manual's Test Administration schedule. --Student progress monitored Districtwide</p>
5. Develop a program to serve Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)	Create a SIFE program model for the Hempstead School District.	-School Administrators -Bilingual and ESL Teachers	10/06-06/07	Title III, BETAC, Nassau B.O.C.E.S.	Superintendent Assistant Superintendents Director of Bilingual Education	<p><u>Strategy #5</u> --SIFE model selected for secondary students --Record of Professional Development provided to support program implementation.</p>
6. Implement Inclusion model for elementary and secondary Special Education students	Job-embedded professional development to support strategies for implementing Inclusion models	-School Administrators -Special Education and General Education teachers	09/06-06/07	IDEA, SETRC, LIRSPN	Superintendent Assistant Superintendents Principals Assistant Principals Special Education Supervisors	<p><u>Strategy #6</u> -Evidence of selected Inclusion models in place for elementary and secondary schools. -Record of job embedded professional development to support program implementation.</p>