

**A Curriculum Management Audit
of the
Minneapolis Public Schools
Special School District No. 1
Minneapolis, Minnesota**



City View School Reading Group in Action



**International Curriculum Management Audit Center®
Phi Delta Kappa International**

**Eighth and Union
Bloomington, Indiana 47404**

January 2009

**A Curriculum Management Audit
of the
MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Special School District No. 1
Minneapolis, Minnesota**

**Conducted Under the Auspices of
International Curriculum Management Audit Center®
Phi Delta Kappa International
P. O. Box 789
Bloomington, IN 47404-0789**

(Copyright use authorization obtained from
Curriculum Management Systems, Inc.
P. O. Box 857, Johnston, IA 50131)

Date Audit Presented: January 2009

Members of the Minneapolis Public Schools Audit Team:

William K. Poston, Jr., Ed.D., Senior Lead Auditor	Kirk Banghart, M.Ed., Auditor
Janice Brown, Ed.D., Auditor	Joseph R. Busch, Ed.D., Associate Lead Auditor
Mary R. Cannie, Ed.D., Emeritus Lead Auditor	Debra L. Grayson, M.S., Auditor
John B. Murdoch, Ed.D., Associate Lead Auditor	Carlos Pagan, Ed.D., Auditor
James A. Scott, Ph.D., Lead Auditor	Stephanie E. Streeter, M.Ed., Auditor
Susan N. Van Hoozer, M.Ed., Auditor	Patricia R. Williams, M.Ed., Auditor
Lynn F. Zinn, Ed.D., Auditor	

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background	1
Audit Background and Scope of Work.....	3
System Purpose for Conducting the Audit.....	4
Approach of the Audit.....	5
II. METHODOLOGY.....	7
The Model for the Curriculum Management Audit.....	7
A Schematic View of Curricular Quality Control	7
Standards for the Auditors.....	8
Technical Expertise.....	8
The Principle of Independence	8
The Principle of Objectivity	8
The Principle of Consistency.....	8
The Principle of Materiality.....	9
The Principle of Full Disclosure.....	9
Data Sources of the Curriculum Management Audit	10
Standards for the Curriculum Audit	10
III. FINDINGS.....	13
STANDARD 1: The School District Demonstrates Its Control of Resources, Programs, and Personnel.....	13
What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Minneapolis Public Schools:	13
Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Minneapolis Public Schools:	13
Finding 1.1: Board policies do not provide the adequate quality control needed for effective curriculum management and other district functions.	14
Finding 1.2: The administrative structure does not meet audit criteria necessary for effective organizational management.	33
Finding 1.3: Job descriptions are inadequate in specifying organizational roles, relationships, and duties related to system-wide quality control of curriculum design and delivery.	40
Finding 1.4: District and school planning quality is adequate, with some exceptions.	44
Finding 1.5: Administrator monitoring of instructional practices is inconsistent and does not ensure alignment with the <i>Principles of Learning</i> framework.....	55
STANDARD 2: The School District Has Established Clear and Valid Objectives for Students.....	63
What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Minneapolis Public Schools:	63
Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Minneapolis Public Schools:	63
Finding 2.1: The scope of the written curriculum is adequate in grades K-8 but inadequate in grades 9-12.	64

Finding 2.2: The quality of curriculum guides is inadequate to direct teaching and maximize student achievement. Internal consistency of the guides is also insufficient; written curriculum documents align adequately with state standards. Guides are used ineffectively and inconsistently throughout the system.	70
STANDARD 3: The School District Demonstrates Internal Consistency and Rational Equity in Its Program Development and Implementation.	125
What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Minneapolis Public Schools:	125
Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Minneapolis Public Schools:	125
Finding 3.1: District initiatives adopted to address inequities in student access to rigorous educational programs and services have not produced significant improvements in student performance.	126
Finding 3.2: Although plentiful, professional development activities lack formalized planning, are inadequate in directing instruction, and have not demonstrated widely shared changes in observed staff knowledge and skills necessary to improve student achievement.	144
STANDARD 4: The School District Uses the Results from System-Designed and/or -Adopted Assessments to Adjust, Improve, or Terminate Ineffective Practices or Programs.....	151
What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Minneapolis Public Schools:	151
Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Minneapolis Public Schools.....	152
Finding 4.1: The school district does not have a plan to generate the student assessment and program evaluation data necessary to support sound curricular decision making and to improve student achievement.	152
Finding 4.2: The scope of assessment for science, mathematics, social studies, and English language arts is inadequate to effectively evaluate the taught curriculum and does not provide sufficient data for making sound curricular decisions. There are no system-wide student assessments for approximately 44 percent of the taught curriculum.	157
Finding 4.3: Trends show that the percentages of students demonstrating proficiency on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments have stagnated or declined, making attainment of strategic proficiency goals improbable. Achievement gaps exist among student groups and may never close without effective interventions.....	161
Finding 4.4: Policy guidance for use of assessment data to improve student achievement is adequate, but procedures and job description guidance are inadequate. Data use has not substantially improved student proficiency rates on state tests.	178
STANDARD 5: The School District Has Improved Productivity.	185
What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Minneapolis Public Schools:	185
Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Minneapolis Public Schools:	185
Finding 5.1: A proliferation of programs and interventions impedes quality control, and policies and procedures for planning and implementing curriculum interventions are insufficient to ensure positive student achievement results.	186
Finding 5.2: Classroom instructional practices are not directed by of specific system expectations and are inconsistent in reflecting the <i>Principles of Learning</i> framework.....	202
Finding 5.3: Current budgeting and financial reporting processes lack clear linkages between curriculum priorities and resource allocations, inadequately reflect congruence with the system strategic plan, and ineffectively exhibit financial transparency.	213

Finding 5.4: Most school facilities are clean and well maintained. However, some schools lack sufficient space to support a full range of instructional programs. Facilities planning is evident but the district does not have a comprehensive long-range facilities plan.	219
IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PDK-CMSi CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AUDIT TEAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF The Minneapolis Public Schools	223
Recommendation 1: Bring district curriculum and program management and all related functions under system control and thoroughly align these efforts to the district’s strategic plan; manage the pace and implementation of the change process to ensure that curriculum and program alignment efforts come to fruition through viable accountability.....	223
Recommendation 2: Develop and execute a curriculum management plan to coordinate, articulate, and align the written, taught, and tested curriculum that includes up-to-date, high quality, and user friendly curriculum guides with appropriate rigor to promote consistency within and among schools and ensure system-wide quality control.	225
Recommendation 3: Review, revise, adopt, and implement current board policies for meeting the characteristics of sound curriculum management, with special emphasis on integrating current planning functions into board policy.	229
Recommendation 4: Adopt a policy governing administrative functions and the management of job descriptions and the table of organization. Prepare and adopt a set of quality job descriptions and revise the table of organization consistent with sound management principles. Configure personnel to reinstate a Chief Academic Officer to ensure that the essential functions relating to curriculum design and delivery, assessments, data management and interpretation, professional development, and program evaluation are covered.....	231
Recommendation 5: To provide for more effective use of data to improve student achievement, develop and implement a plan that provides for the systematic collection, analysis, dissemination, and application of student achievement and program evaluation results. Provide professional development support for the analysis and effective use of data to support teaching and learning.....	234
Recommendation 6 : Design and implement processes that align the curriculum monitoring strategies to the <i>Principles of Learning</i> model.	236
Recommendation 7: Immediately implement strategic plan strategies and action steps focused on eliminating barriers to equitable access to district programs and services and move toward closing the achievement gap.	238
Recommendation 8 : Develop and implement policies, regulations, and plans to move from a demonstration model of professional development to a comprehensive and individualized training program focused on results-oriented strategies that improve instructional skills and student achievement.	239
Recommendation 9: Review and revise intervention policy and develop clearly defined processes and procedures to control the proliferation of program interventions in the school system and monitor their effectiveness to enhance student academic performance.	241
Recommendation 10: Develop and implement a five-year plan that fully aligns district resources to strategic priorities and curricular goals and requires the use of performance-based budgeting processes focused on documentable results, positive achievement growth, and transparency in financial planning.....	243
V. SUMMARY	247
VI. APPENDICES	251
Appendix A: Auditors’ Biographical Data.....	253
Appendix B: List of Documents Reviewed.....	257

Table of Exhibits

Exhibit 1.1.1	Curriculum Management Board Policies and Administrative Regulations Reviewed by Audit Team.....	15
Exhibit 1.1.2	Quality Criteria for Curriculum Management Policies and Regulations.....	19
Exhibit 1.2.1	Table of Organization—Administration	34
Exhibit 1.2.2	Table of Organization—Deputy Superintendent	35
Exhibit 1.2.3	Table of Organization—Curriculum & Instruction.....	36
Exhibit 1.2.4	Principles of Sound Organizational Management	38
Exhibit 1.3.1	Curriculum Management Audit Rating Indicators for Job Descriptions	41
Exhibit 1.3.2	Quality of Job Descriptions Reviewed Using Audit Indicators	41
Exhibit 1.4.1	List of Planning-Related Documents.....	45
Exhibit 1.4.2	Characteristics of Quality Planning Audit Criteria—Design, Deployment, and Delivery	47
Exhibit 1.4.3	Quality of the Districtwide Plan Audit Criteria—Design, Deployment, and Delivery	50
Exhibit 1.4.4	Quality of the School Improvement Plans Audit Criteria—Design, Deployment, and Delivery	52
Exhibit 1.5.1	Summary of Monitoring of Curriculum Implementation in Selected Schools	58
Exhibit 2.1.1	Key Curriculum Planning/Guidance Documents and Materials Reviewed by Auditors.....	66
Exhibit 2.1.2	Scope of Curriculum Guidance Documents for Core Content Areas in Grades K-5	68
Exhibit 2.1.3	Scope of Curriculum Guidance Documents for Core Content Areas in Grades 6-8	68
Exhibit 2.1.4	Scope of Curriculum Guidance Documents for Core Content Areas in Grades 9-12	69
Exhibit 2.1.5	Summary of the Scope of Curriculum Guidance Documents for Core Content Areas in Grades K-12.....	69
Exhibit 2.2.1	Curriculum Guide Audit Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Curriculum Guides.....	73
Exhibit 2.2.2	Auditors’ Ratings of English Language Arts Curriculum Guidance Documents for Grades K-12.....	74
Exhibit 2.2.3	Auditors’ Ratings of Mathematics Curriculum Guidance Documents for Grades K-12.....	76
Exhibit 2.2.4	Auditors’ Ratings of Science Curriculum Guidance Documents for Grades K-12	78
Exhibit 2.2.5	Auditors’ Ratings of Social Studies Curriculum Guidance Documents for Grades K-12.....	80
Exhibit 2.2.6	Auditors’ Summary of Ratings for Curriculum Guidance Documents for Grades K-12	82
Exhibit 2.2.7	National English Language Arts Standards Incorporated In Minnesota Reading and Writing Grade Level Benchmarks And District Curriculum Documents	87
Exhibit 2.2.8	Auditors’ Analysis of State Reading Expectations: Redundancy of Benchmarks across Grade Levels K-12.....	90
Exhibit 2.2.9	Auditors’ Analysis of State Writing Expectations: Redundancy of Benchmarks across Grade Levels K-12.....	92
Exhibit 2.2.10	Internal Consistency with Instructional Resources in English Language Arts Grades 3, 5, 7, and 10	94

Exhibit 2.2.11	Congruence of Instructional Strategies with State Grade Level Benchmarks in English Language Arts Grades 3, 5, 7 and 10.....	97
Exhibit 2.2.12	Congruence of Assessment Items in MCA-II Item Samplers With State Grade Level Benchmarks in English Language Arts Grades 3, 5, 7 and 10	100
Exhibit 2.2.13	Congruence of Assessment Items in District Curriculum Guidance Documents With State Grade Level Benchmarks in English Language Arts Grades 3, 5, 7 and 10.....	103
Exhibit 2.2.14	Classroom Artifact Congruence with Minnesota Academic Standards	105
Exhibit 2.2.15	Description of Cognitive Types in Bloom’s Taxonomy.....	108
Exhibit 2.2.16	Cognitive Domains of State English Language Arts Benchmarks Grades 3, 5, 7, and 9-12 Using Bloom’s Taxonomy	109
Exhibit 2.2.17	Analysis of Student Artifacts for Types of Cognition Required Using Bloom’s Taxonomy of Cognitive Domains	110
Exhibit 2.2.18	Cognitive Domains of Student Artifacts Kindergarten Through Grade 5	111
Exhibit 2.2.19	Cognitive Domains of Student Artifacts Grades 6 Through 8.....	112
Exhibit 2.2.20	Cognitive Domains of Student Artifacts Grades 9 Through 12.....	112
Exhibit 2.2.21	Analysis of Best Practice Typology in Language Arts In Selected Grade Level Resources Grades 3, 5, 7, and 10	114
Exhibit 2.2.22	Principles of Learning.....	119
Exhibit 2.2.23	Evidence of Incorporation of Principles of Learning in English Language Arts Curriculum Documents	121
Exhibit 3.1.1	Ethnicity of Students and Socioeconomic Status in Percentages	128
Exhibit 3.1.2	Ethnicity of Students and District Teachers in Percentages.....	129
Exhibit 3.1.3	Gender of Students and District Staff by Percentages.....	130
Exhibit 3.1.4	Enrollment in Special Education By Ethnicity in Percentages.....	131
Exhibit 3.1.5	Number of Second Grade Students in Gifted and Talented Education by Ethnicity in Percentages	132
Exhibit 3.1.6	High School Graduation Rate by Ethnicity in Percentages Compared to Statewide Percentages	134
Exhibit 3.1.7	High School Dropout Rate by Ethnicity in Percentages Compared to Statewide Percentages	135
Exhibit 3.1.8	Suspension Rates by Ethnicity in Percentages	136
Exhibit 3.1.9	Expulsion Rates by Ethnicity in Percentages	137
Exhibit 3.1.10	Ethnically-Identifiable Schools.....	138
Exhibit 3.1.11	Teachers by District and at Four Ethnically-Identifiable Schools in Percentages	139
Exhibit 3.1.12	Student Performance at Four Ethnically-Identifiable Schools in Percentages	140
Exhibit 3.2.1	Professional Development Documents Reviewed.....	144
Exhibit 3.2.2	Comprehensive Professional Development Program Criteria And Auditors’ Assessments ..	146
Exhibit 4.1.1	Board Policies and Procedures: Student Assessment and Program Evaluation	153
Exhibit 4.1.2	Characteristics of Comprehensive Student Assessment and Program Evaluation Planning and Auditors’ Assessment of the District’s Approach	154

Exhibit 4.2.1	Summary of Student Assessments Administered	158
Exhibit 4.2.2	Scope of Formal Assessments Administered by Subject and Grade	160
Exhibit 4.3.1	Comparison of District and State Student Pass Rates on the GRAD Examinations in Reading and Writing for High School Students	162
Exhibit 4.3.2	Comparison of District and State Student Reading Proficiency Rates on the MCA-II Examinations: Grades 3–8 and 10	163
Exhibit 4.3.3	Comparison of District and State Student Proficiency Rates on the MCA-II Mathematics Examinations: Grades 3–8 and 11	164
Exhibit 4.3.4	Comparison of District and State Student Proficiency Rates on MCA-II Science Examinations: Grades 5, 8, and High School	165
Exhibit 4.3.5	Three-Year Proficiency Trend for Students in Grades 3–8 and 10 MCA-II Reading Tests—All Proficiency Levels	167
Exhibit 4.3.6	Three-Year Proficiency Trend for Students in Grades 3–8 and 11 MCA-II Mathematics Tests—All Proficiency Levels	168
Exhibit 4.3.7	MCA-II Reading Tests: Grades 3–8 and 10 Comparison of Proficiency Trends and Projections to Strategic Plan Proficiency Goals	169
Exhibit 4.3.8	MCA-II Mathematics Tests: Grades 3–8 and 11 Comparison of Proficiency Trends and Projections to Strategic Plan Proficiency Goals	170
Exhibit 4.3.9	MCA-II Reading Results: Years to Achieve Parity at Eighty Percent Proficiency and Annual Improvement Rates Required to Meet 2014 NCLB Target	172
Exhibit 4.3.10	MCA-II Mathematics Results: Years to Achieve Parity and Eighty Percent Proficiency and Annual Improvement Rates Required to Meet 2014 NCLB Target	174
Exhibit 4.4.1	Sample of District Planning Documents Demonstrating Use of Data	179
Exhibit 4.4.2	Job Descriptions Requiring Data Use.....	180
Exhibit 4.4.3	Characteristics of an Adequate Instructional Approach to Summative Assessment Data Use and Auditors’ Assessment of District Approach	181
Exhibit 5.1.1	Board of Education Policies Reviewed—6000 Series.....	187
Exhibit 5.1.2	Intervention Programs Currently Implemented	189
Exhibit 5.1.3	Numbers and Percentages of Interventions by Type and Instructional Level*	195
Exhibit 5.1.4	Numbers of Interventions Implemented in Selected Schools	196
Exhibit 5.1.5	Comparison of Ethnic Academies as Interventions to Program Intervention Criteria	200
Exhibit 5.2.1	Definitions of Observed Teacher and Student Classroom Behaviors	204
Exhibit 5.2.2	Observed Instructional Methods Used by Teachers.....	205
Exhibit 5.2.3	Observed Student Instructional Behaviors	206
Exhibit 5.2.4	Evidence of <i>Principles of Learning</i> Observed in Classrooms	210
Exhibit 5.3.1	School Allocations	214
Exhibit 5.3.2	Components of Curriculum-driven Budgeting and Ratings of Adequacy.....	215
Exhibit 5.3.3	General Fund Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balances	216
Exhibit R.4.1	Table of Organization Showing Role of Achieve Academic Officer.....	233

Table of Photographs

City View School Reading Group in Action.....	i
Central Union High School, 1857.....	1
South High School’s Diversity Commitment Reflects Strategic Plan	44
Bethune School Performance Data Collection Chart.....	57
Learning Principles on display at Nellie Johnson School.....	61
Academic Standards on display in classroom at Anthony School.....	65
Curriculum display in library at Hall Elementary School	84
Bethune School Kindergarten student involved with Math Investigations.....	99
Mathematics testing at Laney Elementary School.....	99
Worksheet lesson in progress at North High School.....	113
Hands-on mathematics at Sullivan School	119
English Language Learner lesson at Whittier School.....	133
Textbook seatwork at Laney Elementary School.....	147
Traditional workbook seatwork at Pillsbury School.....	153
Student receiving help at Southwest High School.....	177
Native language instruction at Emerson School	187
City View Student receiving individual extra help with seatwork.....	198
River Bend High School applied practice in science lesson.....	208
Hale Elementary School student works on a computer	209
Overcrowded classroom at Southwest High School.....	219
Postnatal care for students’ children at Broadway High School.....	221

A CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AUDIT
of the
Minneapolis Public Schools
Minneapolis, Minnesota

I. INTRODUCTION

This document constitutes the final report of a Curriculum Management Audit of the Minneapolis Public Schools. The audit was commissioned by the Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education within the scope of its policy-making authority. It was conducted during the time period of October 20–24, 2008. Document analysis was performed off site, as was the detailed analysis of findings and site visit data.

A curriculum audit is designed to reveal the extent to which officials and professional staff of a school district have developed and implemented a sound, valid, and operational system of curriculum management. Such a system, set within the framework of adopted board policies, enables the school district to make maximum use of its human and financial resources in the education of its students. When such a system is fully operational, it assures the district taxpayers that their fiscal support is optimized under the conditions in which the school district functions.

Background

Minneapolis Public Schools is one of the largest school districts in Minnesota, with nearly 35,000 students in 91 schools. Established in 1834, the first Minneapolis school was started by Rev. J.D. Stevens on the shores of Lake Harriet. By 1849, in St. Anthony, the first private or subscription schools opened. Then in 1851-52, a school was started on the west side of the river by Mary Schofield. As the settlers moved into the area, more educational opportunities opened up. By 1874, there were six school buildings in Minneapolis with an enrollment of 2,907 pupils and four school buildings in St. Anthony (part of Minneapolis since 1872) with an enrollment of 900 students. In 1878 a legislative act combined the two communities' school boards into one board of education that managed all the public schools for the city of Minneapolis.



Central Union High School, 1857

The first high school was Central Union High, which opened in 1857 and burned down in 1863. By 1922, the Minneapolis school system had a total enrollment in elementary, junior high, and high school of more than seventy thousand.

Today, the Minneapolis School District offers an array of magnet and community school options throughout the city, including Montessori, Open, International Baccalaureate, math/science/technology, and arts, to name a few. School grade configurations include K-5, K-8, and paired elementary campuses; 6-8 middle schools; and 9-12 high schools.

Nearly 25,000 adult learners embrace life-long learning through a variety of community education courses. Relationships—with families and community partners—are a critical component of helping all learners reach higher. In spring 2008, the board of education adopted an ambitious five-year strategic plan designed to raise student achievement, close achievement gaps, and help ensure that every student who graduates from the Minneapolis Public Schools is college ready.

Today, the Minneapolis School District employs 3,302 full-time equivalent teachers, 119 administrators, 135 principals and assistant principals, and 2,699 support personnel.

Governance

The Minneapolis School District is governed by an elected seven person Board of Directors. Members of the school board include the following:

Lydia Lee, Chair
Pam Costain, Director
Peggy Flanagan, Director
Sharon Henry-Blythe, Clerk
Tom Madden, Director
Chris Stewart, Director
T. Williams, Treasurer

The Superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools is Dr. William D. Green, who has served as chief executive officer since January 31, 2006. Two members of the board and the superintendent were interviewed by the audit team.

Financial Status

The budget of the Minneapolis School District for 2007-2008 was \$654, 453,751, of which \$435,823,204 was for the General Operating Fund.

Schools and Students

The Minneapolis Public Schools has the following school organization:

Elementary Schools (K-5)	24
Elementary Schools (K-8)	19
Middle Schools (6-8)	7
High Schools	7
Special Education Schools	9
Alternative Schools	4

There are also 17 contract alternative schools and four charter schools in the district.

The student population of the system consists of the following enrollments for 2007-08:

Total Enrollment	34,570 (100%)
Caucasian students	10,299 (29.8%)
African-American	13,696 (39.6%)
Hispanic	5,905 (17.1%)
Asian	3,105 (9.0%)
Native American	1,565 (4.5%)

Special Education comprises 16 percent of the student population with 5,489 students, and there are also 8,020 English Language Learners (speaking 90 languages). About two-thirds of all students (numbering 22,678 students) are eligible for free and reduced meals due to classification below the established poverty line of income per family.

Audit Background and Scope of Work

The Curriculum Management Audit is a process that was developed by Dr. Fenwick W. English and first implemented in 1979 in the Columbus Public Schools, Ohio. The audit is based upon generally-accepted concepts pertaining to effective instruction and curricular design and delivery, some of which have been popularly referred to as the “effective schools research.”

A Curriculum Management Audit is an independent examination of three data sources: documents, interviews, and site visits. These are gathered and triangulated, or corroborated, to reveal the extent to which a school district is meeting its goals and objectives, whether they are internally or externally developed or imposed. A public report is issued as the final phase of the auditing process.

The audit’s scope is centered on curriculum and instruction, and any aspect of operations of a school system that enhances or hinders its design and/or delivery. The audit is an intensive, focused, “postholed” look at how well a school system such as Minneapolis Public Schools has been able to set valid directions for pupil accomplishment and well-being, concentrate its resources to accomplish those directions, and improve its performance, however contextually defined or measured, over time.

The Curriculum Management Audit does not examine any aspect of school system operations unless it pertains to the design and delivery of curriculum. For example, auditors would not examine the cafeteria function unless students were going hungry and, therefore, were not learning. It would not examine vehicle maintenance charts, unless buses continually broke down and children could not get to school to engage in the learning process. It would not be concerned with custodial matters, unless schools were observed to be unclean and unsafe for children to be taught.

The Curriculum Management Audit centers its focus on the main business of schools: teaching, curriculum, and learning. Its contingency focus is based upon data gathered during the audit that impinges negatively or positively on its primary focus. These data are reported along with the main findings of the audit.

In some cases, ancillary findings in a Curriculum Management Audit are so interconnected with the capability of a school system to attain its central objectives, that they become major, interactive forces, which, if not addressed, will severely compromise the ability of the school system to be successful with its students.

Curriculum management audits have been performed in hundreds of school systems in more than 28 states, the District of Columbia, and several other countries, including Canada, Saudi Arabia, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Bermuda.

The methodology and assumptions of the Curriculum Management Audit have been reported in the national professional literature for more than a decade, and at a broad spectrum of national education association conventions and seminars, including the American Association of School Administrators (AASA); Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD); National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP); Association for the Advancement of International Education (AAIE); American Educational Research

Association (AERA); National School Boards Association (NSBA); and the National Governors Association (NGA).

Phi Delta Kappa’s International Curriculum Management Audit Center has an exclusive contractual agreement with Curriculum Management Systems, Inc. (CMSi—a public corporation incorporated in the State of Iowa, and owner of the copyrights to the intellectual property of the audit process), for the purpose of conducting audits for educational institutions, providing training for auditors and others interested in the audit process, and officially assisting in the certification of PDK/ICMAC-CMSi curriculum auditors.

This audit was conducted in accordance with a contract between the Minneapolis Public Schools and the International Curriculum Management Audit Center at Phi Delta Kappa International. All members of the team were certified by Curriculum Management Systems, Inc.

The names of the curriculum auditors in this audit included the following individuals:

William K. Poston, Jr., Ed.D., Senior Lead Auditor	Kirk Banghart, M.Ed., Auditor
Janice Brown, Ed.D., Auditor	Joseph R. Busch, Ed.D., Associate Lead Auditor
Mary R. Cannie, Ed.D., Emeritus Lead Auditor	Debra L. Grayson, M.S., Auditor
John B. Murdoch, Ed.D., Associate Lead Auditor	Carlos Pagan, Ed.D., Auditor
James A. Scott, Ph.D., Lead Auditor	Stephanie E. Streeter, M.Ed., Auditor
Susan N. Van Hoozer, M.Ed., Auditor	Patricia R. Williams, M.Ed., Auditor
Lynn F. Zinn, Ed.D., Auditor	

Biographical information about the auditors is found in the appendix.

System Purpose for Conducting the Audit

The purpose of the audit, as set forth in the approved contract between the Minneapolis Public Schools and Phi Delta Kappa International, was to evaluate and render a professional assessment of the quality of what presently constitutes the district’s written, taught, and assessed curriculum and then provide recommendations to put into place whatever is necessary to achieve the district’s goals for reform.

The district has been engaged in a strategic planning process that is intended to launch a sweeping and systemic reform of the Minneapolis Public Schools. Condensed, the goals of the reform are to increase academic rigor for all students, to ensure equity of access and opportunity across all programs, and to decrease the racial predictability of student achievement. Reports from the Council of Great City Schools, the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, and the Consortium for Policy Research in Education concur: all have recommended closer examination of district expectations for instruction and the monitoring of curriculum delivered across the district.

An additional purpose is to examine how the Minneapolis Public Schools plan, using a partnership with the Institute for Learning from the University of Pittsburgh “breaks the grip of the old assumption that ‘inherited ability’ places a ceiling on what a student can learn” and “guides schools in establishing the kinds of curriculum and pedagogy that would ensure achievement of rigorous academic standards by all students.” The audit team was asked to assess how well the stage *is* or *is not* set for the Minneapolis Public Schools to achieve the *Principles of Learning* from the Institute for Learning.

In this audit, the audit team has endeavored to assess the degree to which the Minneapolis Public Schools’ K-12 curriculum, instruction, and assessment system:

- Is standards-based and articulates what students should know and be able to do in each subject area at each grade level;
- Promotes active, social construction of knowledge rather than rote, passive learning and provides metacognitive direct skill instruction when necessary to insure achievement;

- Is aligned for scope and sequence and includes pacing schedules for each subject area at each grade level;
- Provides explicit benchmarks and aligned formative assessments indicating points in time at which students are expected to attain mastery/proficiency;
- Utilizes assessment to inform teaching and to improve learning and expects students to be active consumers of assessment data, actualizing the *Self Management of Learning* Principle of Learning (IFL);
- Is instructionally and culturally responsive to guarantee achievement for English language learners (nearly a third of MPS population);
- Integrates English language proficiency standards/instructional strategies and is differentiated for the *specific* population and *level* of English learners;
- Includes expectations for the provision of a culturally inclusive environment in which all students are treated equitably, their languages and cultures are respected and reflected in the curriculum, and they are supported in becoming active seekers of knowledge;
- Extends respect and equity to Standard English learners;
- Is sufficiently rigorous to ensure college readiness for all students and guarantees rigorous learning in all classes for every student PK-12;
- Facilitates acceleration versus remediation for all students—regular and special education—and provides appropriate material support to accomplish accelerated growth;
- Is articulated in a coherent, consistent format across disciplines in documents readily accessible and easily utilized;
- Is culturally responsive and culturally relevant, intentionally addressing and countering institutional racism;
- Incorporates expectations for teacher and student use of “state of the art” technology hardware and software that support student achievement; and
- Is progressing toward online repository and delivery of all MPS curriculum and assessment.

The contractual agreement between the parties delimited the scope of the curriculum audit to the areas of English/language arts (including English Language Learning), mathematics, science, and social studies.

Approach of the Audit

The Curriculum Management Audit has established itself as a process of integrity and candor in assessing public school districts. It has been presented as evidence in state and federal litigation concerning matters of school finance, general resource managerial effectiveness, and school desegregation efforts in Kansas, Kentucky, New Jersey, and South Carolina. The audit served as an important data source in state-directed takeovers of school systems in New Jersey and Kentucky. The Curriculum Management Audit has become recognized internationally as an important, viable, and valid tool for the improvement of educational institutions and for the improvement of curriculum design and delivery.

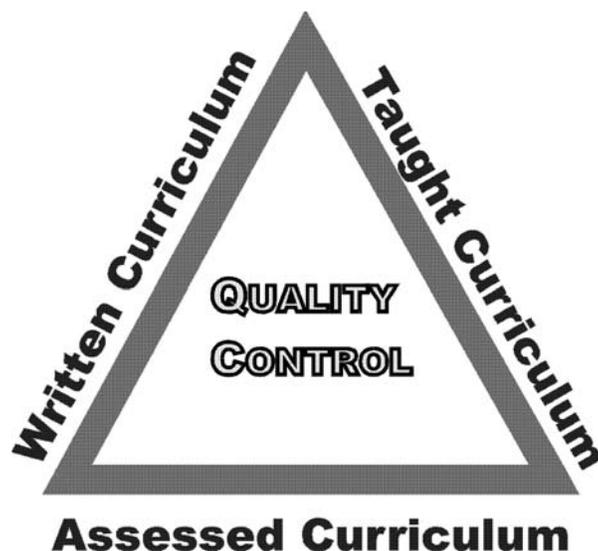
The Curriculum Management Audit represents a “systems” approach to educational improvement; that is, it considers the system as a whole rather than a collection of separate, discrete parts. The interrelationships of system components and their impact on overall quality of the organization in accomplishing its purposes are examined in order to “close the loop” in curriculum and instructional improvement.

II. METHODOLOGY

The Model for the Curriculum Management Audit

The model for the Curriculum Management Audit is shown in the schematic below. The model has been published widely in the national professional literature, recently in the best-selling book, *The Curriculum Management Audit: Improving School Quality* (1995, Frase, English, Poston).

A Schematic View of Curricular Quality Control



General quality control assumes that at least three elements must be present in any organizational and work-related situation for it to be functional and capable of being improved over time. These are: (1) a work standard, goal/objective, or operational mission; (2) work directed toward attaining the mission, standard, goal/objective; and (3) feedback (work measurement), which is related to or aligned with the standard, goal/objective, or mission.

When activities are repeated, there is a “learning curve,” i.e., more of the work objectives are achieved within the existing cost parameters. As a result, the organization, or a subunit of an organization, becomes more “productive” at its essential short- or long-range work tasks.

Within the context of an educational system and its governance and operational structure, curricular quality control requires: (1) a written curriculum in some clear and translatable form for application by teachers in classroom or related instructional settings, (2) a taught curriculum, which is shaped by and interactive with the written one, and (3) a tested curriculum, which includes the tasks, concepts, and skills of pupil learning and which is linked to both the taught and written curricula. This model is applicable in any kind of educational work structure typically found in mass public educational systems, and is suitable for any kind of assessment strategy, from norm-referenced standardized tests to more authentic approaches.

The Curriculum Management Audit assumes that an educational system, as one kind of human work organization, must be responsive to the context in which it functions and in which it receives support for its continuing existence. In the case of public educational systems, the support comes in the form of tax monies from three levels: local, state, and federal.

In return for such support, mass public educational systems are supposed to exhibit characteristics of rationality, i.e., being responsive to the public will as it is expressed in legally constituted bodies such as Congress, state legislatures, and locally elected/appointed boards of education.

In the case of emerging national public school reforms, more and more this responsiveness is assuming a distinctive school-based management focus, which includes parents, teachers, and, in some cases, students.

The ability of schools to be responsive to public expectations, as legally expressed in law and policy, is crucial to their future survival as publicly-supported educational organizations. The Curriculum Management Audit is one method for ascertaining the extent to which a school system, or subunit thereof, has been responsive to expressed expectations and requirements in this context.

Standards for the Auditors

While a Curriculum Management Audit is not a financial audit, it is governed by some of the same principles. These are:

Technical Expertise

PDK-CMSi certified auditors must have actual experience in conducting the affairs of a school system at all levels audited. They must understand the tacit and contextual clues of sound curriculum management.

The Minneapolis Public Schools Curriculum Management Audit Team selected by the Curriculum Management Audit Center included auditors who have been school superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors, coordinators, principals and assistant principals, as well as elementary and secondary classroom teachers in public educational systems in several locations: Arizona, Montana, Pennsylvania, Colorado, Texas, Idaho, New York, Michigan, Iowa, Maryland, and New Mexico.

The Principle of Independence

None of the Curriculum Management Audit Team members had any vested interest in the findings or recommendations of the Minneapolis Public Schools Curriculum Management Audit. None of the auditors has or had any working relationship with the individuals who occupied top or middle management positions in the Minneapolis Public Schools, nor with any of the past or current members of the Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education.

The Principle of Objectivity

Events and situations that comprise the data base for the Curriculum Management Audit are derived from documents, interviews, and site visits. Findings must be verifiable and grounded in the data base, though confidential interview data may not indicate the identity of such sources. Findings must be factually triangulated with two or more sources of data, except when a document is unusually authoritative such as a court judgment, a labor contract signed and approved by all parties to the agreement, approved meeting minutes, which connote the accuracy of the content, or any other document whose verification is self-evident.

Triangulation of documents takes place when the document is requested by the auditor and is subsequently furnished. Confirmation by a system representative that the document is in fact what was requested is a form of triangulation. A final form of triangulation occurs when the audit is sent to the superintendent in draft form. If the superintendent or his/her designee(s) does not provide evidence that the audit text is inaccurate, or documentation that indicates there are omissions or otherwise factual or content errors, the audit is assumed to be triangulated. The superintendent's review is not only a second source of triangulation, but is considered summative triangulation of the entirety of audit.

The Principle of Consistency

All PDK-CMSi-certified Curriculum Management Auditors have used the same standards and basic methods since the initial audit conducted by Dr. Fenwick English in 1979. Audits are not normative in the sense that one school system is compared to another. School systems, as the units of analysis, are compared to a set of standards and positive/negative discrepancies cited.

The Principle of Materiality

PDK-CMSi-certified auditors have broad implied and discretionary power to focus on and select those findings that they consider most important to describing how the curriculum management system is functioning in a school district, and how that system must improve, expand, delete, or reconfigure various functions to attain an optimum level of performance.

The Principle of Full Disclosure

Auditors must reveal all relevant information to the users of the audit, except in cases where such disclosure would compromise the identity of employees or patrons of the system. Confidentiality is respected in audit interviews.

In reporting data derived from site interviews, auditors may use some descriptive terms that lack a precise quantifiable definition. For example:

“Some school principals said that ... ”

“Many teachers expressed concern that ... ”

“There was widespread comment about ... ”

The basis for these terms is the number of persons in a group or class of persons who were interviewed, as opposed to the total potential number of persons in a category. This is a particularly salient point when not all persons within a category are interviewed. “Many teachers said that...,” represents only those interviewed by the auditors, or who may have responded to a survey, and not “many” of the total group whose views were not sampled, and, therefore, could not be disclosed during an audit.

In general these quantifications may be applied to the principle of full disclosure:

Descriptive Term	General Quantification Range
Some ... or a few ...	Less than a majority of the group interviewed and less than 30 percent
Many ...	Less than a majority, more than 30 percent of a group or class of people interviewed
A majority ...	More than 50 percent, less than 75 percent
Most ... or widespread	75-89 percent of a group or class of persons interviewed
Nearly all ...	90-99 percent of those interviewed in a specific class or group of persons
All or everyone ...	100 percent of all persons interviewed within a similar group, job, or class

It should be noted for purposes of full disclosure that some groups within a school district are almost always interviewed in toto. The reason is that the audit is focused on management and those people who have policy and managerial responsibilities for the overall performance of the system as a system. In all audits an attempt is made to interview every member of the board of education and all top administrative officers, all principals, and the executive board of the teachers’ association or union. While teachers and parents are interviewed, they are considered in a status different from those who have system-wide responsibilities for a district’s operations. Students are rarely interviewed unless the system has made a specific request in this regard.

Interviewed Representatives of the Minneapolis Public Schools

School Board Members

Central Office Administrators

Principals

Teachers Organization Officers

Teachers

Approximately 134 individuals were interviewed during the site visit phase of the audit.

Data Sources of the Curriculum Management Audit

A curriculum audit uses a variety of data sources to determine if each of the three elements of curricular quality control is in place and connected one to the other. The audit process also inquires as to whether pupil learning has improved as the result of effective application of curricular quality control.

The major sources of data for the Minneapolis Public Schools Curriculum Management Audit were:

Documents

Documents included written board policies, administrative regulations, curriculum guides, memoranda, budgets, state reports, accreditation documents, and any other source of information that would reveal elements of the written, taught, and tested curricula and linkages among these elements.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted by auditors to explain contextual variables that were operating in the school system at the time of the audit. Such contextual variables may shed light on the actions of various persons or parties, reveal interrelationships, and explain existing progress, tension, or harmony/disharmony within the school system. Quotations cited in the audit from interviews are used as a source of triangulation and not as summative averages or means. Some persons, because of their position, knowledge, or credibility, may be quoted more than once in the audit, but they are not counted more than once because their inclusion is not part of a quantitative/mathematical expression of interview data.

Site Visits

All building sites were toured by the PDK-CMSi audit team. Site visits reveal the actual context in which curriculum is designed and delivered in a school system. Contextual references are important as they indicate discrepancies in documents or unusual working conditions. Auditors attempted to observe briefly all classrooms, gymnasiums, labs, playgrounds, hallways, restrooms, offices, and maintenance areas to properly grasp accurate perceptions of conditions, activities, safety, instructional practices, and operational contexts.

Standards for the Curriculum Audit

The PDK-CMSi Curriculum Management Audit used five standards against which to compare, verify, and comment upon the Minneapolis Public Schools's existing curricular management practices. These standards have been extrapolated from an extensive review of management principles and practices and have been applied in all previous curriculum management audits.

As a result, the standards reflect an ideal management system, but not an unattainable one. They describe working characteristics that any complex work organization should possess in being responsive and responsible to its clients.

A school system that is using its financial and human resources for the greatest benefit of its students is one that is able to establish clear objectives, examine alternatives, select and implement alternatives, measure results as they are applied against established objectives, and adjust its efforts so that it achieves a greater share of the objectives over time.

The five standards employed in the PDK-CMSi Curriculum Management Audit in Minneapolis Public Schools were:

1. The school district demonstrates its control of resources, programs, and personnel.
2. The school district has established clear and valid objectives for students.
3. The school district demonstrates internal connectivity and rational equity in its program development and implementation.
4. The school district has used the results from district-designed or -adopted assessments to adjust, improve, or terminate ineffective practices or programs.
5. The school district has improved its productivity.

A finding within a Curriculum Management Audit is simply a description of the existing state, negative or positive, between an observed and triangulated condition or situation at the time of the PDK-CMSi audit and its comparison with one or more of the five audit standards.

Findings in the negative represent discrepancies below the standard. Findings in the positive reflect meeting or exceeding the standard. As such, audit findings are recorded on nominal and ordinal indices and not ratio or interval scales. As a general rule, audits do not issue commendations, because it is expected that a school district should be meeting every standard as a way of normally doing its business. Commendations are not given for good practice. On occasion, exemplary practices may be cited.

Unlike accreditation methodologies, audits do not have to reach a forced, summative judgment regarding the status of a school district or subunit being analyzed. Audits simply report the discrepancies and formulate recommendations to ameliorate them.

III. FINDINGS

STANDARD 1: The School District Demonstrates Its Control of Resources, Programs, and Personnel.

Quality control is the fundamental element of a well-managed educational program. It is one of the major premises of local educational control within any state's educational system.

The critical premise involved is that, via the will of the electorate, a local board of education establishes local priorities within state laws and regulations. A school district's accountability rests with the school board and the public.

Through the development of an effective policy framework, a local school board provides the focus for management and accountability to be established for administrative and instructional staffs, as well as for its own responsibility. It also enables the district to make meaningful assessments and use student learning data as a critical factor in determining its success.

Although educational program control and accountability are often shared among different components of a school district, ultimately fundamental control of and responsibility for a district and its operations rests with the school board and top-level administrative staff.

What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

A school system meeting PDK-CMSi Curriculum Management Audit Standard One is able to demonstrate its control of resources, programs, and personnel. Common indicators are:

- A curriculum that is centrally defined and adopted by the board of education;
- A clear set of policies that establish an operational framework for management that permits accountability;
- A clear set of policies that reflect state requirements and local program goals and the necessity to use achievement data to improve school system operations;
- A functional administrative structure that facilitates the design and delivery of the district's curriculum;
- A direct, uninterrupted line of authority from school board/superintendent and other central office officials to principals and classroom teachers;
- Organizational development efforts that are focused to improve system effectiveness;
- Documentation of school board and central office planning for the attainment of goals, objectives, and mission over time; and
- A clear mechanism to define and direct change and innovation within the school system to permit maximization of its resources on priority goals, objectives, and mission.

Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard One. Details follow within separate findings.

Policies and regulations are considered inadequate to provide quality control for curriculum management. The Minneapolis Public Schools' organizational structure and related decision-making processes are missing important key functions and do not include all of the principles of sound management. Correlation between job descriptions, day-to-day operations, and the tables of organization is inconsistent or missing entirely. Consequently, the current administrative structure and related job descriptions are inadequate to provide for sound curriculum and instructional management of the organization.

Auditors found great variation in how curriculum implementation is monitored among district schools and by central office administrators. While the *Principles of Learning* are to be the central framework for delivering instruction, building level administrators made only general references to them and auditors observed inconsistencies in how they are both understood and implemented. Consequently, auditors concluded that the *Principles of Learning*, as the instructional framework for the district, have not been consistently integrated into the daily curriculum and instructional practices at the school and classroom levels.

Auditors determined that both district level and school based planning quality are adequate, with some exceptions. A review of board policies and job descriptions related to planning showed that neither set of documents, by itself, is adequate to provide unified direction and purposeful cohesion, which has, over time, contributed to fragmentation among schools and within programs. Other exceptions include the continued lack of resources (financial, time, and personnel) that are needed to fully implement the plan and meet the district's vision of "Every Child College-Ready." The budget is not yet fully tied to the district's strategic priorities. The auditors were not presented with documents that projected what it would actually cost the district to meet the three core outcomes by 2012. Furthermore, the historical fragmentation among schools was validated in interviews, which also confirmed that while recent planning efforts have narrowed the fragmentation, it continues to exist in the site-based philosophy of the district evidenced by the multiple options and interventions that the district continues to support.

Finding 1.1: Board policies do not provide the adequate quality control needed for effective curriculum management and other district functions.

Educational policy development is a major responsibility of the school board. It is through its policies that the board maintains, over time, its responsibility for system control and direction. Comprehensive board policies provide clarity and scope to the day-to-day operations of the school district. Policies that are effective can provide the focus and parameters for decision making by the district staff. It is also through policies that commonly understood standards are established and maintained over time for the design and delivery of all written, taught, and tested curricula.

In order for policies to provide the necessary operational framework, they must be useful in controlling and directing decision making. Policies must reflect the direction set by the board and focus the resources of the board towards specific goals. Policies drive practice. They must be specific, easily referenced, and the first source document in providing individual and system guidance. Conversely, when policies are absent, dated, lack specificity, or are ignored, there is no effective guidance for administrators or staff. Ineffective policies that do not provide continual guidance for practice throughout the district limit the district's ability to improve teaching and learning. The result may be that decision making is left to individual or special interest discretion. In such, there is a lack of coherency in systems, operations, and actions and educational outcomes may be unpredictable and/or fragmented and may not reflect the intent of the board.

To determine the status of policy and regulation development in the Minneapolis Public Schools, auditors interviewed staff and board members and reviewed all district policies presented for examination. Overall, auditors found the policies and regulations to be inadequate when rated against audit (Curriculum Management Improvement Model) criteria; the policies and regulations reviewed met less than one-fourth of the 81 criteria. Those policies and regulations, which have some relationship to curriculum quality and control, are displayed in [Exhibit 1.1.1](#).

Exhibit 1.1.1

**Curriculum Management Board Policies and Administrative Regulations Reviewed by Audit Team
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Policy/Regulation* Number	Policy Title	Date of Most Recent Adoption or Revision
1200	Board of Education Meetings	11/30/1976
1200A	Board of Education Meetings	10/10/1977
1300	Participation by the Public	11/25/1975
1692	Shared Leadership for Continuous Improvement	6/4/2002
1730	Academic Research	5/28/2008
1750	Cooperative Education Procedures between Minneapolis Board of Education and Colleges, Universities, and Other Agencies.	1/30/1973
1950	Shared Time	11/9/1976
2075	Appointment of the Superintendent of Schools	5/22/2007
2100	Superintendent Functions	4/12/1988
2200	Line of Responsibility	4/12/1988
2215	District Diversity and Equity Policy	11/25/2003
2250	Councils, Committees, etc.	4/12/1988
2300	Central Administration	4/12/1988
2400	Position Descriptions	4/12/1988
3000	Code of Ethics	2/27/2007
3005	Budget	2/26/1991
3120	Budget Preparation	10/30/1990
3125	Budget Preparation	10/30/1990
3128	Performance Indicators	10/30/1990
3135	Budget Review, Adoption, Publication	10/30/1990
3145	Budget as Spending Plan	10/30/1990
3150	Budget Reports	10/30/1990
3200	Income-Local Funds	10/30/1990
3220	Income-Federal, State, Local Funds	10/30/1990
3240	Tuition Fees	10/30/1990
3250	Material Fees	10/9/1973
3250A	Material Costs to Pupils	9/9/1975
5000	Equal Education Opportunity	3/26/2008
5050	Title IX Non-Discrimination Policy	8/31/1999
5100	Attendance	7/25/2000
5120	Age of Entrance	6/13/2000
5140	Transfer	10/26/2004
5141	Enrollment of Non-resident Students	6/13/2000
5160	Maximum Age of Attendance	6/12/1984
5200	City-wide Discipline Policy	6/24/2003
5200A	City-wide Discipline Procedures	6/30/2003
5200B	Suspension	9/29/1994
5200C	Discipline of Students with Disabilities	10/13/2003
5262	Assignment of Students to Schools	6/13/2000
5290	Costs of Schooling	9/26/1989
5291	Education of Homeless Children	8/27/2002

Exhibit 1.1.1 (continued)
Curriculum Management Board Policies and Administrative Regulations Reviewed by Audit Team
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Policy/Regulation* Number	Policy Title	Date of Most Recent Adoption or Revision
5310	Reclassification	6/12/1984
5330	Reporting to Parents	6/12/1984
5330A	Reporting to Parents	6/12/1984
5350	Student Records	6/12/1984
5370	Awards for Achievement	6/12/1984
5390	Graduation	5/27/2008
5391	Graduation Requirements	6/26/2007
5392	High School Diploma	6/12/1984
5393	Social Promotion	4/30/1991
5394	Grade Level Promotion	6/12/1984
5560	Co-curricular Eligibility	2/27/1990
5685	Environmental Health and Safety	7/24/2001
5700	Special Education	3/13/2007
5741	Special Education Placement	3/13/2007
5800	Family Involvement	10/29/1996
6000	Elementary - Secondary Education	8/13/1985
6110	Goals of the Education Program	6/30/1992
6110A	Objectives of the Educational Program	8/13/1985
6110B	Organizational/Instructional Arrangement	8/13/1985
6115	Sponsorship and Renewal of Charter Schools	1/13/2004
6120	Educational Choices	8/27/1985
6121	Intervention Programs	8/13/1985
6130	Organizational Plan	6/13/2000
6131	School Calendar	8/13/1985
6132	School Day	8/13/1985
6134	Class Size	8/13/1985
6135	Grouping	8/13/1985
6135A	Grouping	8/13/1985
6200	Curriculum	8/13/1985
6200A	Elementary School Curriculum General Requirements	8/13/1985
6200B	Secondary School Curriculum General Requirements	8/13/1985
6200C	Curriculum Coordinating Council	Undated
6201	Implementation of Graduation Standards	10/14/1997
6201B	Staff Development Policy	6/30/1998
6201C	Definitions for the Minnesota Graduation Rule	6/30/1998
6202	Ensurance of Preparatory Standards	6/30/1998
6202A	Procedures for Ensurance of Preparatory Content Standards	6/30/1998
6203	Ensurance of High School Standards	6/30/1998
6203A	Procedures for Ensurance of High School Content Standards	6/30/1998
6204	Assessment of Standard Achievement	6/30/1998
6205	Record Keeping, Reporting of Student Achievement and Advising	6/30/1998
6205A	Record Keeping, Reporting of Student Achievement and Advising	6/30/1998

Exhibit 1.1.1 (continued)
Curriculum Management Board Policies and Administrative Regulations Reviewed by Audit Team
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Policy/Regulation* Number	Policy Title	Date of Most Recent Adoption or Revision
6210	Program Description	8/13/1985
6220	New Course Offerings—Secondary	8/13/1985
6221	Awarding Credit by Assessment	6/30/1998
6222	Online Learning	5/28/2008
6230	Field Trips	8/13/1985
6240	Homework	8/13/1985
6240A	Homework	8/13/1985
6250	Controversial Issues	8/13/1985
6260	Academic Freedom	8/13/1985
6260 A	Procedures in Making School Contract to Be Used by Parents or Interested Citizens in Questioning the Suitability of Learning Materials	8/13/1985
6270	Evaluation	8/13/1985
6272	Evaluating Student Learning	8/13/1985
274	Testing Program	6/30/1998
6276	Curriculum Evaluation	8/13/1985
6278	Evaluation of Experimental Courses	8/13/1985
6280	Bilingual Student Education: Equity and Quality in Education	6/13/2006
6400	Resource Services	8/13/1985
6411	Learning Materials/Resources	12/15/1992
6411A	Learning Materials Criteria	9/25/1973
6411B	Selection of Learning Materials—General Guidelines	9/25/1973
6411C	Selection of Learning Materials—Procedure	2/23/1976
6411D	Procedures for Publication of Printed Matter	2/23/1976
6414A	Procedures for the Distribution of Supplies	2/23/1976
6415	Instructional Use of Electronic Information Networks and Internet	10/9/2001
6420	Copyright	8/13/1985
6440	Individual Services	8/13/1985
6441	Guidance	8/13/1985
6450	Student Fees	8/13/1985
6510	Cooperative Education Programs	8/13/1985
6521	Athletics, Co-curricular Activities, Clubs and Organizations	8/13/1985
6522	Participation on Athletic Teams	8/13/1985
6524	Student Publications	8/13/1985
6540	Summer/Evening School	8/13/1985
6680	Safety Responsibility Education	8/13/1985
6680.5	Crisis Management	12/12/2006
6682	Emergency Procedures	8/13/1985
6690	Health Nutrition Wellness Education	8/29/2006
6740	Community School Educational Program	8/13/1985
8110	Role and Purpose of the Board	11/12/1991
8111	Guidelines for Board Members	11/12/1991
8120	Standing Committees	11/12/1991
8210	Orienting New Board Members	11/12/1991

Exhibit 1.1.1 (continued)
Curriculum Management Board Policies and Administrative Regulations Reviewed by Audit Team
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Policy/Regulation* Number	Policy Title	Date of Most Recent Adoption or Revision
8260	Guidelines for Board Members	11/12/1991
8270	Responsibilities of the Board of Education	11/12/1991
8300	Methods of Operations	11/12/1991
8301	Guidelines for Board Evaluation of Educational Programs	11/12/1991
8315	Formulation of Guidelines and Interpretations	11/12/1991
8320	Formulation of Administrative Guidelines	11/12/1991
8330	Types of Meetings	11/12/1991
9100	Organization	2/11/1975
9130	Officers	8/18/1992
9310	Development, Adoption, Repeal, Suspension and Implementation of Policies and By-laws	2/27/2008
9320	Adoption, Amendment, Repeal or Suspension of Administrative Regulations	8/18/1992
9332	Construction of Agenda	8/18/1992
9232A	Process for Construction of the Agenda	8/18/1992
9335	Order of Business—Parliamentary Procedure	8/18/1992
9342	Annual Meeting	8/18/1992

* Administrative regulations appear with board policies and include a letter at the end of the number.

Auditors analyzed the policies and regulations listed in Exhibit 1.1.1 for congruence with audit standards using 27 descriptors, each with three levels of analysis, for a total of 81 criteria. The auditors assessed the quality of board policies and administrative regulations by comparing the content to expected audit criteria for good curriculum management. The 81 criteria are organized into five categories: control, direction, connectivity and equity, feedback, and productivity. Relevant policies and regulations were selected from those noted in Exhibit 1.1.1 for further study and review.

The auditors examined each relevant policy and regulation to determine if the audit criteria were present. If a policy or regulation (or several considered together) was adequate in providing specific guidance, the policy or regulation was judged to have met the criterion. If a policy or regulation was considered too weak to meet the criterion or if there was no policy or regulation regarding the criterion, a rating of “inadequate” was given. If there was no policy or regulation relating to the criterion, the word “missing” was used. In order for a Level II criterion to be considered adequate, the Level I criterion must also be considered adequate. Likewise, a Level III criterion would only be adequate if both Levels I and II criteria were adequate. The criteria and results of this analysis are contained in Exhibit 1.1.2.

Exhibit 1.1.2

**Quality Criteria for Curriculum Management Policies and Regulations
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

CMSi Policy Analysis Criteria and Exhibit				
Criteria	Levels	Applicable Policies	Quality	
			Adequate	Inadequate
1. Provides for CONTROL				
1.1 A taught and assessed curriculum that is aligned to the district written curriculum	Level I: A taught and assessed curriculum that is aligned to the district's written curriculum.	6200; 6200A; 6200B; 6200C; 6110A	X	
	Level II: District written curriculum documents to address congruence of locally determined standards to state and national standards and to specify the specific content, context, and type of cognition for all subject areas and grades (includes electives).	6204		X
	Level III: District written curriculum documents to address standards that are more rigorous than state and national standard to provide challenge for those students who have mastered state standards and to specify the specific content, context, and type of cognition for all content area.	Missing		X
1.2 Philosophical statements of district's curriculum approach	Level I: General statement of curriculum approach such as competency based, outcome-based, etc.	6000; 6200A; 6200B		X
	Level II: In addition, adherence to mastery learning practices for all content areas and grade involved in local, state, and national accountability.	6204; 6210		X
	Level III: In addition, adherence to mastery learning practices for all grade levels and content areas including electives.	Missing		X
1.3 Board adoption of the written curriculum	Level I: Annual adoption of the written curriculum for all grade levels and content areas.	6200; 6200A; 6200B; 6411; 6411B; 6411C		X
	Level II: In addition, yearly review of new or revised written curriculum prior to its adoption.	6200; 6200A; 6200B; 6200C; 6411; 6411A; 6411B; 6411C		X
	Level III: In addition, periodic review of the curriculum on a planned cycle over several years.	Missing		X
1.4 Accountability for the design and delivery of the district curriculum through roles and responsibilities	Level I: Where appropriate, job descriptions that include accountability for the design and delivery of an aligned curriculum.	2100; 2400; 6411E		X
	Level II: Professional appraisal processes that address specific accountability functions in the job descriptions of central office administrators, building principals, and regular classroom teachers.	6411E		X
	Level III: Professional appraisal processes address specific accountability functions in the job descriptions of all staff and relate to improved student achievement.	Missing		X

Exhibit 1.1.2 (continued)
Quality Criteria for Curriculum Management Policies and Regulations
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

CMSi Policy Analysis Criteria and Exhibit

Criteria	Levels	Applicable Policies	Quality	
			Adequate	Inadequate
1. Provides for CONTROL (continued)				
1.5 Long-range, system-wide planning process and plan	Level I: District development of a system-wide, long-range plan that is updated annually, and includes a formative and summative evaluation process related to student achievement and system-wide student achievement targets.	1692C		X
	Level II: In addition, school improvement plans that are related to the district long-range plan and include specific student achievement targets, and both formative and summative evaluation processes related to student achievement.	1692C		X
	Level III: In addition, the school and district planning process requires the superintendent and staff to think collectively about the future and that thinking should take some tangible form without prescribing a particular template and allow for flexibility as needed.	1692C		X
1.6 Functional decision-making structure	Level I: An organizational chart that is annually reviewed and approved by the superintendent and presented to the board.	2100; 2200; 2300; 8320		X
	Level II: In addition, updated job descriptions for each person listed on the organizational chart to reflect modifications, if any, and adherence to the audit criteria such as span of control, logical grouping of functions, etc.	2300; 2400		X
	Level III: In addition, specification of decision-making bodies (e.g. cabinet, task forces, committees) regarding composition and decision-making responsibilities to ensure consistency, non-duplication of tasks, and product requirements.	2100; 2250; 2300;		X
2. Provides for DIRECTION				
2.1 Written curriculum, with aligned criterion referenced formative assessments for all subject areas at all grade levels	Level I: Enough specificity so that all teachers understand what the curriculum objectives mean in terms of how students will demonstrate mastery.	6110A	X	
	Level II: In addition, pre and post testing of specific curriculum objectives.	6110A	X	
	Level III: In addition, development of suggestions for differentiating curriculum to address content, context, and type of cognition based upon student need as diagnostically assessed.	Missing		X

Exhibit 1.1.2 (continued)
Quality Criteria for Curriculum Management Policies and Regulations
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

CMSi Policy Analysis Criteria and Exhibit

Criteria	Levels	Applicable Policies	Quality	
			Adequate	Inadequate
2. Provides for DIRECTION (continued)				
2.2 Provides periodic review/ update of the curriculum and aligned resources and assessments	Level I: Alignment of textbook adoption with curricular revision procedures as adoption cycle takes place.	6110A	X	
	Level II: In addition, yearly update of test banks, benchmark assessments, and instructional practices to align with acquisition of new materials and changes in the district/state accountability system.	Missing		X
	Level III: In addition, the development of both formative and summative review procedures of the written curriculum for all grade levels and content areas.	Missing		X
2.3 Textbook/ resource alignment with curriculum and assessment	Level I: Review of all new instructional resource materials for content, context, and type of cognition aligned with the district curriculum and assessment.	6110; 6276; 6411A		X
	Level II: In addition, teachers to modify instructional practices based on any alignment updates for curriculum and/or assessment.	6276; 6411A		X
	Level III: In addition, district staff to identify discrete areas of misalignment and provide teachers with supplementary materials to address the misalignment.	6276; 6400; 6411A		X
2.4 Content area emphasis	Level I: Yearly identification of subject areas to receive emphasis based on review of assessment results.	6110A; 6121; 6200; 6200A; 6200B; 6411A		X
	Level II: In addition, within subject areas, identification by administration of specific objectives, context, types of cognition, and instructional practices to receive budgetary support.	6110A; 6121; 6200; 6200A; 6200B; 6200C; 6411A; 3120		X
	Level III: In addition, focused professional development and coaching to support deployment and delivery of the priority within the content areas.	6201B		X
2.5 Program integration and alignment to the district's written curriculum	Level I: All new subject-related (e.g. reading, Title I) and school-wide (e.g. tutoring, DARE, AVID) program to be reviewed for alignment to the written and assessed curriculum.	6121; 6210; 6220A; 6278		X
	Level II: In addition, written procedures for both formative and summative evaluation of all new subject-related and school-wide programs before submission to the board for approval.	6204; 6272; 6274		X
	Level III: In addition, administrative staff to prepare annual recommendations for subject-related and school-wide program revision, expansion or termination based on improved student achievement.	6276; 6278		X

Exhibit 1.1.2 (continued)
Quality Criteria for Curriculum Management Policies and Regulations
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

CMSi Policy Analysis Criteria and Exhibit

Criteria	Levels	Applicable Policies	Quality	
			Adequate	Inadequate
3. Provides for CONNECTIVITY AND EQUITY				
3.1 Predictability of written curriculum from one grade and/or instructional level to another	Level I: The district Curriculum Management Plan includes a preK-12 scope and sequence chart for core content areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies).	6000; 6110; 6110A; 6110B; 6200A; 6200B; 6200C		X
	Level II: The district Curriculum Management Plan includes a preK-12 scope and sequence chart (where relevant) for all content areas.	Missing		X
	Level III: The identification of prerequisite skills and their placement in the written curriculum takes place at the appropriate grade/instructional level for core content areas.	Missing		X
3.2 Vertical articulation and horizontal coordination of the curriculum	Level I: Vertical articulation and horizontal coordination of the curriculum at the school level.	6110A; 6110B		X
	Level II: Vertical articulation and horizontal coordination across grade levels and among schools at a given level within the major content areas.	Missing		X
	Level III: Vertical articulation and horizontal coordination across grade levels and among schools at a given level for all content areas.	Missing		X
3.3 Training for staff in the delivery of the curriculum	Level I: Oversight of the development of a district professional development plan tied to the district long-range plan and annual district goal priorities.	6201B	X	
	Level II: Development, deployment, and implementation of a process to provide coaching to staff in the areas where professional development has been provided.	6201B	X	
	Level III: Periodic formative and summative evaluation of the impact of professional development on increased student achievement.	6201B		X
3.4 Delivery of the adopted district curriculum	Level I: All staff to deliver the curriculum as approved by the board.	6110A; 6200A; 6200B; 6200C; 6202	X	
	Level II: In addition, principals and central office staff with curricular responsibilities to review district/building assessment results and identify areas where the curriculum delivery may be deficient to comply with current requirements.	6121; 6200; 6200A; 6200B; 6200C; 6202	X	
	Level III: In addition, district staff to prepare an annual report for the board regarding the status of the curriculum delivery.	2100	X	

Exhibit 1.1.2 (continued)
Quality Criteria for Curriculum Management Policies and Regulations
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

CMSi Policy Analysis Criteria and Exhibit

Criteria	Levels	Applicable Policies	Quality	
			Adequate	Inadequate
3. Provides for CONNECTIVITY AND EQUITY (continued)				
3.5 Monitoring the delivery of the district curriculum	Level I: Building principals to develop and implement a plan to monitor the delivery of the district curriculum on a weekly basis.	6270		X
	Level II: Central office curricular staff to assist the principal in monitoring the delivery of the district curriculum.	6270		X
	Level III: Periodic school classroom data gathering reports from principals detailing the status of the design and delivery of the curriculum with recommendations for the creation of professional development activities or curricular revisions.	6201B		X
3.6 Equitable student access to the curriculum, instructional resources, and learning environment	Level I: Equitable student access to the curriculum, appropriate instructional materials for a variety of learning levels and modes, and appropriate facilities to create the learning environment necessary to deliver the district curriculum.	2215; 6110A; 6110B; 6120	X	
	Level II: Development of procedures for fast-tracking students who may be deficient in pre-requisite skills for courses such as AP, honors, etc.	2215; 6110A; 6110B; 6120; 6221	X	
	Level III: An annual review of equity data (such as access, racial isolation, rigor) and the development of a plan for correcting equity issues that will be presented to the board.	2215; 6110A; 6110B; 6120; 6221	X	
4. Provide for FEEDBACK				
4.1 A student assessment process	Level I: Development, deployment, and implementation of a district student assessment process that goes beyond the state accountability assessment system and is both formative and summative in nature.	6201B; 6204; 6272		X
	Level II: Development, deployment, and implementation of a district student assessment process for all content areas at all grade/instructional levels that is both formative and summative in nature.	6201B; 6204; 6272		X
	Level III: Development, deployment, and implementation of a district student assessment process that is differentiated to address differences in student achievement (both above and below grade level) and is both formative and summative in nature.	6201B; 6204; 6272		X

Exhibit 1.1.2 (continued)
Quality Criteria for Curriculum Management Policies and Regulations
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

CMSi Policy Analysis Criteria and Exhibit

Criteria	Levels	Applicable Policies	Quality	
			Adequate	Inadequate
4. Provide for FEEDBACK (continued)				
4.2 A program assessment process	Level I: Development, deployment, and implementation of a district program assessment process that is both formative and summative in nature.	6110A; 6270; 6278		X
	Level II: Development, deployment, and implementation of a district program assessment process that is both formative and summative in nature that is designed prior to the implementation of all new programs.	6278		X
	Level III: Periodic review of each program to determine modifications needed to better reach programmatic goals.	6270; 6278		X
4.3 Use of data from assessment to determine program/ curriculum effectiveness and efficiency	Level I: Data disaggregation at the school, classroom, and student level and use to determine program/ curriculum effectiveness and efficiency.	6270; 6272; 6274; 6278; 8301		X
	Level II: In addition, classroom teachers track and document student mastery in core content areas.	6270; 6272; 6274; 6278; 8301		X
	Level III: In addition, development of exit tests for all courses and grade levels (includes electives), creation of disaggregated test results relative to the standards and objectives for the courses, analysis of disaggregated test results, and modifications made as needed in the program/curriculum to bring about effectiveness and efficiency.	6270; 6272; 6274; 6278; 8301		X
4.4 Reports to the Board about program effectiveness	Level I: Yearly reports to the board for all new programs for the first three years of operation.	6270; 6272; 6274; 6278		X
	Level II: Reports to the board every three years for ongoing programs.	6270; 6272; 6274; 6278		X
	Level III: Summative reports to the board at least every five years for all content areas before curriculum revision or major materials acquisition that occur prior to the curricular adoption cycle.	6270; 6272; 6274; 6278; 8110		X

Exhibit 1.1.2 (continued)
Quality Criteria for Curriculum Management Policies and Regulations
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

CMSi Policy Analysis Criteria and Exhibit

Criteria	Levels	Applicable Policies	Quality	
			Adequate	Inadequate
5. Provides for PRODUCTIVITY				
5.1 Program-centered budgeting	Level I: A budget process that requires program evaluation, identification of specific measurable program goals before the budget process begins, and documented costs to ensure that expenditures are aligned with revenues and cost-benefit analysis is facilitated.	3005; 3120: 3120A; 3125; 3128		X
	Level II: Program centered budgeting process that includes incremental budgeting based on contrasting program delivery types and quality for all curriculum areas and programs, and evidences tangible connections between allocations and anticipated outcomes or program accomplishments.	3005; 3120: 3120A; 3125; 3128		X
	Level III: Full implementation of a program centered budgeting process that includes process evaluation and program assessment data linked to budget allocations, which enables program budget decisions based upon documented results and performance.	3005; 3120: 3120A; 3125; 3128		X
5.2 Resource allocation tied to curriculum priorities	Level I: A budget that allocates resources according to documented needs-assessment data and established district curriculum and program goal priorities.	3005; 3120: 3120A; 3125; 3128	X	
	Level II: A budget that may be multi-year in nature and provides ongoing support for curriculum and program priorities and connects costs with program expectations and needs established with data.	3005; 3120: 3120A; 3125; 3128		X
	Level III: A budget that provides resources needed to enable achievement of system priorities over time and demonstrated necessity of resources with measurable results and/or performance of programs and activities.	3005; 3120: 3120A; 3125; 3128		X
5.3 Environment to support curriculum delivery	Level I: Facilities (including equipment, materials) that enable teachers to work in an environment that supports delivery of the curriculum adequately.	3170; 3172; 3174; 3179	X	
	Level II: Consideration of a multi-year facilities planning effort to support the district curriculum and program priorities adequately.	3170; 3172; 3174; 3179	X	
	Level III: Facilities planning linked to future curriculum trends and to the teaching-learning environment incorporated in documented system mission and vision statements.	3170; 3172; 3174; 3179; 7300	X	

Exhibit 1.1.2 (continued)
Quality Criteria for Curriculum Management Policies and Regulations
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

CMSi Policy Analysis Criteria and Exhibit

Criteria	Levels	Applicable Policies	Quality	
			Adequate	Inadequate
5. Provides for PRODUCTIVITY (continued)				
5.4 Support systems focused on curriculum design, deployment, and delivery	Level I: Clear connection of district support services to the achievement of the district curriculum design, deployment, and delivery, and evidence of optimization within the system.	2300; 6121; 6400	X	
	Level II: Formative and summative evaluation practices for each support service to provide data for improving these services and documented evidence of improvement over time.	Missing		X
	Level III: Periodic reports to the board with recommendations for continuing, revising, and developing new support services to support delivery of the mission, including acknowledged need-based data.	Missing		X
5.5 Data-driven decisions for the purpose of increasing student learning	Level I: Development of specific requirements for data analysis that lead to improved student learning for the core curriculum areas and electives.	Missing		X
	Level II: Development and implementation of specific requirements for data analysis that lead to improved student learning for all curriculum areas and grade levels (including electives).	Missing		X
	Level III: Development of specific requirements for data analysis that lead to improved student learning in all operations of the district.	Missing		X
5.6 Change processes for long-term institutionalization of district priority goals	Level I: Identification of strategies, grounded in documented assessment of program success or efficacy, to be used by the district to ensure long-term institutionalization of change.	Missing		X
	Level II: School improvement plans, which address the use of specific change strategies at the building level to ensure the institutionalization of change and improved results or performance.	Missing		X
	Level III: All district department and program plans incorporate procedures for change strategies to ensure the institutionalization of change for improvement and procedures with formative and summative practices that provide data about change implementation and effectiveness.	Missing		X
Totals			17	64
Percent Adequate			21%	

In order to be considered adequate, 70 percent, or 57 of the 91 criteria, must be satisfied. The policies and regulations of the Minneapolis Public Schools satisfied 17 of the 81 criteria, or 21 percent, and are, therefore, considered inadequate to provide quality control for curriculum management. Policy and regulation analysis revealed the following:

Provides for CONTROL:

Criterion 1.1: A Taught and Assessed Curriculum that is Aligned to the District Written Curriculum

- Level I criterion is met; Levels II and III criteria are not met. *Board Policy 6200* states in part, “The goal of any curriculum instructional program or activity is to contribute to student growth by bringing about positive change in the student’s attitudes, ways of thinking, knowledge, and skills. This implies that one must determine what is to be learned, what procedures and materials will work best to reach the desired learning levels and some measure of knowing when the required learning has taken place.” Policies addressing Levels II and III criteria are either inadequate or missing.

Criterion 1.2: Philosophical Statements of District’s Curriculum Approach

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. *Board Policy 6000* states in part, “The school district is committed to an integrated, culturally diversified education environment which treats all students as unique and capable of learning. The district is committed to providing an excellent instructional program for the benefit of all students.” While this is a general statement of philosophy, it does not identify a specific approach to accomplishing the goal of “providing an excellent instructional program.” The superintendent’s job description (see [Finding 1.2.1](#)) does refer to “best practices in standards-based instruction,” but these words are missing from board policy.

Criterion 1.3: Board Adoption of the Written Curriculum

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. The board has delegated its responsibility to adopt the curriculum to the superintendent through *Board Policy 6411*, which states, “The Board of Education delegates to professional personnel of the district the authority for the selection/retention of instructional material resources.” *Administrative Regulation 6411C* does require that “Official action by the Board of Education must be made before the first of March.” However, there is no policy that requires annual adoption of the written curriculum for all grade levels and content areas. Interviews suggested that it was the goal of the district to adopt instructional materials on a planned cycle. However, auditors were not presented with such a cycle in either policy or regulation. With the exception of the recent math adoption, which took two years to complete, interviewees reported that most textbooks were dated, wearing out, or in insufficient supply. The consequence of the current approach to adopting curriculum is that board policy does not assure coordination or articulation of curriculum between schools or grade levels, thus creating the potential for gaps or unnecessary overlaps in a student’s K-12 curriculum experience (see [Finding 2.2](#)).

Criterion 1.4: Accountability for the Design and Delivery of the District Curriculum through Roles and Responsibilities

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. *Board Policy 2400* states, “It is the policy of the Board of Education that all positions within the Minneapolis Public Schools shall have a current description which forms the basis for the Performance Appraisal system. These descriptions will be maintained in current condition in a classification Manual.” However, neither this policy nor any other specifically requires that job descriptions include accountability for the design and delivery of an aligned curriculum. *Administrative Regulation 6411E* does assign some accountability for curriculum delivery, but only so far as materials are concerned. The regulation states, “All school personnel share in the responsibility for making new curriculum materials serve their intended purpose, and for recording and reporting, on request, significant evidence showing wherein such materials succeed or fail to meet the needs they are expected to serve.” No other regulation or policy assigns any specific responsibilities for curriculum design and delivery to discrete positions or within job descriptions in the district.

Criterion 1.5: Long-range, System-wide Planning Process and Plan

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. While recognizing that the district has a newly adopted strategic plan (see [Finding 1.4](#)) and noting that some policies allude to various forms of planning, the auditors nonetheless found no policy that specifically directs a long range, system-wide planning process that meets CMSi system planning criteria.

Criterion 1.6: Functional Decision-making Structure

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. There are no policies or combination of policies that fully meet CMSi’s decision-making criteria. However, some elements are present in policies that partially address these criteria. *Board Policy 2200* authorizes the superintendent to “recommend to the Board an organizational structure for the District.” However, the policy does not require the organizational structure to be “annually reviewed.” As noted above, *Board Policy 2400* states, “It is the policy of the Board of Education that all positions within the Minneapolis Public Schools shall have a current description which forms the basis for the Performance Appraisal system. These descriptions will be maintained in current condition in a classification Manual.” There is no provision in this policy that requires standards similar to those found in audit criteria for the district’s organizational structure (see [Finding 1.2.1](#)). *Board Policy 2100* states in part, “As chief executive officer of the Board, the Superintendent shall make specific recommendations from time to time concerning the achievements, progress, improvements, efficiency, and continued growth of the school system.” *Board Policy 2250* further directs that the administration organizes “mechanisms for input and feedback such as councils, committees, etc.” However, these policies fall short of specifying responsibilities that ensure consistency, non-duplication of tasks, and product requirements.

Provides for DIRECTION:

Criterion 2.1: Written Curriculum, with Aligned Criterion Referenced Formative Assessments for All Subject Areas at All Grade Levels

- Levels I and II of this criterion are met; Level III is considered inadequate. *Administrative Regulation 6110A* states in part, “It shall be the responsibility of citywide committees working under the leadership of the Director of Curriculum to develop specific educational goals as outlined by the Minneapolis Public Schools. It shall be the responsibility of each building staff under the leadership of the principal to deliver the specific educational objectives that have been determined centrally, which are consistent with the broad educational goals of the school district. Educational objectives become the criteria by which learning materials are selected, content identified, instructional procedures and educational technology developed, and evaluation techniques devised. The defined, written curriculum includes all subject areas. Curriculum goals and objectives, scope and sequence, learning materials, expectation levels of students, and measurements of achievement will be determined centrally and directed for obligatory districtwide implementation at the building level through the line superintendents. Kindergarten through 12th grade curriculum objectives are being developed/revised in every subject matter area.” Level II criteria are met in *Board Policy 6270*: “The first purpose in diagnostic function [pre-test]—is to enable staff to determine the unmet needs of students. The second purpose—the achievement function—is to measure the degree to which each student has accomplished the learning objectives [post-test].” There is no policy or combination of policies that meets the Level III criterion.

Criterion 2.2: Provides Periodic Review/update of the Curriculum and Aligned Resources and Assessments

- Level I criterion is met; Levels II and III criteria are not met. Level I is addressed in *Administrative Regulation 6110A*, which directs that “Educational objectives become the criteria by which learning materials are selected, content identified, instructional procedures and educational technology developed, and evaluation techniques devised.” Levels II and III criteria are not adequately addressed in policy.

Criterion 2.3: Textbook/Resource Alignment to Curriculum and Assessment

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. *Board Policy 6276* describes that “The evaluation of the curriculum and other aspects of the educational program of a school shall be directed by the principal, who shall report to the appropriate superintendent. Use of various evaluative resources, such as the Research and Evaluation Department of Minneapolis Schools along with other appropriate means, should be utilized in this task including the State of Minnesota legislated process of Planning, Evaluating, Reporting.” This policy does not address the specific need to evaluate materials for context and content alignment and therefore is considered to be inadequate. Consequently, teachers are unable (on the basis of policy direction) to modify instructional practices based on any alignment updates for curriculum and/or assessment.

Criterion 2.4: Content Area Emphasis

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. Interviews revealed that there are informal discussions of content area emphasis. *Board Policy 6121* directs that additional instructional support be provided, “particularly in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics.” *Board Policy 3120* describes the budget preparation process: “The goal of the budget preparation process is to design a budget that meets the education goals established by the Board of Education within parameters of the financial resources available. In order to accomplish this goal, it will be necessary for the individual program managers to focus on the identification, quantification, and initial prioritization of their program’s needs. The annual budget preparation should be compatible with the long-range goals of the school district.” However, there is no specific language in policy detailing how, on an annual basis, priorities are to be established and acted upon (see [Finding 5.3](#)).

Criterion 2.5: Program Integration and Alignment to the District’s Written Curriculum

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. There is no policy directing that educational programs be integrated and aligned to the curriculum. As a consequence, some programs may not align adequately with the written curriculum, impeding overall curriculum alignment. *Board Policy 6278* directs a regular evaluation of new or experimental educational programs: “Such evaluation may be expected to lead to recommendations for modifications of practice, changes in content and new courses.” However, the policy falls short of requiring the review to include alignment of programs to the written and assessed curriculum. This policy does require board approval before an experimental course becomes part of the “regular curriculum.” Also, there are no written procedures that detail requirements for formative and summative assessments to be built in and used to verify effective integration of instructional programs.

Provides for CONNECTIVITY AND EQUITY:

Criterion 3.1: Predictability of Written Curriculum from One Grade and/or Instructional Level to Another

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. There is no specific district curriculum management policy that includes directives to build a PreK-12 scope and sequence chart for core content areas (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies).

Criterion 3.2: Vertical Articulation and Horizontal Coordination of the Curriculum

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. *Administrative Regulation 6110A* states in part, “It shall be the responsibility of citywide committees working under the leadership of the Director of Curriculum to develop specific educational goals as outlined by the Minneapolis Public Schools. It shall be the responsibility of each building staff under the leadership of the principal to deliver the specific educational objectives that have been determined centrally, which are consistent with the broad educational goals of the school district. Educational objectives become the criteria by which learning materials are selected, content identified, instructional procedures and educational technology developed, and evaluation techniques devised.” While the policy speaks to specific goals, it does not specifically address articulation of the curriculum between grade levels/schools or coordination among teachers teaching the same content.

Criterion 3.3: Training for Staff in the Delivery of the Curriculum

- Levels I and II of this criterion are met; Level III is considered inadequate. Professional development is addressed in other district documents and the district uses content area coaches to help teachers implement the curriculum. Interviewees acknowledged that staff development was abundant and often overwhelming. *Administrative Regulation 6201B* states, “The school district is committed to developing staff policies and processes for continuous improvement of curriculum, instruction and assessment to ensure effective implementation of the Graduation Standards at all levels.” Level III criterion requires a periodic formative and summative evaluation of the impact of professional development on increased student achievement. This requirement does not appear in existing policies.

Criterion 3.4: Delivery of the Adopted District Curriculum

- All three levels of criteria are met. The combination of *Administrative Regulations 6110A, 6200A, 6200B, 6200C*, and *Board Policy 6202* adequately meets Levels I and II criteria for curriculum delivery. *Policy 2100* describes superintendent functions regarding the submission of an annual report: “The Superintendent of Schools shall have authority to require all school personnel to make such annual, periodic, and special reports as he/she deems necessary.” The *2008 Annual Progress Report* was among the district documents provided auditors.

Criterion 3.5: Monitoring the Delivery of the District Curriculum

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. *Board Policy 6270* states in part, “The district encourages the use of evaluation techniques at the building level to determine effectiveness in meeting program objectives.” However, this policy falls short of requiring the principal to monitor curriculum on a weekly basis (see [Finding 1.3](#)). The same policy does provide that “District resources may be called upon to lend support to this effort at the schools.” *Administrative Regulation 6102B* directs that “In service, staff meetings, and district and building level staff development plans and programs shall include focus on implementation and improvement of the implementation of the Graduation Standards at all levels for all students, including those with special needs.” While this policy addresses Level III criterion, Levels I and II must also be rated adequate for Level III to be considered adequate.

Criterion 3.6: Equitable Student Access to the Curriculum, Instructional Resources, and Learning Environment

- All three levels of criteria are met for this criterion. *Board Policy 6120* states, “Minneapolis Public Schools supports a broad array of public education program styles to enable families and students to select an educational setting best suited to the needs of individual learners.” *Administrative Regulation 6110A* adds, “All learning activities designed to achieve objectives will be sensitive to the district’s diverse student body.” *Administrative Regulation 6110B* reinforces the need for equity: “In order to provide suitable organizational and instructional arrangements, it is essential to consider the characteristics and capabilities of individual students.” *Board Policy 2215* describes efforts to maintain equity: “The goal of the District Diversity and Equity Policy is to establish a framework for the elimination of diversity bias . . . as factors affect student achievement and learning experiences.” The Superintendent shall establish . . . plans and initiatives as may be necessary and appropriate to accomplish [this] intent.” Interviews also reinforced the district’s desire to achieve equity: “We are striving to eliminate institutional bias from our programs” (Administrator).

Provides for FEEDBACK:

Criterion 4.1: A Student Assessment Process

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. *Administrative Regulation 6201B* states, “The school district is committed to developing staff policies and processes for continuous improvement of curriculum, instruction and assessment to ensure effective implementation of the Graduation Standards at all levels.” *Board Policy 6204* adds, “The school district will establish a procedure by which students shall complete the Graduation Standards. This procedure will include the use of performance packages to be used in assessing student performance. Performance packages will provide opportunities for students to

demonstrate and for teachers to assess achievement of the standards. The building principals shall ensure that students and parents or guardians are provided with written notice of the location of preparatory and/or high school content standards and how standards will be assessed at each level.” *Board Policy 6272* states in part, “Each student should be evaluated on the level of comprehension and competence specified for each objective. . .” These policies in combination do not meet CMSi’s criteria for an effective student assessment program as they do not describe the formative and summative natures of how the “standards will be assessed at each level.”

Criterion 4.2: A Program Assessment Process

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. *Board Policy 6270* identifies that one of the purposes of assessment is to evaluate “instructional program function. . .to determine if there are weaknesses in the instructional program in order to improve it.” *Board Policy 6278* adds, “The Board expects its faculty and administration to evaluate regularly the education program. Such evaluation may be expected to lead to recommendations for modifications of practice, changes in content and new courses.” However, no policy speaks to the need to have an evaluation system in place prior to the implementation of a new program and there is no direction in policy to specifically provide for both formative and summative assessment for the purpose of program evaluation.

Criterion 4.3: Use of Data from Assessment to Determine Program/Curriculum Effectiveness and Efficiency

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. While *Board Policies 6270, 6272, 6274, 6276, and 6278* address evaluation, there is no policy that directs that data be disaggregated at the school, classroom, and student level or that specifically directs classroom teachers to track and document student mastery in core content areas.

Criterion 4.4: Reports to the Board about Program Effectiveness

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. *Board Policy 6278* states, “Normally, new courses will be introduced on an experimental basis and will be evaluated at least annually.” *Board Policy 6276* adds, “The evaluation of the curriculum and other aspects of the educational program of a school shall be directed by the principal, who shall report to the appropriate superintendent. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent to report periodically to the Board of Education on the progress the district is making towards the attainment of its educational goals.” These policies are judged inadequate because they lack the specific time lines required in the CMSi criteria: effectiveness of new programs to be reported each year for the first three years, effectiveness of existing programs to be reported every three years, and summative reporting of program effectiveness at least every five years prior to the acquisition of new materials.

Provides for PRODUCTIVITY:

Criterion 5.1: Program-centered Budgeting

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. *Board Policy 3120* states, “The goal of the budget preparation process is to design a budget that meets the education goals established by the Board of Education within parameters of the financial resources available. In order to accomplish this goal, it will be necessary for the individual program managers to focus on the identification, quantification, and initial prioritization of their program’s needs.” Further direction is provided in *Board Policy 3128*: “The annual budget preparation should be compatible with the long-range goals of the school district. Where possible, the Minneapolis Public Schools will integrate performance measurement and productivity indicators with the budget.” While these policies approximate CMSi criteria for a system of program based budgeting, they do not adequately require the identification of specific, measurable program goals before the budget process begins or the development of tangible connections between allocations and anticipated outcomes or program accomplishments.

Criterion 5.2 Resource Allocation Tied to Curriculum Priorities

- Level I is met for this criterion; Levels II and III are not met. *Board Policy 3120* meets the Level I criterion of developing a budget that allocates resources according to documented needs-assessment data and established district curriculum and program goal priorities. It states, “The goal of the budget preparation process is to design a budget that meets the education goals established by the Board of Education within parameters of the financial resources available. In order to accomplish this goal, it will be necessary for the individual program managers to focus on the identification, quantification, and initial prioritization of their program’s needs.” No policies fully meet the criteria for Levels II and III.

Criterion 5.3 Environment to Support Curriculum Delivery

- All three levels of this criterion are met. *Board Policy 3170* directs, “The Minneapolis Public Schools will develop a multi-year plan for capital improvements and update it annually.” *Board Policy 3172* continues, “The Minneapolis Public Schools will enact an annual capital budget based on the multi-year capital improvement plan. Future capital expenditures necessitated by changes in economic bases will be calculated and included in capital budget projections.” *Board Policy 3174* adds, “The budget will provide for adequate maintenance of the capital plant and equipment, and for their orderly replacement in compliance with the multi-year capital improvement plan.” *Board Policy 3179* specifically addresses the replacement of equipment: “The Minneapolis Public Schools will project its equipment replacement and maintenance needs for the next several years and will update this projection each year.” *Board Policy 7310* requires, “School buildings shall reflect current educational planning yet provide for physical plant that can accommodate future needs.”

Criterion 5.4 Support Systems Focused on Curriculum Design, Deployment, and Delivery

- Level I is met; Levels II and III of this criterion are not met. *Board Policy 2300* authorizes, “The Superintendent of Schools shall recommend the appointment of persons to positions such as other Superintendents and/or Directors as he/she determines to be necessary to achieve the mission, goals, and objectives of the Minneapolis Public Schools.” Furthermore, *Board Policy 6400* directs, “The selection of instructional activities, learning activities, and learning materials should enable the greatest number of students to accomplish the learning objectives at an acceptable level of achievement in a reasonable amount of time. The Board endeavors to assist in accomplishing this goal by providing the necessary support resources and services that will assist the student and teacher in the learning/instructional tasks they face. Necessary support services and resources include: learning materials of many kinds, equipment and supplies, reserve teachers, consultant and resource teachers, school media centers, testing programs, individual and remedial services and other instructional support programs such as Field Trips and Volunteer Services, etc.” Policies for Level II and III criteria are missing.

Criterion 5.5 Data-driven Decisions for the Purpose of Increasing Student Learning

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. Interviewees reported having a helpful research department: “There are some really smart people in the research department” (Administrator). However, no policies direct the development of specific requirements for data analysis that leads to improved student learning in core curriculum, electives, or all other operations of the district.

Criterion 5.6 Change Processes for Long-term Institutionalization of District Priority Goals

- Policy direction for all levels of this criterion is considered inadequate. There are no policies that direct that all district, department, and building level program plans incorporate both procedures for strategies to ensure the institutionalization of change and procedures with formative and summative practices that provide data about change implementation and effectiveness.

Some interviews addressed issues relating to board policies. Examples of their comments include the following:

- “We haven’t spent much time on policies. The board is in process of updating policies.” (Board member).
- “Some policies are so outdated that it is an embarrassment.” (Board member)
- “Board policy has not had an impact on my work. I have a list of 17 policies that need to be changed.” (Administrator)
- “Some policies are not in compliance with recent legislation.” (Board member)
- “We are not a policy directed organization—especially around high school reform.” (Administrator)

Summary

In summary, district policies and administrative recommendations met 17 of 81 criteria. Criteria met in each of the five categories are as follows: Control—1 of 18, Direction—3 of 15, Connectivity and Equity—8 of 18, Feedback—0 of 12, and Productivity—5 of 18. Given these deficiencies, auditors determined that policies and administrative regulations of the Minneapolis Public Schools did not meet the audit standard for effective governance.

Finding 1.2: The administrative structure does not meet audit criteria necessary for effective organizational management.

Administrative functions provide the mechanism for the governing board to translate its values, goals, policies, and intentions into action. The Board exercises its responsibility by determining the results it wants the system to attain, by conducting organizational oversight, by authorizing the budget, and by supervising the chief executive officer. To accomplish its purposes, the board of education needs to provide the superintendent with sufficient staff to fulfill relevant functions and can appropriately manage the work.

Clear organizational relationships are important for the effective management of a school system. Successful educational organizations assign and arrange personnel by function to ensure the effective and efficient design and delivery of curriculum. The simplest expression of these relationships is the organizational chart(s), that clearly depicts employee relationships, line/staff relationships, and the line of authority among them.

The auditors examined the Minneapolis Public Schools’ tables of organization specific to curriculum leadership (see [Exhibits 1.2.1](#) through [1.2.3](#)) to determine the extent to which there is congruence with sound principles of management. The auditors also reviewed board policies and job descriptions, and interviewed Minneapolis Public Schools personnel and board members to determine the match between the day-to-day work relationships and responsibilities identified on the tables of organization. On the basis of their analysis, auditors determined that the Minneapolis Public Schools organizational structure, associated job descriptions, and related decision-making processes are missing important key functions and do not include all of the principles of sound management as identified in [Exhibit 1.2.4](#). Alignment between job descriptions, curriculum design and delivery, and the table of organization is inconsistent or missing entirely. Consequently, the organizational structure is insufficient to provide for clarity and effectiveness in curriculum and instructional management of the organization.

Exhibit 1.2.1 is the Administration Table of Organization for personnel directly reporting to the superintendent.

Exhibit 1.2.1
Table of Organization—Administration
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

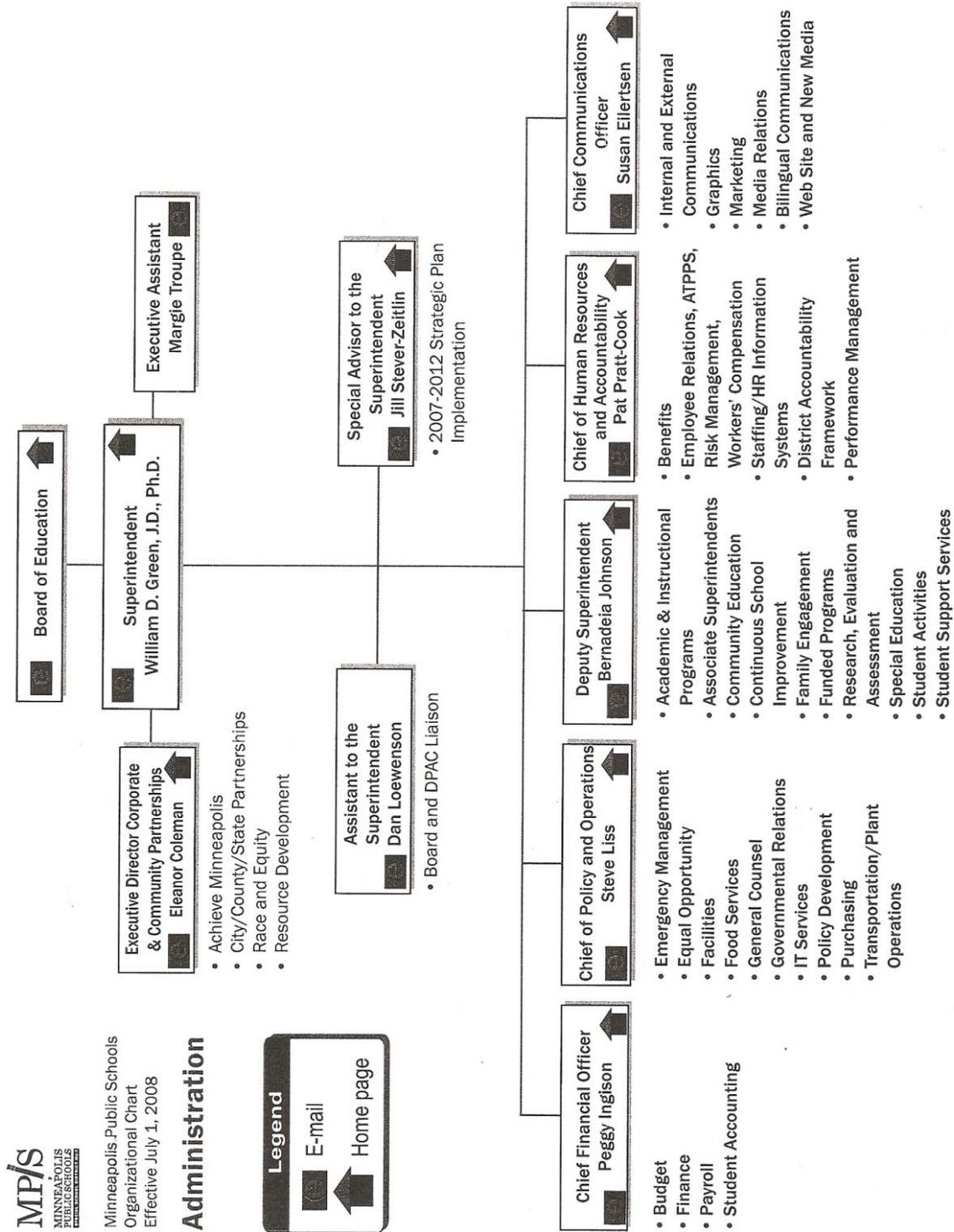


Exhibit 1.2.2 is the Table of Organization for personnel reporting to the Deputy Superintendent.

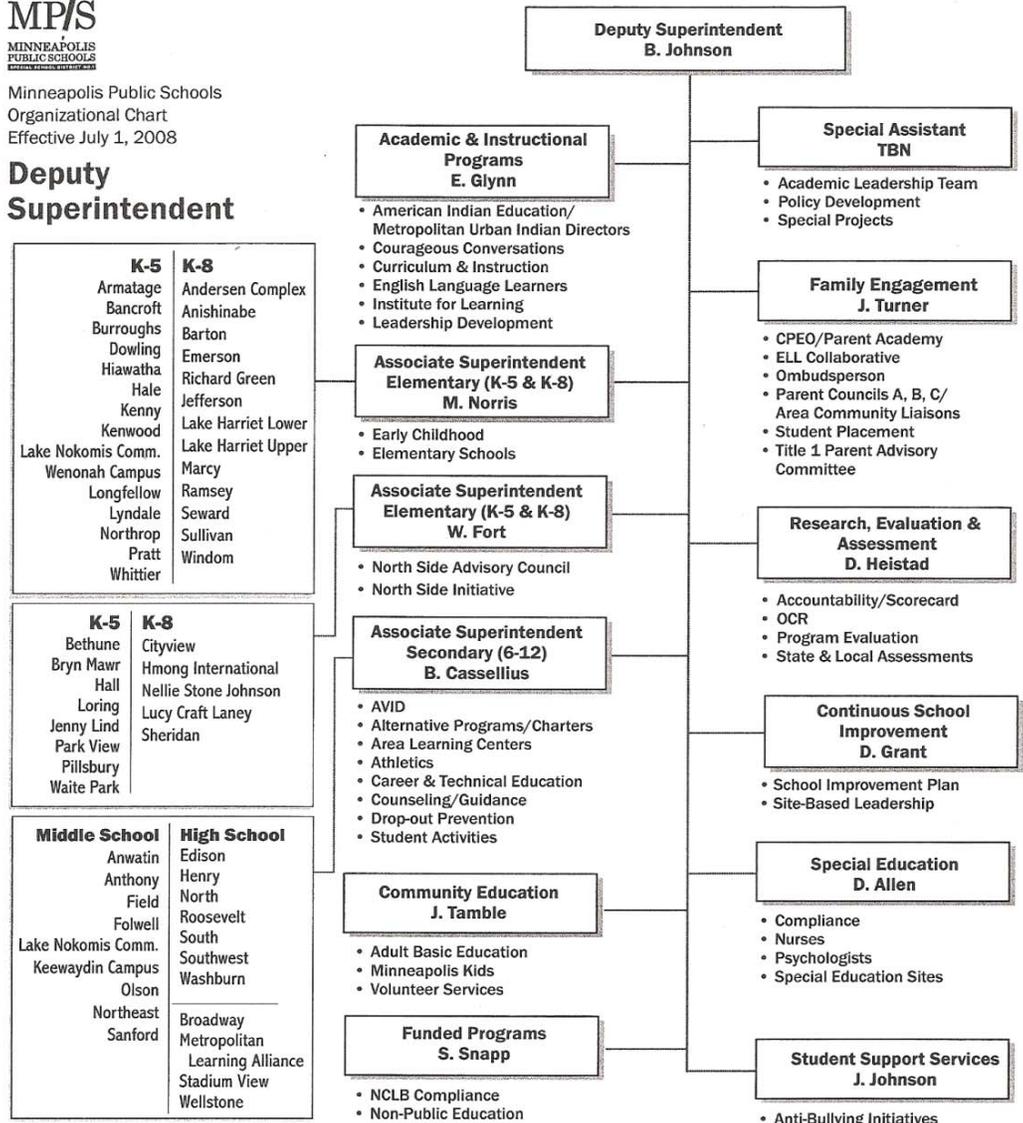
Exhibit 1.2.2

**Table of Organization—Deputy Superintendent
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**



Minneapolis Public Schools
Organizational Chart
Effective July 1, 2008

Deputy Superintendent



DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

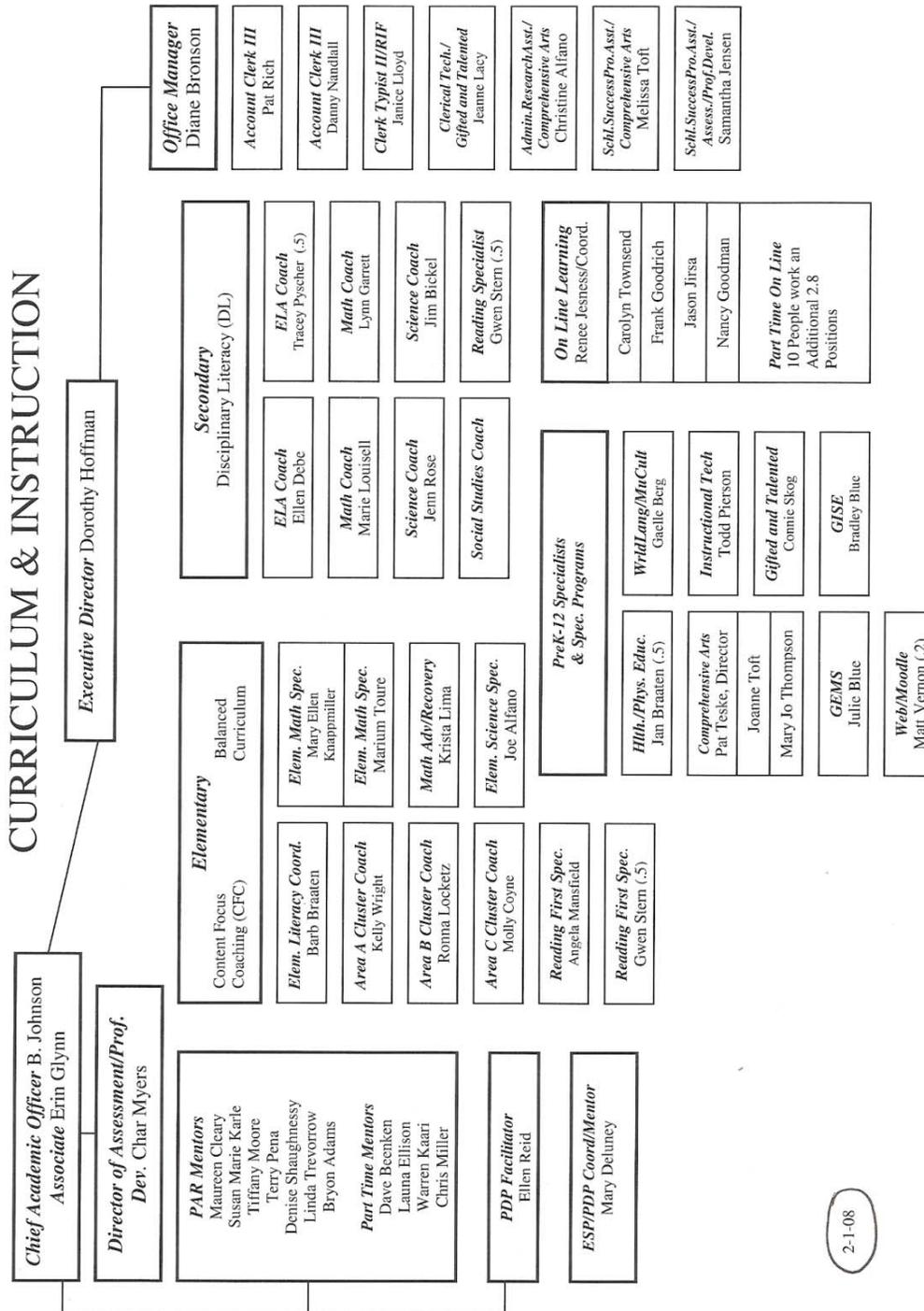
Deputy Superintendent Bernadeia Johnson's division is responsible for implementing the district academic agenda to raise every student's achievement by 2012 and close the achievement gap. This involves aligning all departments that are responsible for what we teach, how we teach and how we assess student learning. The academic agenda includes key strategies to improve the achievement of all students, including English Language Learners and those who need special education. Critical to achievement are the ways in which we support student learning in the areas of attendance, positive school climate and mental health. Finally, engaging families in their child's education is critical as they are our students' primary teachers.

7/16/08

Exhibit 1.2.3 is the Table of Organization for the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

Exhibit 1.2.3

**Table of Organization—Curriculum & Instruction
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**



2-1-08

Auditors reviewed the following policies related to governing and administrative functions of the district:

- *Board Policy 2200: Line of Responsibility* states, “The Superintendent of Schools, as the executive of the Board of Education and chief administrative officer for the school system, is responsible to the Board for all aspects of educational leadership and school system management. The Superintendent shall recommend to the Board an organizational structure for the District. He/she shall recommend positions necessary to support it in conformity with law, good educational practice, and cost-effective management. The Superintendent, in turn, delegates to members of his/her staff the responsibility for the organization and administration of various departments or divisions of the school system. A line of administrative responsibility extends from the Superintendent through other Superintendents, to the Principals. Other staff officers are administratively responsible directly or indirectly to the Superintendent, or other Superintendents, as determined by the Superintendent.”
- *Board Policy 2300: Central Administration* states, “The Superintendent of Schools shall recommend the appointment of persons to positions such as other Superintendents and/or Directors as he/she determines to be necessary to achieve the mission, goals, and objectives of the Minneapolis Public Schools.”
- *Board Policy 8110: Purposes and Role of the Board* states in part, “The Board of Education is the legally constituted authority for the control and management of the schools. It is the duty and responsibility of the Board to provide a program of public education for the people of Minneapolis.”
- *Board Policy 8270: Internal Operations-Board Chair* states, “The primary function of the Board Chair is to preside over the Board of Education meetings. The Board chairperson has no more authority or power than any other Board member in the interim period between Board meetings, except for ministerial duties assigned by law.”
- *Board Policy 8300: Internal Operations-Methods of Operation* identifies 11 specific board duties and concludes, “The Board shall concern itself primarily with broad questions of policy rather than with administrative details.” In fulfilling this role, the policy directs the board to “Enact policy” and “provide for systematic review and updating of policies.”
- *Board Policy 8315: Internal Operations-Formation Guidelines and Interpretations* states in part, “The Board of Education may interpret its policies from time to time. Such interpretations have the force of policy.”

While the above policies delineate board and administrative duties, auditors were not presented with policies that adequately describe the organizational structure necessary to ensure quality control and effective curriculum management (see [Finding 1.1](#) for adequacy of relevant curriculum management policies).

The auditors used the principles of sound management to critique the Minneapolis Public Schools’ organizational structure. These principles are presented in [Exhibit 1.2.4](#).

Exhibit 1.2.4

Principles of Sound Organizational Management

CMSi Principles of Sound Organizational Management	
Principle	Explanation
Span of Control	The range of superiors to subordinates should be 7-12 as a maximum number of persons who are supervised on a daily face-to-face-basis.
Chain of Command	A person should have only one superior to avoid being placed in a compromised decision-making situation.
Logical Grouping of Functions	Similar duties/tasks should be clustered in order to keep supervisory needs to a minimum (ensuring economy of scale).
Separation of Line and Staff Functions	Those administrators carrying out the primary mission of the district are not confused with those supporting it. Also, note that in reporting relationships, line administrators report only to other line administrators, never staff administrators. This keeps the line of accountability for the primary mission of the district uncomplicated.
Scalar Relationships	Roles of the same title and remuneration should be depicted graphically on the same general horizontal plane.
Full Inclusion	All persons working within the district carrying out its essential functions should be depicted on the table of organization.

In order to be considered adequate, the Minneapolis Public Schools would need to be rated adequate in at least four of the five Principles of Sound Organizational Management. Auditors' ratings showed that only one of five criteria was fully met. The auditors' assessment of the table of organization based on the principles identified in [Exhibit 1.2.4](#) is provided below:

Span of Control: This criterion is not met. [Exhibit 1.2.1](#) shows the superintendent supervising nine subordinates. These supervisory duties, combined with the responsibility to serve seven board members, exceed the maximum recommended number of 12 people being served on a face-to-face basis. [Exhibit 1.2.2](#) shows the deputy superintendent supervising 12 persons. However, in this same exhibit, the three associate superintendents each supervise from 13 to 28 principals. Likewise, principals and assistant principals also supervise more than 12 employees on a face-to-face basis. [Exhibit 1.2.3](#) shows the grouping of similar functions, but does not reflect current practice or provide a clear line of supervisory responsibility.

Chain of Command: This audit criterion is met. Although some job descriptions are not current (see [Finding 1.2.1](#)) and do not accurately show the employee's supervisor, there is no evidence in either the tables of organization or job descriptions of a person reporting to more than one supervisor.

Logical Grouping of Functions: This audit criterion is not fully met. The table of organization showing central administration (see [Exhibit 1.2.1](#)) groups functions by finance, policy and operations, human resources and accountability, and communication. It also includes the deputy superintendent on the same line as the chief officers for these four areas, which is in violation of appropriate scalar relationships (see discussion below on Scalar Relationships). [Exhibit 1.2.3](#) shows the grouping of similar functions, but does not reflect current practice or provide a clear line of supervisory responsibility as noted under Span of Control.

Separation of Line and Staff Functions: This criterion is not met. Those administrators who have responsibility to carry out the primary mission of the district should not be confused with those supporting it. The Minneapolis Public Schools' administration table of organization denotes some line administrators (see [Exhibit 1.2.1](#)). However, both [Exhibits 1.2.1](#) and [1.2.2](#) fail to clearly present the line administration responsibilities of associate superintendents. Auditors also noted that in [Exhibit 1.2.3](#) (Curriculum and Instruction) it is not clear which positions have some form of line authority and which positions have staff functions only.

Scalar Relationships: This criterion is not met. This criterion requires that roles of the same title and remuneration be depicted graphically on the same general horizontal plane. [Exhibit 1.2.1](#) shows the deputy

superintendent in an equal position to four other chief officers. As second in authority in the district, this position should be presented on a separate line above those of chief officers. Likewise, [Exhibit 1.2.2](#) shows the office of Academic and Instructional Programs (a staff position) on a higher line than associate superintendents who have line authority.

Full Inclusion: This criterion is not met. It requires that all persons working within the district who carry out essential functions be depicted on the table of organization. Building instructional personnel (assistant principals and teachers) are not shown on any of the district’s organizational charts. In addition, the district recently eliminated the position of Chief Academic Officer and placed the responsibility for curriculum and instruction under the deputy superintendent. The scope of the deputy superintendent’s assignment is extremely demanding, as noted in [Exhibit 1.2.2](#): “[The] Deputy Superintendent’s... division is responsible for implementing the district academic agenda to raise every student’s achievement by 2012 and close the achievement gap.” The work of curriculum and instruction, which at one time was the focus of a chief academic officer, is now an additional duty among many other duties of the office of Academic and Instructional Programs (a staff position). As a consequence, there simply may not be enough intentional focus or related human resources to meet this demanding responsibility, respond to the recommendations that emerge from this audit (see all other findings and recommendations), or carry out the district’s strategic plan (see [Finding 1.4](#)). Concern about the lack of prominence given to curriculum and instructional leadership was noted in several interviews: “From the audit, I am expecting the district to increase its commitment to moving curriculum and instruction to the center of all of its work. I want there to be specific responsibility of this department to one person who has no other distractions or responsibilities. Without this office, there will not be enough administrative leverage to make the changes that are needed to ensure that every third grader is literate and that every eighth grade student is ready for algebra” (Patron).

Other quotations provided additional insight into the Minneapolis Public Schools’ Table of Organization and associated decision making:

- “Historically, central services have had a lot of dead weight; there has been deliberate focus on improving central office leadership.” (Patron)
- “We are trying to develop a more systemic approach in decision making than we have had in the past.” (Administrator)
- “Historically, decisions have been made in isolation without considering the implications for students, teachers, and instructional materials.” (Administrator)
- “We have significant building level leadership issues. Schools progress only where there are competent administrators in place. Historically, administrators have filled a manager role and some have not been able to transition to the role of instructional leader.” (Administrator)
- “There is no longer districtwide leadership in curriculum and instruction. Without leadership, buildings will continue to fragment.” (Administrator)
- “In 2007 four of seven board members were new—with an aggressive agenda of moving forward quickly.” (Patron)
- “We’re becoming more focused in what we want to see happen in schools—curriculum, professional development, and our accountability systems. We’re talking about what we need to do for kids—there is urgency, more gravity than in the past. We’re also working to build support from city and community.” (Administrator)
- “Teachers have lost trust in the district over a long period of time. Teachers have nothing they can depend on from day to day. Staff has a hard time taking anything seriously because everything changes all the time.” (Administrator)
- “Decisions are made by the campuses, the district, and teachers individually. We don’t know who we talk to about these issues.” (Teacher)

Summary

The Minneapolis Public Schools' board policies (see [Finding 1.1](#)), organizational structure, and related decision-making processes are missing important key functions and do not include all of the principles of sound management as identified in [Exhibit 1.2.4](#). Connections between job descriptions (see [Finding 1.2.1](#)), day-to-day operations, and the tables of organization are inconsistent or missing entirely. Consequently, the current administrative structure does not meet all of the audit criteria that are necessary for effective organizational management.

Finding 1.3: Job descriptions are inadequate in specifying organizational roles, relationships, and duties related to system-wide quality control of curriculum design and delivery.

Strong job descriptions provide clear statements that delineate job titles, qualifications, immediate links in the chain of command, and a description of functions, duties, and responsibilities of the job. Since auditors examined an educational organization whose purpose is instructional, all positions should have a connection to the design or delivery of the curriculum. They should describe essential employee qualifications, the curricular tasks that must be completed in order for the organization to accomplish its mission, and the relationship of one position to another. Job descriptions must also be accurate, current, and noted in the organizational charts of the district.

To determine the availability and quality of job descriptions, auditors analyzed all job descriptions or job vacancy postings presented for review. Since many of the job descriptions on the organizational chart were not presented to auditors, job vacancy postings were also used to verify availability and quality. Additionally, board policies were reviewed to determine the requirements for written job descriptions and staff was interviewed regarding job responsibilities and accountability structure.

Overall, auditors found that job descriptions inadequately specify organizational roles, relationships, and duties in the Minneapolis Public Schools. Job descriptions were weakest in specifying links to the chain of command and strongest in delineating the functions, duties, and responsibilities of the position.

Board Policy 2400: Position Descriptions states in part, "It is the policy of the Board of Education that all positions within the Minneapolis Public Schools shall have a current description which forms the basis for the Performance Appraisal System. These descriptions will be maintained in current condition in a Classification Manual. The Classification Manual will also include a description of the Job Evaluation system by which all positions are assigned a point value for salary and equity purposes." Auditors reviewed 47 job descriptions and vacancy postings that have a connection to the design and delivery of the curriculum or were prominent on the organizational chart of the district. The criteria used to rate the job descriptions in each category are presented in [Exhibit 1.3.1](#). Auditors expect that all four categories be rated adequate or above for the job description to be determined adequate.

The four audit categories rated were:

- Qualifications appropriate for the position;
- Immediate links to the chain of command—a statement identifying the supervisor (No employee shall have more than one supervisor);
- Functions, duties, and responsibilities; and
- Relationship to the curriculum, or curriculum design, alignment, and delivery responsibilities.

There were five possible ratings for each of the four criteria, as shown in [Exhibit 1.3.1](#).

Exhibit 1.3.1

Curriculum Management Audit Rating Indicators for Job Descriptions

Rating	Explanation
Missing	No statement made.
Inadequate	Statement made, but is incomplete and missing sufficient detail.
Adequate	Clear statement, but weak in curriculum quality control statements. The statement is more or less complete, usually missing curricular linkages or sufficient detail regarding curricular linkages/alignment.
Strong	Clear statement, including several aspects of curriculum quality control statements.
Exemplary	Clear statement, including curriculum quality and delivery of the curriculum.
N/A	Not applicable to position.

Auditors' assessments of the job descriptions provided by the Minneapolis Public Schools are shown in Exhibit 1.3.2.

Exhibit 1.3.2

**Quality of Job Descriptions Reviewed Using Audit Indicators
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Date	Position	Qualifications	Links to Chain of Command	Responsibilities	Curriculum Linkage
Missing	Assistant Superintendent	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Missing	Assistant to the Superintendent	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing
Jan-07	Associate Superintendent	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Jan-07	Chief Academic Officer	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Missing	Chief Communications Officer	Adequate	Missing	Adequate	Inadequate
Missing	Chief Financial Officer	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Missing	Chief of Human Resources and Accountability	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing
Missing	Chief of Policy & Operations	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing
Jan-07	Chief of Student Support, Family and Community Engagement	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate
Jul-08	Coordinator, On-Line Learning	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Jul-08	Deputy Superintendent	Inadequate	Missing	Inadequate	Inadequate
Missing	Director, Community Education	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing
Dec-06	Director, Funded Programs	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Oct-06	Director, Professional Development & Assessment	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Early Reading Master Teacher PreK-2	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Elementary and Middle School Math Master Teacher/ Professional Developer	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Elementary and Middle School Science Master Teacher/Professional Developer	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Elementary and Secondary Principal Candidate Pool	Adequate	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Elementary Literacy Master Teacher	Strong	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Elementary Literacy TOSA (K-5)	Strong	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Elementary Social Studies Master Teacher/ Professional Developer	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong

Exhibit 1.3.2 (continued)
Quality of Job Descriptions Reviewed Using Audit Indicators
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Date	Position	Qualifications	Links to Chain of Command	Responsibilities	Curriculum Linkage
Missing	Executive Assistant	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing
Missing	Executive Director of Human Resources	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Missing	Executive Director, Corporate & Community Partnerships	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing
Jan-07	Executive Director, Curriculum & Instruction	Strong	Inadequate	Strong	Adequate
Missing	Executive Director, Family Engagement	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing
Jan-07	Executive Director, Research, Evaluation & Assessment	Strong	Adequate	Strong	Strong
Sep-06	Executive Director, Special Ed	Strong	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Gifted/Talented Master Teacher	Strong	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	High School Literacy Master Teacher	Strong	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Instructional Technology Master Teacher	Strong	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	K-12 Math Initiatives Master Teacher	Strong	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	K-8 District Mentor	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Missing	Mentor	Strong	Adequate	Adequate	Strong
Missing	Middle School Literacy Master Teacher	Strong	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Professional Developer/Master Teacher in Literacy	Strong	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Reading First Literacy Coordinator	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Missing	Reading First/Content Focused Coach, K-3/K-5	Strong	Missing	Strong	Strong
Missing	Secondary Math Master Teacher/ Professional Developer	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
Missing	Secondary Science Master Teacher/ Professional Developer	Adequate	Inadequate	Strong	Strong
May-05	Secondary Social Studies Master Teacher/ Professional Developer	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Adequate
Missing	Senior Executive Director, Academic Affairs	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing
Missing	Special Advisor to the Superintendent	Missing	Missing	Missing	Missing
Jan-07	Superintendent	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
Missing	T.O.S.A.—Curriculum and Testing Coordinator	Adequate	Inadequate	Adequate	Strong
Missing	Teacher	Adequate	Missing	Adequate	Adequate
Missing	Teacher Mentor	Adequate	Missing	Adequate	Adequate

In order to provide sufficient direction and connectivity to the design and delivery of the curriculum, at least 70 percent of the district’s job descriptions must be rated as adequate or higher in all four criteria. If each individual criterion were rated separately, three of four would be judged as adequate. However, only ten out of the 47 job descriptions, or 22 percent, received a rating of adequate or above in all four categories. Therefore, the job descriptions of the Minneapolis Public Schools are inadequate in specifying organization roles, relationships, and duties related to system-wide quality control of curriculum design and delivery. Exhibit 1.3.2 provided the following information:

- **Qualifications:** Thirty-four out of 47 (72 percent) job qualifications were rated adequate or above. Thirteen (28 percent) of 47 job qualifications were rated as missing or inadequate.
- **Links to Chain of Command:** Thirty-four out of 47 (72 percent) links to chain of command were rated missing or inadequate. Twenty job descriptions were rated inadequate for reporting to positions that no longer existed in the district or for reporting to positions that no longer existed on the district organization function chart. Fourteen out of 47 job positions were rated missing for not indicating a chain of command. Thirteen out of 47 (26 percent) were rated adequate.
- **Responsibilities:** Thirty-seven out of 47 (79 percent) were rated adequate or strong. Ten (21 percent) were rated missing or inadequate.
- **Relationship to Curriculum:** Thirty-four out of 47 job descriptions (72 percent) were rated adequate or above in this criterion. Thirteen of 47 (28 percent) were rated inadequate or missing.

Auditors also noted the following issues during a review of job descriptions and interviews with staff personnel:

- None of the job descriptions provided to auditors had signature lines for reviewers and employee acknowledgement.
- There was no indication on any of the job descriptions that they had been approved by the board of education.
- The auditors found that the linkage of the written job descriptions to the current district organizational chart was lacking. Job titles and responsibilities have changed since the hiring of the superintendent in 2006 and the creation of a new organizational chart in July 2008. Current job titles as listed on the July 2008 organizational chart were not linked to previous position titles on any district organizational charts from 2006 to the present. For example, the title Deputy Superintendent was listed on the current organizational chart but not linked to any previous job title on the former organizational function charts.
- The chain of command, or to whom the position reported, also differed in the job descriptions dated prior to July 2008 and the positions shown on current organizational charts. Consequently, it was difficult to align the job descriptions with the current organizational charts.
- According to Human Resources personnel, job descriptions were not available for the following positions listed on the most current organizational charts: Deputy Superintendent, Executive Director of Corporate and Community Partnerships, Assistant to the Superintendent, Chief of Policy and Operations, Chief of Human Resources and Accountability, Executive Director of Academic Affairs, Director of Community Education, Executive Director of Family Engagement, and Director of Student Support Services. Job descriptions were also not available for Principals, Assistant Principals, and Principals on Special Assignment (POSA).
- A job description for the Coordinator of On-Line Learning was reviewed, but the position was not included on the district organizational chart.
- Only twelve out of 47 (26 percent) of the job descriptions were dated.
- Most job descriptions were generic lists of duties. Job descriptions provided for some functions critical to the effective design and delivery of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. However, alignment between job descriptions, daily operations and functions, and the table of organization was inconsistent or missing entirely. No person(s) has specific responsibilities to serve as the system-wide coordinator and clearing house for planning. No person(s) has the specific responsibilities to serve as the coordinator and formal evaluator of programs or program interventions. No person(s) has specific responsibility to ensure that grants are aligned to mission and system objectives and to evaluate them against intended outcomes. Auditors also did not find any job description that encompasses the skill set and experience required to establish a functional, state-of-the-art technology program with connectivity to the design and delivery of curriculum.

Complete and well-written job descriptions for each position are a necessity for sound management and decision making that will assist in the coordination of efforts and resources for curriculum design and delivery. Interviews with staff members confirmed that updating job descriptions was informally completed by the Human Resources Department and that there was no formal system for ensuring that job descriptions included the language required for effective curriculum management or that employees were fully versed in their individual responsibilities.

The following quotations provided additional insight into the Minneapolis Public Schools' job descriptions and associated decision-making:

- “Most job descriptions are out of date.” (Administrator)
- “Many job descriptions are not available for executive leadership positions on the new organizational chart. We are evaluating many of these positions in November or December 2008.” (Administrator)
- “Job description? I’ve never seen one. I just keep doing what I’m told although it would be helpful to know my responsibilities.” (Administrator)
- “So many of us have changed job titles or functions recently. It’s possible that after our jobs are evaluated, we’ll have a better understanding of the connection between positions.” (Administrator)
- “We’re still trying to change the culture from one in which people were allowed to operate in isolation to one in which people are more connected.” (Administrator)

Summary

The district’s job descriptions do not consistently match current job titles and responsibilities. Consequently, the district is not in full compliance with the expectation of *Board Policy 2400* that “all positions” have “current job descriptions.” In addition, there is no system in place for maintaining job descriptions for all positions, verifying their accuracy and connectivity to the effective design and delivery of the curriculum, or ensuring that employees know the responsibilities of their individual assignments. Therefore, the auditors concluded that job descriptions are inadequate in specifying organizational roles, relationships, and duties related to system-wide quality control of curriculum design and delivery.



South High School's Diversity Commitment Reflects Strategic Plan

Finding 1.4: District and school planning quality is adequate, with some exceptions.

One characteristic of an effective school system is the ability of school leaders to direct and prioritize the resources and programs for the district. The board of trustees is expected to govern the school system and direct its progress toward the achievement of agreed-upon priorities. Structured planning establishes the mission and vision for all district efforts, brings all district operations under one umbrella, and affords the district the

opportunity to assess and reassess its beliefs, values, commitments, and resources in terms of its vision and mission. This is achieved through comprehensive and cohesive system-wide short- and long-term planning. Plans provide the district with the framework for systematic actions necessary to identify, by priority, the goals it wants to achieve, the action steps and time lines necessary to achieve those goals, and the evidence that it will accept which demonstrates that the goals have been achieved. Long-term planning, in particular, promotes constancy of effort and helps to maintain program fidelity and administrative focus in the allocation of time and financial resources to the highest priorities of the system. Embedded in the ongoing planning process is the ability to modify and adjust direction based upon student needs, new legislation, or changes in the community. In their analysis, auditors determined that district and school planning quality is adequate, with some exceptions.

In its analysis of the district’s planning process, the auditors examined relevant planning documents, related board policies and administrative regulations, and job descriptions, and conducted interviews with trustees, administrators, staff, and members of the community. The auditors found that planning is current and a priority in the Minneapolis Public Schools, and plans that were rated against audit criteria were found to be adequate in design. However, adherence to plans was inconsistent across the district. The planning documents reviewed are identified in [Exhibit 1.4.1](#)

Exhibit 1.4.1
List of Planning-Related Documents
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Planning Document	Date
MSP 2007-2012 Strategic Plan: Supplemental Action Steps, Metrics, and Timing	11-Mar-08
MSP 2007-2012 Strategic Plan Implementation Progress Report Update #1	10-Jun-08
MSP 2007-2012 Strategic Plan Implementation Progress Report Update #2	12-Sep-08
MPS Program and Operations Planning: Board Retreat-Preparation Materials	30-Aug-08
Sampling of 45 Individual School’s Continuous Improvement Plans	2008-09
MPS Secondary Academic Agenda Project Plan	2008-09
MPS Curriculum and Instruction Department: Elementary Literacy Plans	1-Jun-08
MPS Secondary Academic Agenda Project Plan 2007-2008	20-Oct-08
MPS Secondary Academic Agenda Project Plan 2008-2014	Fall 2008
MPS PreKindergarten to Middle Grade Guide	2008-09
MPS High School Guide	2008-09
MSP State of the Schools Annual Progress Report	Fall 2008
MSP Technology Master Plan 2008-2009	Not Dated
MSP Facilities Department Website	Mar-07
MSP Facility Reuse Planning Process	27-Sep-05
MSP Staff Development Website	Fall 2008
MSP Instructional Planning Website	27-Sep-07
MSP Performance Appraisal Development Planning Guide	Undated
MSP Professional Development Planning Powerpoint	17-May-07
Minnesota Department of Education ABE Indicators: Program Planning, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement	FY2006

In their review, auditors found the following board policies and administrative regulations that refer to some element of planning:

- *Administrative Regulation 1692C Accountability* includes a planning component in building level accountability: “The Building Profile consists of two components - outcome indicators and building plans.”

- *Board Policy 3120 Budget Preparation* states in part, “The goal of the budget preparation process is to design a budget that meets the education goals established by the Board of Education within parameters of the financial resources available. In order to accomplish this goal, it will be necessary for the individual program managers to focus on the identification, quantification, and initial prioritization of their program’s needs. The annual budget preparation should be compatible with the long-range goals of the school district.”
- *Board Policy 3170: Capital Planning* states, “The Minneapolis Public Schools will develop a multi-year plan for capital improvements and update it annually.”
- *Administrative Regulation 6201B: Staff Development Plans* states under item C, “Staff development plans for the school district shall address identified needs for Graduation Standards implementation throughout all levels of the school district programs.”
- *Board Policy 7110* and *Administrative Regulations 7210 A* and *7210B* provide direction for facilities planning.

While not specifically in policy, the following statement was included on the district’s strategic planning website: “The Board unanimously approved a final version of the nine recommendations in December. The strategic plan was presented to the Board on March 11, 2008. Detailed action plans will be developed in phases to ensure that each recommendation is well-executed and measured for success over the next several years.” Auditors did find some direction in policy regarding planning at various levels in the system.

Auditors noted the following correlations between sample job descriptions and planning responsibilities:

- Superintendent: “Strengthen the School-wide Continuous Improvement Planning (SCIP) process to engage schools in the development of three-year school improvement plans that school communities review and update annually.”
- Deputy Superintendent: a job description for this position was not presented to auditors ([see Finding 1.2.1](#)).
- Associate Superintendent: “Participates in the development of future initiatives to keep the Strategic Plan/Action Plan current and dynamic.”
- Executive Director, Special Education: “Direct the planning, development, and delivery of high quality staff development for the district’s special education teachers, administrators, educational assistants, and support staff.”
- Elementary and Secondary Principal Candidate Pool: “. . .lead the school in developing and implementing a school improvement plan. . .” (Auditors were not presented with an official job description for principals.)
- Chief Communication Officer: “Develop and direct a comprehensive marketing communications and public relations plan to support the District’s mission, vision, and strategic plan.”
- Chief of Student Support, Family and Community Engagement: “As part of the District Strategy Team and District Executive Leadership Team, participates in all decisions related in the strategic direction of the District.”
- Executive Director: Research Evaluation, & Assessment: “Ability to translate complex data to district staff and the public to influence planning for improved student achievement.”

Some elements of planning are present in selected board policies and job descriptions. However, neither set of documents, by itself, is adequate to provide unified direction and purposeful cohesion, which has, over time, contributed to fragmentation among schools and within programs ([see Findings 1.3, 2.2, 3.1, 4.3, 5.1, and 5.2](#)).

Three levels of analysis were used to determine the adequacy of planning in the Minneapolis Public Schools. These levels are as follows:

Level 1: Quality of Planning Design and Delivery

Level 2: Quality of Districtwide Plan Design, Deployment, and Delivery

Level 3: Quality of School/Department Improvement Plans’ Design, Deployment, and Delivery

The three terms used in this analysis were defined as follows:

- Design—the act of working out the form of a goal/project/product—to conceive, invent, etc.
- Deployment—those strategic actions taken to prepare and bring a goal or objective to action (e.g., staff development endeavors, coaching, mentoring)—setting up, installing, implementing, etc.
- Delivery—the carrying out of a goal/project/product—using a function/process/product, in place.

Level 1: Quality of Planning Design and Delivery

In the Level 1 review auditors considered the following questions:

1. Is there planning?
2. What is the quality of planning?
3. Is there action resulting from planning?
4. Is the action getting the desired results?

In answering these questions, auditors reviewed planning documents (see [Exhibit 1.4.1](#)), gathered information from interviews, and rated the quality of planning according to criteria noted in [Exhibit 1.4.2](#).

Exhibit 1.4.2

**Characteristics of Quality Planning
 Audit Criteria—Design, Deployment, and Delivery
 Minneapolis Public Schools
 October 2008**

No.	Characteristics of Quality Planning	Quality	
	Audit Criteria—Design, Deployment, and Delivery	Adequate	Inadequate
	There is evidence that...		
1	The Governing Board has placed into policy the expectation that the superintendent and staff think collectively about the future and that this thinking should take some tangible form without prescribing a particular template, allowing for flexibility as needed.		X
2	Leadership has implicit or explicit vision of or general direction for where the organization is going for improvement purposes. That vision emerges from having thought about the future in the context of that future.	X	
3	Databases influence the planning and system directions/initiatives.	X	
4	Budget planning for change is done in concert with other planning, with goals and actions from those plans driving the budget planning.		X
5	Leadership makes day-to-day decisions regarding the implicit or explicit direction of the system and facilitates movement toward that planned direction.	X	
6	Leadership is able to adjust any discrepancies between current status and desired status, facilitates movement toward the desired status, and is fluid in planning efforts (emergent in nature).	X	
7	Staff are involved in a purposeful way with such efforts as school/unit improvement planning, professional development councils, and district task forces, which are congruent with the articulated direction of the system or system initiatives.	X	
8	Professional development endeavors are aligned to system planning initiatives.	X	

To meet audit standards, six of the eight criteria must be found to be adequate. MPS met six of the eight quality planning criteria and therefore has adequate Level 1 planning. An explanation of auditors' rating of each criterion is noted below:

- Criterion 1 is not met. There are no board policies that provide direction for system-wide planning. Some policies do reference sub-categories of planning, such as building plans, budgeting, staff development, and capital outlay.
- Criterion 2 is met. The district's stated vision is "to make every child college ready."
- Criterion 3 is met. In context of the vision, the district has identified three key outcomes to be achieved by 2012:
 - "80 percent of all MPS students will meet or exceed state standards in math and reading.
 - 80 percent of all MPS students will be ready for college.
 - Race and income gaps [will be] reduced by 75 percent."
- Criterion 4 is not met. *Board Policy 3120: Budget Preparation* states in part, "The annual budget preparation should be compatible with the long-range goals of the school district." Interviews revealed that actual practice did not coincide with this policy directive:
 - "Most budget decisions are about what we are going to rearrange to avoid deficit spending" (Patron).
 - "Program needs should drive the budget—instead, the budget drives the program and often limits its quality" (Administrator).
 - "We have so many competing systems that it is hard to develop and fund excellence in any program" (Patron).
 - "We want to align the budget to the strategic plan, but how do we do this when you're used to just doling out money?" (Administrator).
 - "Budget decisions are not aligned with the strategic plan. Plan priorities are not being funded." (Administrator) (Also see [Finding 5.3](#)).
- Criterion 5 is met. Interviews revealed that decisions regarding direction were deliberately planned and focused: "We are trying to build a rational system of choice that is cost effective, equitable, and honors our culture of choice" (Patron). Likewise, a key initiative in Strategy #1 is "Leadership communication around raising expectations for all students." Reported accomplishments include aggressive academic targets, consistent emphasis by the leadership team, and the covenant signed with the African American community to close the achievement gap.
- Criterion 6 is met. The following quotation is representative of those discussing the district's dilemma of offering so many choices: "As original options have morphed, it is hard to know which programs are high quality and which are quality only in name and reputation" (Patron). Among the evidence, auditors found that the district was working on this problem was an informational packet from a July 26, 2008, board work session which identified a "consensus preference" in dealing with the challenge of raising academic standards while losing enrollment to competing "nonMPS options." The proposed solution included the need to offer "high quality magnet programs with integrity."
- Criterion 7 is met. Each school is required to have an individual *Continuous School Improvement Plan*. Auditors sampled plans for 45 of the district's 91 schools. While each plan is individually designed, they all follow a common template. Embedded in each plan is the responsibility to organize and receive input from building level advisory groups or councils. In addition, the district invited wide input from the public in the development of its strategic plan. Input included surveys, focus groups, and public meetings in which input was collected "from a wide variety of stakeholders including parents, students,

teachers, principals, and the community at large” (Quotation from the district’s strategic planning website).

- Criterion 8 is met. One administrator interviewed noted, “IFL (Institute for Learning) provides a much needed common nomenclature for teachers, administrators, and teachers.” The district has adopted and implemented over the last three years the Institute for Learning (IFL) principles:
 - Organizing for Effort
 - Clear Expectations
 - Fair and Credible Evaluations
 - Recognition of Accomplishment
 - Academic Rigor in a Thinking Curriculum
 - Accountable Talk
 - Socializing Intelligence
 - Self-Management of Learning
 - Learning as Apprenticeship

While results of this initiative vary by school (see [Finding 1.3](#)), the model does coincide with the district’s core strategy to “raise expectations, academic rigor, and performance for all students....”

Answers to Level 1 planning questions

1. With respect to the first question about planning, auditors found documented evidence that planning takes place within the Minneapolis Public Schools at both the district and building levels. The document most often referred to was the district’s recently adopted strategic plan. Auditors were also presented with 45 individual school plans.
2. Question #2 addresses the quality of planning. [Exhibit 1.4.2](#) shows that the district met six of eight quality planning criteria, which validates that there is adequate quality in the district’s planning efforts.
3. Question #3 asks if there is action resulting from the planning. As of October 2008, the district had published two *MPS Strategic Plan Implementation Quarterly Progress Reports* that detail progress with each core strategy.
4. The answer to Question #4 about results is that auditors were not presented with data that verifies that the district is getting “the desired results” (see [Findings 4.3](#) and [4.4](#)).

Level 2: Quality of Districtwide Plan (Design, Deployment, and Delivery)

In the Level 2 review, auditors considered the following questions:

1. Is there a districtwide plan?
2. What is the quality of the districtwide plan?
3. Is the plan being carried out and used?

In answering these questions, auditors reviewed planning documents (see [Exhibit 1.4.1](#)), gathered information from interviews, and rated their findings against the criteria in [Exhibit 1.4.3](#).

Exhibit 1.4.3

**Quality of the Districtwide Plan
Audit Criteria—Design, Deployment, and Delivery
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

No.	Characteristics of Plan Quality (Design, Deployment, and Delivery)	Quality	
		Adequate	Inadequate
1	Reasonableness and Clarity: The plan is reasonable; it has a feasible number of goals and objectives for the resources (financial, time, people) available. Moreover, the goals and objectives are clear and measurable.		X
2	Emergent: The plan allows for emergent thinking and trends and changes that impact the system both internally and externally.	X	
3	Change Strategies: The plan incorporates and focuses on those action strategies/interventions that are built around effective change strategies (e.g., capacity building of appropriate staff).	X	
4	Deployment Strategies: The plan clearly delineates strategies to be used to support deploying the steps and tasks outlined in the plan (e.g., orientation to the change, staff development on the proficiencies needed to bring about the change, communication regarding planned change).	X	
5	Integration of Goals and Actions: All goals and actions in the plan are interrelated and congruent with one another.	X	
6	Evaluation Plan and Implementation: There is a written plan to evaluate the objectives of the plan (not to evaluate whether or not the activities have taken place). Evaluation components of plans are actions to be implemented; plans are evaluated for their effects or results and modified as needed. There is both ongoing formative evaluation, so that plans are revised as needed, as well as an annual summative evaluation.	X	
7	Monitoring: Systems are in place and are being implemented for assessing the status of activities, analyzing the results, and reporting the outcomes that take place as the plan is deployed and delivered.	X	

To meet audit standards, six of the seven criteria must be found to be adequate. MPS does meet six of seven criteria and, therefore, Level 2 planning is considered adequate. An explanation of the auditors' rating of each criterion is noted below:

- Criterion 1 is not met. The strategic plan is well written; goals and objectives are clear and measurable. The principal reason that this criterion is not met is that evidence was not presented to auditors that the district's resources (financial, time, and people) are adequate to complete all of the identified tasks detailed in the strategic plan necessary to achieve the goal of "Every Child College-Ready," the three leading indicators, or the three core outcomes. As noted in Criterion 4 of the Level 1 planning analysis, the budget is not yet fully tied to the district's strategic priorities (see [Finding 5.3](#)). For example, documents were not presented to auditors that projected what it would actually cost the district to meet the three core outcomes by 2012. An answer was not given to the question, "What will it really cost to have 80 percent of all MPS students proficient or advanced on the state math and reading MCA II/ MTELL exams by 2012?" In addition, auditors were not presented with a comprehensive "stop doing list" of programs or interventions with lower priority that can be eliminated so that those resources can be redirected to achieving core outcomes. Interviews confirmed the disconnect between resources and goals: "The question is—what can we sustain? In losing students and cutting budgets, we have laid off teachers. Since we can't have it all, what are we willing to keep and at what cost?" (Administrator).

- Criterion 2 is met. On page 50 of the strategic plan, a section titled “Going Forward, We Will Explore Several Additional Possible Metrics and Leading Indicators” suggests that the plan is responsive to emergent thinking.
- Criterion 3 is met. Embedded in the strategic plan are the following capacity-building strategies:
 - Strategy 3: “Develop highly effective principal corps and ensure they have the capacity to establish and lead outstanding instructional teams.”
 - Strategy 4: “Develop high performing teacher corps and provide professional development and supports to get excellent results for all students.
- Criterion 4 is met. Each of the nine strategies has built in action steps with accompanying time-lines, which provide specific direction.
- Criterion 5 is met. Goals and action plans are interrelated and congruent with one another. The vision is to “Make Every Child College Ready,” and key desired outcomes focus on raising expectations and academic rigor for all students and aligning PreK-12 programs to the college readiness goal.” These actions were verified in interviews: “We have had to refer to the strategic plan more often to insure that we are aligning our efforts with the plan” (Administrator).
- Criterion 6 is met. The principal formative evaluation document is the district’s quarterly “Implementation Progress Report.” The report details implementation progress. Pages 21-24 highlight examples of critical work that still needs to be done in each strategy. Summative evaluation is reported in the district’s Scorecard and Targets document (pages 46-49 of the strategic plan). These pages detail achievement baseline data and progress towards the three core outcomes and the three leading indicators. These data are also reported in the State of the District annual report. The first actual summative evaluation that will provide hard evidence as to the plans’ efficacy will occur in the spring of 2009.
- Criterion 7 is met. Each strategy identifies the person(s) who have both primary and secondary accountability for monitoring progress towards completion of the respective action steps. The monitored progress is reported formatively in the quarterly progress report and summatively in the annual report.

Answers to Level 2 planning questions:

1. Is there a districtwide plan? Yes, the district has a comprehensive, up-to-date strategic plan (*The Plan*).
2. What is the quality of the districtwide plan? The quality of the plan is adequate, as it meets six of seven quality criteria.
3. Is the plan being carried out and used? Yes, but there were concerns expressed during interviews regarding consistency in using the strategic plan. Interviews and follow-up documents provide evidence that the plan is a living document and is central to the work of the district. However, the ultimate success of the plan hinges on alignment of the plan to the resources of the district (see Criterion 1 above and [Finding 5.3](#)) and the commitment of school personnel and patrons. These concerns were also expressed in interviews; sample comments follow:
 - “We haven’t always been committed to results; we have been rewarded for process regardless of the results” (Administrator).
 - “We don’t always work hard and smart about the right things” (Administrator).
 - “We need continuity of program throughout the system. The question is—what are we going to keep on the basis of sustainability and predictability” (Administrator).
 - “Is the district goal of getting 80 percent of students to proficiency attainable? I don’t believe that is possible because you would need early interventions before kindergarten. Many students do not come to school ready to learn” (Teacher).

Level 3: Quality of School Improvement Plans’ Design, Deployment, and Delivery

To frame the quality review of school improvement plans, auditors considered what was reported to them during interviews concerning the historical culture of site-based decision making. These comments related to the culture surrounding implementing plans consistently districtwide.

- “Teachers have lost trust in the district over a long period of time. Teachers have nothing they can depend on from day to day. Staff has a hard time taking anything seriously because everything changes all the time.” (Teacher)
- “We are still trying to change the culture from one in which people were allowed to operate in isolation to one in which people are more connected.” (Administrator)
- “Decisions are made by the campuses, the district, and teachers individually. We don’t know who we talk to about these issues.” (Teacher)
- “For the past four years, it has been a very deliberate effort to look at ourselves as a school system, not a system of schools.” (Administrator)
- “I’m a stand-alone department. I’m not sure about IFL in the district. What is it? What does it have to do with me?” (Teacher)

The school plans that were presented to auditors were prepared in a required common template and therefore contained similar components, but differed in approach, application, and depth of detail. In the Level 3 review, auditors considered the following questions:

1. Are there school plans?
2. What is the quality of the plans?
3. Are the plans being carried out and used?

In answering these questions, auditors reviewed planning documents for 45 of the district’s 91 schools, gathered information from interviews, and considered the criteria in [Exhibit 1.4.4](#).

Exhibit 1.4.4

Quality of the School Improvement Plans Audit Criteria—Design, Deployment, and Delivery Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

No.	Characteristics of School Improvement Plan Quality (Design, Deployment, Delivery)	Quality	
		Adequate	Inadequate
1	Congruence and Connectivity: Goals and actions are derived from, explicitly linked to, and congruent with the district plan’s goals, objectives, and priorities.	X	
2	Reasonableness and Clarity: The plan is reasonable in that it has a feasible number of goals and objectives for the resources (finances, time, people) available. Moreover, the goals and objectives are clear and measurable.		X
3	Emergent: The plan allows for emergent thinking, trends, and changes that impact the system both internally and externally.	X	
4	Change Strategies: The plan incorporates and focuses on those action strategies/interventions that are built around effective change strategies (e.g., capacity building of appropriate staff).	X	
5	Deployment Strategies: The plan clearly delineates strategies to be used to support deploying in the plan (e.g., orientation to the change, staff development on the proficiencies needed to bring about the change, communication regarding planned change).	X	

Exhibit 1.4.4
Quality of the School Improvement Plans
Audit Criteria—Design, Deployment, and Delivery
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

No.	Characteristics of School Improvement Plan Quality (Design, Deployment, Delivery)	Quality	
		Adequate	Inadequate
6	Integration of Goals and Actions: All goals and actions in the plan are interrelated and congruent with one another.	X	
7	Evaluation Plan: There is a written plan to evaluate the objectives of the plan (not an evaluation as to whether the activities have taken place).	X	
8	Monitoring: Systems are in place and are being implemented for assessing the status of activities, analyzing the results, and reporting outcomes that take place as the plan is designed, deployed, and delivered.	X	
9	Evaluation: Evaluation components of plans are implemented; plans are evaluated for their effects/results and modified as needed. There is both ongoing formative evaluation, so that plans are revised as needed, and an annual summative evaluation.	X	

To meet audit standards, seven of the nine criteria must be found to be adequate. The audit team found that MPS does meet eight of nine criteria and, therefore, has adequate Level 3 planning. An explanation of the auditors' rating of each criterion is provided below:

- Criterion 1 is met. Every school had a unique approach to goal setting based upon tradition, demographics, and present achievement levels of students. However, the district goals in reading and math were universally addressed, with schools identifying their own benchmarks. Closing the achievement gap for students of color varied on the basis of individual school demographics.
- Criterion 2 is not met for the same reason that Criterion 1 was not met in the district's strategic plan: feasibility of achieving goals within current resource allocations (finances, time, and people). Interviews verified this limitation:
 - "The most common complaint by teachers is that they never get time to plan for the next day." (Teacher)
 - "Our biggest challenge is money; we have limited resources, but not limited needs." (Administrator)
 - "Resources are a problem; teachers often have to make up their own curriculum or use out-dated textbooks." (Teacher)
 - "When standards change, teachers are forced to redo units which creates more work without the compensation of time or money." (Teacher)
 - "We must extend the school day; you can't teach all that is required in the time that is presently available." (Teacher)
- Criterion 3 is met. The planning template requires schools to "see if new data/circumstances require revisions in the plan." Schools universally responded to this requirement. A typical response is that schools reviewed progress on a scheduled basis (usually every 6-9 weeks). "Any revisions suggested [through this review process] will be brought to the work groups...and Education Council for approval" was a typical approach to responding to emerging needs.
- Criterion 4 is met. The planning template requires schools to "Explain the way your leadership team relates to the staff in order to build and maintain support for implementation of the School Improvement Plan." In addition, the template requires a professional development plan to support all action steps. A representative response to the template requirement is as follows: "Staff buy-in is critical to the success of this plan. Staff has collaborated to help define priorities and develop a more detailed implementation

breakout for years one, two, and three.” However, some interviews provided a contradictory response: “Some building cultures are oppositional to change and that is detrimental to students” (Administrator). However, each plan, by virtue of the common template, addressed the need to incorporate and focus on professional development strategies needed for change.

- Criterion 5 is met. The planning template requires schools to state deployment strategies by specifying implementation steps. Typical implementation strategies were presented in spreadsheet form with sections for the required action, required resources, timelines, responsible person(s), and plan to monitor and evaluate. Most schools filled out each section of the template for each action plan. However, some schools presented plans with empty cells. Due to the fact that most schools presented complete templates, Criterion 5 was judged as adequate.
- Criterion 6 is met. A review of representative school plans showed that schools added a variety of actions to the principal goals of increasing math and reading achievement. Most of these additions address various strategies in the district’s strategic plan, such as family and community involvement, enhancement of school climate and positive behavior support, and other interventions for at-risk students.
- Criterion 7 is met. The common template requires a “Description of how student progress toward this goal will be measured.” Responses generally include some combination of local, formative criterion-based measures and state required standardized summative testing.
- Criterion 8 is met. Again, the common template requires “Regular monitoring of the SIP [as this] is necessary for success. Monitoring will check to see if the plan is being fully implemented as intended.” A representative response to this requirement states in part, “Strategies will be employed to collect information and get feedback from all teachers as warranted. Test scores generated throughout the year, CALT and MCA, will be used to assess progress academically, as well as behavior data will be used to assess climate. Family, student, and staff survey results will also be used as indicators of overall success or to identify growth areas.”
- Criterion 9 is met. The evaluation template requires schools to identify “. . . how student progress toward [each] goal will be measured.” Examples of these measures include the following:
 - “CBM, an oral reading fluency measure, will be administered in the fall, winter and spring for benchmark testing. Students falling below 50 percent will be monitored weekly; biweekly for students in the 40-79 percent range and monthly for students above 79 percent.”
 - “We implemented the Edusoft assessment . . . with 8th graders to look at progress towards [reading rate] benchmark [goals]. We also administered the CALT in the fall [to 8th grade students] and are in the process of implementing the CALT in March for 6th and 7th graders. Both of these will provide some comparison of how students are progressing. We will look at continuously enrolled students to get a fair representation of what is happening for students academically.”

Answers to Level 3 planning questions:

1. Are there school plans? Yes, each school is mandated to complete an annual update of its *Continuous School Improvement Plan*.
2. What is the quality of the plans? Plan quality is adequate as the MPS *Continuous School Improvement Plan* planning template meets eight of nine quality criteria.
3. Are the plans being carried out and used? Interviews suggested that actual plan use varied among buildings, as noted in the following comments:
 - “Moving Algebra I to 8th grade is going to be a push and a shove—if we get it implemented at all.” (Administrator)
 - “How well teachers articulate the curriculum varies widely and depends on their general competency and willingness to do the job.” (Administrator)

- “There is a real disconnect between the actual rigor of our schools and public perception of that rigor.” (Administrator)
- “We have significant building level leadership issues. Schools progress only where there are competent administrators in place. Historically, administrators have filled a manager role and some have not been able to transition to the role of instructional leader.” (Administrator)

Summary

Auditors determined that both district level and school based planning quality are adequate, with some exceptions. A review of board policies and job descriptions related to planning showed that neither set of documents, in and of themselves, is adequate to provide the unified direction and cohesion that are necessary to prevent fragmentation among schools and within programs. Other exceptions include the continued lack of resources (financial, time, and personnel) that are needed to fully implement the plan and meet the district’s vision of “Every Child College-Ready.” The budget is not yet fully tied to the district’s strategic priorities (see [Finding 5.3](#)). Documents were not presented to auditors which projected what it would actually cost the district to meet the three core outcomes by 2012. The historical fragmentation among schools was validated in interviews which also confirmed that while recent planning efforts have narrowed the fragmentation, it continues to exist in the site-based philosophy of the district evidenced by the multiple options and interventions that the district continues to support. “Something has to give; we can’t sustain every existing program,” one teacher remarked, a feeling that was echoed in many interviews.

Finding 1.5: Administrator monitoring of instructional practices is inconsistent and does not ensure alignment with the *Principles of Learning* framework.

Monitoring implementation of the system’s curriculum is crucial to organizational effectiveness. Key functions must be monitored to ensure that the organization is on track in accomplishing its mission.

Teachers operate from a group of informed assumptions, which include the following:

1. Teachers are responsible for planning their instruction, implementing their plans, and appraising their success on the basis of their beliefs about what will enable students to gain maximum achievement.
2. Teachers consciously determine what activities to engage students in, and they are in charge of decisions about how, and when to teach students the assigned curriculum.

The autonomy of teachers calls for supervision that monitors the implementation of the curriculum and that facilitates reflective dialogue with teachers to ascertain the decision-making process used by teachers. Given that knowledge of the classroom process is needed, the function of monitoring is one of the more vital tasks for school principals in order to assure the following:

- Implementation of school board policies and requirements, including the authorized curriculum and expectations for use of productive teaching and learning methods in the classroom.
- Delivery of the curriculum with an appropriate and thorough focus on learner objectives (content), in the manner in which the objectives are measured for proficiency (context), at the level of challenge required to master the objective (cognitive type), and at the appropriate point (developmental sequence).
- Fidelity to the curriculum (aligned to the accountability measures) reflected in what is being taught regularly.
- Execution of system expectations for use of powerful instructional strategies, such as differentiated instruction, principles of learning, problem-solving learning activities, etc.
- Active student engagement, characterized by optimal use of time and motivational approaches.
- Use of mastery learning strategies, including diagnostic determinations for instructional planning to meet the needs of all students.
- Accurate understanding of student progress and teacher performance, coupled with frequent classroom visits of variable duration.

- Classroom group gains in achievement, typified by teaching that is differentiated, engaging, and designed to promote independent thought and action on the part of students.

Many factors rise to critical importance in the instructional process, not the least of which is the choice to teach the “right material in the right way.” Monitoring is essential to provide the system with a greater likelihood of optimization and success in getting adequate student achievement and accomplishing of the system’s mission and goals.

Auditors observed how curriculum implementation was monitored in the Minneapolis Public Schools. Data were collected by reviewing board policies and the *Principles of Learning (POL)*, by interviewing district and building level staff, and by visiting schools and classrooms. In addition, job related documents for leadership positions were reviewed to ascertain if monitoring the curriculum was identified as a key responsibility (see [Finding 1.2](#) and [Exhibit 1.2.1](#)).

Overall, the auditors found that district processes and procedures for monitoring curriculum and instruction are inadequate and inconsistent in addressing the *Principles of Learning*. District documents were not clear regarding expectations for instructional delivery, and monitoring practices used by administrators varied across the school system. The inconsistencies in monitoring practices that auditors observed included significant variations in administrators’ understanding of “what was effective observation of instructional practices,” the frequency of instructional monitoring, and the extent to which classroom instruction was aligned with *POL* components.

The auditors did not identify any board policy or administrative regulation that comprehensively detailed expectations for the delivery of curriculum, but they did find the following statements in policy that imply responsibility for monitoring:

- *Administrative Regulation 6110A: Objectives of the Educational Program* states, “It shall be the responsibility of each building staff under the leadership of the principal to deliver the specific educational objectives that have been determined centrally, which are consistent with the broad educational goals of the school district.”
- *Policy 6200: Curriculum* includes the following language: “...one must determine what is to be learned, what procedures and materials will work best to reach the desired learning levels and some measure of knowing when the required learning has taken place.”
- *Policy 6276: Curriculum Evaluation* states, “The evaluation of the curriculum and other aspects of the educational program of a school shall be directed by the principal, who shall report to the appropriate superintendent.... It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent to report periodically to the Board of Education on the progress the district is making towards the attainment of its educational goals.”
- *Administrative Regulation 1692C: Restructuring and Site-Based Management (Assistance to Schools)* states, “The central office will be responsible for assisting all schools as they implement their *Building Profile Plans*. In addition, the central office will be expected to intervene with any schools identified for intensive school improvement. The first priority of that intervention will be to assure the quality of classroom experiences and the level of student performance while the school community and the central office strive to improve building outcomes in other areas of the Building Profile.”

The audit team also identified references that implied responsibility for curriculum monitoring in the following job descriptions:

- Superintendent: “Implement research-based best practice approaches to instruction in core academic areas....” (Note: the superintendent’s job description does not specifically address monitoring responsibilities.)
- Associate Superintendent: “Regularly visits schools and other appropriate program sites to observe programs in operation, and assist principals and other administrators to serve most effectively as leaders.”

- Elementary and Secondary Principal Candidate Pool: “. . . monitoring of the instructional program by understanding individual needs of students in the program; assess the programs designed to meet those needs; work collaboratively with all staff to strengthen the instructional program. . .” (Note: auditors were not presented with official job descriptions for principals.)
- Executive Director-Special Education: “Monitor staff compliance with due process timelines . . . Provide feedback, coaching, guidance, and needed resources when staff is out of compliance.”
- Chief of Student Support, Family and Community Engagement: “Supervise, plan, and consult with lead counselor in all issues relevant to counseling services and district policies relative to student’s successful progress through meeting graduation standards.”
- Executive Director-Research, Evaluation, & Assessment: “Through direct supervision, manages and is responsible for district, state, and federally mandated testing of students.”

The nine components of the *Principles of Learning*—Organizing for Effort, Clear Expectations, Recognition of Accomplishment, Fair and Credible Evaluations, Academic Rigor in a Thinking Curriculum, Accountable Talk, Socializing Intelligence, Learning as Apprenticeship, and Self-Management of Learning—were identified as the district framework for curriculum implementation. Auditors considered the POLs to be the primary source of direction regarding an instructional model in the Minneapolis Public Schools.



Bethune School Performance Data Collection Chart

Central office and building administrators were interviewed and schools in the Minneapolis Public Schools were visited by the audit team. In order to ascertain how administrators fulfilled their responsibility to monitor the implementation of curriculum, district level administrators were asked about expectations for the amount of time they are to spend in schools working with principals and monitoring instruction. Principals were asked how often their supervisor visits their school. Building administrators and some staff members were asked questions such as: How do you know if teachers are teaching the correct content? How does your principal know if you are teaching the correct content? How often do supervisors visits your classroom?

Answers to these types of questions served as the primary data source in determining how curriculum implementation was being monitored. Data were collected from a sampling of schools and interviews and was analyzed to determine

- What monitoring practices were implemented in schools,
- The frequency of visits made to schools/classrooms by supervisors, and
- The level of alignment with the *Principles of Learning*, especially Clear Expectations, Academic Rigor in a Thinking Curriculum, and Accountable Talk.

Responses to auditors' questions were obtained from most schools and are summarized in [Exhibit 1.5.1](#).

Exhibit 1.5.1

**Summary of Monitoring of Curriculum Implementation in Selected Schools
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Elementary (K-5)	Elementary (K-8)	Middle	High
Armatage—Collects lesson plans; walk-through; formal observations of new teachers; data meetings.	Anderson—TAP Protocol; AP documents.	Afrocentric—classroom visits.	Anishanabe—In classroom every day.
Bancroft—(Infrequent) learning walks.	Barton—Daily classroom visits.	Anthony—Walk-throughs.	Broadway Alternative—Daily presence in classrooms.
Bethune—Compare teacher to teacher; check on pacing of content.	Cityview—Review lesson plans; daily classroom visits (AP also visits); gives feedback to teachers on instructional practice with recommendations for improvement; constant data review at individual student level; principal provided evidence of the use of data.	Anwatin—IB Curriculum.	Edison—SIP data; proximity to monitor behavior.
Brym Mawr—SIP; classroom visits.	Green Central—Use of data (visible in conference room); focus on addressing the needs of individual students.	Field—“I get into classrooms as much as I can; looking for clear expectations;” AP’s held accountable for monitoring.	Henry—Through teacher evaluation.
Burroughs—SIP.	Hmong—TAP school protocol; in classrooms every day.	Folwell—TAP protocol; short visits to all classrooms every other week.	North High—Instructional focused lessons plan (ELA and math); learning walks; Faculty Council discussions; site-based committees , e.g., Graduation Committee, Wellness Committee; data review; test talks.
Dowling—Walk-throughs; “look to see match of instructional methods to state standards.”	Jefferson—Daily visits in classrooms.	Northeast—Walk-throughs; look at IB questions and student work; peer coaching as a component of IB program.	Roosevelt—SIP data.
Hale—The Content Focused Coaching Model; data review with each grade level; team meetings every 5 weeks (Fountas and Pinnell data).	Lake Harriet—Grade level meeting; team meetings; lesson plans reviewed; learning walks.	Olson/Lind Middle—Team meetings - focus- planning and integration; in every classroom every day.	South—Walk-through—no format—“I just know what I am looking for—clarity of standards.”
Hiawatha—Visits classrooms daily; speaks to teachers and students.	Lucy Laney—Data review; TAP protocol.	Riverbend—CBM data; RIM data.	Southwest—“Wander” through classrooms; testing; department monitors content.
Keewaydin—Data walks.	Marcy—Have to look at data.	Sanford—TAP protocol; classroom walk-throughs.	Stadium View High School—Minnesota State Standards.

Exhibit 1.5.1 (continued)
Summary of Monitoring of Curriculum Implementation in Selected Schools
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Elementary (K-5)	Elementary (K-8)	Middle	High
Kenny—"I walk in classrooms all the time;" check lesson plans; data review.	Nellie Johnson—Learning walk-throughs; TAP school.		Wellstone—SIP data.
Kenwood—Check lesson plans; classroom walks/visits.	Seward—Data meetings-focus on "bubble" students.		
Lind/Olsen—Review lesson plans (rotating basis); look for content being taught in classroom/alignment with lesson plans.	Sheridan—In classrooms 3 times per week "to see what's going;" building curriculum coordinator.		
Loring—Walk-throughs look for accountable talk; grade level meetings look for curriculum content and pacing.	Sullivan—Data (formative).		
Lyndale—Daily visits to classrooms (mornings).	Windom—In every classroom every day.		
Northrop—No formal model in place; peer review teams meet on a quarterly basis.			
Parkview—Classroom visits; Montessori Program review.			
Pillsbury—Collect lesson plans every 6 weeks; 15-20 minute observations in classrooms at every grade level once every 6 weeks.			
Pratt—Data Teams; CFC coach; data walks.			
Waite Park—Quarterly meetings to discuss progress of individual students .			
Wenonah Elementary—Data Teams meet in cross grade curriculum meetings.			
Whitter—Use data to track low achieving students.			

The following are findings and questions for reflection identified from data in [Exhibit 1.5.1](#).

- School system curriculum leaders identified *Principles of Learning* as the framework for classroom instruction. An overarching question regarding curriculum monitoring in the Minneapolis Public Schools is, "What are the acceptable evidences that *Principles of Learning* are being implemented effectively in classrooms and at all levels of the school system?" Practices employed in monitoring curriculum implementation varied across the district. Administrators' comments did not consistently reference *POL* components. Several principals and district administrators presented the auditors with "observation sheets" that they had developed and were using to document the instructional practices they observed when visiting classrooms. Most administrators, however, made no reference to how they

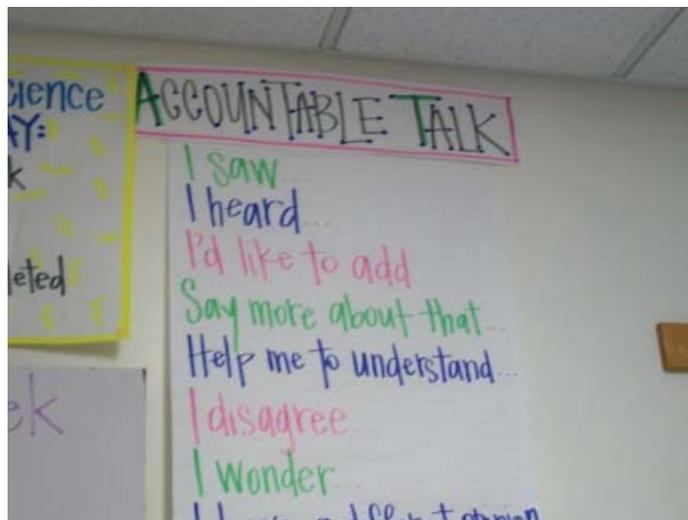
documented what was observed in classrooms. Some administrators indicated that they have no formal means for documenting instructional practices observed in classrooms.

- Terminology used to identify group monitoring practices was confusing. For example, administrators used the terms *learning walk*, *data walks*, and *walk-throughs* as methods of monitoring curriculum implementation. Questions: How are these processes similar? Do they consistently provide the same information about student performance and the effectiveness of the curriculum? If they are different, what critical information do administrators learn from each type of review and how should principals differentiate when their utilization will generate needed data? What common name should be used to identify *building walks* type activities if they are to generate the same types of data? How does the *building walk* process support the implementation of *POL* in schools and classrooms?
- Lesson plans were mentioned sporadically as a means of monitoring instructional practice and the implementation of the curriculum. There was no consistency in how or when lesson plans were reviewed. Some administrators collected and reviewed lesson plans weekly; others reviewed them every six weeks; some did not collect lesson plans, but required teachers to have them available for review upon request. Questions: How does the district define the purpose of lesson planning? What is the expectation for reviewing lesson plans? What level of detail should be included in lesson plans to ensure that lessons are aligned to *POL* and state learning standards?
- Many building administrators used vague terminology such as “look for content” to describe what they expected to see when observing instruction. Questions: What are the expectations for using approved district curriculum guides to drive teacher decision making regarding what skills to teach? How is the utilization of textbooks compared to the utilization of approved written curriculum in determining what teachers teach? How do district curriculum guides support the horizontal coordination of curriculum (across a grade level: all 5th grade students learn the same content; across an instructional level: all middle school students are exposed to and expected to master the same body of content and skills)? How do district curriculum guides support the vertical articulation of curriculum: prerequisite learning skills between grades and instructional levels? How are written curriculum documents used in the school system to support the implementation of *POL*?
- Inconsistencies were also identified in the frequency of principals’ visits to classrooms, for example, everyday, three times a week, short visits, “wandering into classrooms.” Questions: What are the expectations for central office administrators to visit schools? What should be the focus of central office school visitations? In their instructional leadership role, what are the expectations for building administrators to be in classrooms observing teaching and instruction (frequency and length of visit)? How should schools with multiple administrators organize monitoring to ensure that all teachers are observed and provided necessary support in infusing *Principles of Learning* components into their instructional planning and implementation?
- Many administrators identified the use of data as a monitoring practice; however, most did not provide evidence that they actually used data. Questions: How do district decision makers expect data to be used? How does the district determine if administrators understand the significance of different types of data and how to use data to drive decision making about the written, taught, and tested curricula? What evidence is acceptable to demonstrate that data are effectively used to drive instructional decision making and implementation of the *Principles of Learning*?

The findings and questions for reflection cited above were echoed by staff. Interviews revealed inconsistencies in the frequency and number of visits and in expectations for school visits.

- “We are in schools on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday...Monday and Friday are reserved for meetings and office work.” (Administrator)
- “I am in schools at least two hours a day.” (Administrator)

- “I don’t get into classrooms much...we have so much PD [professional development] to plan we depend on the building level coaches to get into the classrooms and keep us informed about the effective usage of programs.” (Administrator)
- “The capacity of principals in monitoring of teaching is low.” (Administrator)
- “We have some shining stars...but for some principals, 80 percent of their time is spent on management.” (Administrator)
- “It [POL] is not mandated [in my program].” (Administrator)
- “There is no sense of urgency about how content is being taught and how time is being used.” (Administrator)
- “My supervisor has been in the school more than ever. The supervisor comes to visit because a complaint is made.” (Administrator)
- “The district has a desire for us to get into the classroom. For me to get into classrooms is a luxury.” (Administrator)
- “My supervisor has visited the school two times this year.” (Administrator)
- “I get into classrooms...as much as I can.” (Administrator)
- “We are expected to spend 1-2 hours in the classroom a day. One teacher said to me, ‘You’re the first principal in 14 years who came in to observe.’ Another teacher said, ‘It has been 20 years for me!’” (Administrator)
- “Our focus as a system wasn’t on aligned teaching. At individual schools, we made decisions about what to teach and what materials to use. This doesn’t work vertically or with high mobility rates.” (Teacher)
- “The principal monitors my instruction by collecting and reviewing my lesson plans on a weekly basis.” (Teacher)
- “No administrator has been in my classroom this year and I am untenured.” (Teacher)
- “I see an administrator as mandated by contract.” (Teacher)



Learning Principles on display at Nellie Johnson School

Summary

Auditors found great variation in how curriculum implementation is monitored among district schools and by central office administrators. While the *Principles of Learning* are to be the central framework for delivering instruction, building level administrators made only general references to them, and auditors observed inconsistencies in both how they are understood and implemented. Consequently, auditors concluded that the *Principles of Learning*, as the instructional framework for the district, have not been consistently integrated into the daily curriculum and instructional practices at the school and classroom levels.

STANDARD 2: The School District Has Established Clear and Valid Objectives for Students.

A school system meeting this audit standard has established a clear, valid, and measurable set of pupil standards for learning and has set the objectives into a workable framework for their attainment.

Unless objectives are clear and measurable, there cannot be a cohesive effort to improve pupil achievement in the dimensions in which measurement occurs. The lack of clarity and focus denies to a school system's educators the ability to concentrate scarce resources on priority targets. Instead, resources may be spread too thin and be ineffective in any direction. Objectives are, therefore, essential to attaining local quality control via the school board.

What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

Common indicators the PDK-CMSi auditors expected to find are:

- A clearly established, board-adopted system-wide set of goals and objectives for all programs and courses;
- Demonstration that the system is contextual and responsive to national, state, and other expectations as evidenced in local initiatives;
- Operations set within a framework that carries out the system's goals and objectives;
- Evidence of comprehensive, detailed, short- and long-range curriculum management planning;
- Knowledge, local validation, and use of current best practices and emerging curriculum trends;
- Written curriculum that addresses both current and future needs of students;
- Major programmatic initiatives designed to be cohesive;
- Provision of explicit direction for the superintendent and professional staff; and
- A framework that exists for systemic curricular change.

Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard Two. Details follow within separate findings.

The scope of a district's curriculum is the presence of curriculum documents to guide instruction in every subject and course offered to students. The lack of curriculum documents increases the risk of inconsistency and fragmentation across courses, grade levels, and schools. To be considered adequate according to audit criteria, 70 percent of the district's subjects and courses must have guiding curriculum documents. The scope of the written curriculum for the four core content areas—English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies—was considered adequate in kindergarten through grade 8, with 100 percent of courses in these grade levels having some type of written or online curriculum guidance document available to teachers. However, in grades 9 through 12, the scope of the curriculum in the core content areas was considered inadequate, with 56 percent of courses having some type of written or online document available to teachers.

The existence and availability of curriculum documents is only one piece of providing appropriate curriculum guidance to teachers, however. Curriculum documents must also be of adequate quality and provide direction and consistency to enable students to achieve at high levels. Comprehensive curriculum documents identify lesson objectives, specific prerequisite skills necessary to address these objectives, instructional resources, preferred teaching strategies, and assessment measures. Auditors reviewed written documents available to teachers, both in paper and online formats. Among these were descriptions of core content, curriculum maps, and other curriculum documents; course syllabi; literacy continua, and curriculum frameworks. Auditors also

reviewed Minnesota Academic Standards, Minnesota assessment item samples for language arts, and a variety of student artifacts collected during school visits.

The auditors found that the quality of the district's written curriculum was inadequate to direct teaching and to support quality instruction that is focused on the content and contexts assessed by district tests in use.. Auditors also found that district curriculum documents lacked internal consistency across all curricular areas and, consequently, they were often used ineffectively and/or inconsistently throughout the system.

The curriculum documents (guides) contained a variety of problems in terms of basic quality. Auditors selected one content area, English language arts, for further analysis. These documents contained problems in internal consistency, which was exacerbated by the lack of strong district curriculum and internal problems within the Minnesota Academic standards themselves. Such lack of internal consistency impedes the delivery of curriculum as intended.

Finding 2.1: The scope of the written curriculum is adequate in grades K-8 but inadequate in grades 9-12.

Curriculum documents are the written guidelines that provide direction for teachers in planning classroom instruction. These documents should include information about standards and objectives for students, prerequisite skills, instructional resources, classroom strategies, and methods of assessment. A complete set of curriculum documents includes written curriculum for all subjects and courses taught. This is known as the scope of the written curriculum. When there is no curriculum document for a subject or content area, teachers must rely on other resources for planning and delivering instruction. These resources may or may not be aligned with the district's intended curriculum or with its common system-wide assessments. Without a district-developed curriculum guide, it is difficult to provide for consistency, focus, and equity across schools, grades, and courses.

The auditors look for the presence of comprehensive curriculum guides for each content area and course at each grade level in the school system. Typically, these guides have been written documents developed to provide clear direction for teacher use in implementing the intended curriculum. Minneapolis Public Schools curriculum documents, from a traditional perspective, have been replaced with online access to a variety of curriculum guidance documents that would usually be present in a single, comprehensive curriculum document for a given subject area or course that would provide for system-wide direction. Although these documents were not presented in cohesive form, auditors consider them to be the documents that are intended to guide instruction in the district, and as such refer to them as curriculum guides.

“Curriculum guide” or curriculum documents are terms intended to encompass the various paper and online documents and resources made available, including district standards, core content, alignment documents, pacing guides, scope and sequence documents, course syllabi and outlines, and other curriculum guidance documents.

To determine the scope of curriculum and district requirements concerning scope, auditors reviewed district policies and administrative regulations, plans, and district course numbering maps. They reviewed all curriculum guides and related documents made available to them, and interviewed teachers, principals, and members of the central office administrative staff responsible for curriculum development and supervision.

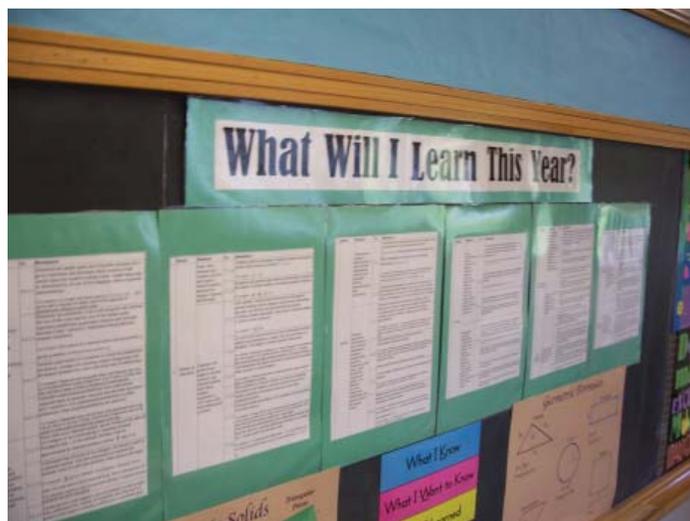
The auditors expect to find written curriculum for all subjects and courses offered at every grade level. If 70 percent or more of courses offered in a system have written curriculum documents, the scope, or coverage, of the written curriculum is considered adequate to provide quality control of the system's curriculum. The quality of the district's written curriculum guidance documents is addressed in [Finding 2.2](#).

Overall, auditors found that the scope of the written curriculum was adequate in the four core content areas in grades K-8 but inadequate in grades 9-12. Furthermore, auditors found that curriculum guides were difficult to gather in that the written curriculum varied by subject and grade level in terms of their location (paper or online), components, and formats. Some curricula had been developed by district teams for districtwide use, but auditors also found that, due to lack of district curriculum, some building staffs had initiated curriculum

development for their own sites. Most high school documents included course syllabi, outlines, or calendars; in a number of instances, these were the only written documents related to curriculum provided to auditors.

Auditors examined board policy and administrative regulations to determine if they specify for scope requirements. The following board policies refer to the scope of the written curriculum:

- *Administrative Regulation 6110A: Objectives of the Educational Program* (revised 1985) gives responsibility for developing written curriculum in all subject areas to the district, stating, “Curriculum goals and objectives, scope and sequence, learning materials, expectation levels of students and measurements of achievement will be determined centrally and directed for obligatory districtwide implementation....”
- *Board Policy 6200: Curriculum* (revised 2008) states that the board recognizes that “a curriculum with clearly established goals and objectives is a necessity in accomplishing the district’s mission.”
- *Administrative Regulation 6200A: Elementary School Curriculum* (revised 1985) lists the subjects taught as part of the elementary school curriculum.
- *Administrative Regulation 6200B: Secondary School Curriculum, General Requirements* (revised 1985) lists the subjects to be taught as part of the curriculum for grades 7 through 12. For grades 7-8, the policy refers to offering “common curriculum experiences to all students.” For grades 9-12, the policy states, “Equity is guaranteed among Minneapolis high schools by providing a comprehensive core curriculum in every senior high school” and reinforces this statement as follows: “Equity in the basic course offerings is the goal.”
- *Board Policy 6202: Ensurance of Preparatory Standards* (revised 1998) explains the district’s commitment to having all students “receive curriculum, instruction and assessments which address the required preparatory standards of the Profile of Learning and integrate technology.”
- *Board Policy 6203: Ensurance of High School Standards* (revised 1998) confirms that the district will conform to the requirements of the Minnesota Graduation Standards for all students. It also states that “the sequence of standards and learning provided in grades 9-12 will be developed and submitted to the Minneapolis Public School Board for approval.”
- *Board Policy 6210: Program Descriptions* (adopted 1985) directs each secondary building to develop course handbooks that include “course offerings, course goals and objectives, activities, prerequisites, grading criteria, graduation requirements... and assessment methods.”



Academic Standards on display in classroom at Anthony School

Auditors examined the paper documents presented to them, as well as resources presented on the district’s website. The auditors found that the electronic curriculum guidance documents on the district’s website were not uniform in design or relative placement within the website. These documents along with others provided by district personnel were compared to course lists to determine the scope of the written curriculum.

Auditors reviewed a variety of state-, district-, and site-developed documents in the course of their work on this finding, as well as on [Findings 1.4](#) and [2.2](#). The following exhibit lists key documents reviewed by the auditors in this process.

Exhibit 2.1.1
Key Curriculum Planning/Guidance Documents and Materials
Reviewed by Auditors
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Document	Publication Date
Board Policies 6202; 6203	1998
Board Policy 6202	1995
Board Policy 6110	1992
Board Policies 6200; 6210; 6276	1985
Administrative Regulations 6202A; 6203A	1998
Administrative Regulations 6100A; 6110A; 6200A; 6200B	1985
Administrative Regulation 6200C	Undated
MPS Strategic Plan, 2007-2012	2007
MPS 2007-2012 Strategic Plan Supplement—Action steps, metrics and timing	2008
MPS Curriculum Review and Adoption Cycle, 2005-2013	2005
MPS Curriculum Review Cycle	2006
MPS Philosophy of Professional Development	Undated
MPS Standards of Effective Instruction: Domains and Rubrics	2007
Standards and Graduation Requirements Revisions (MN Department of Education)	2006
MPS Common Course Numbering System—course titles for core content areas	2008
MPS Curriculum & Instruction websites for core content areas	Various
MPS PreK through 5 Big Ideas (website)	2007
Resnick, Lauren B., Making America Smarter: Summarization of Eight Principles of Learning	2005
Principles of Learning, Institute for Learning	2007
Minnesota Academic Standards: Language Arts K-12	2003
MPS Power Standards for Secondary English Language Arts: 6-12th Grade Curriculum Frameworks	2007
Big Picture: MPS English Language Arts Curriculum Framework & Mapping Process	Undated
Secondary English Language Arts Alignment to the MPS Strategic Plan	2008
Disciplinary Literacy in English Language Arts: Suggested Professional Learning Community Agenda Items	2008
Disciplinary Literacy in English Language Arts: What are Students Doing as Learners?	2008
English Language Arts Curriculum Framework: Factors in ELA Rigorous Instruction	2007
MPS Elementary Literacy Plan	2008
New Standards Primary Literacy Standards: K-3 Continuum Documents	Undated
Alignment of MN and New Standards Primary Literacy Standards: Grade 3	Undated
Alignment of MN and New Standards Performance Standards: 4th and 5th Grade	Undated
MPS K-5 Literacy Framework	2007
Key Components of Literacy Instruction	Undated
Key Components of Reading Instruction	Undated
Key Components of Writing Instruction	Undated

Exhibit 2.1.1 (continued) Key Curriculum Planning/Guidance Documents and Materials Reviewed by Auditors Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008	
Document	Publication Date
Key Components of Speaking and Listening Instruction	2008
Key Components of Literacy Assessments	Undated
Big Ideas (PK-5)	2007
MPS English Language Arts Adoption Criteria Program Evaluation 2007/2008 (draft)	2007
Minnesota Academic Standards: Mathematics K-12	2007
Mathematics high school course syllabi (various)	Various
IB curricula in core content areas (various)	Various
Minnesota Academic Standards: Science K-12	2003
MPS Core Science Curriculum, grades K-5	Undated
MPS Core Science Curriculum, grades 6-8	2008
MPS Core Science Curriculum, grades 9-12	2008
MPS Science Department Recommended Steps to Systemic Integration and Sustainability	Undated
Big Ideas (PK-5)	2007
Klentschy, M., Science Notebook Essentials-A guide to effective notebook components	2005
Core Science Unit Descriptions for High Five	Undated
MPS Scope and Sequence of Science Units, Assessments Noted	Undated
Quality Indicators in K-5 Science Instruction	Undated
Minnesota Academic Standards: Social Studies K-12	2004
MPS Core Social Studies Curriculum, grades K-5	2005
MPS Core Social Studies Curriculum, grades 6-8	2005
MPS Core Social Studies Curriculum, grades 9-12	2005

Auditors found some direction regarding curriculum scope in *Administrative Regulation 6110A*, which states “Curriculum goals and objectives, scope and sequence, learning materials, expectation levels of students and measurements of achievement will be determined centrally and directed for obligatory districtwide implementation....” Auditors found that although regulation directs having curriculum and making it obligatory, this was not always observed in practice.

Auditors received a variety of curriculum-related documents, including Minnesota Academic Standards and district-developed scope and sequence matrices, pacing guides, quarterly assessments, units of study, curriculum frameworks, and other materials found in hard copy and/or on the district and school websites. At the high school level, auditors frequently were presented with course syllabi, outlines, or weekly topic calendars, which teachers used to guide instruction. Because auditors were not given single curriculum guides as the “curriculum” for any given grade level or course and because they wished to honor district practice of using multiple curriculum documents, auditors chose to consider these state- or district-developed documents that collectively were used to direct instruction as “curriculum guides.” In interviews with district personnel, auditors heard textbooks, teachers’ guides, and other publisher-developed resources referred to as “curriculum.” Auditors did not use district adopted textbooks or publishers’ supplemental material in their assessment of the existence of curriculum guidance documents in this finding or in their evaluations of curriculum quality in [Finding 2.2](#). Textbooks and other commercially-produced documents are considered instructional resources, not guides.

The following exhibit shows the scope of written curriculum guidance documents for core content areas in kindergarten through grade 5. For auditors to find the scope adequate, curriculum guides must exist for at least 70 percent of the courses and subjects taught in those grade levels.

Exhibit 2.1.2
Scope of Curriculum Guidance Documents
for Core Content Areas in Grades K-5
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Content Area	Number of Course Offerings	Offerings with Curriculum Guidance Documents	Percent of offerings with Curriculum Guidance Documents
English Language Arts	6	6	100
Mathematics	6	6	100
Science	6	6	100
Social Studies	6	6	100
Total	24	24	100

As [Exhibit 2.1.2](#) shows, curriculum guidance documents existed for all core subjects taught in kindergarten through grade 5. Therefore, the scope of the written curriculum is considered to be adequate at these grade levels.

[Exhibit 2.1.3](#) presents the scope of curriculum guidance documents for core content areas in grades 6 through 8.

Exhibit 2.1.3
Scope of Curriculum Guidance Documents
for Core Content Areas in Grades 6-8
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

	Number of Course Offerings	Offerings with Curriculum Guidance Documents	Percent of Offerings with Curriculum Guidance Documents
English Language Arts	3	3	100
Mathematics	3	3	100
Science	1	1	100
Life Science	1	1	100
Earth Science	1	1	100
Social Studies	1	1	100
Geography	1	1	100
US History	1	1	100
Total	12	12	100

As [Exhibit 2.1.3](#) shows, all core courses in grades 6 through 8 had some form of curriculum guidance documents available. Therefore, auditors consider the scope of the written curriculum adequate in these grades.

Exhibit 2.1.4 displays the scope of written curriculum for the core content areas in grades 9 through 12.

Exhibit 2.1.4
Scope of Curriculum Guidance Documents
for Core Content Areas in Grades 9-12
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

	Number of Course Offerings	Offerings with Curriculum Guidance Documents	Percent of Offerings with Curriculum Guidance Documents
English Language Arts	35	24	69
Mathematics	22	12	55
Science	28	19	68
Social Studies	45	18	40
Total	130	73	56

Exhibit 2.1.4 shows that, in grades 9 through 12:

- A total of 130 courses were being offered and, of these, 73 had some form of curriculum guidance documents available. With 56 percent of courses in grades 9 through 12 having some form of curriculum guidance documents available to auditors, the scope for high school curriculum did not meet the audit standard of 70 percent.
- English language arts courses had the greatest percentage of courses with curriculum guidance documents (69 percent), but this does not meet the audit standard of 70 percent coverage.
- Science had the second largest percentage of courses with curriculum coverage (68 percent), which did not meet the audit curriculum scope standard of 70 percent.
- Social studies had the least percentage of coverage, with auditors receiving some form of curriculum guidance documents for 40 percent of courses.
- Mathematics courses did not meet the minimum audit scope standard, as only 55 percent of the courses had some form of written direction.

Exhibit 2.1.5 provides a summary of the scope of curriculum coverage for all grades in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

Exhibit 2.1.5
Summary of the Scope of Curriculum Guidance Documents
for Core Content Areas in Grades K-12
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Content Area	Number of Core Course Offerings	Offerings with Curriculum Guidance Documents	Percent of Offerings with Curriculum Guidance Documents
Grades K-5	24	24	100
Grades 6-8	12	12	100
Grades 9-12	130	73	56
Total	166	109	66

As indicated in [Exhibit 2.1.5](#):

- Auditors were presented with curriculum guidance documents for 66 percent of courses, or 109 of the 166 English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies courses taught in kindergarten through grade 12.
- The total scope of the curriculum in kindergarten through grade 12 did not meet the audit standard of 70 percent coverage.
- The scope of curriculum guidance documents in kindergarten through grade 8 met the audit standard for curriculum coverage.
- Auditors were given some form of curriculum guidance documents for 56 percent of high school courses, which did not meet the audit standard for curriculum scope.

Auditors interviewed various district employees and other patrons about the written curriculum. In doing so, auditors learned that district employees tended to refer to “curriculum” when they were actually referring to textbooks or programs used to teach a given grade or course, as the following examples demonstrate:

- “Textbooks are the basis of our curriculum. We align them to state standards.” (Administrator)
- “We have no writing curriculum. Teachers will say ‘Collins,’ but that isn’t a curriculum.” (Administrator)
- “We finally have a single curriculum (textbook series) that has been adopted at the middle school level; we finally have a single curriculum (textbook series) at the high school. For years, that wasn’t the case; schools picked their own texts.” (Administrator)
- “I like the new *Investigations* curriculum.” (Teacher)

Interviews also included comments from district and site administrators as well as teachers about the scope and accessibility of written curriculum in the district, as the following selected comments indicate:

- “We are in process of creating K-5 arts curriculum. I can’t imagine that any teacher doesn’t use the web to get the curriculum.” (Administrator)
- “The middle schools are not aligned. Materials, assessments, and the curriculum are all different at each middle school.” (Administrator)
- “There is no reading curriculum at the middle school level.” (Administrator)
- “Our focus as a system wasn’t on aligned teaching. At individual schools, we made decisions about what to teach and what materials to use. This doesn’t work vertically or with high mobility rates.” (Administrator)

Summary

Auditors concluded that written curriculum guidance documents in the Minneapolis Public Schools provided adequate coverage of courses in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies in kindergarten through grade 8. However, scope of curriculum for grades 9 to 12 was inadequate to direct instruction in those courses and grade levels. Auditors found the terms “curriculum” and “textbook” tended to be used interchangeably. Furthermore, inconsistencies in format, location, and availability of documents in all grades and across all core content areas made the district’s written curriculum difficult to access for teachers, administrators, and patrons of the district.

Finding 2.2: The quality of curriculum guides is inadequate to direct teaching and maximize student achievement. Internal consistency of the guides is also insufficient; written curriculum documents align adequately with state standards. Guides are used ineffectively and inconsistently throughout the system.

Quality curriculum guidance documents provide teachers with a clear framework that connects the written curriculum with what is taught and tested in the classroom. No amount of inspired teaching is a substitute for

teaching the appropriate curriculum, and quality curriculum guides support instruction through clear objectives, alignment to assessments, delineation of prerequisite skills and knowledge, appropriate and aligned instructional resources, and instructional strategies for classroom implementation. Quality curriculum documents also allow all students equal access to learning and eliminate learning gaps from grade level to grade level and from campus to campus. Incomplete or unavailable curriculum documents contribute to inconsistency in teaching and learning as teachers make independent decisions regarding objectives, assessments, resources, and instructional approaches.

To assess the quality of curriculum in the Minneapolis Public Schools, auditors reviewed a variety of materials provided by the district. *Board Policies* and *Administrative Regulations* were reviewed for references to a required written curriculum (for a more complete discussion of the efficacy of *Board Policies* and *Administrative Regulations* see [Finding 1.1](#)). The following policies and regulations provide direction for the district curriculum:

- *Administrative Regulation 6110A* (revised 1985) outlines the MPS philosophy for a written curriculum, stating, “The defined, written curriculum includes all subject areas. Curriculum goals and objectives, scope and sequence, learning materials, expectation levels of students, and measurements of achievement will be determined centrally and directed for obligatory districtwide implementation at the building level through the line superintendents.”
- *Board Policy 6200* (revised 1985) states, “The Board of Education recognizes that a curriculum with clearly established goals and objectives is a necessity in accomplishing the district’s mission. The goal of any curriculum, instructional program, or activity is to contribute to student growth by bringing about positive change in the student’s attitudes, ways of thinking, knowledge, and skills. This implies that one must determine what is to be learned, what procedures and materials will work best to reach the desired learning levels and some measure of knowing when the required learning has taken place.”
- *Administrative Regulation 6200C* outlines the work of the Curriculum Coordinating Council: “The function of the council is to legitimize district curriculum through a process of establishing curriculum priorities with necessary budget support and timelines for identification, development, implementation and evaluation.... The function is to provide a communications link and coordinate curriculum efforts in order to identify ‘the Minneapolis Public schools curriculum’. The council provides a process for evaluation of curriculum proposals. It also provides an interdisciplinary network.”

Auditors also reviewed other Minneapolis Public School materials for references to a written curriculum. The following documents were examined and found to contain such references:

- The *2007-2012 Strategic Plan Supplement—Action steps, metrics and timing* (2008) includes “Strategy #1b.: Increase academic rigor in curriculum, instruction and assessment.”
- The *K-5 Literacy Framework* (2007) states, “The framework is an integrated, comprehensive and standards-based approach to curriculum, instruction and assessment in all K-5 classrooms.”
- The *Science Department Recommended Steps to Systemic Integration and Sustainability* states, “curriculum improvements are embedded in the district science scope and sequence and thus are part of what teachers are expected to teach, and curriculum improvements are incorporated into existing curriculum materials kits and are therefore maintained and distributed through district science materials centers.”
- The *Curriculum Review and Adoption Cycle 2005-2013* (2006) outlines the subject area for review by year and delineates steps for review and evaluation of the curriculum.

The auditors found that the quality of the district’s written curriculum was inadequate to direct teaching and not sufficiently reliable to ensure increased student achievement. Auditors also found that district curriculum guidance documents lacked internal consistency across all curricular areas although they are aligned to state standards. They are often used ineffectively and/or inconsistently throughout the system. Textbooks were cited as the resource most often used as the curriculum rather than a district-designed curriculum.

The analyses conducted in this finding are organized under the following sections:

I. Minimum Criteria for Curriculum Guide Quality

- a. English language arts
- b. Mathematics
- c. Science
- d. Social Studies
- e. All Content Areas Summary

II. Internal Consistency

- a. Congruence of local standards with state and national standards: a review of linkages between local, state, and national expectations and system learning objectives;
- b. Articulation from level to level within state standards: a review of the vertical flow and articulation of state benchmarks across grades and courses for possible redundancy or repetition of learning objectives without extension through subsequent quarters or grade levels;
- c. Congruence of state benchmarks and instructional resources: a review of congruence between the learning benchmarks and instructional resources/textbooks in use;
- d. Congruence of state benchmarks and instructional strategies/activities: analysis of alignment of benchmarks for expected student learning with suggested instructional strategies and classroom activities;
- e. Congruence of state benchmarks with state and district assessment items: analyses of alignment of benchmarks for expected student learning with assessment examples found on the state website and assessment recommendations and strategies in district curriculum guidance documents; and
- f. Congruence of artifacts with state benchmarks: an analysis of student artifacts for congruence of content, context, and cognitive type.

III. Cognitive Complexity

- a. Cognitive types in state benchmarks: an analysis of the cognitive domains found in the *Minnesota Academic Standards for Language Arts*; and
- b. Cognitive types in student artifacts: an analysis of instructional artifacts in the four core content areas collected during classroom visits.

IV. Best Practices

- a. Best practices analyzed by typology: an analysis of curriculum resources for instructional strategies and student activities that incorporated any “Best Practices; and
- b. The *Principles of Learning*: a review of district core curriculum guidance documents for evidence indicating embedment of the *Principles of Learning*.

Auditors’ analysis of written curriculum documents for minimum guide components follows in the next section.

I. Minimum Criteria for Curriculum Guide Quality

The auditors reviewed and assessed 112 curriculum guidance documents for kindergarten through grade 12 provided on the Minneapolis Public School website and presented as paper documents by various departments and campuses within the district. The documents varied from subject area to subject area and were inconsistent in format or content. The auditors, when not presented with a single curriculum document for a particular subject area/grade level, modified their approach by assessing any available documents that provided guidance to teachers related to classroom instruction and student learning. Documents reviewed included curriculum

maps, curriculum documents, class syllabi, literacy continua, curriculum frameworks, and the Minnesota Academic Standards for kindergarten through grade 12. To determine the quality of curriculum guidance documents presented to the auditors, each group of curriculum guidance documents for a given grade level or course in each content area was reviewed using the criteria for assessing quality found in [Exhibit 2.2.1](#):

Exhibit 2.2.1

Curriculum Guide Audit Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Curriculum Guides

Criterion	Description
1	Clarity and specificity of objectives
	0 No goals/objectives present
	1 Vague delineation of goals/learner outcome
	2 States tasks to be performed or skills/concepts to be learned
	3 States for each objective the what, when (sequence within course/grade), how actual objective is performed, and the amount of time to be spent learning
2	Congruence of the curriculum to assessment process
	0 No evaluation approach
	1 Some approach of evaluation stated
	2 States skills, knowledge, concepts that will be assessed
	3 Each objective is keyed to the district and/or state performance evaluations
3	Delineation of the prerequisite essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes
	0 No mention of the required skill
	1 States prior general knowledge
	2 States prior general experience needed in specified grade level
	3 States specific documented prerequisite or description of discrete skills/concepts required prior to this learning (may be a scope and sequence across grades/courses)
4	Delineation of the major instructional tools
	0 No mention of textbook or instructional tools/resources
	1 Names the basic text/instructional resource(s)
	2 Names the basic text/instructional resource(s) and supplementary materials to be used
	3 States for each objective the “match” between the basic text/instructional resource(s) and curriculum objective
5	Clear approaches for classroom use
	0 No approaches cited for classroom use
	1 Overall, vague statement on approaching subject
	2 Provides general suggestions on approaches
	3 Provides specific examples on how to approach key concepts/skills in the classroom
<i>Source: Curriculum Management Systems, Inc.</i>	

A curriculum document may receive a rating of zero to three on each criterion. A 3 represents the highest rating possible; a document can receive a maximum overall rating of 15 points. A document must receive a score of 12 points or greater to be considered a quality guide.

The Minneapolis Public School District curriculum documents were given ratings on each criterion. A total score for each set of curriculum documents for a given course or grade level was calculated by adding the ratings for all criteria. The evaluations of the curriculum documents are presented in [Exhibits 2.2.2](#) through [2.2.5](#) for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, respectively.

a. English Language Arts

Exhibit 2.2.2

**Auditors' Ratings of English Language Arts Curriculum Guidance Documents
For Grades K-12
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Course	Grade Level	Written/ Revised	Obj.	Asmt.	Prereq. Skills	Res.	Classroom Strat.	Total Score
English Language Arts	6	2007	2	2	1	2	3	10
English Language Arts	7	2007	2	2	1	2	3	10
Language Arts	K	2007	2	1	3	1	2	9
Language Arts	1	2007	2	1	3	1	2	9
Language Arts	2	2007	2	1	3	1	2	9
Language Arts	3	2007	2	1	3	1	2	9
AP English Lit. & Composition	12	2008	2	2	0	2	2	8
English 9	9	2005	2	1	1	2	1	7
Honors English 9	9	2005	2	1	1	2	1	7
English 10	10	Undated	2	1	1	2	1	7
English 11	11	Undated	2	1	1	2	1	7
Honors English 11	11	Undated	2	1	1	2	1	7
English 12	12	Undated	2	1	1	2	1	7
IB SL English Yr. 1	Unknown	2007	2	1	0	2	1	6
IB SL English Yr. 2	Unknown	2007	2	1	0	2	1	6
IB HL English Yr. 1	Unknown	2007	2	1	0	2	1	6
IB HL English Yr 2	Unknown	2007	2	1	0	2	1	6
Language Arts	4	2007	2	0	2	0	1	5
Language Arts	5	2007	2	0	2	0	1	5
English Language Arts	8	2007	2	0	1	2	0	5
Honors English 10	10	Undated	1	1	0	2	0	4
College Prep Writing	11-12	2008	2	0	0	2	0	4
American Literature	11-12	2008	2	0	0	2	0	4
Literature & Film	Unknown	Undated	1	0	0	2	1	4
Science Fiction & Fantasy	Unknown	Undated	1	0	0	2	1	4
READ 180	Unknown	2008	1	0	0	1	1	3
CIS Writing	12	Undated	1	0	1	0	1	3
Creative Writing	11-12	Undated	1	1	0	0	1	3
Playwriting	11-12	2008	1	1	0	0	1	3
Apocalyptic Literature & Film	Unknown	Undated	1	0	0	1	1	3
Journalism	Unknown	2008	1	0	0	1	1	3
Literature of the Holocaust	Unknown	2008	1	0	0	0	1	2
Contemporary Literature	Unknown	Undated	1	0	0	1	0	2
Popular Paperbacks	Unknown	Undated	1	0	0	0	1	2
Average Ratings			1.65	0.68	0.76	1.35	1.12	5.56

As noted in the previous exhibit:

- The average quality rating for curriculum guidance documents for English language arts was 5.56 on a scale of zero to 15.

- The curriculum guidance documents ranged in quality from a high of ten points to a low of two points; none met the audit quality standard of 12 points.
- Curriculum guidance documents for grades 6 through 8 received an average total rating of 8.33 points.
- Curriculum guidance documents for grades kindergarten through 5 received an average total rating of 7.66 points.
- Curriculum guidance documents for grades 9 through 12 received an average total rating of 4.72 points.
- Curriculum guidance documents for grades 6 and 7 received the highest ratings (10 points), and the documents for grades kindergarten through 3 received the next highest ratings (nine points).
- The only curriculum guidance documents receiving three points for any criterion were grades 6 and 7 (clear approaches for classroom use) and grades kindergarten through grade 3 (delineation of prerequisite essential skills).
- Overall, the strongest rating category was clarity and specificity of objectives, which received a mean score of 1.65 points out of a possible three points. The weakest category was congruence of the curriculum to the assessment process for each course, which received a total rating of 0.68 points out of a possible three points.

Further comments related to the ratings for each criterion are as follows:

Criterion 1: Clarity and Validity of Objectives

Mean rating: 1.65

All curriculum guidance documents mentioned standards, objectives, or indicators addressing the skills, concepts, or knowledge involved in the curriculum for English/language arts. No curriculum guidance documents included estimated learning times by objective or concept, although pacing guides generally indicated the quarter during which given benchmarks should be given attention.

Criterion 2: Congruence of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process

Mean Rating: 0.68

None of the curriculum guidance documents presented keyed each objective to district and/or state assessments. Fourteen of the 34 sets of curriculum guidance documents (41 percent) made no mention of assessment and received ratings of zero. All others made some reference to assessment but provided no sample assessment items.

Criterion 3: Delineation of the Prerequisite Essential Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes

Mean Rating: 0.76

Auditors gave credit for the presence of prerequisite information where prerequisite information was available in the online curriculum documents. Eighteen of 34 courses made no mention of prerequisite learning information or subsequent learning in the curricular area (52 percent). Four courses (12 percent) in kindergarten through grade 3 received full credit for delineating prerequisite skills and knowledge.

Criterion 4: Delineation of the Major Instructional Resources

Mean Rating: 1.35

Twenty-seven of 34 curriculum guidance documents (79 percent) listed at least some instructional resources. Seven made no mention of instructional resources.

Criterion 5: Clear Strategies for Classroom Use

Mean Rating: 1.12

This criterion was an area of strength for English language arts curriculum guidance documents in grades 6 and 7. However, only a small percentage of all the guides offered adequately specific examples of teaching strategies or suggestions for teacher planning. No mention of teaching strategies was made in curriculum guidance documents for five courses and/or grade levels.

b. Mathematics

The following exhibit displays the auditors' ratings of mathematics curriculum guidance documents for kindergarten through grade 12:

Exhibit 2.2.3
Auditors' Ratings of Mathematics Curriculum Guidance Documents
For Grades K-12
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Course	Grade Level	Written/ Revised	Obj.	Asmt.	Prereq. Skills	Res.	Classroom Strat.	Total Score
Mathematics	7	2005	2	2	1	2	2	9
Mathematics	8	2005	2	2	1	2	2	9
Mathematics	3	Undated	2	2	0	2	2	8
Mathematics	4	Undated	2	2	0	2	2	8
Mathematics	5	Undated	2	2	0	2	2	8
Mathematics	6	2005	2	2	0	2	2	8
IB HL Math	12	Undated	2	2	1	2	1	8
IB Math Studies	9-12	2004	2	1	1	1	2	7
IB Math Methods	Unknown	2006	2	1	1	1	2	7
Geometry	9-12	2007	2	1	0	1	3	7
Algebra I	9-12	2007	2	1	0	1	3	7
Mathematics	K	Undated	2	2	0	1	1	6
Mathematics	1	Undated	2	2	0	1	1	6
Mathematics	2	Undated	2	2	0	1	1	6
IMP 4	12	2008	2	1	0	0	2	5
AP Statistics	11-12	Undated	2	1	0	1	1	5
AP Calculus	11-12	Undated	2	1	0	1	1	5
Algebra II/Trigonometry	9-12	2007	2	1	0	1	1	5
Pre-Algebra	Unknown	2008	1	0	0	2	0	3
Geometry Support	Unknown	2008	1	1	0	1	0	3
Algebra/ Geometry/ Statistics Survey	10-12	2008	1	1	0	0	0	2
Average Ratings			1.86	1.43	0.24	1.29	1.48	6.29

As noted in the previous exhibit:

- The average rating for K-12 mathematics curriculum guidance documents was 6.29 points of a total possible rating of 15 points. Ratings for individual grades or courses ranged from a high of nine points to a low of two points.
- None met the audit curriculum guide quality standard of 12 points.

- The curriculum guidance documents for grades 7 and 8 received the highest ratings (nine points), and the documents for grades 3 through 6 received the next highest ratings (eight points). Curriculum documents for IB HL Math also received a rating of eight points.
- Curriculum guidance documents for grades 6 through 8 had the highest average total rating (8.67 points) but did not meet the minimum audit criterion of 12 points.
- Curriculum guidance documents from kindergarten through grade 5 received an average total rating of 7.00 points.
- Curriculum guidance documents from grades 9 through 12 received the lowest average total rating of 5.33 points. However, when the documents for the International Baccalaureate program were excluded, and only district-developed courses were counted, the mean total rating for high school mathematics courses was 4.67 points.
- Overall, the strongest rating category was the clarity and specificity of objectives, which received a mean score of 1.86 points out of a possible three points. The weakest category was delineation of prerequisite essential skills for each course, which received a total rating of 0.24 points out of a possible three points.

A summary of comments related to the ratings for each criterion follows:

Criterion 1: Clarity and Validity of Objectives

Mean Rating: 1.86

No curriculum guidance documents addressed all the aspects of Criterion 1 to receive the highest rating of three. Documents for 18 of the 21 grade levels or courses (86 percent) received scores of two, meaning they identified tasks to be performed or skills to be learned. Documents for three grade levels or courses (14 percent) were given quality ratings of one, indicating that learner goals and/or objectives were vague. None received ratings of zero for this criterion.

Criterion 2: Congruence of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process

Mean Rating: 1.43

No curriculum guidance documents were found to have objectives keyed directly to district and/or state assessments. Ten of 21 sets of documents (48 percent) were found to state skills, knowledge, or concepts to be assessed and earned scores of two. Ten of 21 sets of curriculum guidance documents (48 percent) were given ratings of one, indicating that some approach of assessment was noted. One set of curriculum documents made no mention of assessment.

Criterion 3: Delineation of the Prerequisite Essential Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes

Mean Rating: 0.24

This was the weakest element for math curriculum guidance documents. None of curriculum guidance documents receiving ratings higher than one. Sixteen of 21 (76 percent) made no mention of prerequisite skills and knowledge.

Criterion 4: Delineation of the Major Instructional Resources

Mean Rating: 1.29

Eight sets of curriculum guidance documents (38 percent) received ratings of two, indicating that basic texts, instructional resources, and supplementary materials were named. Eleven sets of curriculum guidance documents (52 percent) listed only the primary texts and thus received ratings of one. Two documents (10 percent) made no mention of any textbook or resource and received ratings of zero.

Criterion 5: Clear Strategies for Classroom Use

Mean Rating: 1.48

Curriculum guidance documents for two of 21 grade levels or courses (10 percent) received ratings of three by including specific strategies for classroom instruction. Nine sets of documents (43 percent) provided general suggestions for classroom approaches, earning ratings of two, while seven (33 percent) made vague references related to classroom use, earning ratings of one. Documents for three grade levels or courses (14 percent) made no references to approaches for classroom use.

c. Science

Exhibit 2.2.4 provides the auditors' ratings of the curriculum guidance documents for science in kindergarten through grade 12.

Exhibit 2.2.4

Auditors' Ratings of Science Curriculum Guidance Documents For Grades K-12 Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

Course	Grade Level	Written/ Revised	Obj.	Asmt.	Prereq. Skills	Res.	Classroom Strat.	Total Score
Science	6	2008	2	2	2	2	1	9
Life Science	7	2008	2	2	2	2	1	9
Earth Science	8	2008	2	2	2	2	1	9
Environmental Foundations	9	2008	2	2	2	2	1	9
Chemistry	10-12	2008	2	2	2	2	1	9
Honors Chemistry	10-12	2008	2	2	2	2	1	9
Physics	11-12	2008	2	2	2	2	1	9
Honors Physics	11-12	2008	2	2	2	2	1	9
Physical Science—Physics	11-12	2008	2	2	2	2	1	9
Biology	9-10	2008	2	1	2	2	1	8
Honors Biology	9-10	Undated	2	1	2	2	1	8
AP Biology	Unknown	2007	2	2	1	2	1	8
AP Chemistry	11-12	2008	2	1	2	2	1	8
AP Physics	12	2008	2	1	2	1	2	8
IB SL Biology	Unknown	2007	2	2	0	2	1	7
IB HL Biology	Unknown	2007	2	2	0	2	1	7
IB SL Chemistry	Unknown	2007	2	2	0	2	1	7
IB HL Chemistry	Unknown	2007	2	2	0	2	1	7
IB SL Physics	Unknown	2007	2	2	0	2	1	7
AP Environmental Science	Unknown	2008	1	1	1	2	1	6
Science	K	2003	1	1	2	1	0	5
Science	1	2003	1	1	2	1	0	5
Science	2	2003	1	1	2	1	0	5
Science	3	2003	1	1	2	1	0	5
Science	4	2003	1	1	2	1	0	5
Science	5	2003	1	1	2	1	0	5
Physical Science—Chemistry	Unknown	Undated	1	1	0	1	0	3
Honors Integrated Science Yr. 3	Unknown	Undated	1	1	0	1	0	3
Average Ratings			1.68	1.54	1.43	1.68	0.75	7.07

As noted in the science curriculum exhibit:

- The average rating of science curriculum guidance documents was 7.07 on a scale of zero to 15; all documents failed to meet the 12 points required to be considered quality documents.
- The curriculum guidance documents ranged in quality from a high of nine points to a low of three points.
- Curriculum guidance documents for grades 6 through 8 had the highest average total rating of nine points.
- Curriculum guidance documents for grades 9 through 12 received an average total rating of 7.42 points.
- Curriculum guidance documents for grades kindergarten through 5 received overall total ratings of 5.00.
- Overall, the strongest rating categories were clarity and specificity of objectives and delineation of major instructional tools; each received a mean score of 1.68 points out of a possible three points. The weakest category was clear approaches for classroom use, which received a total mean score of 0.75 points out of a possible three points.

Comments related to the ratings for each criterion are as follows:

Criterion 1: Clarity and Validity of Objectives

Mean Rating: 1.68

All science curriculum guidance documents addressed objectives and skills to be learned to some degree. Nineteen of 28 sets of curriculum guidance documents (68 percent) received ratings of two, indicating the presence of tasks to be performed or skills to be learned. Nine of 28 sets of curriculum guidance documents (32 percent) received ratings of one, indicating that learner goals/objectives were vague.

Criterion 2: Congruence of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process

Mean Rating: 1.54

No curriculum guidance documents were found to have objectives keyed directly to district and/or state assessments. Fifteen of 28 sets of curriculum guidance documents (54 percent) were found to state the skills, knowledge, or concepts to be assessed, and these documents earned ratings of two. Thirteen of 28 sets of documents (46 percent) earned ratings of one due to vague references to assessment.

Criterion 3: Delineation of the Prerequisite Essential Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes

Mean Rating: 1.43

Nineteen of 28 sets of curriculum guidance documents (68 percent) received ratings of two, indicating some reference to prerequisite skills. Two sets of documents (7 percent) made vague references to prerequisite skills needed, and seven sets of curriculum guidance documents (25 percent) made no mention of prerequisite skills.

Criterion 4: Delineation of the Major Instructional Resources

Mean Rating: 1.68

All science curriculum guidance documents referred to, to some degree, instructional resources. Nineteen sets of curriculum documents (68 percent) received ratings of two, indicating that basic texts, instructional resources, and supplementary materials were named. Nine sets of curriculum guidance documents listed only the major texts to be used (32 percent) and thus received ratings of one.

Criterion 5: Clear Strategies for Classroom Use

Mean Rating: 0.75

This was the weakest component of the science curriculum guidance documents. No guidance documents received a rating of three. Only one set of curriculum guidance documents received a rating of two, indicating general suggestions for classroom approaches. Nineteen of 28 sets of curriculum documents (68 percent) referred to classroom use (68 percent), earning them a rating of one. Eight sets of documents (29 percent) made no mention of classroom use.

d. Social Studies

Auditors' quality ratings of the district's social studies curriculum guidance documents may be found in [Exhibit 2.2.5](#).

Exhibit 2.2.5
Auditors' Ratings of Social Studies Curriculum Guidance Documents
For Grades K-12
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Course	Grade Level	Written/ Revised	Obj.	Asmt.	Prereq. Skills	Res.	Classroom Strat.	Total Score
IB US History	Unknown	2001	2	2	0	2	3	9
IB SL History of the Americas	Unknown	2001	2	2	0	2	3	9
AP U.S. History	11-12	Undated	2	2	0	2	3	9
IB Theory of Knowledge	Unknown	2006	2	2	0	2	2	8
Social Studies	K	2005	2	1	0	2	2	7
Social Studies	1	2005	2	1	0	2	2	7
AP Psychology	11-12	Undated	2	1	0	3	1	7
Social Studies	2	2005	2	1	0	1	2	6
Social Studies	3	2005	2	1	0	1	2	6
Social Studies	6	2005	2	1	0	2	1	6
AP U.S. Government	11-12	Undated	1	2	0	2	1	6
World History	10	2005	2	1	0	1	1	5
U.S. History	11	2005	2	1	0	1	1	5
U.S. History	8	2005	2	1	0	1	1	5
U.S. Government	12	2005	2	1	0	1	1	5
IB HL Asian Studies	Unknown	Undated	2	0	0	2	1	5
Geography	7	2005	2	1	0	1	1	5
Geography	9	2005	2	1	0	1	1	5
Economics	11-12	2005	2	1	0	1	1	5
Stock Market	Unknown	2008	1	1	0	1	1	4
Social Studies	4	2005	2	1	0	0	1	4
Social Studies	5	2005	2	1	0	0	1	4
IB SL Psychology	Unknown	2004	2	0	0	0	2	4
CIS U.S. History	Unknown	Undated	1	1	0	2	0	4
Sociology	Unknown	2008	1	0	1	1	0	3
Holocaust	Unknown	Undated	1	1	0	1	0	3
AP Government & Politics 12	12	2008	1	1	0	1	0	3
Honors World History	Unknown	Undated	1	0	0	0	1	2
Early American History & Film	Unknown	2008	1	0	0	0	1	2
Average Ratings			1.72	1.00	0.03	1.24	1.28	5.28

As shown in [Exhibit 2.2.5](#):

- The average rating of curriculum guidance documents was 5.28 on a scale of zero to 15, failing to meet the 12 points required to be considered a quality document.
- Curriculum guidance documents ranged in quality from a high of nine points to a low of two points.
- Curriculum guidance documents for grades kindergarten through 5 had the highest average total ratings (5.67 points), but did not meet the minimum audit criterion of 12 points for a quality curriculum document.
- Curriculum guidance documents for grades 6 through 8 received an average total rating of 5.33 points.
- Curriculum guidance documents for grades 9 through 12 received the lowest average total rating of 5.15 points.
- Sociology received one point for essential prerequisite skills by stating prior general knowledge required for the course. All others were rated zero for this criterion.
- Overall, the strongest category was the clarity and specificity of objectives, which received a mean score of 1.72 points out of a possible three points. The weakest category was delineation of prerequisite essential skills, which received a total rating of 0.03 points out of a possible three points.

A summary of comments related to the ratings for each criterion follows:

Criterion 1: Clarity and Validity of Objectives

Mean Rating: 1.72

All curriculum guidance documents included standards, identifiable skills, and concepts to be learned. Twenty-one of 29 sets of curriculum documents (72 percent) received a score of two, indicating that documents stated tasks to be performed or skills to be learned. Eight of 29 sets of curriculum guidance documents (28 percent) made only vague references to learner goals and objectives and earned ratings of one point.

Criterion 2: Congruence of the Curriculum to the Assessment Process

Mean Rating: 1.00

Five sets of documents (17 percent) received ratings of two points by stating skills, knowledge, or concepts to be assessed. Nineteen of 29 curriculum guidance documents (66 percent) provided only general references to assessments, earning ratings of one, and five sets of curriculum guidance documents (17 percent) received ratings of zero with no references to assessment present.

Criterion 3: Delineation of the Prerequisite Essential Skills, Knowledge, and Attitudes

Mean Rating: 0.03

The presence of prerequisite skills and knowledge was the weakest component in the social studies curriculum guidance documents. Only one set of curriculum guidance documents of 29 made reference to prerequisite skills, earning a rating of one. The remaining 28 (97 percent) made no references to prerequisite skills and received ratings of zero.

Criterion 4: Delineation of the Major Instructional Resources

Mean Rating: 1.24

Ratings for delineation of instructional resources in social studies curriculum guidance documents ranged from three to zero. One set of curriculum guidance documents received a rating of three, indicating a match between the basic text/instructional resource(s) and each curriculum objective. Ten of 29 (40 percent) were rated two, indicating that basic texts, instructional resources, and supplementary materials were named. Thirteen (41 percent) listed only basic texts and received ratings of one, and five made no mention of a textbook or resource and therefore received a rating of zero.

Criterion 5: Clear Strategies for classroom Use

Mean Rating: 1.28

Three of 29 curriculum guidance documents (10 percent) provided specific classroom examples of how to approach key concepts/skills, earning scores of three. Six of 29 (20 percent) provided general suggestions for classroom approaches, earning ratings of two. Sixteen (55 percent) were given ratings of one because of vague references to classroom strategies, and four (14 percent) received ratings of zero for making no references to classroom approaches.

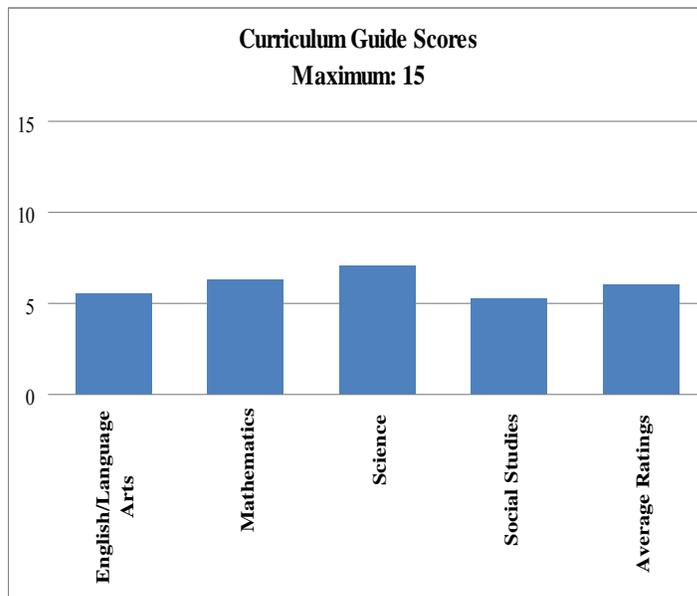
e. All Content Areas Summary

Exhibit 2.2.6 provides a summary of auditors’ ratings of the district’s curriculum guidance documents for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Exhibit 2.2.6

**Auditors’ Summary of Ratings for Curriculum Guidance Documents
For Grades K-12
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Course	Obj.	Asmt.	Prereq. Skills	Res.	Classroom Strat.	Total Score
English/Language Arts	1.65	0.68	0.76	1.35	1.12	5.56
Mathematics	1.86	1.43	0.24	1.29	1.48	6.29
Science	1.68	1.54	1.43	1.68	0.75	7.07
Social Studies	1.72	1	0.03	1.24	1.28	5.28
Average Ratings	1.73	1.16	0.61	1.39	1.16	6.05



As noted in the summary exhibit:

- The average rating of the curriculum guidance documents for all four core subject areas was 6.05 on a scale of zero to 15.
- Science curriculum guidance documents received the highest overall average rating (7.07), followed by mathematics (6.29), English language arts (5.56), and social studies (5.28).

- Math curriculum guidance documents received the highest average ratings on two criteria—clarity and specificity of objectives (1.86) and approaches for classroom use (1.48).
- Science curriculum guidance documents received the highest average ratings on three criteria—congruence of the curriculum to the assessment process (1.54), delineation of prerequisite skills (1.43), and delineation of instructional resources (1.68).

In addition to reviewing the curriculum guides, auditors also interviewed central office and building administrators, board members, and teachers. Comments related to the inadequacy of the district curriculum included:

- “Our curriculum is too wide and too thin.” (Administrator)
- “We have not defined what it is kids need to know and be able to do.” (Administrator)
- “We have curriculum maps set up, but I’m not sure they are consistent.” (Administrator)
- “I don’t have a complaint about where we are going, but it’s just an awful lot to cover [science].” (Teacher)

Other comments attest to the attention given to aligning any curriculum documents to the state standards:

- “[In English language arts] we aligned the Minnesota Standards with content subject area standards and then created a continuum so teachers would know what is taught in the grade below and above them.” (Administrator)
- “We have [science] curriculum guides that are aligned with the standards and the big ideas.” (Administrator)
- “The standards are out there for everybody, but how they are divided into courses.... That’s a struggle.” (Administrator)
- “The state standards are what is taught.” (Administrator)

Others testified to adhering more closely to textbooks and resources, or even personal preference, than the state standards:

- “Our curriculum is based on the standards, [but] the [science] kits are the materials that anchor. Teachers are encouraged to use supplements.” (Administrator)
- “Curriculum is still textbook-driven.” (Administrator)
- “Mainly, I follow the [textbook] series on a daily basis.” (Teacher)
- “I am an experienced teacher and give myself permission to pick and choose what I teach.” (Teacher)

Auditors learned that the district had adopted curriculum, but in the past, sites have had control over the degree to which it was followed (see also [Finding 1.3](#)). This practice, auditors learned, is changing gradually. The following are selected comments made by administrators and teachers:

- “Schools have been allowed to be independent because they were successful; that is not true today.” (Administrator)
- “Prior to this year, teachers could just start teaching a course without approval from anyone except maybe on the campus.” (Teacher)
- “We’re in the third year of [math] textbook adoption at the high school level, and that has meant we could have common conversations about pacing, alignment with standards, quarterly assessments....” (Administrator)
- “The middle schools are not aligned. Materials, assessments, and the curriculum are all different at each middle school.” (Administrator)

Similarly, auditors found that assessments were often taken from textbooks or other resources—or were created at the school or classroom level. Curriculum guidance documents in place in the district did not have clear

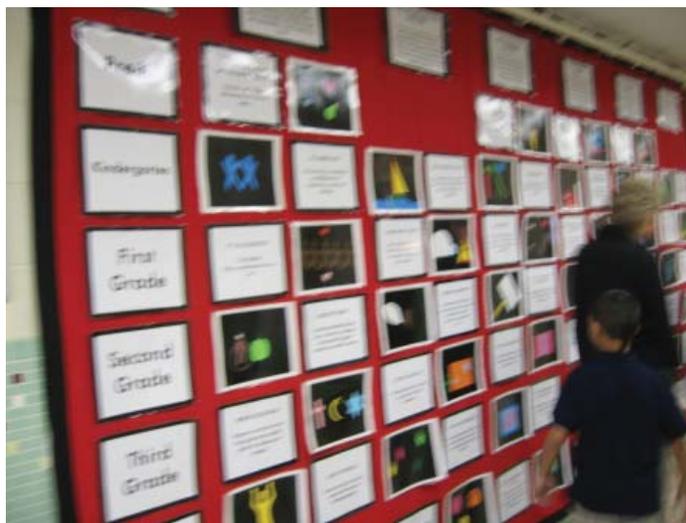
assessment links to the Minnesota Academic Standards, largely because the state does not release actual MCA-II test items. Consequently, teachers had minimal information about the content, context, or cognitive levels of the assessments by which student achievement is measured. In practice, teachers appeared to equate assessment provided by textbooks or other programs with assessment tied directly to the state standards, as shown in the following statements by interviewees:

- “The new math program has good formative assessment.” (Administrator)
- “Test items are developed by teachers [based on the Standards] or taken from the CD that came with the [textbook] adoption.” (Administrator)

Relying on commercially-produced resources for assessment guidance can at times result in impeded alignment. Analyses of the nature and degree of alignment between commercial products and state assessments must be conducted to ensure alignment before relying on products’ adequacy.

Summary of Minimum Criteria for Curriculum Guide Quality

In summary, the auditors found that the quality of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies curriculum guidance documents in the Minneapolis Public Schools was inadequate to direct teaching and not sufficiently reliable to ensure increased student achievement. Curriculum guidance documents lacked clarity and specificity of objectives, assessment congruence with state and local standards, delineation of prerequisite skills, instructional resources alignment with objectives, and strategies for teacher delivery of instruction.



Curriculum display in library at Hall Elementary School

II.-IV. Analysis of Further Alignment

In addition to identifying the scope of available written curriculum (see [Finding 2.1](#)) and the basic quality of the written curriculum guidance documents (as previously discussed in this finding), the auditors also analyzed national and state standards, district curriculum documents, other instructional resources, and classroom artifacts for internal consistency, cognitive complexity, and evidence of best practice strategies. Auditors typically conduct further analysis of curricula that meet the minimum audit rating of 12 points, but none of the curriculum guidance documents in the four core content areas met this standard. However, to provide the district an example of the types of analyses that may be conducted, the auditors elected to conduct a deeper review of the English language arts documents. This content area was selected for several reasons: (a) auditors did not wish to interfere with work done as part of the district’s mathematics textbook adoption process; (b) auditors received a wider variety of language arts curriculum guidance documents and instructional materials than they did for other content areas; and (c) auditors were told a language arts revision had been halted while awaiting recommendations of the curriculum management audit. However, in conducting artifact analyses, auditors used material from all four core content areas collected during school visits.

The following reports of these further analyses have been divided into three segments: analyses of *internal consistency*, analyses of *cognitive complexity*, and analyses of *best practices*. These segments have been broken down into three sub-sections, each of which has specific sets of analyses: These subsections are:

II. Internal Consistency

III. Cognitive Complexity

IV. Best Practices

To complete these analyses, the auditors reviewed board policies and administrative regulations, as well as other documents providing direction to and information about curriculum design and delivery. In addition, the auditors reviewed samples of objectives, instructional materials, suggested strategies, and assessment items in English language arts at four selected grade levels. In selecting resources, auditors chose from those materials presented as primary instructional resources, as well as online and paper documents provided by the district (e.g., curriculum guidance documents, course descriptions, and district web resources). The auditors collected samples of student work during their visits to individual classrooms.

Overall, the auditors found the state Academic Standards for Language Arts lacked sufficient internal consistency to permit adequate alignment of district curriculum, resources, instructional strategies, and assessment and to maximize student achievement as measured by the MCA-II tests. Furthermore, auditors found Minneapolis Public Schools curriculum support documents for core subject areas lacked internal consistency. Particularly at the high school level, this was exacerbated by the inclusion of course offerings that were developed at and for the various school sites—a situation somewhat ameliorated by a recently implemented common course numbering system. Auditors also found mismatches between what the district and state said they expected in terms of cognitive complexity and what they saw in curriculum guidance documents. Furthermore, auditors found fragmented alignment of curriculum guidance documents with two best practices frameworks, one of which was central to the district’s improvement plans.

Auditors found no policies referring to the types of congruence expected among materials, classroom instructional practices, and assessments. Such congruence analysis generally is seen in factors identified for consideration in evaluating textbooks, planning instructional strategies, and designing formative and summative assessments. Other than documents referring to textbook review for congruence with the Minnesota Academic Standards, no documents containing this information were presented to auditors.

With regard to cognitive complexity and best practices, auditors found the following in board policy documents:

- *Board Policy 6000: Elementary-Secondary Education* (revised 1985) refers to the mission of the district as providing students with “an excellent educational program” in which “students are challenged to reach their highest intellectual potential,” developing “communication skills,... mathematical and problem solving skills, study skills, and citizenship skills necessary... for living in a changing society.”
- *Board Policy 6110: Goals of the Educational Program* (revised 1992) states that the district is responsible for “assuring that each graduate demonstrates the qualities of a complex thinker, skilled communicator, responsible citizen, self-directed adult, and community contributor.”

The *Minneapolis Public Schools Strategic Plan 2007-2012* identifies the following in its recommendations: raising expectations of and providing academic rigor for students, identifying and correcting practices that perpetuate the achievement gap, developing high quality principal and teacher corps, and providing professional development and support to achieve “excellent results for all students.”

Within the remainder of this finding, the auditors have provided summaries of their examinations, focusing primarily on one selected content area—English language arts. Although most of the analyses that follow are related to design and center around data gathered from document review, the auditors have also included selected pertinent comments from individual and group interviews held during the audit visit.

II. Internal Consistency

Internal consistency in curriculum creates linkages among student learning objectives, instructional strategies, instructional resources, and assessments that measure attainment of the objectives. Such consistency includes alignment of local curriculum with state and national standards where those have been developed. If accountability of the school system is measured by assessed mastery of core learnings, alignment among expected learning outcomes, instructional processes, and resources used for teaching and learning is necessary to prepare students to be successfully accountable. Internal consistency is measured by examining the congruence between the content, context, and cognitive type of objectives and each of these factors in the design and delivery of the curriculum.

The following sections summarize the internal consistency review in the area of English language arts.

a. Congruence of District Curriculum Guidance Documents with State and National Standards

Most state departments of education base student learning expectations and objectives on national standards established by professional organizations in the content areas. For example, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) created 12 standards for English language arts. The federal accountability system in the *No Child Left Behind* legislation (2001) measures student progress in mastering state standards using state-determined assessments to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Alignment with national standards is an external validation of state standards' adequacy.

Auditors reviewed the national standards for language arts, *NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts*, for their inclusion in district curriculum documents. In looking at documents for the elementary grades, auditors reviewed the *Minneapolis Public Schools K-5 Literacy Framework*, as well as complementary documents addressing district expectations for instructional practice in literacy and various district-state alignment documents. For grades 6 through 8, auditors reviewed the *Minneapolis Public Schools Power Standards for Secondary English Language Arts*, complementary documents addressing district expectations for secondary level instructional practice in English language arts, a district writing framework for grades 6 through 12 (the *Grade-Level Curriculum Framework for Writing*), and a variety of partially completed quarter maps done by the district and/or by and for individual middle schools. For the high school level, auditors reviewed the *Minneapolis Public Schools Power Standards for Secondary English Language Arts*, a district document assigning Minnesota Standards for grades 9 through 12 to individual grades, and a set of curriculum maps for grade 10.

Exhibit 2.2.7 summarizes the congruence between the national standards, state grade level benchmarks, and district objectives at grades 3, 5, 7, and 10. The auditors have provided two examples at each grade level for this list, which is intended to be representative rather than all-inclusive.

Exhibit 2.2.7

**National English Language Arts Standards Incorporated
In Minnesota Reading and Writing Grade Level Benchmarks
And District Curriculum Documents
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

National Language Standard	Incorporated MN Academic Benchmark	Incorporated MPS Academic Performance Standards
K-12.1 Reading for Perspective Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.	Grade 3.I.D Literature	Grade 3.I.D.E1, E
	Grade 5.I.D. Literature	Grade 5.I.D.E1, E5
	Grade 7.I.D Literature	Grade 7.I.D.E4, E11
	Grade 9-12.I.D Literature	Grade 10.I.D.E3, E5, E10
K-12.2 Understanding the Human Experience Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.	Grade 3.I.D Literature	Grade 3.I.D.E8, E9
	Grade 5.I.D. Literature	Grade 5.I.D.E4, E8
	Grade 7.I.D Literature	Grade 7.I.D.E1, E6
	Grade 9-12.I.D Literature	Grade 10.I.D.E3, E7
K-12.3 Evaluation Strategies Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).	Grade 3.I.A. Word Recognition, Analysis and Fluency	Grade 3.I.A.E1, E2, E3
	Grade 3.I.B Vocabulary Expansion	Grade 3.I.B.E3
	Grade 3.I.C Comprehension	Grade 3.I.C.E2
	Grade 5.I.A. Word Recognition, Analysis and Fluency	Grade 5.I.A.E1d
	Grade 5.I.B Vocabulary Expansion	
	Grade 5.I.C Comprehension	Grade 5.I.C.E1
	Grade 7.I.A. Word Recognition, Analysis and Fluency	Grade 7.I.A.E3
	Grade 7.I.B Vocabulary Expansion	Grade 7.I.B.E5
	Grade 7.I.C Comprehension	Grade 7.I.C.E1
	Grade 9-12.I.A. Word Recognition, Analysis and Fluency	
	Grade 9-12.I.B Vocabulary Expansion	Grade 10.I.B.3
Grade 9-12.I.C Comprehension	Grade 10.I.C.E1, E4, E6, E8 and E9	

Exhibit 2.2.7 (continued)
National English Language Arts Standards Incorporated
In Minnesota Reading and Writing Grade Level Benchmarks
And District Curriculum Documents
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

National Language Standard	Incorporated MN Academic Benchmark	Incorporated MPS Academic Performance Standards
K-12.4 Communication Skills Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.	Grade 3.II.A Types of Writing	Grade 3.II.A.E2
	Grade 3.II.C Spelling, Grammar, and Usage	Grade 3.II.C.E1
	Grade 3.III.A Speaking & Listening	Grade 3.III.A.E3
	Grade 5.II.A Types of Writing	Grade 5.II.A.E2b
	Grade 5.II.C Spelling, Grammar, and Usage	
	Grade 5.III.A Speaking & Listening	Grade 5.III.A.E3a, E3b, E3c
	Grade 7.II.A Types of Writing	Grade 7.II.A.E2
	Grade 7.II.C Spelling, Grammar, and Usage	Grade 7.II.C.E4
	Grade 7.III.A Speaking & Listening	Grade 7.III.A.E3
	Grade 9-12.II.A Types of Writing	Grade 10.II.A.E2
	Grade 9-12.II.C Spelling, Grammar, and Usage	Grade 10.II.C
K-12.5 Communication Strategies. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.	Grade 3.II.A Types of Writing	Grade 3.II.A.E1
	Grade 3.II.B Elements of Composition	Grade 3.II.B.E2
	Grade 5.II.A Types of Writing	Grade 5.II.A.E2a, E2c
	Grade 5.II.B Elements of Composition	Grade 5.II.B.E4b
	Grade 7.II.A Types of Writing	Grade 7.II.A.E2
	Grade 7.II.B Elements of Composition	Grade 7.II.B.E2
	Grade 9-12.II.A Types of Writing	Grade 10.II.A.E1
	Grade 9-12.II.B Elements of Composition	Grade 10.II.B.E8
K-12.6 Applying Knowledge Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.	Grades 3.II.C Spelling, Grammar, and Usage	Grade 3.II.C.E5, E6
	Grades 3.II.E Handwriting and Word Processing	
	Grades 5.II.C Spelling, Grammar, and Usage	Grade 5.II.C.E4, E5
	Grades 5.II.E Handwriting and Word Processing	Grade 5.II.E.E2
	Grades 7.II.C Spelling, Grammar, and Usage	Grade 7.II.C.E3, E4
	Grades 7.II.E Handwriting and Word Processing	Grade 7.II.E.E2
	Grades 9-12.II.C Spelling, Grammar, and Usage	Grade 10.II.C.E3.
	Grades 9-12.II.E Handwriting and Word Processing	
K-12.7 Evaluating Data Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.	Grade 3.II.D Research	
	Grade 5.II.D Research	
	Grade 7.II.D Research	Grade 7.II.D.E2, E3
	Grade 9-12.II.D Research	Grade 10.II.D.E1 - E7

Exhibit 2.2.7 (continued)
National English Language Arts Standards Incorporated
In Minnesota Reading and Writing Grade Level Benchmarks
And District Curriculum Documents
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

National Language Standard	Incorporated MN Academic Benchmark	Incorporated MPS Academic Performance Standards
K-12.8 Developing Research Skills Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.	Grade 3.II.D Research	
	Grade 3.III.C Media Literacy	
	Grade 5.II.D Research	
	Grade 5.III.C Media Literacy	
	Grade 7.II.D Research	Grade 7.II.D.E2
	Grade 7.III.C Media Literacy	Grade 7.III.C.E3
	Grade 9-12.II.D Research	Grade 10.II.D.E1 - E7
	Grade 9-12.III.C Media Literacy	Grade 10.III.C.E9, E10
K-12.9 Multicultural Understanding Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects, across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.	Grade 3.I.B Vocabulary Expansion	Grade 3.I.B.E3b, E3c
	Grade 5.I.B Vocabulary Expansion	
	Grade 7.I.B Vocabulary Expansion	Grade 7.I.B.E2, E5
	Grade 9-12.I.B Vocabulary Expansion	Grade 10.I.B.E2, E4
K-12.10 Applying non-English Perspective Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.	Grade 3.I.C Comprehension	Grade 3.I.C.E2a, E2k
	Grade 5.I.C Comprehension	Grade 5.I.C.E1b, E1c
	Grade 7.I.C Comprehension	Grade 7.I.C.E1
	Grade 9-12.I.C Comprehension	Grade 10.I.C.E8, E10
K-12.11 Participating in a Society Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.	Grade 3.III.C Media Literacy	
	Grade 5.III.C Media Literacy	
	Grade 7.III.C Media Literacy	Grade 7.III.C.E3
	Grade 9-12.III.C Media Literacy	Grade 10.III.C.E9, E10
K-12.12 Applying Language Skills Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).	Grade 3.II.D Research	
	Grade 3.III.A Speaking & Listening	Grade 3.III.A.E1, E2
	Grade 5.II.D Research	
	Grade 5.III.A Speaking & Listening	Grade 5.III.A.E1, E2
	Grade 7.II.D Research	Grade 7.II.D.E2
	Grade 7.III.A Speaking & Listening	Grade 7.III.A.E3
	Grade 9-12.II.D Research	Grade 10.II.D.E, E9
	Grade 9-12.III.A Speaking & Listening	Grade 10.III.A.E6

Exhibit 2.2.7 indicates the following:

- One or more state standards at each of the four grade levels were aligned with the 12 national standards. Local standards existed for and were aligned with nine of the national standards (75 percent), and local standards aligned with ten of 16 state standards (63 percent).
- At grade 5, local standards existed for and were aligned with nine of the 12 national standards (75 percent), and local standards aligned with 11 of 17 state standards (65 percent).
- At grade 7, local standards existed for and were aligned with all national standards (100 percent), and local standards aligned with all 17 state standards (100 percent).

- At grade 10, local standards existed for and were aligned with all 12 national standards but only 15 of 17 state standards (88 percent) for grades 9 through 12.

Auditors found alignment of national, state, and local standards challenging for several reasons. District curriculum documents lacked a common format, and related guidance documents, such as curriculum maps and frameworks, were located in various places in hard copy or on the district website. At certain levels, there was no districtwide curriculum. In such cases, the state standards were used as a proxy for local curriculum. Auditors found that local curriculum guidance documents varied by grade level and were in different stages of development or revision; in fact, some were being developed at and by individual schools due to the lack of a district provided curriculum.

Overall, the auditors found that the written curriculum for English language arts in the Minneapolis Public Schools was anchored in the Minnesota State Standards. Auditors found clear linkages between state and national standards. However, learning objectives in district curriculum guidance documents were inconsistently linked to either state or national standards. At most grade levels, district curriculum replicated the state standards and presented no further delineation to guide instruction.

II.b. Articulation From Level to Level Within the Curriculum Area

This frame of analysis addresses articulation of curriculum concepts and learning objectives across grade levels, kindergarten through grade 12. A number of district curriculum documents existed in draft form and were not articulated across grade levels in reading and writing. As shown in [Exhibit 2.1.5](#), many courses lacked curriculum guides, and, as shown in [Exhibit 2.2.6](#), the curriculum guidance documents that did exist were inadequate in quality. In practice, the district relied on the state grade level benchmarks to determine a continuum of learning related to specific content and skills across all grades and courses.

To examine articulation, auditors analyzed selected sample benchmarks from the Minnesota Academic Standards, attending to the nature of concept treatment across selected grade levels. Each benchmark was examined further to determine if concepts or skills in subsequent grades extended learning to greater depth and complexity, were duplicative of previous grade levels, or involved lower degrees of challenge than in prior grades. In this analysis, auditors used the standards for reading and writing as exemplars of curriculum extension or redundancy.

In [Exhibit 2.2.8](#), auditors present their analysis of the state reading standards, noting the grade level at which an objective or expectation was introduced (I), duplicated with no content enhancement (D), or extended with greater challenge (E). In cases where the objective or expectation required lower degrees of challenge than that of the previous grade level, auditors have so indicated (LOW).

Exhibit 2.2.8

Auditors' Analysis of State Reading Expectations: Redundancy of Benchmarks across Grade Levels K-12 Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

Expectations	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
I.A.1. Phonemes/Decoding	I	E	E										
I.A.2, I.A.3 Word Structures	I	E	E										
I.A.4 Single/Multi-Syllabic Words	I	E	E	E	D	D	D	E					
I.A.5, I.A.7 Rhyming Words/Patterns	I	E											
I.A.6, I.A.8 High-Frequency Words	I	E	E										
I.A.9 Self-Correcting Strategies		I	E	E									
I.A.10 Accuracy and Fluency		I	E	E	D	D	E	D					
I.A.10a. Narrative/Expository Text									I				
I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3 Descriptive Words	I	D	E	E									
I.B.3a. Multiple-Meaning Words/Analogies		I	E	E	E	D		D	D	E	D	D	D

Exhibit 2.2.8 (continued)
Auditors' Analysis of State Reading Expectations:
Redundancy of Benchmarks across Grade Levels K-12
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Expectations	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
I.B.4 Context Clues/Word Structure	I	D	E	D	D	E	E	D	E	E	D	D	D
I.B.4a. Language Influence								I	D				
I.B.5 Explicit Instruction of New Words	I	E	D	D	D	D	D	D	E	E	D	D	D
I.B.5a Greek/Latin Roots							I	D	D	D	D	D	D
I.B.6 Reference Tools			I	D	D	E	E	D	D	D	D	D	D
I.B.6c Literary Elements							I	D	D				
I.B.8 Word Inflection									I				
I.C.1. Narrative/Informational Text	I	E	E	D	D	D				E	D	D	D
I.C.2 Prediction	I	E	E										
I.C.3 Self-Correcting/Monitoring Strategies	I	I	D	E	D	D	E	D	E	E	D	D	D
I.C.3a Analyzing/Questioning Text			I	E	D	D	E	D	D				
I.C.4 Prior Knowledge/Experiences	I	E	D	D	D	D	D	D	D				
I.C.5 Inference/Main Idea		I	D	D	D	D	D	E	D	D	D	D	D
I.C.6 Conclusions		I	E	E	E	D	D	E	D	E	D	D	D
I.C.6a Fact/Opinion and Cause/Effect					I	E	D	D	E				
I.C.6b Recall/Sequence of Events			I				I	D	D				
I.C.7 Structural Organizers				I	D	E	E	E	D				
I.C.8 Evidence from Text/Credibility		I	E			E	D	E	E	E	D	D	D
I.C.9 Summarizing/Paraphrasing			I	E	D	D	D	E	E	D	D	D	D
I.C.9b Fallacies in Logic										I	D	D	D
I.C.10 Directions			I	E	E	D	D	E	D				
I.C.10a Comparison/Contrast					I	D	E	E	D				
I.C.10b Synthesizing/Interpretations										I	D	D	D
I.C.11 Point of View/ Purpose/ Argument						I	E	E	E	E	D	D	D
I.C.11b Persuasive Text								I	E	E	D	D	D
I.D.1 Genres	I	E	D	E	D	D	E	D		E	D	D	D
I.D.2 Literary Elements	I	D	E	E	E	E				E	D	D	D
I.D.3 Interpretation/ Elements of Literature	I	D	LOW	E	D	D	E	E	D	E	D	D	D
I.D.3c World Literary Works										I	D	D	D
I.D.4 Comparison/Contrast			I	E	D								
I.D.5 Personal Enjoyment	I	D	D	D	E	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D
I.D.5a Figurative Language				I	D	D	E	E	D	E	D	D	D
I.D.6a First, Third Person Point of View					I	E	D	E	D				
I.D.6b Historical Literary Analysis							I	D	D	E	D	D	D
I.D.7a Poetry							I	D	D	E	D	D	D
I.D.8 Literary Connections				I	D	D	E	E	D	D	D	D	D
I.D.9 Evidence from Text/Recurring Themes										I	D	D	D
I.D.9a Dramatic Literature										I	D	D	D
I.D.9b Literary Forms										I	D	D	D
I.D.10 Literary and Structural Devices										I	D	D	D

Key: I=Introduced E=Extended D=Duplicated LOW=Less challenging

Source: MN Academic Standards for Language Arts K-12

Exhibit 2.2.8 demonstrates the following information about reading benchmarks:

- Thirty percent of all state grade level benchmarks in reading were introduced in kindergarten. An additional 14 percent were introduced in first grade, meaning that 44 percent of all reading benchmarks were introduced either in kindergarten or in grade 1.
- Duplication of benchmark expectations occurred for 205 out of 340 total benchmarks (60 percent) and 85 benchmarks (25 percent) offered greater challenges than those at the previous grade level.
- Among all grade 9 benchmarks, 14 percent were introduced at that grade level and another 30 percent called for extension beyond grade 8 expectations.
- Grade levels in which the greatest percentage of benchmarks included introduction of new content were kindergarten (100 percent), grade 1 (32 percent), grade 2 (22 percent), and grade 9 (25 percent). Grade levels with the least percentage of benchmarks involving introduction of new topics were grade 5 (4 percent) and grades 7 and 8 (each with 7 percent).
- Grade levels containing the greatest percentages of duplicative benchmarks were grade 4 (67 percent), grade 5 (69 percent), grade 8 (67 percent), and grades 10, 11, and 12 (100 percent).
- Grade levels with the greatest percentage of benchmarks describing extensions from the previous grade level were grade 2 (52 percent), grade 3 (58 percent), and grade 9 (54 percent).
- In one instance (I.D.3), the learning expectation for one grade level (grade 2) was lower than that for the previous grade level.

Exhibit 2.2.9 shows articulation of state grade level expectations in writing.

Exhibit 2.2.9

**Auditors’ Analysis of State Writing Expectations:
Redundancy of Benchmarks across Grade Levels K-12
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Expectations	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
II.A.1a.Narrative		I	D	D	D	D	E	D	E	E	D	D	D
II.A.1b.Informative		I	D	D	D	D	E	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.A.1c Poetic		I	D	D	D	D	E	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.A.1d. Functional			I	E	D	D	E	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.A.1e. Descriptive				I	D	D	E	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.A.1f. Persuasive					I	D	E	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.A.1g. Thank You Note					I	D	E	D	D	D	D	D	D
II.A.1h Reports						I	E	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.A.2.Record Information/Observations		I	E										
II.B.1. Simple/Topic Sentences		I	E	E	D	D							
II.B.1a. Paragraphs				I	E	D	E	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.B.2 Verbalization			I	D	D								
II.B.2a Composing Processes				I	E	D	E	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.B.3 Narratives							I	D	D	D	D	D	D
II.B.4 Informative Reports					I	D	E	D	D	D	D	D	D
II.B.4a Word Processing and Formatting									I	E	D	D	D
II.B.5Audience					I	D	D	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.B.5a. Opinions, Supporting Arguments									I	E	D	D	D
II.B.5b Revision										I	D	D	D
II.B.6 Technology										I	D	D	D

Exhibit 2.2.9 (continued)
Auditors' Analysis of State Writing Expectations:
Redundancy of Benchmarks across Grade Levels K-12
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Expectations	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
II.B. 7 Citing Sources										I	D	D	D
II.C.1 Punctuation	I	E	D	E	E	E	E	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.C.1a. Parts of Speech			I	E						E	D	D	D
II.C.1b Formal, Informal Language										I	D	D	D
II.C.2. Editing						I	E	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.C.3a Compound Words				I	E	D							
II.C.3b Grammar							I	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.C.4 Sentences		I	E	E	D	D	D	D	D	E	D	D	D
II.C.4a Homophones				I	E	D							
II.C.5. Spelling		I	E	E	E	D							
II.D.1. Reference Materials		I	D	D	D	E	E	E	D	E	D	D	D
II.D.1a Research Tools										I	D	D	D
II.D.2. Alphabetizing		I	E										
II.D.2a Research Questions						I	D	E	D	E	D	D	D
II.D.2b Organizational Structures						I	D	E	D	E	D	D	D
II.D.3. Plagiarism						I	D	D	E	E	D	D	D
II.D.3a Citations						I	D	E	D	E	D	D	D
II.D.4 Research Plan										I	D	D	D
II.D.5 Accuracy										I	D	D	D
II.D.6 Report with Evidence										I	D	D	D
II.D.7 Technology										I	D	D	D
II.D.8 Style Methods										I	D	D	D
II.D.9 Publication										I	D	D	D
II.E.1. Letters	I	E											
II.E.2. Numbers	I												
II.E.2a Spacing		I	E										
II.E.2b Cursive			I	E	D	D	D	D	D				
II.E.2c Word Processing								I	D				
II.E.3 Writing Left to Right	I												
II.E.3b Keyboarding			I	E	D	D	E	D	D				
II.E.4 First, Last Names	I												
Key: I=Introduced E=Extended D=Duplicated LOW=Less challenging													
Source: MN Academic Standards for Language Arts K-12													

The following may be noted of [Exhibit 2.2.9](#):

- Ten percent of all writing benchmarks were introduced in kindergarten, and an additional 22 percent were introduced in first grade, meaning that nearly one-third of all benchmarks were introduced either in kindergarten or grade 1.
- Duplication of benchmark expectations from one grade to the next occurred for 200 of 313 writing benchmarks (64 percent). On the other hand, extended learning was required for 67 benchmarks (22 percent).
- Grade levels at which the greatest percentages of new benchmarks were introduced were kindergarten (100 percent), grade 1 (83 percent), and grades 3 and 5 (28 percent each).

- The grade levels with the highest percentages of duplicative benchmarks were grade 5 (69 percent), grade 6 (63 percent), grade 7 (80 percent), and grade 8 (85 percent). Grades with the lowest percentages of duplicative benchmarks were kindergarten (0 percent) and grade 9 (9 percent).
- Grade levels with the highest percentages of benchmarks extending expectations beyond those of the previous grade levels were grade 6 (63 percent) and grade 9 (61 percent). Grade levels with the lowest percentages of benchmarks with extended content were grades 5 and 8 (8 percent each) and grade 9 (9 percent).
- Only the punctuation benchmark (II.C.1) was articulated from kindergarten through grade 12. However, in six of 12 grade levels, the benchmark duplicated that of the previous grade level.

In summary, because the district had a partially completed curriculum for kindergarten through grade 12 and because, in practice, the Minnesota Academic Standards served as the default curriculum for English language arts in the Minneapolis Public Schools, auditors reviewed the state standards for redundancy. The auditors found that 60 percent of reading and 64 percent of writing objectives were duplicative across grade levels, resulting in redundancy of learning expectations.

II.c. Congruence of State Benchmarks with Instructional Resources

The third frame of analysis for articulation addresses congruence between learning benchmarks and textbooks and other instructional resources used in the classroom. Without such alignment, teachers are left to search for resources or materials aligned with the curriculum objectives they are to teach. Auditors look for consistency in the content, or topic, of the objective; the context, or how the learnings or objectives occur; and the types of cognition, using Bloom’s Taxonomy of Cognitive Domains (see [Exhibit 2.2.15](#)). The auditors chose a small, representative sample of their analyses from four grade levels to demonstrate their findings, as shown in [Exhibit 2.2.10](#).

Exhibit 2.2.10

Internal Consistency with Instructional Resources in English Language Arts Grades 3, 5, 7, and 10 Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

Benchmark	Adopted Resource	Consistency of Resource to		
		Content [†]	Context [†]	Cognition [†]
Grade 3	Houghton Mifflin, <i>Reading (3)</i>			
I.B.2: Identify and correctly use antonyms, synonyms, homonyms and multiple meaning words.	Create word web of opposite pairs (R19); Substitute synonym in sentences (151F); Choose correct definitions of underlined words (137H)	Partial	Partial	Partial
II.D.1 Use grade-level appropriate reference material to obtain information from dictionaries, glossaries, encyclopedias and internet.	Identify parts of dictionary (137I); Discuss why nonfiction books have glossaries (121H); Use encyclopedia, internet to research (R9)	Yes	Yes	Yes
III.A.4 Give oral presentations to different audiences for different purposes.	Give persuasive speech (367N); perform a scene (399N)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grade 5	Houghton Mifflin, <i>Reading (5)</i>			
I.B.2: Uses knowledge of root words, derivations, antonyms, synonyms, idioms, homonyms, and multiple meaning words to determine word meanings and understand text.	Students play a game where they match synonyms (T 51M); students use knowledge of meaning of selected roots to complete sentences with correct word (T 129C)	Partial	No	Yes

Exhibit 2.2.10 (continued)
Internal Consistency with Instructional Resources in English Language Arts
Grades 3, 5, 7, and 10
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Benchmark	Adopted Resource	Consistency of Resource to		
		Content [†]	Context [†]	Cognition [†]
Grade 5 (continued)	Houghton Mifflin, <i>Reading (5)</i>			
I.C.4: Identify main idea and determine relevant details in fiction texts.	Students are asked to identify main idea in a non-fiction passage. (T69)	Partial	Partial	Yes
II.B.3: Use composing processes, including: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.	Prewriting—Students brainstorm ideas using graphic organizer (T129K); Editing—Students are given a proofreading checklist (T129L); Publishing—Students are asked to create a final copy of an assignment (T53G)	Partial	Partial	No
Grade 7	Houghton Mifflin, <i>Write Source (7)</i> ; Junior Great Books, <i>And Justice for All</i> ; McDougal Littell, <i>The Language of Literature (7)</i>			
I.C.2: Recall and use prior learning and preview text to prepare for reading.	Text opener to help students connect their own experience to the text (Jr. Great Books, Discussion Guide, 10)	Yes	Yes	Yes
II.B.1: Create multiple paragraph compositions that state, maintain and use details in a logical order to support a main idea.	Text gives examples of graphic organizers, lists, outlines and other patterns of organization (<i>Write Source</i> , 548-551); mentions various strategies (McDougal Littell, various pages)	Yes	No	No
II.D.2: Cite sources for quoted and paraphrased information in a bibliography when writing a research report.	Describes how to create a “works cited” page (<i>Write Source</i> , 403-4)	Partial	No	Yes
Grade 10	Houghton Mifflin, <i>Reader’s Handbook (10)</i> ; Junior Great Books, <i>Voices of the Holocaust</i>			
I.B.4: Apply knowledge of Greek and Latin roots, prefixes and suffixes to understand content vocabulary.	Use root words to find meaning in context. Use prefixes and suffixes to create a new word or change the meaning of a word. (<i>Reader’s Handbook</i> , T420, S673-674, S Application Book 234)	Yes	Partial	No
I.C.5: Summarize and paraphrase main idea and supporting details.	Utilize tools and organizers for summarizing and paraphrasing main idea and supporting details. (<i>Reader’s Handbook</i> , S126, 730-731; 709, 722-723, 749; 55-58, 259; S Application Book 77-83, 156)	Yes	No	No
II.B.5: Revise writing for clarity, coherence, smooth transitions, and unity.	A comparison between the reading process of “looking back” and revision in the writing process. (<i>Reader’s Handbook</i> , S34-35)	Partial	No	No
<i>Source: MN Academic Standards; district curriculum resources</i>				
[†] of learner objective				

A review of [Exhibit 2.2.10](#) provides the following information about the representative samples used for this analysis of internal consistency of instructional resources to learning objectives:

- For grade 3, two of three samples were aligned in content, context, and cognition. The third was partially aligned in all three areas. Thus, the sample had six of nine possible areas in alignment (67 percent).
- At grade 5, none of the selected benchmarks were fully aligned in all three dimensions: content, context, and cognitive type. Resources for all three were partially aligned in terms of content, one was partially aligned for context, and two were aligned in cognitive type. The sample had two of nine possible points of alignment (22 percent).
- At grade 7, one of the three samples was fully aligned, another was aligned only in content, and the third was aligned only in cognitive type. The sample was aligned at five of nine points (56 percent).
- At grade 10, none of the samples were fully aligned in terms of content, context, and cognitive type. Two of three benchmarks had content congruence with resources. The grade 10 sample was aligned at two of nine points (22 percent).
- Overall, in the English language arts, the sample instructional resources and benchmarks received a 33.3 percent congruence rating.

Auditors recognize that this analysis includes only a sample of instructional materials and objectives for English language arts. However, this information demonstrates some of the problems with internal consistency present within the curriculum resources and instructional materials in this content area.

In summary, internal consistency was weak among the sampling of district-aligned and -adopted instructional materials and benchmarks for English language arts. Without internal consistency between district-aligned textbooks and instructional materials and the learning expectations across all courses and grades in the district, the chances of students mastering the concepts and skills to be successful on measures of accountability are reduced.

II.d. Congruence of State Benchmarks with Instructional Strategies/Activities

The auditors evaluated the internal consistency between a sample of English language arts grade level expectations and recommended instructional strategies in various curriculum guidance documents found on paper and online. In order to determine internal consistency, the auditors listed examples of instructional strategies in district curriculum guidance documents and compared them to their related grade level benchmarks from the Minnesota Academic Standards. It should be noted that the auditors used curriculum documents that were developed at the district level for kindergarten through grade 5. Similarly, auditors were provided a draft copy of a district curriculum for grade 10. The only grade 7 curriculum documents with any strategies were partial quarter maps done with the help of district curriculum staff at the request of and in conjunction with staff at one middle school. Auditors were told these would likely serve as templates for districtwide curriculum revisions. Where documents were listed in the following exhibit, it was because they contained both student expectations and instructional strategies. Three benchmarks at each grade level were selected randomly from the Minnesota Academic Standards. The internal consistency of grade level benchmarks and instructional strategies is shown in [Exhibit 2.2.11](#).

Exhibit 2.2.11
Congruence of Instructional Strategies with
State Grade Level Benchmarks in English Language Arts
Grades 3, 5, 7 and 10
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

State Grade Level Expectations	Instructional Strategy from Curriculum Guidance Documents	Congruence		
		Content [†]	Context [†]	Cognition [†]
Grade 3				
I.B.4: Use knowledge of prefixes and suffixes to determine the meaning of unknown words.	Teacher models strategies to determine word meanings; teacher demonstrates various word learning strategies to promote use of new vocabulary (<i>MPS K-5 Literacy Framework</i>)	Yes	No	Yes
II.C.6 Apply punctuation conventions correctly in writing, including periods, question marks, exclamation points, capitalization of proper nouns, abbreviation, and commas in a series.	Provide opportunities for students to apply conventions during interactive, shared, modeled, guided writing and independent writing; provide opportunities for students to engage in peer editing for use of words and language conventions (<i>MPS K-5 Literacy Framework</i>)	Yes	No	Partial
III.A.2: Demonstrate active listening and comprehension.	Talk through procedures and have students teach each other; model and encourage attentive listening and thoughtful feedback (<i>MPS K-5 Literacy Framework</i>)	Yes	Partial	Yes
Grade 5				
I.C.1: Read aloud grade-appropriate text (that has not been previewed) with accuracy and comprehension.	No strategies in curriculum guidance documents	--	--	--
I.D.6: Distinguish between third person omniscient and first person point of view.	No strategies in curriculum guidance documents	--	--	--
II.D.2: Formulate research questions and collect relevant information or perform observations that address such questions.	No strategies in curriculum guidance documents	--	--	--
Grade 7*				
I.B.3: Recognize the influences of other languages on the English language.	No strategies in curriculum guidance documents	--	--	--
II.B.3: Create informative reports, including gathering material, formulating ideas based on gathered material, organizing information, and editing for logical progression.	No strategies in curriculum guidance documents	--	--	--

Exhibit 2.2.11 (continued)
Congruence of Instructional Strategies with
State Grade Level Benchmarks in English Language Arts
Grades 3, 5, 7 and 10
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

State Grade Level Expectations	Instructional Strategy from Curriculum Guidance Documents	Congruence		
		Content [†]	Context [†]	Cognition [†]
Grade 7* (continued)				
III.C.2: Evaluate the accuracy and credibility of information found on Internet sites.	Analytic discussion of a movie, television program, any media/new media in a one-to-one conference (<i>Northeast MS 1st Quarter Map draft, E3a</i>); explain the use of propaganda techniques in media/new media (<i>Northeast MS 1st Quarter Map draft, E3d</i>)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grade 10				
I.B.4: Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and metaphors by using dictionaries, context clues and reference books	No strategies in curriculum guidance documents.	--	--	--
I.D.8: Analyze classic and contemporary poems for poetic devices.	No strategies in curriculum guidance documents.	--	--	--
II.B.7: Generate footnotes, endnotes and bibliographies in a consistent and widely accepted format.	No strategies in curriculum guidance documents.	--	--	--
Note: * Grade 7 Quarter maps had only been partially completed at the time of the audit. [†] of learner objective				
Source: MN Academic Standards; district curriculum guidance documents				

As shown in [Exhibit 2.2.11](#):

- Only at grade 3 did curriculum documents include instructional strategies for all three sample benchmarks. Instructional strategies and benchmarks showed content alignment. The strategies and benchmarks were partially aligned in context in one case and not aligned in two cases. In two instances, strategies and benchmarks aligned in cognitive type, while the third was partially aligned. Overall, strategies and grade 3 benchmarks were aligned in five of nine possible instances (56 percent).
- At grade 7, one of three benchmarks included reference to an instructional strategy. This strategy was completely aligned to the benchmark in terms of content, context, and cognitive type.
- The grades 5 and 10 curriculum guidance documents did not include instructional strategies.

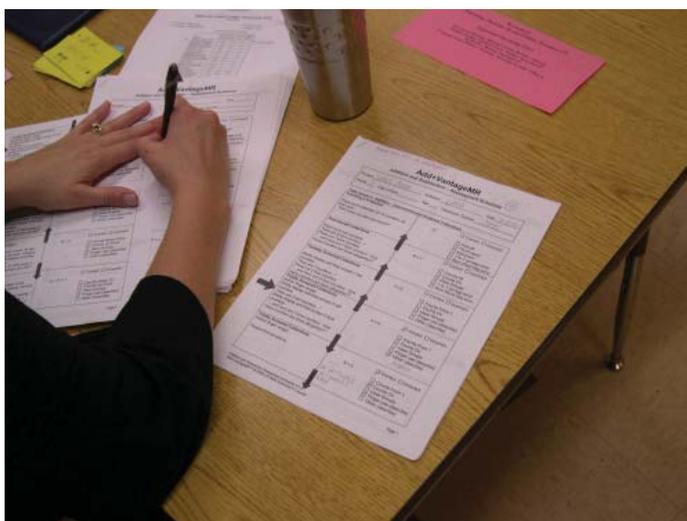
In summary, instructional strategies in curriculum guidance documents were not typically available. In those cases where instructional strategies were present, they were not necessarily in full congruence with the relevant state benchmarks. If these samples are representative, written curriculum guidance documents lack internal consistency in terms of instructional strategies, a situation that can impair teachers' abilities to address all aspects of curriculum objectives and, consequently, can hinder students' efforts to master concepts and skills for which they are accountable on high stakes assessments.



Bethune School Kindergarten student involved with Math Investigations

II.e. Congruence of State Benchmarks with Assessment Items

Well-written curriculum guidance documents include information about the assessments used and provide examples of typical test items to promote congruence between learning expectations (benchmarks) and the assessments by which students are held accountable for demonstrating their knowledge and skills. Alignment of assessment and benchmarks is considered necessary to provide for transfer of learning from instruction to assessment. Such congruence should also be present in the various formative assessments used by teachers to evaluate student progress and modify instruction to ensure improved progress when necessary.



Mathematics testing at Laney Elementary School

It should be noted that the Minnesota Department of Education does not release MCA-II tests or actual test items, so the district would be hard pressed to ensure alignment of assessment items with the grade level benchmarks found in the Minnesota Academic Standards for the various core content areas. As one administrator stated, “It’s kind of like shooting in the dark, because the state has not released any [authentic] MCA tests.” Similarly, because the district personnel have no way of knowing the precise degree of match between the assessment items and the standards, they cannot be certain that any district-developed assessments would align with what is assessed (content), how it is assessed (context), or what types of cognition are required (cognition). Consequently, district assessments can, at best, be a guess based on a limited number of sample assessment items that have been made available by the state Department of Education. The following information was provided in the teachers’ guides to the Item Samplers:

- “The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment—Series II (MCA-IIs) are reading and mathematics tests that help schools and districts measure student progress toward the state’s academic standards.”
- “In 2006, the tests became aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards, received a new name (MCA-II) and now are given in grades 3-8, 10 and 11.”
- “An item sampler is not a complete test. It contains a smaller number of the items that students will see on a full-length test in the spring. MCA-II Item Samplers were developed to familiarize students and teachers with the format of the MCA-IIs and the kinds of items that will appear on them.”
- “This MCA-II Item Sampler is not a real test. It should not be used to predict how well students will do on the tests. However, students may feel more comfortable with the tests if they have reviewed the Item Samplers prior to the test.”

The state MCA-IIs tested only the reading and writing components of the state language arts standards. The following exhibit lists assessment items taken from the MCA-II Reading Item Samplers for grades 3, 5, 7, and 10. At each grade level, auditors included three multiple choice items and one open-ended item. Auditors selected test items that assessed four different state benchmarks at a given grade level and included one item involving cognitive type A (knowledge), two requiring cognitive type B (comprehension and application), and one involving cognitive type C (analysis, synthesis, or evaluation). According to the teachers’ guides provided with these Item Samplers, this group of 16 sample assessment items reflected 16 different state benchmarks, four each at four grade levels. In the following exhibit, auditors compare the assessment items and state benchmarks for congruence of content, context, and cognition. If auditors determined that an assessment item was not aligned in content, they conducted no further analyses of that item.

Exhibit 2.2.12

**Congruence of Assessment Items in MCA-II Item Samplers
With State Grade Level Benchmarks in English Language Arts
Grades 3, 5, 7 and 10
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Assessment Item	Designation in Sampler		Congruence		
	State Grade Level Benchmark	Cognitive Type	Content†	Context†	Cognition†
Grade 3					
<i>(After reading a fictional selection)</i> 3. When Henry played baseball, he was: A) picked last. B) the pitcher. C) too slow. D) laughed at.	I.C.3	A	Partial	Partial	Partial
<i>(After reading a poem)</i> 13. Which step is done before placing each bulb? A) Weeding B) Watering C) Digging D) Patting	I.C.7	B	No	--	--
<i>(After reading an article)</i> 29. Elisa wears protective gear when she A) drives trucks. B) unloads glass. C) sorts cans. D) moves paper.	I.C.5	B	Partial	Partial	No

Exhibit 2.2.12 (continued)
Congruence of Assessment Items in MCA-II Item Samplers
With State Grade Level Benchmarks in English Language Arts
Grades 3, 5, 7 and 10
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Assessment Item	Designation in Sampler		Congruence		
	State Grade Level Benchmark	Cognitive Type	Content [†]	Context [†]	Cognition [†]
Grade 3 (continued)					
<i>(After reading a fictional selection)</i> 37. Retell the story in your own words. Be sure to include the following: Part A) One event from the beginning of the story Part B) One event from the middle of the story Part C) One event from the end of the story	I.C.4	C	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grade 5					
<i>(After reading a fictional selection)</i> 8. Denise's lan-yap is a A) snake skin. B) magnolia flower. C) bird feather. D) dragonfly wing.	I.C.4	A	Partial	Partial	Yes
<i>(After reading an article)</i> 15. In paragraph 2, the word <u>terrain</u> means A) ground. B) fear. C) snowshoe. D) check point.	I.B.4	B	Partial	Partial	Yes
<i>(After reading a poem)</i> 22. In lines 18-19, "One cat almost smiled" means that the cat was probably: A) foolish. B) content. C) selfish. D) timid.	I.D.8	B	No	--	--
<i>(After reading an article)</i> 40. Explain why you think Blanche Leathers wanted to become a steamboat captain. Use three details to support your answer.	I.C.7	C	Partial	Partial	Yes
Grade 7					
<i>(After reading a poem)</i> 6. According to the poem, where is Crow "supposed to be" (line 13)? A) In a puddle B) In the sky C) Down the road D) At ground level	I.C.4	A	Partial	Yes	No
<i>(After reading an article)</i> 11. The article is mainly about A) informing readers about the history of hockey. B) persuading readers to start playing hockey. C) describing the equipment needed to play hockey. D) narrating the life stories of famous hockey players.	I.C.1	B	Partial	Partial	Partial

Exhibit 2.2.12 (continued)
Congruence of Assessment Items in MCA-II Item Samplers
With State Grade Level Benchmarks in English Language Arts
Grades 3, 5, 7 and 10
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Assessment Item	Designation in Sampler		Congruence		
	State Grade Level Benchmark	Cognitive Type	Content [†]	Context [†]	Cognition [†]
Grade 7 (continued)					
<i>(After reading a passage)</i> 32. Identify two ways that the Depression affects Carrie’s life with her mother and father. Then, give two reasons why the Depression does not affect life for Grandpa and Grandma.	I.C.1	C	Partial	Partial	No
<i>(After reading a passage)</i> 33. In paragraph 4, the word <u>glumly</u> means A) cheerfully. B) sadly. C) excitedly. D) thickly.	I.B.2	B	Partial	Partial	Partial
Grade 10					
<i>(After reading an article)</i> 4. What is the author’s source for his list of the kinds of sports facilities that Minnesota needs? A) A poll of the citizens B) An independent study done by the university C) His own analysis of what other cities have D) A newspaper article about local sports	I.C.8	B	No	--	--
<i>(After reading an article)</i> 7. The author of this article states, “It’s pointless at this late date to lay blame for the sports facilities mess...” However, he does indicate some possible causes. In your own words, state at least four causes of the stadium mess that the author mentions.	I.C.6	B	No	--	--
<i>(After reading an article)</i> 8. What change took place in American factories during the years from 1820 to 1900? A) Textile mills switched from hand looms to huge mechanical looms. B) Female factory workers went from being a novelty to being commonplace. C) Male factory workers began doing more complicated tasks than they had done previously. D) Women workers’ wages rose until they equaled the wages men received	I.C.5	B	No	--	--
<i>(After reading a poem)</i> 35. In line 5, the reader can tell that a <u>ruffian</u> is someone who A) disobeys rules. B) enjoys learning. C) is athletic. D) resents being small.	I.B.2	A	Partial	Partial	Yes
[†] of learner objective					

As shown in [Exhibit 2.2.12](#):

- One out of 16 sample items (6 percent) was fully aligned with the benchmark in terms of content, context, and cognitive complexity. An additional 10 sample items (63 percent) were partially aligned in terms of content.
- Five of 16 sample items (31 percent) were not aligned in terms of content with their respective state benchmarks. Auditors did no further analysis of these five sample test items.
- Of the 11 sample items for which context alignment was analyzed, two (18 percent) were aligned in terms of context and another nine (82 percent) were partially aligned.
- Of the 11 sample items for which cognitive complexity alignment was analyzed, five (45 percent) were aligned and another three (27 percent) were partially aligned. Three items (27 percent) were not aligned with the benchmark in terms of cognitive complexity.
- Two of the three sample items designated type C (analysis, synthesis, or evaluation) were aligned with their state benchmarks in terms of cognitive complexity.

Because the Minnesota Academic Standards for Language Arts was the primary source of objectives used in district English language arts curriculum documents, auditors examined state benchmarks and compared them to assessment items contained in the district’s curriculum guidance documents. Auditors sought sample assessment items and/or references to such items in English language arts curriculum guidance documents at four selected grade levels—grades 3, 5, 7 and 10. Auditors selected three sample benchmarks at each grade level and attempted to locate assessment examples that were tightly congruent in content. For those examples exhibiting content congruence, auditors looked for a match in context and cognitive type (using Bloom’s Taxonomy, as described in [Exhibit 2.2.15](#)). If the sample was not congruent in terms of content, auditors did not pursue analysis of context or cognitive type.

Exhibit 2.2.13

Congruence of Assessment Items in District Curriculum Guidance Documents With State Grade Level Benchmarks in English Language Arts Grades 3, 5, 7 and 10 Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

State Grade Level Benchmark	Assessment Item from Curriculum Guidance Documents	Congruence		
		Content [†]	Context [†]	Cognition [†]
Grade 3				
I.A.2 Read aloud narrative and expository text with fluency, accuracy, and appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression.	Read aloud unfamiliar O level books with 90% accuracy; read aloud level O books using pacing and intonation to convey meaning	Partial	Yes	Yes
I.C.3: Generate and answer literal, inferential, interpretive and evaluative questions to demonstrate understanding about what is read.	Teacher observations of students’ ability to make sense of what is read; running records for comprehension; learning logs responding to a question or prompt	No	--	--
II.A.1: Write in a variety of modes to express meaning, including descriptive, narrative, informative, friendly letter, poetic.	Students write pieces of various genres over a year: informational, narrative, functional and procedural, and literature	Yes	Yes	Yes

Exhibit 2.2.13 (continued)
Congruence of Assessment Items in District Curriculum Guidance Documents
With State Grade Level Benchmarks in English Language Arts
Grades 3, 5, 7 and 10
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

State Grade Level Benchmark	Assessment Item from Curriculum Guidance Documents	Congruence		
		Content [†]	Context [†]	Cognition [†]
Grade 5				
I.B.4: Analyze word structure and use context clues in order to understand new words.	No assessment suggestion included in the curriculum guidance documents for this objective	--	--	--
I.C.5: Generate and answer literal, inferential, interpretive, and evaluative questions to demonstrate understanding about what is read.	No assessment suggestion included in the curriculum guidance documents for this objective	--	--	--
II.B.4: Create informative reports, including gathering material, formulating ideas based on gathered material, organizing information, and editing for logical progression.	No assessment suggestion included in the curriculum guidance documents for this objective	--	--	--
Grade 7				
I.C.6: Use texts' structural organizers, such as graphics, illustrations, references, notes, introductions, boldface type and subheadings to aid comprehension.	No assessment suggestion included in the curriculum guidance documents for this objective	--	--	--
II.C.3: Apply grammar conventions correctly in writing.	No assessment suggestion included in the curriculum guidance documents for this objective	--	--	--
III.A.5: Follow a speaker's presentation and represent it in notes.	No assessment suggestion included in the curriculum guidance documents for this objective	--	--	--
Grade 10				
I.C.3: Analyze and draw conclusions about information contained in warranties, contracts, job descriptions, technical descriptions and other informational sources.	No assessment suggestion included in the curriculum guidance documents for this objective	--	--	--
II.D.4: Develop a research plan.	No assessment suggestion included in the curriculum guidance documents for this objective	--	--	--
III.A.1: Distinguish between speaker's opinion and verifiable facts and analyze the credibility of the presentation.	No assessment suggestion included in the curriculum guidance documents for this objective	--	--	--
<i>Source: MN Academic Standards; district curriculum documents</i>				
[†] of learner objective				

As shown in [Exhibit 2.2.13](#):

- Among the four grade levels in the sample, only the curriculum guide for grade 3 contained references to assessments of benchmarks.
- In the three grade 3 assessment examples, two assessment items were completely congruent with their respective benchmarks in terms of content, context, and cognitive type. The third was a strategy rather than an assessment item; lacking content alignment, auditors did not analyze further.

- Curriculum guidance documents for grades 5, 7, and 10 contained either no sample assessment items or mention of assessment approaches at all, or none for the benchmarks selected.

Auditors were unable to analyze the internal congruence of state standards and assessment within curriculum guides since the guides lacked specificity regarding assessment. Interview data supported auditors’ finding that local assessment items tied to the Minnesota Academic Standards for Language Arts had not been developed districtwide, as the following selected comments demonstrate:

- “Assessments are teacher-created but standards-driven.” (Administrator)
- “We have to redevelop alignment documents, pacing charts, and initial and quarter assessments.” (Administrator)
- “In the past, we were able to develop assessments that went with the elementary program.” (Administrator)
- “When standards change, teachers are forced to redo units.” (Teacher)

It should be noted that some core content areas provided quarterly benchmark assessments tied to the state benchmarks as well as adopted textbooks (e.g., mathematics, science). However, these were of limited functionality, due to incomplete information provided by the state Department of Education regarding the MCA-II test items (see further discussion in this finding as well as in [Finding 4.3](#)).

In summary, auditors found limited evidence of alignment of state or local assessment items with the benchmarks at the grade levels examined. This being said, the auditors were not convinced that the state has provided sufficient specificity for curriculum alignment purposes.

II.f. Artifact Congruence with State Benchmarks

To provide an example of the analysis of student artifacts with state standards, auditors undertook deeper analysis of three artifacts from each of the four core content areas . Where possible, they used one sample from the elementary grades, one from the middle grades, and one from high school. For each artifact, they noted the grade level and subject area or course, described the artifact, and identified relevant state standards. Finally, they assessed the degree of match between the artifact and the standard in terms of content, context, and cognitive type. Some artifacts addressed multiple state standards and therefore were analyzed for alignment to each of those standards. [Exhibit 2.2.14](#) displays auditors’ findings relative to this small sample of work presented to students.

Exhibit 2.2.14
Classroom Artifact Congruence with Minnesota Academic Standards
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Grade/ Course	Artifact Description	Artifact Student Expectation	State Standard	Alignment		
				Content [†]	Context [†]	Cognition [†]
4 Science	worksheet on properties of earth samples	use observation and knowledge to answer questions about properties of earth samples; refer to a chart to answer questions	4.I.B.3	No	--	--
6 Science	teacher-made worksheet listing symbols of elements	write the correct element name for given symbols, referring to attached periodic table	6.II.A.1	Partial	Partial	Yes
9-12 Chemistry	teacher-made worksheet on elements, compounds	define and list various elements; define compound; draw and change carbohydrate molecules; respond to questions about carbohydrates	9-12. II.A.9	Yes	No	No
			9-12. II.B.1	Yes	Yes	Yes

Exhibit 2.2.14
Classroom Artifact Congruence with Minnesota Academic Standards
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Grade/ Course	Artifact Description	Artifact Student Expectation	State Standard	Alignment		
				Content [†]	Context [†]	Cognition [†]
5/6 Social Studies	mass-produced worksheet	refer to the U.S. Constitution to answer questions	4-8. I.D.1	Partial	Partial	No
6 Social Studies	MN historical society worksheet on American Indians' way of life	draw a picture of what an ancient Native American site may have looked like based on inferences made through reading a selection; answer questions as a note-taking tool prior to developing drawing	4-8. II.A.1	Yes	Partial	Yes
7 Geography	teacher-made worksheet on current peace process in Middle East	respond to questions about President Bush's Middle East policy	4-8. I.K.2	Partial	Partial	No
1 Language Arts	Houghton Mifflin, reading vocabulary worksheet	write correct word from list provided to complete sentences; reinforcement of newly introduced story vocabulary	1.I.B.1	Partial	Partial	Yes
8 Language Arts	teacher-made worksheet asking students to state opinions prior to class discussion	prior to discussion, mark whether they agree or disagree with a variety of statements about a novel and the meaning of a key word	8.I.B.3	Yes	No	Partial
			8. I.D.1	Partial	No	No
			8.I.D.12	No	--	--
			8.I.C.14	Partial	Partial	Partial
12 English	teacher-made worksheet practicing active sentence construction	worksheet defines and gives examples of active and passive sentence construction; student rewrite sentences, using active constructions	9-12. III.C.3d	Partial	Partial	Partial
2 Math	worksheet from adopted text on addition facts	students write down clues for solving sets of (+1 and +2) math facts displayed commutatively	2.1.2.2	Partial	No	Yes
6 Math	worksheet from adopted text on conversion of improper fractions and mixed numbers	students convert mixed numbers to improper fractions and vice versa; convert mixed numbers to improper fractions with given denominators	6.1.1.7	Partial	Yes	Yes
Algebra I	teacher-made chapter review worksheet on proportions, proportions and measurement systems, solution of equations, and evaluation of expressions	students evaluate expressions, solve equations with proportions, write expressions using ratios, solve word problems	9.2.2.1	Partial	Yes	Yes

Source: Site visit artifacts; MN Academic Standards

[†] of learner objective

From [Exhibit 2.2.14](#), one may note:

- Two of the 12 artifacts were aligned with state benchmarks in terms of content (17 percent). Others were only partially aligned (62 percent) or were not aligned at all (12 percent).
- Of the 11 documents analyzed for context alignment, two were aligned with their respective standards (18 percent). Eight artifacts were partially aligned (73 percent), and one was non-aligned in terms of context (9 percent). One artifact was not examined for context alignment because content alignment was not present.
- Six of the 11 artifacts analyzed for cognitive type were fully aligned with state benchmarks (55 percent). Three artifacts were partially aligned (27 percent), and two were non-aligned (18 percent). One artifact was not analyzed for cognitive type because content alignment was not present.

In summary, the auditors found limited congruence between classroom artifacts and the Minnesota State Standards in terms of content, context, and cognition. Artifacts included teacher-made worksheets, adopted text worksheets, and worksheets from other sources. If this sample is typical of work presented to students, it would appear that the source of the artifact did not significantly impact congruence with the state standards. Without internal consistency between work presented to students and learning expectations, students' opportunities to master the concepts and skills required on measures of accountability are diminished.

III. Cognitive Complexity

III.a. Objective Complexity

Well-written curriculum documents include objectives of all cognitive types, promoting higher order thinking skills and appropriate levels of rigor. The ability to apply knowledge and to use critical thinking skills—analysis, synthesis, and evaluation—is necessary to adequately prepare students for the challenges of continuing education, careers, and life as productive citizens in a democratic society. Using English language arts as an example, auditors analyzed levels of cognition with respect to the state grade level benchmarks. *Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* was used to determine the domains of cognitive thinking required for each of the objectives presented in the core curriculum documents.

[Exhibit 2.2.15](#) provides a summary of the Bloom's Taxonomy domains and descriptors used for this review. For the purposes of this analysis, auditors collapsed the six cognitive domains into three clusters: knowledge and comprehension; application; and analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Auditors relied on the descriptors listed below rather than the verbs attached to any given benchmark. For example, a benchmark starting with the verb "apply" was categorized as "application" only if the action following the verb actually required the student to make connections to a new situation or to apply previously learned skills in a real-world context.

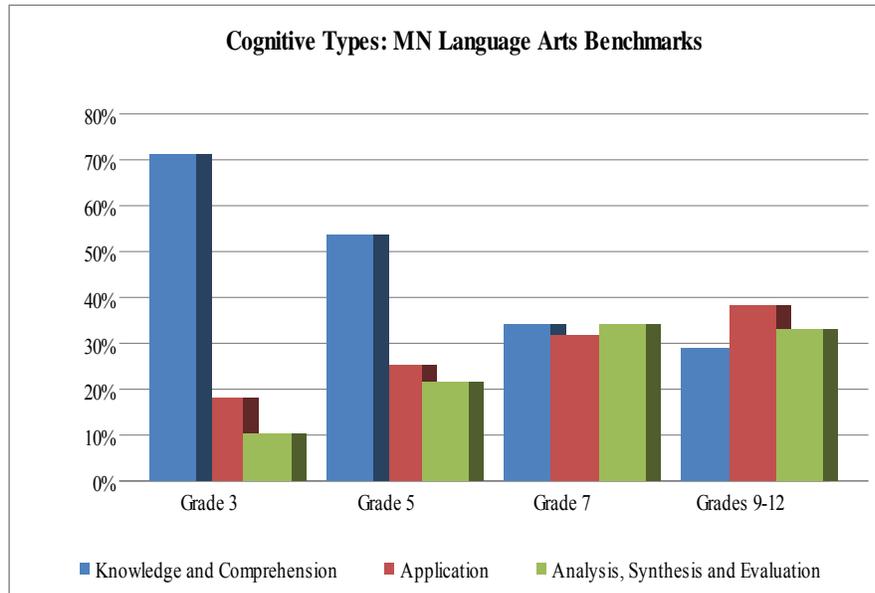
Exhibit 2.2.15

Description of Cognitive Types in Bloom's Taxonomy

Cognitive Type	Definition of Domain	Additional Clarification Comments
Knowledge	Includes those behaviors and test situations that emphasize the remembering, either by recognition or recall, of ideas, material, or phenomena.	Ranges from the specific and relatively concrete types of behaviors to the more complex and abstract ones, including the interrelations and patterns in which information can be organized and structured. Remembering is the major psychological process involved.
Comprehension	When confronted with a communication, written or oral, they are expected to know what is being communicated and to be able to make some use of the material or ideas contained in it.	Three types: translation, interpretation, and extrapolation. Emphasis is on the grasp of the meaning and intent of the material.
Application	Apply comprehension in a situation new to the student without prompting; requires transferring of knowledge and comprehension to a real situation.	Emphasis is on the remembering and bringing to bear upon given material the appropriate generalizations or principles.
Analysis	Break down the material into its constituent parts, make explicit the relationships among the elements, and then recognize the organizational principles of the arrangement and structure, which hold together the communications as a whole.	Emphasis is on the breakdown of the material into its constituent parts and detection of the relationship of the parts and of the way they are organized. Not to be confused with comprehending the meaning of something abstract (which is comprehension).
Synthesis	Putting together elements and parts so as to form a whole to a pattern or structure not clearly there before.	Focus on creative ability of the student but within limits of a framework. Must draw upon elements from many sources and put these together in a structure or pattern not clearly there before. Should yield a product.
Evaluation	Making of judgments about the value, for some purpose, of ideas, works, solution, methods, material, etc.	Involves use of criteria as well as standards for appraising the extent to which particulars are accurate, effective, economical or satisfying. May be quantitative or qualitative. Are not opinions but judgments based on criteria.
<p><i>Source: Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Benjamin Bloom, Editor, Longman, 1956; CMSi "Conducting Walk-Throughs with Reflective Inquiry to Maximize Student Achievement", Basic Part II.</i></p>		

Minneapolis Public Schools English language arts curriculum guidance documents primarily used Minnesota Academic Standards when defining grade level expectations. Therefore, auditors examined state grade level expectations to determine the predominant cognitive types among the benchmarks. The following exhibit shows the results of this analysis, using 20 randomly selected state benchmarks for grades 3, 5, 7, and 9-12.

Exhibit 2.2.16
Cognitive Domains of State English Language Arts Benchmarks
Grades 3, 5, 7, and 9-12
Using Bloom's Taxonomy
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008



From the preceding exhibit, one may note the following:

- At grade 3, 71 percent of benchmarks assessed knowledge or comprehension. Application was required for 18 percent of all benchmarks, and analysis, synthesis, and evaluation were required for 11 percent.
- In grade 5, knowledge and comprehension were required for 54 percent of benchmarks. Application was required for 25 percent. Analysis, synthesis, and evaluation were needed for 21 percent of the benchmarks.
- At grade 7, the benchmarks were evenly divided among knowledge and comprehension; application; and analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
- Among the grades 9 through 12 benchmarks, slightly more required application (38 percent) than analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (33 percent) or knowledge and comprehension (29 percent).

Overall, the types of cognition required by benchmarks in the Minnesota Academic Standards for Language Arts K-12 leaned more toward knowledge and comprehension in the elementary grades but were more evenly distributed in grades 7 through 12.

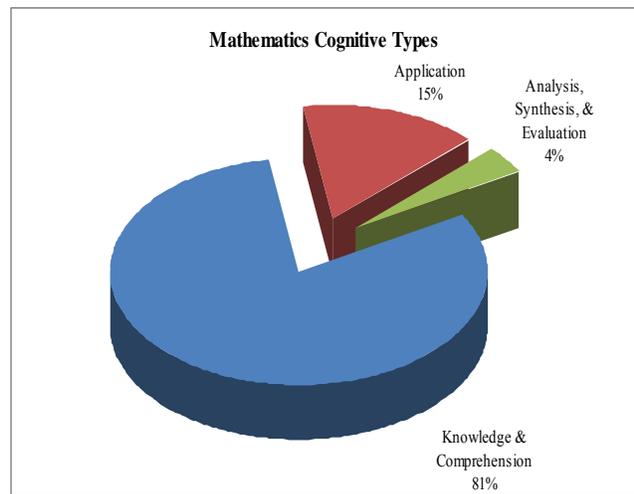
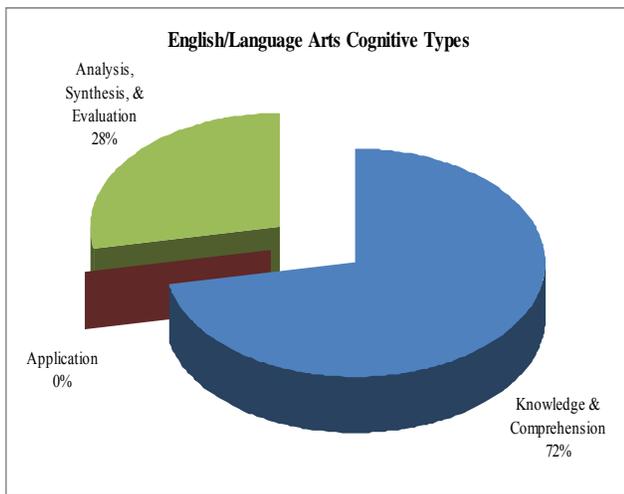
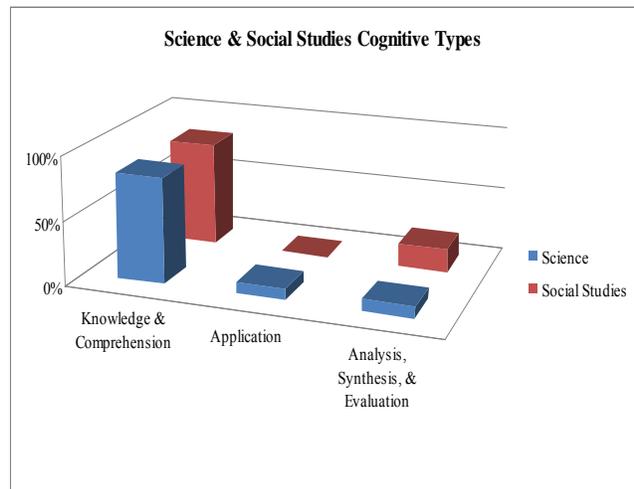
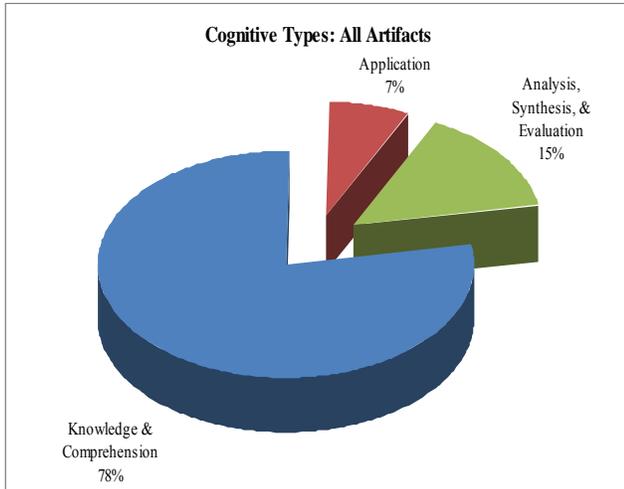
III.b. Cognitive Types in Student Artifacts

Auditors expect to see congruence in cognitive domains between learning objectives and student work. The various assignments, projects, and classroom activities used in a given grade level or content area should reveal a range of cognitive demands in order for students to develop the thinking skills they will need in accountability assessments.

As auditors visited core content area classrooms across the district, they gathered samples of student work and activities when available, from various grade levels. Auditors recognize that these artifacts were only a sampling of the instructional materials used for teaching and learning. Auditors used these artifacts as a sample when analyzing for cognitive types involved in student work. Bloom's Taxonomy was used for all four core content areas. Auditors' analyses of cognitive type in student work are summarized in [Exhibit 2.2.17](#).

Exhibit 2.2.17

**Analysis of Student Artifacts for Types of Cognition Required
Using Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Domains
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**



Content Area	Knowledge & Comprehension	Application	Analysis, Synthesis, & Evaluation	Number of Artifacts Analyzed
English/Language Arts	72%	0%	28%	25
Mathematics	81%	15%	4%	26
Science	82%	9%	9%	11
Social Studies	82%	0%	18%	11
Total	78%	7%	15%	73

Sources: Sample of artifacts collected by auditors during school visits; Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Domains

The following observations can be made from [Exhibit 2.2.17](#):

- In all, auditors collected 73 artifacts, of which nearly 70 percent came from two content areas—English language arts and mathematics.
- Knowledge and comprehension were required for 78 percent of the artifacts in the sample.
- In English language arts, knowledge and comprehension were represented most frequently (72 percent), followed by analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (28 percent). None of the artifacts required application.
- Analysis, synthesis, and evaluation were used more frequently in the artifacts collected for English language arts than for any of the other content areas.
- Of the mathematics artifacts in the sample, 81 percent required knowledge or comprehension, 15 percent required application, and four percent required use of analysis, synthesis, or evaluation.
- Application was required more frequently for the mathematics artifacts than for those from other content areas.
- Eighty-two percent of the science artifacts required use of knowledge or comprehension. Nine percent required application, and nine percent required analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. However, it should be noted that auditors collected only 11 science artifacts.
- Of the 11 social studies artifacts gathered, 82 percent demanded knowledge or comprehension, and 18 percent entailed use of analysis, synthesis, or evaluation. None required application.

The preceding exhibit reported classifications of artifacts by content area. The following three pie charts display the percentages of cognitive types found in artifacts collected at three grade bands—kindergarten through grade 5, grades 6 through 8, and grades 9 through 12. First, [Exhibit 2.2.18](#) provides a depiction of cognitive types found in artifacts collected from classrooms in kindergarten through grade 5.

Exhibit 2.2.18

Cognitive Domains of Student Artifacts Kindergarten Through Grade 5 Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

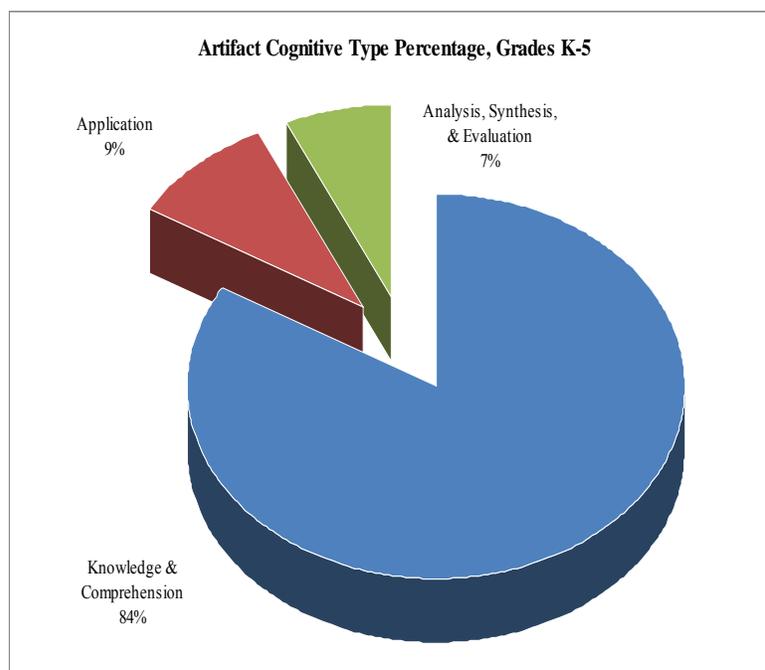
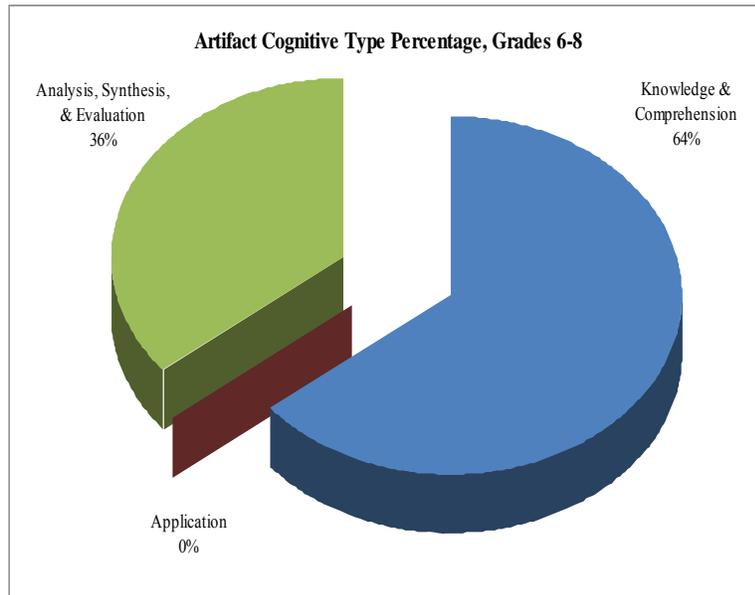


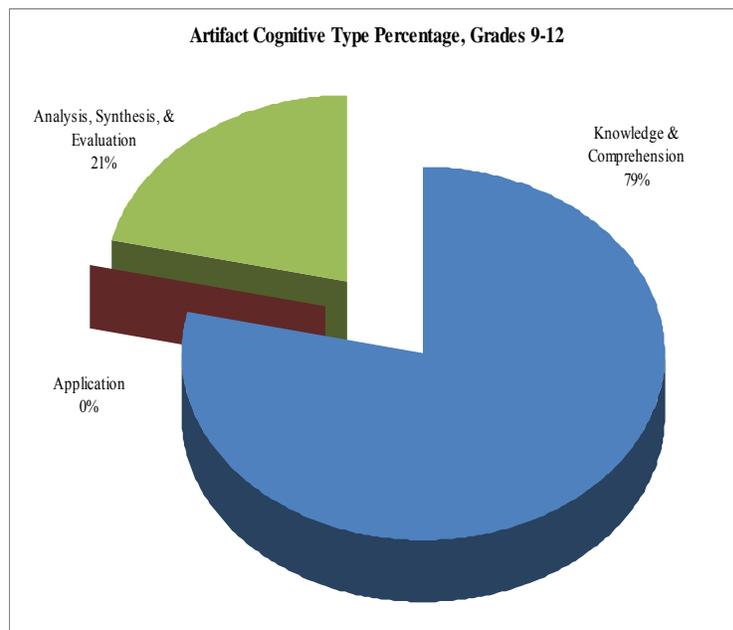
Exhibit 2.2.19 portrays the relative percentage of cognitive types found in artifacts collected from classrooms in grades 6 through 8.

Exhibit 2.2.19
Cognitive Domains of Student Artifacts
Grades 6 Through 8
Minneapolis Public School
October 2008



The final exhibit in this series depicts the percentages of cognitive types required by artifacts collected from core content classes in grades 9 through 12.

Exhibit 2.2.20
Cognitive Domains of Student Artifacts
Grades 9 Through 12
Minneapolis Public School
October 2008



The following notes are based on Exhibits 2.2.18 through 2.2.20:

- At all three levels, the knowledge and comprehension domains were required far more often than other domains.
- Knowledge and comprehension were required most often in artifacts gathered from kindergarten through grade 5 (84 percent) and less frequently for artifacts collected from grades 6 through 8 (64 percent).
- Application was required for 9 percent of artifacts collected from kindergarten through grade 5. None of the artifacts from grades 6 through 12 required application.
- Analysis, synthesis, or evaluation were required most frequently for artifacts collected in grades 6 through 8 (36 percent), and next most frequently for grades 9 through 12 artifacts (21 percent). These domains were required least frequently for the completion of artifacts collected from kindergarten through grade 5 (7 percent).

In summary, auditors sought to identify the cognitive types required of students in their daily work assignments or homework activities. The analyses used Bloom’s Taxonomy of Cognitive Domains to review student work in the four core curricular areas. Auditors found that classroom artifacts in all four core content areas and at all three grade bands were primarily of the knowledge and comprehension types. In nearly all cases, the application domain was least commonly represented in the sample of artifacts collected. The exception was mathematics, where 15 percent of artifacts were of the application type. Analysis, synthesis, or evaluation were required for 15 percent of all artifacts in the total sample and were required for more than one-third of the artifacts collected from grades 6 through 8.



Worksheet lesson in progress at North High School

IV. Best Practices

IV.a. Best Practices Analyzed by Typology

The auditors reviewed online and paper copies of curriculum guidance documents, as well as a variety of instructional resources, to analyze instructional practices and activities and determine the degree of presence of ten commonly accepted best practices. Auditors rated a given best practice as present upon readily locating two or more quality examples of a given practice at each of the four selected grade levels. Auditors gave a best practice a rating of “partial” when one of two examples was not found at a single grade level, and they gave a rating of “not present” when one or more examples were not readily found for at least two grade levels.

This analysis was conducted to provide district leaders with an example of best practice alignment within district curriculum documents. Although auditors chose to look for two examples at each grade level, district leaders must decide how many best practices should be included within a given curriculum guide to be deemed adequate.

Auditors summarize the presence of best practices examples within instructional resources from grades 3, 5, 7, and 10 in [Exhibit 2.2.21](#).

Exhibit 2.2.21

**Analysis of Best Practice Typology in Language Arts
In Selected Grade Level Resources
Grades 3, 5, 7, and 10
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Activity Type		Auditors' Rating	
		Present	Not Present
1.	Experiential: uses direct, hands-on, concrete, engaging experiences		X
2.	Reflective: has learners reflect on experiences and think about what they have learned	Partial	
3.	Authentic: uses content-rich ideas; events and materials in purposeful context; useful, useable information		X
4.	Social: uses social interaction and construction, sharing; supports individual learning and thought	X	
5.	Collaborative: has cooperative learning, which allows for developing and learning together outside the confines of competition	X	
6.	Child-centered: uses children's own interests, investigates their own questions, empowers the child	X	
7.	Cognitive: uses higher-order thinking skills in conjunction with concepts to be understood	X	
8.	Level of Difficulty: adjusts activities to the needs of different children	Partial	
9.	Challenging: presents genuine challenges, choices, and responsibility for students in their own learning	Partial	
10.	Activity Variety: uses a variety of approaches including thematic studies, collaborative group activities, learning logs, classroom workshop, conferences, centers	X	

From the preceding exhibit, one may observe the following:

- Auditors readily found at least two quality examples at each grade level of five best practices—social, collaborative, child-centered, cognitive, and activity variety. These practices were identified as present.
- Auditors easily found at least two quality examples of reflective, level of difficulty, and challenging at all but one grade level. These practices were identified as partially present.
- Auditors did not locate two examples of instructional activities that were experiential or authentic in at least two grades. These practices were identified as not present—that is, they were not easily found in teacher resource materials for at least two of the four grade levels.

The following are examples of activities of each type found at each of the four grade levels. This list is intended to be a representative sample of activities found in the district's English language arts resources.

Experiential:

- Grade 3—Students act out a scene using props, instructing students to pay attention to the different ways actors interpret lines. Write short reviews of the performances. (Houghton Mifflin, 399)
- Grade 3—Students learn and practice American Sign Language for the class. (Houghton Mifflin, 404)
- Grade 5—Students read a story about origami and then make their own origami creations. (Houghton Mifflin, T413)
- Grade 5—Students create schedules or timeline for current events. (Houghton Mifflin, T229H)
- Grade 7—Students make personal connections and connections to the world as a part of their writing. (draft 1st Quarter curriculum map for Writing)

Reflective:

- Grade 3—Groups work together on a task and then write paragraphs about how the group process worked, explaining how any disagreements were resolved and what, if anything, was learned from the process. (Houghton Mifflin, 296J)
- Grade 3—Students complete problem-solving charts, using personal experiences and knowledge from their own lives to evaluate a character’s problem; they list the problem, possible solutions and evaluate the solutions. (Houghton Mifflin, 304)
- Grade 5—Students think about and discuss comprehension strategies used in reading a selection. (Houghton Mifflin, T47)
- Grade 7—Students work with partners to write a dialogue between the author and one of the characters in a reading selection in which they discuss a prank that was played, the consequences, and their feelings about the prank. (McDougal Littell, T486)
- Grade 7—Junior Great Books program “encourages students to notice and value their own responses to a selection, and to use them as a starting point for interpretive thinking.” (Leaders Guide, 15)
- Grade 10—Students use cluster maps to examine the qualities of one of their heroes or heroines, listing reasons why they value these qualities. (Great Source Daybook, S51)
- Grade 10—Students consider questions such as, “Have I been able to form an impression of the writer? Do I understand the purpose of the memoir?” (Great Source Reader’s Handbook, S103)

Authentic:

- Grade 3—Students write in their personal stories about a journey they have taken. (Houghton Mifflin, 179)
- Grade 5—Students learn about weather, meteorologists, and weather phenomena for their region. (Houghton Mifflin, T80)
- Grade 5—Students write diary entries including details of their day and how they felt. (Houghton Mifflin, T375)
- Grade 7—Students picture themselves in five or ten years and create charts listing directions their lives might take and challenges they might face, as well as qualities or talents they might develop in order to meet these challenges. (McDougal Littell, T351)
- Grade 10—Students read a chapter from a driver’s handbook and make notes on key words and topics. (Great Source Reader’s Handbook, S201)
- Grade 10—Students write essays about someone who has served as a model of conduct for them and some important things this person has taught them. (Great Source Daybook, S47)

Social:

- Grade 3—Groups of students agree on 20 items to take on an overnight camping trip to survive. Individually, students write about how the group progress worked, telling how any disagreements were resolved and what, if anything, was learned from the process. (Houghton Mifflin, T296J)
- Grade 3—Students discuss how they feel about the story characters and the story’s outcome. (Houghton Mifflin, T361)
- Grade 5—Students create letters for an advice column. (Houghton Mifflin, TM26)
- Grade 5—In partners, students list rules for making formal phone calls and role play phone conversations. (Houghton Mifflin, T413N)
- Grade 7—Students are encouraged to share their own questions, ideas, and personal responses to the readings with the group. (Junior Great Books)
- Grade 7—Students hold a mock trial of a character in a reading selection. (McDougal Littell, T35)
- Grade 10—Students make a list of the qualities of a heroine and compare charts with peers. (Great Source Daybook, S42)
- Grade 10—Students imagine a memorable meal and make notes or a cluster showing how the food appealed to their senses and emotions. (Great Source Daybook, S94)

Collaborative:

- Grade 3—Students work in pairs to draw a conclusion about a story based on more than two story clues. Ask them to record their work in a graphic organizer. (Houghton Mifflin, T367A)
- Grade 3—Students act out a scene using props. Repeat performances, instructing students to pay attention to the different ways actors interpret lines. Write short reviews of the performances. (Houghton Mifflin, T399)
- Grade 5—Students work in small groups to identify visual images in poems. (Houghton Mifflin, T436)
- Grade 5—Students work in pairs to determine sequence of events in story. (Houghton Mifflin, T33)
- Grade 7—Students work together to write a ballad and set the words to a song they already know. (McDougal Littell, T487)
- Grade 7—Students hold a talk show on a given topic, assigning various roles to classmates. (McDougal Littell, T714)
- Grade 10—Students discuss with partners their perceptions of the major difference between a given story and poem. (Great Source Daybook, S154)
- Grade 10—Students write three sample test questions, exchange them with partners, and answer partner’s questions. (Great Source Reader’s Handbook, S39)

Child-centered:

- Grade 3—Students compare and contrast how a story is similar to and different from other scary stories the students have read. (Houghton Mifflin, T353)
- Grade 3—Students collect personal essays in a class book. Organize the essays by topics or themes and save as samples of writing development. (Houghton Mifflin, T399L)
- Grade 5—Students choose a day that is special to them for some reason and write detailed descriptions of that day. (Houghton Mifflin, T413AA)
- Grade 5—Students write their own poems about something they know and feel strongly about. (Houghton Mifflin, T437)

- Grade 7—Working with a small group of peers, students select one of the tales they have read and rewrite it with their own twist. (McDougall Littell, T760)
- Grade 7—Students write personal response essays about poems, songs, movies, and literature. (McDougal Littell, T76)
- Grade 10—Students read a selection and connect it to their own experiences. (Great Source Daybook, S12)
- Grade 10—Students think of two websites and give their opinions of each site and reasons for those opinions. (Great Source Reader’s Handbook, S188)

Cognitive:

- Grade 3—Review the process of making judgments. Consider facts from the story as well as personal beliefs and values as you think about each side of the issue. Weigh both sides to arrive at the best judgment. (Houghton Mifflin, T383)
- Grade 3—Have students create a cause-effect chain after reading a story. Identify what happens (cause) and why it happens (effect). (Houghton Mifflin, T349)
- Grade 5—Students construct a Venn diagram comparing origami and quilt making. (Houghton Mifflin, T413A)
- Grade 5—Students choose a story and think about how the main idea would change if replaced with a character from another story and then outline the new story. (Houghton Mifflin, TM31)
- Grade 7—Junior Great Books program provides students with guided practice in careful examination of texts using scaffolding techniques.
- Grade 7—Students think about what might have happened if a reading selection had ended a different way. (McDougall Littell, T271)
- Grade 10—Students imagine that a given sonnet is an essay with a thesis statement, an argument, and a conclusion; they analyze the progression through the three quatrains and the couplet. (Great Source Daybook, S189)
- Grade 10—Students write brief letters responding to an editorial; they express their opinions and discuss the effectiveness of the argument. (Great Source Reader’s Handbook, S73)

Level of Difficulty:

- Grade 3—Students look at illustrations as they read and guess what the characters are thinking and feeling. (Houghton Mifflin, T196)
- Grade 5—Students design book jackets including titles, authors, and illustrations. (Houghton Mifflin, T433)
- Grade 5—Teachers’ guide suggests whole and small group instruction, allowing for work with students at their own levels and appropriate level of practice activities. (Houghton Mifflin, T25C)
- Grade 7—Students are given options to give oral rather than written reports. (McDougall Littell, T155)
- Grade 7—Junior Great Books looks for improvement through a continuing process of evaluation of work by teacher and student.
- Grade 10—Students choose their own strategies to keep track of the many literary elements of a story. (Great Source Reader’s Handbook, S118)
- Grade 10—Students create their own graphics, each representing the same information in different ways. (Great Source Reader’s Handbook, S197)

Challenging:

- Grade 3—Students use a checklist to help proofread written summaries. (Houghton Mifflin, T399L)
- Grade 3—Students select scenes from stories to act out without words. They discuss which nonverbal actions were the most successful. (Houghton Mifflin, T213N)
- Grade 5—Students use print or electronic resources to learn who trains animals, how they do it, and for what purpose. They write brief summaries explaining their learnings and place them in the appropriate location on a world map. (Houghton Mifflin, T391)
- Grade 5—Students locate examples of Plains Indian art and compare to samples provided; they prepare visual reports showing development of Plains Indian art. (Houghton Mifflin, T491)
- Grade 7—Students research what scientists currently know about the climate and surface of Venus, using a variety of resources including new media. (McDougall Littell, T496)
- Grade 7—Junior Great Books program emphasizes the value of shared inquiry as teacher and students partner in “genuine intellectual collaboration.” (Leaders Guide, 11)
- Grade 10—Students rewrite a poem with a different tone (e.g., formal, solemn, playful). (Great Source Daybook, S182)

Activity Variety:

- Grade 3—Students think of adventure-packed vacations and create brochures to advertise them. (Houghton Mifflin, T10J – Create a Vacation Brochure)
- Grade 3—In groups, students look at photographs and take notes of small details in *Shackleton’s Real-Life Voyage*. Each group receives one photograph to describe in detail and write and share alternative captions. (Houghton Mifflin, T250)
- Grade 5—Center-based activities are recommended. (Houghton Mifflin, T51M-51N)
- Grade 5—Students develop cartoon strips to show training steps a dog in a selection goes through to become a guide dog. (Houghton Mifflin, T365Q)
- Grade 7—Junior Great Books program encourages teachers to use art and dramatization of literary selections.
- Grade 7—Students draw or construct models depicting sets for a theatrical production of a piece they have read. (McDougall Littell, T154)
- Grade 10—Students draw a series of frames depicting the various actions the character in a selection takes on Mars. (Great Source Daybook, S34)
- Grade 10—Students draw portraits of a character and write captions that explain their thoughts about him/her. (Great Source Reader’s Handbook, S174)

In summary, the auditors found that resources available to teachers of English language arts provide examples of most of the best practices used in the audit. However, such examples are not always easily found. Because the audit has no quantitative or qualitative requirements for presence of best practices, this information is provided for district personnel to use in determining whether or not such practices are sufficiently represented for their purposes. It should be noted that this typology has similarities with the *Principles of Learning* (see [Exhibit 2.2.22](#)), which is discussed in the next section.



Hands-on mathematics at Sullivan School

IV.b. Principles of Learning

The district has implemented a system-wide, multi-year effort to weave the *Principles of Learning* (Institute for Learning, University of Pittsburgh) into curriculum and instruction in all content areas and at all grade levels. The *MPS Strategic Plan 2007-2012* highlighted the district’s commitment to the *Principles of Learning*, referring to the continuing “roll out of *Principles of Learning*... training.” The following exhibit provides a brief description of each principle:

Exhibit 2.2.22

Principles of Learning Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

Principle	Brief Description
Organization for Effort	High minimum standards are set, and all students’ curriculum is geared to these standards. Some students will need extra time and expert instruction to meet these expectations.
Accountable Talk	Accountable talk seriously responds to and further develops what others in the group have said. It puts forth and demands knowledge that is accurate and relevant to the issue under discussion, appropriate to the discipline, and follows established norms of good reasoning.
Clear Expectations	Cleanly define what we expect students to learn with visual accomplishment targets to aim toward at each stage of learning; students participate in evaluating their own work.
Fair and Credible Evaluations	Long-term effort by students calls for assessment practices that students find fair. Tests, exams, and classroom assessments must be aligned to the curriculum and not grades on a curve.
Socializing Intelligence	Intelligent habits of mind are learned through daily learner expectations. By calling on students to use the skills of intelligent thinking and accountable talk, and by holding them responsible for doing so, educators can “teach” intelligence.
Recognition of Accomplishment	Clear recognition of authentic accomplishment in the form of celebrations of work that meets standards or intermediate expectations. All students are recognized frequently.

Exhibit 2.2.22 (continued)
Principles of Learning
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Principle	Brief Description
Self-management of Learning	Meta-cognitive strategies are explicitly modeled, discussed and practiced; students actively monitor and manage the quality of their own learning; teachers scaffold student performance, gradually removing supports.
Academic Rigor in a Thinking Curriculum	Thinking and problem-solving will engage students in thinking joined with knowledge. In every subject, at every grade level, the curriculum must include commitment to a knowledge core, high thinking demand, and active use of knowledge.
Learning as Apprenticeship	Teaching needs to model skilled practice and guide novices as they create authentic products or performances. Learners are allowed to acquire the complex interdisciplinary knowledge, practical abilities, and appropriate forms of social behavior that go with high levels of skilled performance.

Source: Principles of Learning; CMSi

Auditors reviewed various district curriculum documents for references to the *Principles of Learning*. They also looked for evidence of implementation of this initiative when they visited schools (see [Finding 5.2](#)), in district planning documents (see [Finding 1.4](#)), and in professional development plans and activities (see [Finding 3.2](#)). References to implementation of the *Principles of Learning* framework found in district curriculum documents included the following:

- The district’s *K-5 Literacy Framework* (2007) describes the philosophical approach for the framework and specifically how it was guided by the *Principles of Learning*.
- The district’s *Key Components of Literacy Instruction* (undated) describes a Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop model of balanced literacy that “embeds the Principles of Learning.”
- A draft document from a Reading First meeting (August 2007) reports Reading First routines and activities and aligns them with eight of the nine Principles of Learning.
- The *Big Picture: Minneapolis Public Schools English Language Arts Curriculum Framework and Mapping Process* (undated) refers to habits of thinking and formative assessments in depicting the three lenses that must be addressed in the development of an English language arts framework.
- The auditors were unable to locate references to the *Principles of Learning* in curriculum documents for mathematics, science, or social studies.

Again using English language arts as an example, auditors undertook a review of curriculum guidance documents looking for the presence of references to specific frames of the *Principles of Learning* or to instructional strategies that might be categorized under one or more of the principles. The following exhibit shows examples of what auditors found in various district English language arts curriculum documents.

Exhibit 2.2.23

**Evidence of Incorporation of Principles of Learning
in English Language Arts Curriculum Documents
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Principles of Learning	Examples in Curriculum Documents
Organization for Effort	Found in various alignment documents, including <i>MPS Power Standards for Secondary ELA</i> and elementary grades <i>Alignment of Minnesota and New Standards Performance Standards</i>
Accountable Talk	“Create opportunities for students to make sense of new learning by talking to others....” (<i>New Standards Primary Literacy Standards</i> , p. 20) “Ask students to use evidence in their writing to support ideas, claims and evaluative conclusions.” (<i>MPS Power Standards for Secondary ELA: Gr. 6-12 Curriculum Framework for Writing</i> , E2.3)
Clear Expectations	“[Teacher] ... provides specific coaching based on student work and standards-based rubrics.” (<i>MPS Elementary Literacy Framework: Key Components of Writing Instruction</i> , p. 3)
Fair and Credible Evaluations	Reference to use of formative assessment to “inform the teacher, student, and families of the students of progress toward learning objectives.” (<i>MPS Elementary Literacy Framework: Key Components of Literacy Assessment</i> , p. 1)
Socializing Intelligence	“Develop and negotiate a classroom rubric.” (<i>MPS Power Standards for Secondary ELA: Gr. 6-12 Curriculum Framework for Speaking, Listening and Viewing</i> , E3b)
Recognition of Accomplishment	Reference to use of formative assessment to “inform the teacher, student, and families of the students of progress toward learning objectives.” (<i>MPS Elementary Literacy Framework: Key Components of Literacy Assessment</i> , p. 1)
Self-management of Learning	“Integrate opportunities for a variety of reflective activities to help students monitor their writing process.” (<i>MPS Power Standards for Secondary ELA: Gr. 6-12 Curriculum Framework for Writing</i> , E2.5)
Academic Rigor in a Thinking Curriculum	“A report that analyzes a trend running through several literary works (gr. 6-8).” (<i>MPS Power Standards for Secondary ELA: Gr. 6-12 Curriculum Framework for Speaking, Listening and Viewing</i> , E3c)
Learning as Apprenticeship	“[Teacher] explicitly make[s] thinking transparent by talking out loud about what you are thinking as you are reading.” (<i>MPS Elementary Literacy Framework: Key Components of Reading Instruction</i> , p. 2)
<i>Sources: MPS Elementary Literacy Framework; MPS Power Standards for Secondary English Language Arts</i>	

From the preceding exhibit, one may note that the district English language arts curriculum guidance documents contained general and/or specific references to instructional strategies and other guidance aligned to the nine frames of the *Principles of Learning* at various grade levels.

In interviews, auditors heard statements relative to the district’s *Principles of Learning* initiative and integration of the principles, as reflected in the following selected comments:

- “The *POL (Principles of Learning)* framework is used in all schools.... *POL* has had an important impact on the district curriculum.” (Administrator)
- “We have our own curriculum and performance indicators.... We want to stick with what we’ve got. But we also want the district to stay with *POL*... and not change too soon.” (Teacher)
- “We are using IFL (the Institute for Learning’s Principles of Learning) for professional development.... We now have 100 percent of our math teachers involved in a common pedagogy.” (Administrator)

- “We are getting better buy-in by tying the new [math] adoption with the principles of IFL.” (Administrator)
- “We asked for guidance on integrating... [the] Principles of Learning... but, honestly, [the district] has a long way to go.” (Administrator)
- “We are focusing on delivery and not on content.” (Teacher)

In summary, auditors found limited incorporation of the *Principles of Learning* in curriculum guidance documents in the four core content areas, although, in English language arts documents, they were successful in finding suggestions for teacher practice aligned with all nine frames. Interviews indicated that *Principles of Learning* training was at different stages for the various content areas and grade levels (see also [Finding 3.2](#)).

Summary of Analysis of Further Alignment

Overall, for English language arts, state Academic Standards lacked sufficient internal consistency to permit adequate alignment of district curriculum, resources, instructional strategies, and assessment and to maximize student achievement as measured by the MCA-II. Auditors found that district curriculum documents and resources, as well as state and local assessments, lacked internal consistency. Auditors also found discrepancies between what the district and state said they expected in terms of cognitive complexity and what was present in curriculum guidance documents, instructional strategies, resources, and assessment. Furthermore, auditors found incomplete alignment of curriculum guidance documents with a framework of “best practices” as well as with the district’s *Principles of Learning* initiative.

Summary of Finding 2.2

The auditors found that the quality of the district’s written curriculum was inadequate to direct teaching and not sufficiently reliable to ensure increased student achievement. Auditors also found that district curriculum guidance documents lacked internal consistency across all curricular areas, and consequently, they were often used ineffectively and/or inconsistently throughout the system.

Curriculum guidance documents for the four core content areas were grounded in their respective Minnesota State Academic Standards. Board policies did not set clear expectations for curriculum and gave little guidance for its development, evaluation, or renewal (see [Finding 1.1](#)). What was presented to the auditors as curriculum was different for each content area and, depending on the content area and grade level, might include local benchmarks, core content descriptions, pacing guides, quarter maps, or some other documents. At the high school level, auditors typically received course syllabi and/or outlines in addition to or in the absence of district curriculum documents. Some curriculum documents were developed by and for schools, with the help of district content area specialists. Auditors reviewed whatever was presented to them as curriculum, giving quality ratings to each subject or course for the four core content areas. In all cases, the quality of these documents did not meet audit criteria and was inadequate to direct instruction.

Auditors also found online district curriculum guidance documents were inconsistent in format, components, and location on the district website. Because of the inadequate quality of district curriculum and the general practices of referring to textbooks as the “curriculum,” auditors found teachers relied heavily on textbooks to guide instruction. Use of curriculum guidance documents was ineffective for directing instruction and ensuring horizontal coordination among schools or within same grade or content areas.

Further frames of analysis (using English language arts as an example) indicated that state grade level benchmarks were aligned with national standards. However, district curriculum was not fully aligned with either state or national standards. In reviewing state language arts benchmarks for alignment with district instructional strategies, resources, and assessments, auditors found the state benchmarks and district curriculum guidance documents lacking in internal consistency and the cognitive complexity necessary for improved student learning and higher achievement. Weak curriculum quality is likely to negatively impact teaching and learning and will impair the district’s goals of “academic rigor,” “excellent results for all students,” or “Every child college ready.”

In assessing curriculum guidance documents and instructional resources for evidence of best instructional practices, auditors found they were not all easily located in teacher resources. Allusions to the district's initiative, the *Principles of Learning*, were made in English language arts curriculum documents, but were not evident in those of the other core content areas.

Overall, the auditors found deficiencies in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies curriculum guidance documents. They also found that these documents were inconsistent in format, both in online and paper formats. Using English language arts as an example, auditors found weaknesses in congruence of guides, materials, and assessments when evaluated against audit criteria. If this content area is representative of others, the Minneapolis Public Schools curriculum materials lack the deep alignment needed to support optimal student achievement.

STANDARD 3: The School District Demonstrates Internal Consistency and Rational Equity in Its Program Development and Implementation.

A school system meeting this Curriculum Management Audit standard is able to show how its program has been created as the result of a systematic identification of deficiencies in the achievement and growth of its students compared to measurable standards of pupil learning.

In addition, a school system meeting this standard is able to demonstrate that it possesses a focused and coherent approach toward defining curriculum and that, as a whole, it is more effective than the sum of its parts, i.e., any arbitrary combinations of programs or schools do not equate to the larger school system entity.

The purpose of having a school system is to obtain the educational and economic benefits of a coordinated and focused program for students, both to enhance learning, which is complex and multi-year in its dimensions, and to employ economies of scale where applicable.

What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

The PDK-CMSi auditors expected to find a highly-developed, articulated, and coordinated curriculum in the school system that was effectively monitored by the administrative and supervisory staffs at the central and site levels. Common indicators are:

- Documents/sources that reveal internal connections at different levels in the system;
- Predictable consistency through a coherent rationale for content delineation within the curriculum;
- Equity of curriculum/course access and opportunity;
- Allocation of resource flow to areas of greatest need;
- A curriculum that is clearly explained to members of the teaching staff and building-level administrators and other supervisory personnel;
- Specific professional development programs to enhance curricular design and delivery;
- A curriculum that is monitored by central office and site supervisory personnel; and
- Teacher and administrator responsiveness to school board policies, currently and over time.

Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard Three. Details follow within separate findings.

Despite efforts by Minneapolis Public Schools leaders to deal with system-wide inequities, the auditors found several areas where resources do not flow to the areas of greatest need. Staff demographics do not reflect the ethnic and gender representation of the student body. Disproportionate student representation by ethnicity were noted in special education, the gifted and talented program, and disciplinary actions. Minority students were overrepresented in special education and disciplinary actions, such as suspensions and expulsions, but underrepresented in gifted and talented programs.

Minority students and economically disadvantaged students were found to be achieving below the level of other students, indicating a lack of alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. A large number of these students leave the school system between grades nine and twelve. The auditors also found that students in the recently initiated ethnically-identifiable schools performed below their district counterparts, indicating that this program has failed to achieve its ambitious goals.

Finding 3.1: District initiatives adopted to address inequities in student access to rigorous educational programs and services have not produced significant improvements in student performance.

The objective of educational equity efforts is to produce comparable academic outcomes for all students. To produce such outcomes, school systems need to provide equal access to programs and services and equitable support. As used in the audit, the terms “equal” and “equity” are not synonymous. “Equal” means “exactly the same.” “Equity” means that resources are allocated according to student needs, rather than being distributed on the basis of per pupil allocations or other formulae that do not take into consideration the fact that students come to schools with different educational needs. Without monitoring and active measures to achieve both equal access and equity, schools simply perpetuate any societal disadvantages that a public education was designed to erase.

In order to determine if students had equal access and equitable support in the Minneapolis Public Schools, the audit team reviewed documents including board policies, district plans, test data, budget documents, and program participation and performance rates for a variety of programs and services. In addition, auditors interviewed board members, administrators, teachers, parents, and community members. Auditors also visited classrooms in all the schools to collect observational data on instructional spaces in the district.

The auditors found that the *Minneapolis Public Schools 2007-2012 Strategic Plan* has identified steps to be taken to address inequalities and inequities. However, the auditors determined that much remains to be done in order to translate strategic goals and key steps into actions that effectively impact student success. A large number of students drop out of school. Disparities exist in the number of students suspended or expelled. Furthermore, agreements made with various ethnic groups have not produced better results for students in district schools. The achievement levels of students in ethnically-identifiable schools remain below district percentages.

Auditors reviewed board policies that directly address equal access to educational opportunities:

- *Board Policy 5000: Equal Educational Opportunity* states, “The purpose of this policy is to ensure that equal educational opportunity is provided for all students of the Minneapolis Public Schools District.”
- *Board Policy 5050: Title IX Non-Discrimination Policy* states: “Students are protected from discrimination on the basis of sex pursuant to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Minnesota Human Rights Act. The purpose of this policy is to provide equal educational opportunity for all students and to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex.”
- *Board Policy 4000: Equal Employment Opportunity* states, “It is the intent of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools of the Minneapolis Public Schools, Special School District No. 1, to comply with all Federal, State, and Local laws and ordinances which provide equal opportunity in employment issues for all persons, and to prohibit unlawful discrimination in employment.”
- *Board Policy 4001: Disability Non-Discrimination* states, “The purpose of this policy is to provide a fair employment setting for all persons and to comply with state and federal law.”
- *Board Policy 5261: Desegregation* states, “The purpose of this policy is to state the position of the school district with regard to racial desegregation issues and in relation to the district’s commitment to high achievement for all students.”
- *Board Policy 5750: Disability Non-Discrimination* states, “The purpose of this policy is to protect each student with a disability from illegal discrimination on the basis of disability and provide each student with the required free appropriate public education.”
- *Board Policy 6000: Elementary –Secondary Education* states, “Each individual has uniqueness and worth. Every action, objective, organization, and activity in the Minneapolis Public Schools is based on that assumption. Mutual respect among students, staff, and community people will be a cornerstone for accomplishing the mission of the schools.” Furthermore, “The school district is committed to an integrated, culturally diversified educational environment which treats all students as unique and capable of learning. The district is committed to providing an excellent instructional program for the benefit of all students.”

The *Minneapolis Public Schools 2007-2012 Strategic Plan* provides additional direction for meeting the needs of students. The Plan identifies nine strategies and numerous action steps to be taken in a five year period. The first two strategies address equality and equity issues:

- *Strategy #1: Raise expectations and academic rigor for all students...* Included in this strategy are several action steps intended to raise student expectations: “Communicate high expectations across the District, starting from the top; monitor and address racial, income, and language disparities in student participation and outcomes; remove barriers and actively encourage students to pursue more rigorous coursework; and develop a comprehensive strategy to address English Language Learner (ELL)-specific needs...”
- *Strategy #2: Identify and correct practices and policies that perpetuate racial inequality and the achievement gap....* Included in Strategy #2 are action steps to “Create a Framework for Eliminating Institutional Racism and integrate into all aspects of the Strategic Plan and decision making; report all key metrics by race, ethnicity, gender, income...; and develop pro-equity/anti-racist leadership at all levels of the District and implement systems and training on cultural competence.”

In addition to the *Minneapolis Public Schools 2007-2012 Strategic Plan*, auditors reviewed several other documents that addressed district equality and equity issues. The documents reviewed included the following:

- *North Side Initiative: Revitalizing Minneapolis Public Schools.* This initiative is “...a multi-year effort designed to raise student achievement and ensure an equitable education for all children.” The Initiative allocates resources to improve student achievement in the North Side of the district. The North Side consists of district schools that are predominantly enrolled with students of color. The development of the Initiative began in spring 2007 and implementation in the fall of 2007.
- *The Covenant between the Minneapolis Public Schools and the African American Mobilization for Education.* The Covenant “...is intended to establish a community relationship to its schools that improves outcomes for African American students, and therefore will apply to all schools under the oversight of the Minneapolis Public School board.” The Covenant calls for a partnership between the Minneapolis Public Schools and the African American Mobilization for Education (AAME) committee to establish best practices in three schools—one elementary, one middle school or K-8, and one secondary school. This document was dated September 5, 2008.
- *Memorandum of Agreement between the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors.* The Agreement calls for the implementation of “a new model of education based on indigenous ‘best practices’ that will result in significant improvements in educational outcomes for Indian children.” This document was dated September 20, 2006.
- *High School Redesign Proposal.* The high school proposal began with four schools: Edison, North, Roosevelt, and Washburn. The goal is to move these four schools “from a ‘small learning communities’ model to an early college model.” The schools are also integrating the Four-Core Equity Framework: Advanced Placement, College in the Schools, International Baccalaureate, and Career and Technical Education.
- *Comprehensive Desegregation/Integration Plan and Budget.* This Plan was completed in December 2004 to address changing student demographics. Data included in the Plan indicated that from 1983 to 2003, the Minneapolis Public School experienced a more than 100 percent increase in students of color. The students of color percentage grew from 35.25 to 73.19 percent. The Plan was written in response to Minnesota’s Desegregation Rule, which “requires that districts that have racially identifiable schools not the result of illegal discrimination develop and submit a plan that provides options to integrate and increase interracial interaction for the students at those racially identifiable schools.”

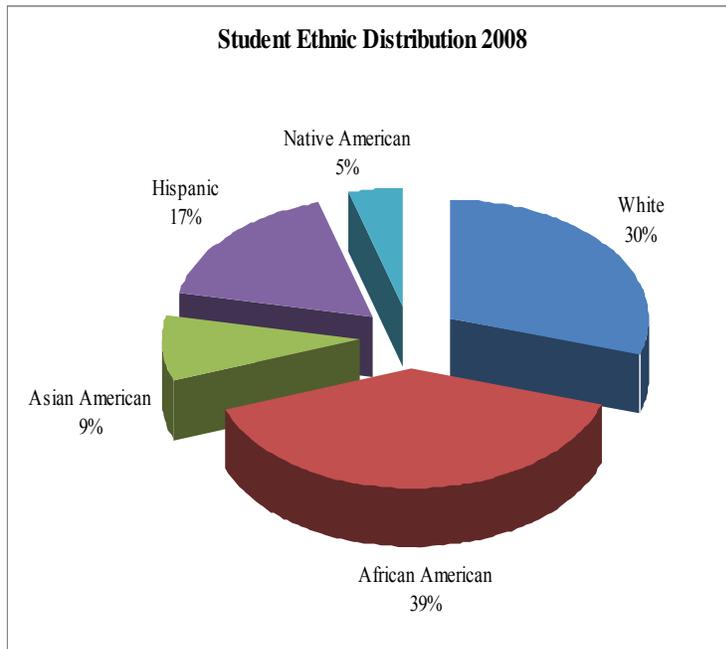
Auditors considered board policies, initiatives, covenants, proposals, memorandums, and plans adequate to provide direction to the staff or the intended activities. To assess the implementation and outcomes of these policies and various documents, auditors reviewed student data, conducted interviews with board and staff, and visited district schools and classrooms to see if they provided evidence of equal access and equity.

Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status of Student Population

Data reviewed by auditors indicate substantial ethnic and economic diversity in the student population. [Exhibit 3.1.1](#) summarizes the diversity for the period 2005-2008.

Exhibit 3.1.1

Ethnicity of Students and Socioeconomic Status in Percentages Minneapolis Public Schools 2005-2008



Year		White	African American	Asian American	Hispanic	Native American	Free/Reduced Lunch	Total
2005-06	Count	10,804	16,196	4,157	5,971	1,627	25,810	38,755
	%	27.9	41.8	10.7	15.4	4.2	66.6	100
2006-07	Count	10,287	15,126	3,538	5,909	1,568	23,860	36,428
	%	28.2	41.5	9.7	16.2	4.3	65.5	100
2007-08	Count	10,299	13,696	3,105	5,905	1,565	22,055	34,570
	%	29.8	39.6	9.0	17.1	4.5	63.8	100
Change from 2005 to 2008	Count	-505	-2,500	-1,052	-66	-62	-3,755	-4,185
	%	1.9	-2.2	-1.7	1.7	0.3	-2.8	NA

Source: Minneapolis Public Schools: Student Accounting (2008)

[Exhibit 3.1.1](#) indicates the following:

- Total student enrollment has declined by 4,185 students.
- The number of African American students fell by 2,500 from 2005-06 to 2007-08. This was the largest drop of all ethnic groups.
- The number of Asian students fell by 1,052 from 2005 to 2008.
- The percentage of students eligible for Free and Reduced lunch remained steady. Over the three year period it averaged 65.3 percent.

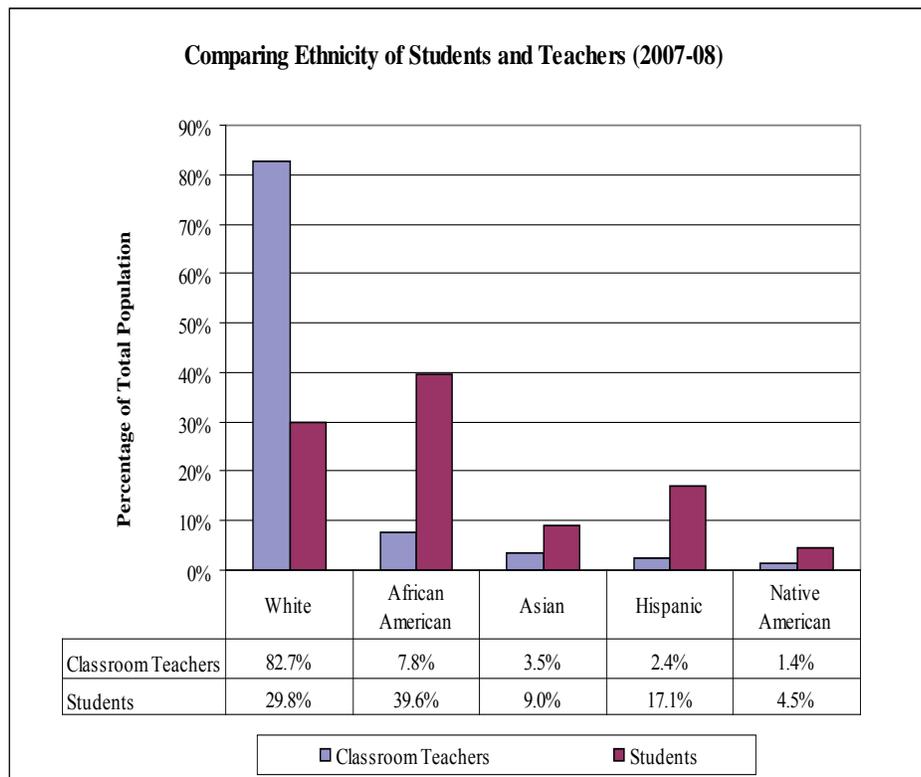
- During these three years, White, Hispanic, and Native American students increased their percentage of the total student population.

In an effective school system the diversity of the staff reflects the diversity of the student population. Proportionate representation in the ethnic and gender composition of staff and students provides students with role models and contributes to their sense of belonging.

While auditors did not find board policies that directly address disparities between the percentages of students of color and staff, the *Minneapolis Public School 2007-2012 Strategic Plan* lists a key strategy: “Develop strategies for recruiting and retaining staff in under-represented racial and ethnic groups.”

Exhibit 3.1.2

Ethnicity of Students and District Teachers in Percentages Minneapolis Public Schools 2007-08



Source: Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnesota Department of Education (2008)

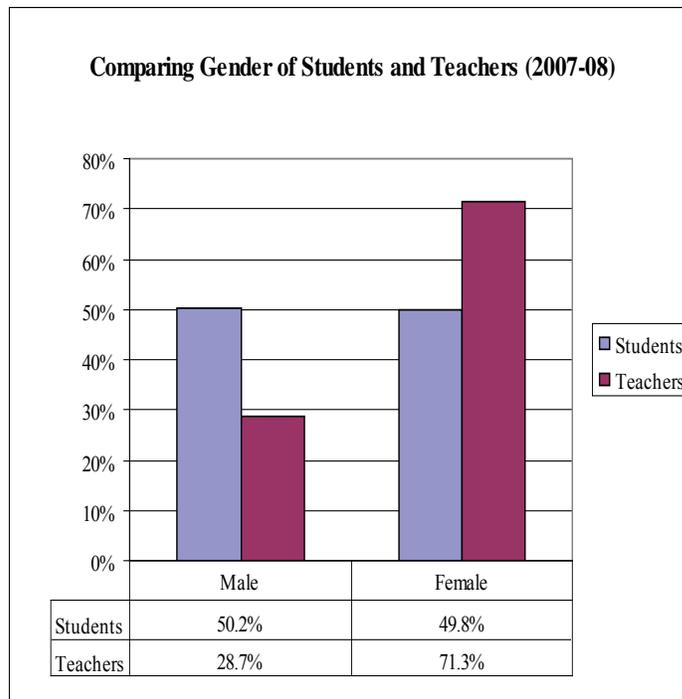
Exhibit 3.1.2 shows:

- The percentage of minority teachers is underrepresented compared with the percentage of minority students in each of the ethnic groups displayed.
- The percentage of White teachers is overrepresented compared with the percentage of White students in the district.
- In 2008, 29.8 percent of Minneapolis Public School students were White, while 82.7 percent of the teachers were White.
- In 2008, 39.6 percent of students were African American, while 7.8 percent of teachers were African American.
- The difference between minority teachers and minority students is most significant within the African American population.

Significant disparities exist between the percentage of minority students and the percentage of minority teachers in all ethnic groups. White teachers are overrepresented when compared to the percentage of White students in the district.

Exhibit 3.1.3 presents a comparison of the percentage of students and teachers by gender during the period of 2007-08. Auditors were unable to obtain data from prior years.

Exhibit 3.1.3
Gender of Students and District Staff by Percentages
Minneapolis Public Schools
2007-08



Source: Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnesota Department of Education

Exhibit 3.1.3 indicates the following:

- In 2007-08, female teachers are overrepresented and male teachers are underrepresented in comparison with the percentages of male and female students.
- The percent of female to male teachers is more than double.

Enrollment in Special Programs

The auditors expect to find enrollments in special programs proportional to the ethnic distribution of the district’s total student enrollment. Several board policies reference programs that are designed to meet the needs of certain student groups.

- *Board Policy 5741: Special Education Placement Policy (SEPP)* states that “...this policy is to ensure MPS offers a Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) when considering the placement of all of its students with special needs.”
- *Board Policy 5700: Special Education* ensures that “...special education instruction and related services will be provided to all children with disabilities aged birth through 21, inclusive, who need and meet the eligibility criteria for special education instruction and related services.”

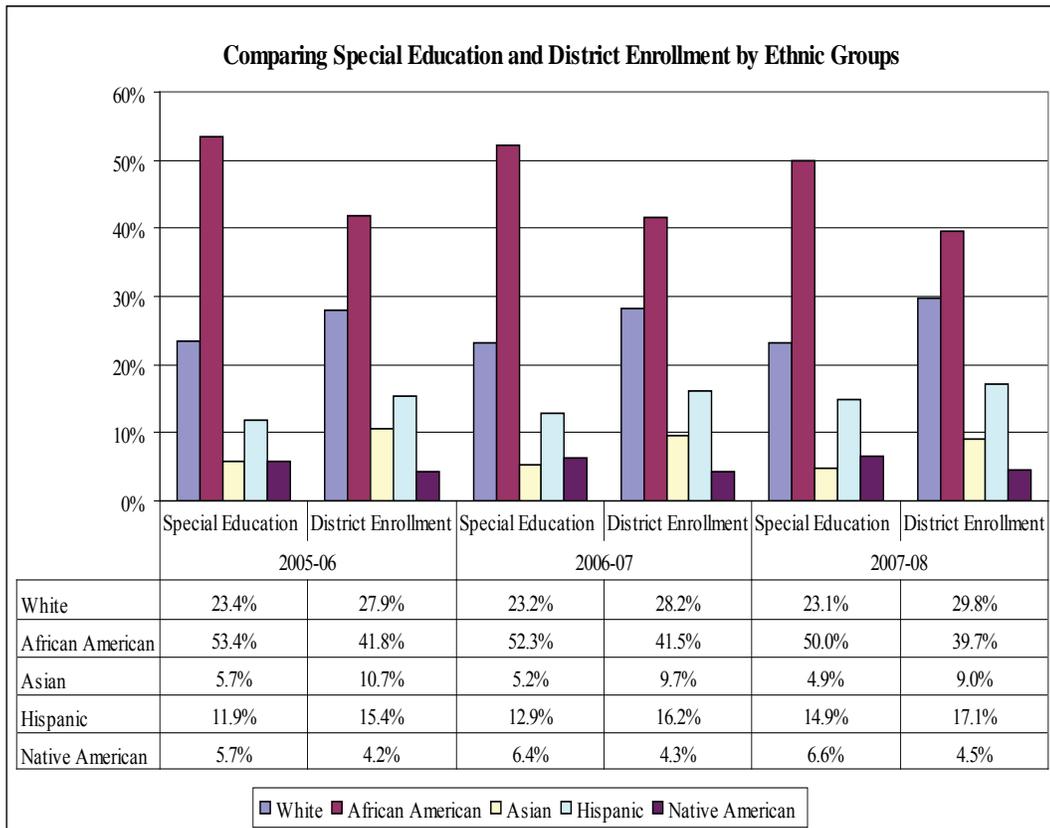
The *Minneapolis Public School 2007-2012 Strategic Plan* identifies areas that address student group representation in special programs. Some examples of these areas include:

- *Strategy #1-1c: Increase access to rigor for all students.* “Transform Special Education curriculum and professional development and align with regular education...”
- *Strategy #1-1g: Focus on mathematics across grade levels so all students are ready for Algebra in 8th grade.* “Provide all teachers through professional development in new math curriculum, including strategies for working with Special Education and English Language Learner students.”
- *Strategy #1-1j: Transform Special Education, leveraging EBD program experience.* “Assure that all students who need Special Education services are appropriately identified for referral, e.g., for ELL students, distinguishing between language barriers and learning disabilities; culture-behavior effects.”
- *Strategy #2-2d: Where racial disparities exist, organize “focus team” to understand causes and develop solutions, for example, ...* “special education referral and exit rates for students of color.”

The auditors reviewed the enrollment data provided by district staff for programs serving special populations to determine if the students participating in the programs were representative of the total district population. Data for students in gifted and talented education was provided for second grade only. Exhibit 3.1.4 summarizes the data for student enrollment in special education by ethnicity.

Exhibit 3.1.4

**Enrollment in Special Education
By Ethnicity in Percentages
Minneapolis Public Schools
2005-2008**



Source: Minneapolis Public Schools

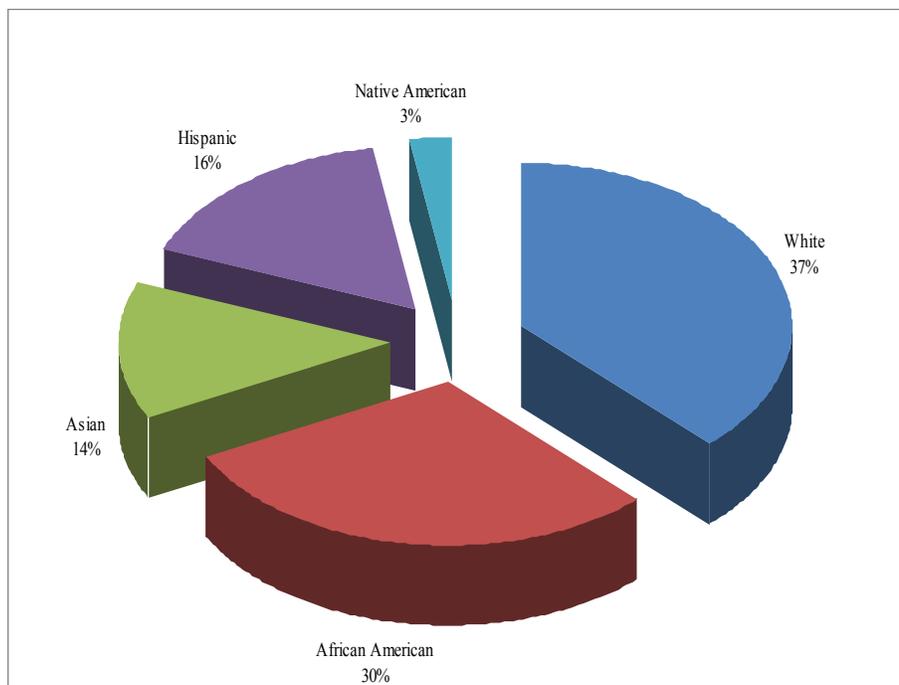
The following observations can be made from Exhibit 3.1.4:

- For the three years reported, African American students were overrepresented in special education. In 2005-06, African Americans made up 41.8 percent of the district’s total enrollment and 53.4 percent of the special education students. Overrepresentation of African American students in special education has remained around 11 percent during the three years reported.
- Native American students were also overrepresented in special education programs. The percent of Native Americans in special education has increased from 5.7 percent in 2005-06 to 6.6 percent in 2007-08.
- White students were underrepresented in special education for the three years reported. In 2007-08, the difference between enrollment and special education participation was 6.7 percent.
- Asian students were underrepresented in special education for the three years reported. The percent of Asian students in special education has declined as the total percent enrolled has also declined.
- Hispanic students are underrepresented in special education for the period reported. In 2007-08, Hispanic students made up 17.1 percent of the total district enrollment and 14.9 percent of the special education population.

Exhibit 3.1.5 shows student enrollment in gifted and talented education. The data are for second grade only.

Exhibit 3.1.5
Number of Second Grade Students in
Gifted and Talented Education by Ethnicity in Percentages
Minneapolis Public Schools
2007-08

White	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Unknown
37.7	29.6	13.7	16.2	2.5	0.3
Total District Enrollment					
29.8	39.6	9.0	17.1	4.5	
<i>Source: Minneapolis Public Schools: Second Grade GT Identification</i>					



The following observations can be made from Exhibit 3.1.5:

- White students had the highest participation rate in gifted and talented education at the second grade level (37.7 percent).
- Native-American students had the lowest participation rate in gifted and talented education at the second grade level (2.5 percent).
- African-American students had the second highest participation rate in gifted and talented education at the second grade level (29.6 percent).
- Hispanic and Asian students had participation rates in gifted and talented education at the second grade level of 16.2 percent and 13.7 percent respectively.

Graduation and Dropout Rates

Graduation rate is a required Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measure for high schools. The graduation rate is the percentage of students who receive a high school diploma during a specific school year. Several board policies reference requirements for graduation in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

- *Board Policy 5390: Graduation* states, “Graduation from the schools of the district implies that students have satisfactorily completed the prescribed courses of study in accordance with their respective abilities to achieve, and that they have satisfactorily passed any examination and other requirements set by the Board of Education in accordance with state law and regulations.”
- *Board Policy 5391: Graduation Requirements* identifies required credits for graduation. Requirements include four credits in language arts; four credits in social studies; three credits in science; three credits mathematics; one credit in the arts; one credit in physical education; one credit in health; and four and a half elective credits. Students must also complete My Life Plan. My Life Plan supports students in planning for careers, post-secondary education, and life after high school.
- *Board Policy 5392: High School Diploma* states, “Students in the Minneapolis Public Schools must meet graduation requirements during their experiences in a four year high school.” Furthermore, “A diploma will be awarded by the high school of attendance to those students who have met the graduation requirements.”

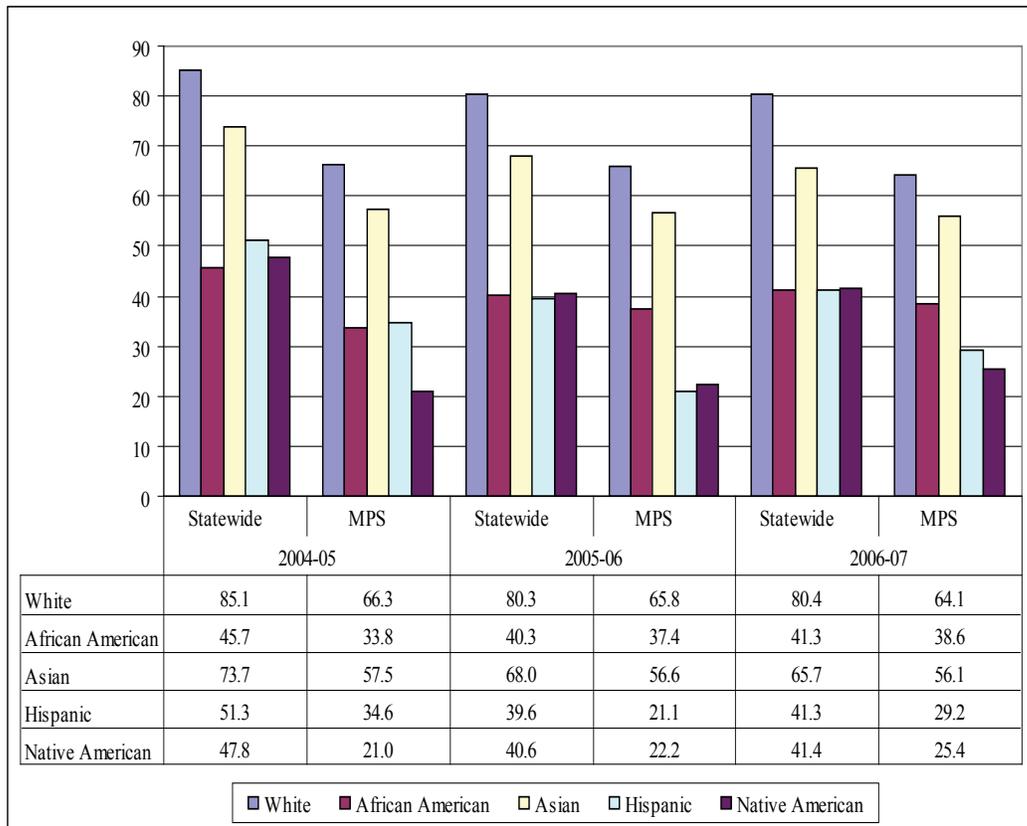


English Language Learner lesson at Whittier School

Exhibit 3.1.6 displays the high school graduation rates by ethnicity for the years 2004-2007.

Exhibit 3.1.6

**High School Graduation Rate by Ethnicity in Percentages
Compared to Statewide Percentages
Minneapolis Public Schools
2004-2007**



Source: Minnesota Department of Education (2008)

Exhibit 3.1.6 shows the following:

- The district’s high school graduation rate improved slightly from 2005-06 to 2006-07, but declined over the three year period by 1.1 percent and was lower than the 2004-05 rate.
- The high school graduation rate has decreased for White, Asian, and Hispanic students. The rate has improved for African-American and Native-American students.
- White students had the highest graduation rate (64.1 percent) in 2006-07, followed by Asian students (56.1 percent), African-American students (38.6 percent), Hispanic students (29.2 percent), and Native Americans (25.4 percent).
- In 2006-07, district graduation rates for all groups were below statewide rates. The statewide graduation rate was 73.1 percent, compared to the district’s rate of 45.1 percent.

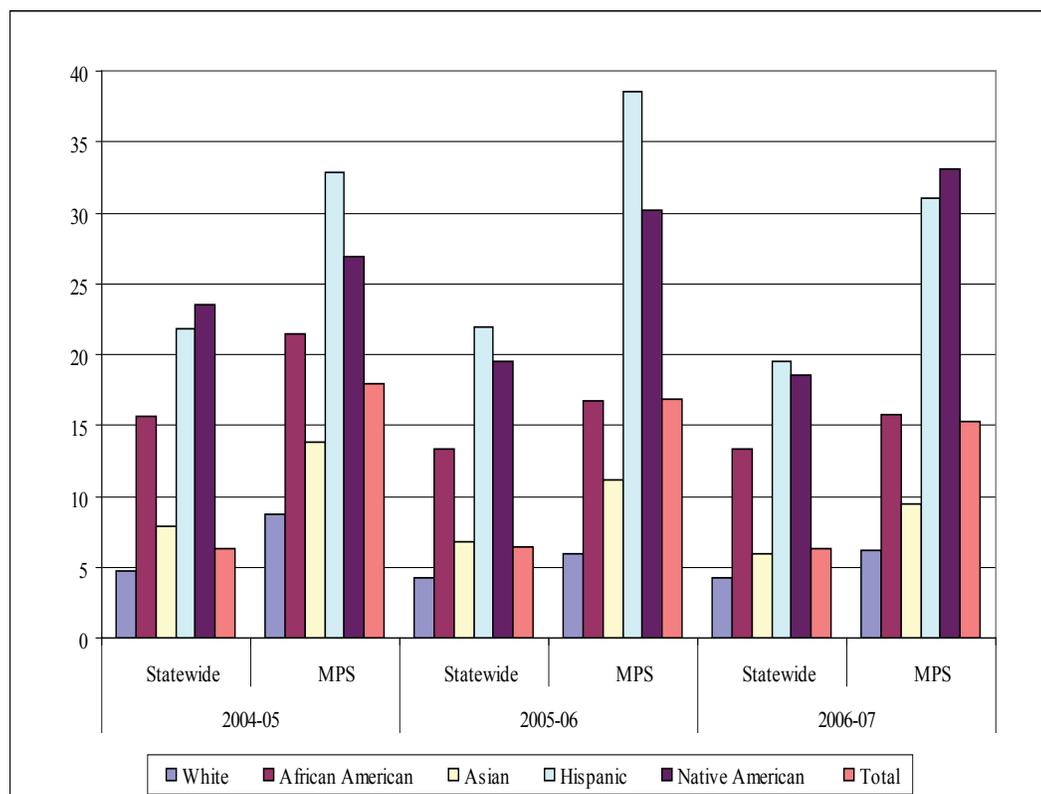
Exhibit 3.1.7 displays the high school dropout rates by ethnicity for the years 2004-2007.

Exhibit 3.1.7

**High School Dropout Rate by Ethnicity in Percentages
Compared to Statewide Percentages
Minneapolis Public Schools
2004-2007**

Year		White	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Native American	Total
2004-05	Statewide	4.7	15.6	7.9	21.8	23.6	6.3
	MPS	8.7	21.4	13.9	32.9	26.9	17.9
2005-06	Statewide	4.3	13.3	6.8	21.9	19.5	6.4
	MPS	5.9	16.7	11.2	38.5	30.2	16.9
2006-07	Statewide	4.2	13.3	6.0	19.5	18.6	6.3
	MPS	6.2	15.8	9.4	31.0	33.1	15.3
Change	Statewide	-0.5	-2.3	-1.9	-2.3	-5.0	-0.0
	MPS	-2.5	-5.6	-4.5	-1.9	6.2	-2.6

Source: Minnesota Department of Education (2008)



Source: Minnesota Department of Education (2008)

Exhibit 3.1.7 indicates the following:

- The district's dropout rate declined between 2004-05 and 2006-07 from 17.9 percent to 15.3 percent.
- The dropout rate for Native American students increased from 26.9 percent in 2004-05 to 33.1 percent in 2006-07. Native American students had the highest dropout rate in the district. White students had the lowest.

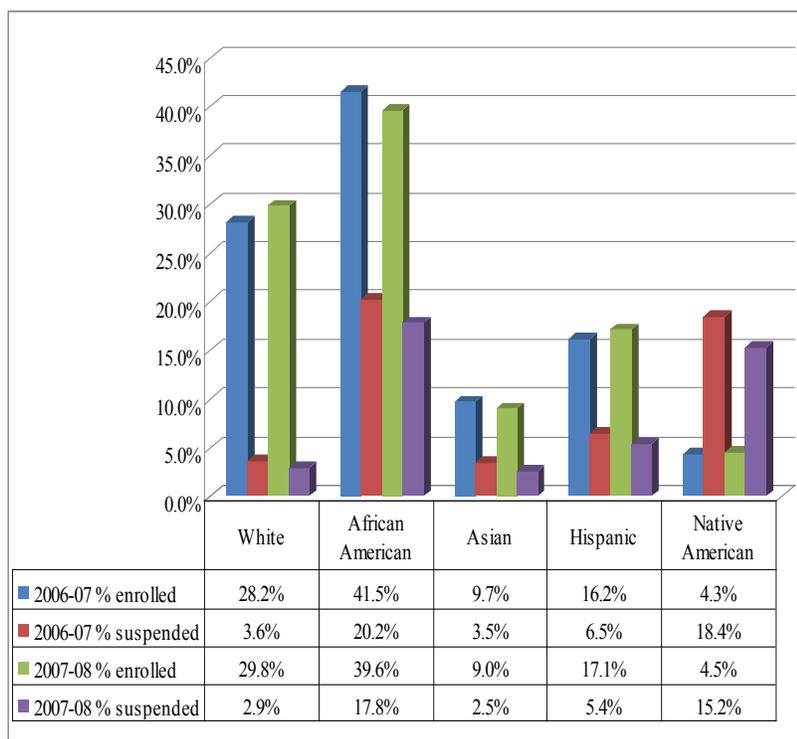
- In 2006-07, white students had a dropout rate of 6.2 percent; African American students 15.8 percent; Asian students 9.4 percent; Hispanic students 31.0 percent; and Native American students 33.1 percent. The district’s dropout rate was higher for all groups than the statewide rate.

Suspensions and Expulsions

Board Policy 5200: Citywide Discipline Policy describes discipline goals and procedures. Item II:B states, “Previously, African American males and Native American students have had a disproportionate share of suspensions.” Furthermore, the policy states, “This policy and the accompanying procedures are intended to help MPS adjust practice to eliminate gaps in suspension rates, while improving behavior, school climate, and academic achievement for all students.”

The auditors expect to find the percentages of students suspended or expelled proportional to their gender or ethnic composition in the total student population. [Exhibit 3.1.9](#) shows the percentages of suspensions by ethnicity for 2006-2008.

Exhibit 3.1.8
Suspension Rates by Ethnicity in Percentages
Minneapolis Public Schools
2006-2008



Source: Minneapolis Public Schools (2008)

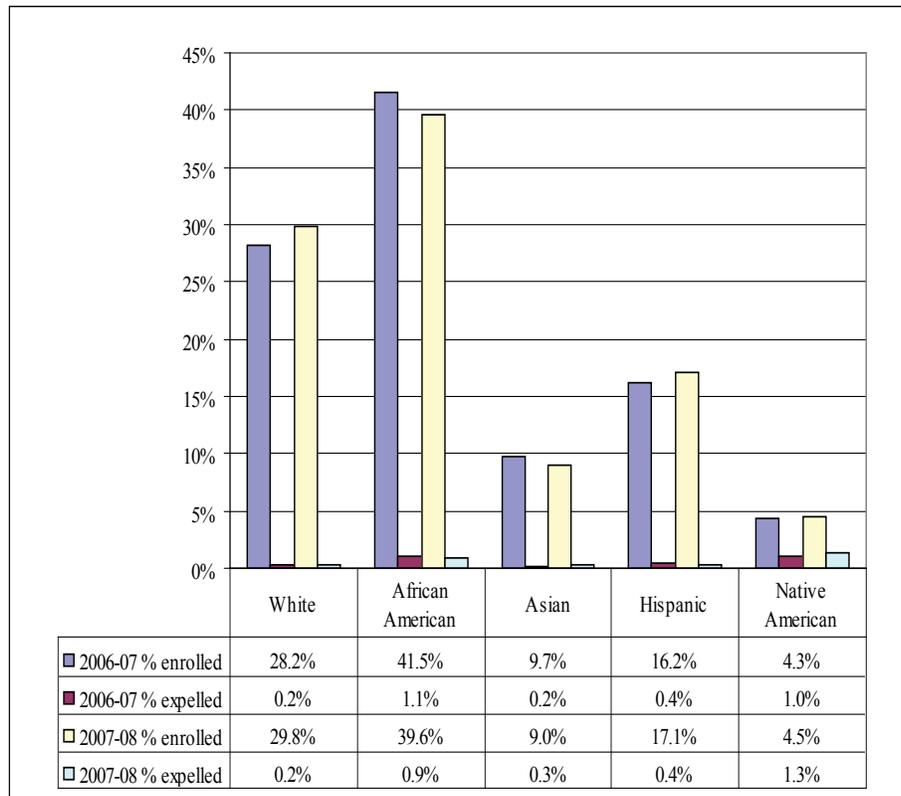
[Exhibit 3.1.8](#) indicates:

- In 2006-07, African American students comprised 41.5 percent of the total student population. The percent of African American students suspended was 20.2 percent.
- In 2006-07, White students made up 28.2 percent of district enrollment. The percent of White students suspended was 3.6 percent.
- Suspension rates declined for all major ethnic groups from 2006-07 to 2007-08.
- When compared to total percent enrolled, Native American and African American students had a disproportionate percent of students suspended. In 2007-08, Native American students represented 4.5

percent of total enrollment. However, 15.2 percent of Native Americans were suspended. Similarly, in 2007-08, African American students accounted for 39.6 percent of total enrollment. However, African American students accounted for 17.8 percent of suspensions.

Exhibit 3.1.9 shows the percentage of expulsions by ethnicity for the 2006-2008 period.

Exhibit 3.1.9
Expulsion Rates by Ethnicity in Percentages
Minneapolis Public Schools
2006-2008



Source: Minneapolis Public Schools (2008)

Exhibit 3.1.9 indicates:

- In 2006-07, African American students had an expulsion rate of 1.1 percent. This was the highest of all ethnic groups for that year.
- In 2007-08, Native American students had an expulsion rate of 1.3 percent. This was the highest of all ethnic groups for that year.
- From 2006-07 to 2007-08, expulsion rates increased for Native American and Asian students.
- The expulsion rate did not change for White and Hispanic students from 2006-07 to 2007-08.
- Expulsion rates declined slightly for African American students from 2006-07 to 2007-08.
- Native American students had the highest increase in expulsion rates, a change from 1.0 percent to 1.3 percent.

Sub-Finding 3.1 (a): Ethnically identifiable schools do not reflect success in closing the achievement gap for their students.

Improved student performance is the goal of all strategic decisions. School systems with diverse student populations must not only focus on improving the performance of students, but also on narrowing the achievement

gap that may exist among the various groups. An effective strategy improves the performance of students and narrows the achievement gap over time.

Auditors reviewed board policy, district student enrollment information, magnet program description, and the *Minneapolis Public School 2007-2012 Strategic Plan* related to ethnically-identifiable schools. The audit team also conducted interviews with board members and district and building level staff.

Overall, the audit team found that a high number of district schools (see [Exhibit 3.1.10](#)) had student enrollments of 65 percent or more from one ethnic group. Auditors also found that at these schools student performance has not improved considerably and that staff demographics, although better than at other district schools, do not reflect the makeup of the student body.

In addition to board policies included above in [Finding 3.1](#), auditors reviewed the following:

- *Board Policy 5260: School Attendance Areas* states, “The Superintendent of Schools shall designate the boundaries of the school attendance areas, subject to the approval of the Board.”
- *Board Policy 5262: Assignment of Students to Schools* addresses the placement of students: “All students will be assigned to schools based upon the district’s student placement guidelines which govern community and magnet school student placements, and special school student placements.”

Audit team members did not find board policies that directly establish ethnically-identifiable schools or procedures for the creation of magnet schools based on ethnicity.

Auditors reviewed district and state student enrollment data to assess the ethnic distribution of students in district schools. [Exhibit 3.1.10](#) lists a sample of district schools with a high concentration of one ethnic group.

Exhibit 3.1.10
Ethnically-Identifiable Schools
Minneapolis Public Schools
2007-08

School
Afrocentric Academy/African American (99%)
Andersen Elementary/Hispanic (66%)
Anishinabe Academy/Native American (87%)
Bethune Community/African American (82%)
Broadway Alternative/African American (72%)
Burroughs Community/Caucasian (72%)
Cityview Performing Arts Magnet/African American (78%)
Crosstown Education Center/African American (91%)
Emerson Spanish Immersion/Hispanic (72%)
Hall International/African American (84%)
Harrison Education Center/African American (81%)
Hmong International Academy/Asian (99%)
Lucy Craft Laney/African American (85%)
North High/African American (66%)
Park View Montessori/African American (74%)
Riverbend Educational Center (Crawford)/African American (80%)
Southwest High/Caucasian (66%)
Span Central/African American (83%)
Span High/African American (76%)
Windom Open/Hispanic (67%)
<i>Source: Minnesota Department of Education</i>

Exhibit 3.1.10 shows:

- In 2007-08, a sample of 20 district schools had enrollment of 65 percent or more of one ethnic group.
- Four schools—Afrocentric Academy, Hmong International Academy, Anishinabe Academy, and Emerson Spanish Immersion—had high concentrations of African American, Hmong, Native American, or Hispanic students.
- At the Afrocentric Academy, 99 percent were African American students.
- At the Hmong International Academy, 99 percent were Asian students.
- At Emerson Spanish Immersion, 72 percent were Hispanic students.
- At the Anishinabe Academy, 87 percent were Native American students.
- At Burroughs Community, 72 percent were White students.

Auditors conducted further review of staff hiring patterns and student performance at the following schools: Afrocentric Academy (grades 6-8), Hmong International Academy (grades PreK-8), Anishinabe Academy (grades PreK-8), and Emerson Spanish Immersion (grades K-8). Exhibit 3.1.11 shows district percentages for teachers in each ethnic group, as compared to percentages at the four schools.

Exhibit 3.1.11
Teachers by District and at Four Ethnically-Identifiable
Schools in Percentages
Minneapolis Public Schools
2007-08

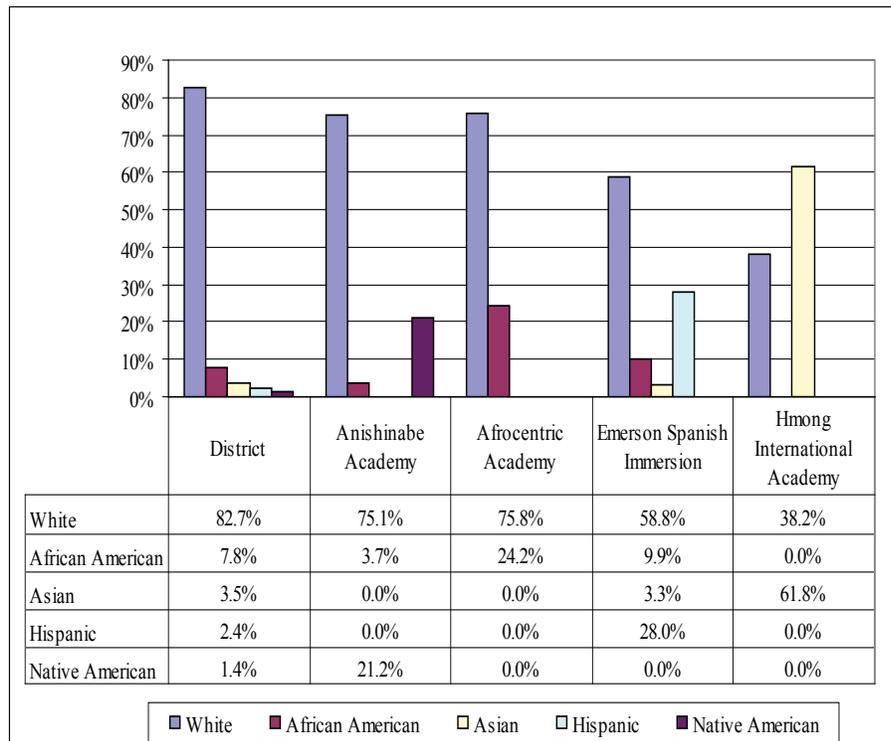


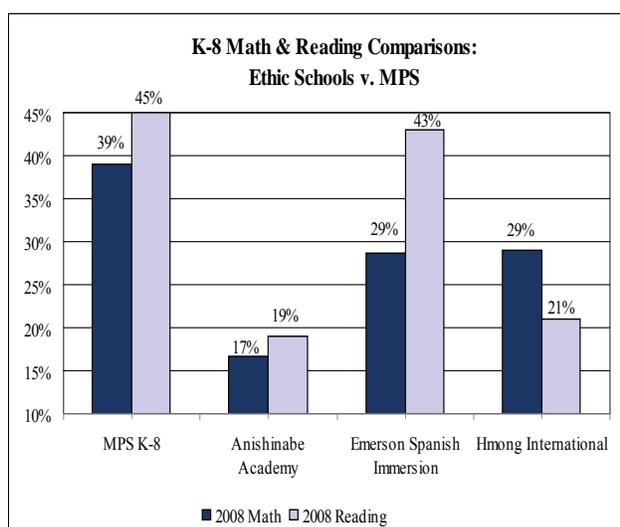
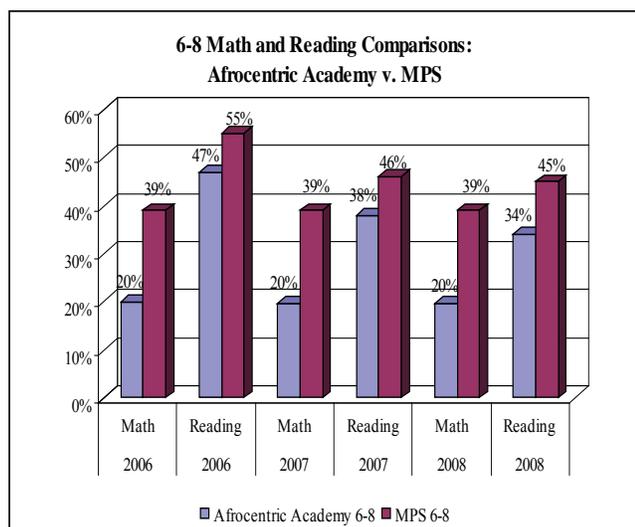
Exhibit 3.1.11 indicates the following regarding teachers at four ethnically-identifiable schools:

- The percent of ethnic teachers at all four schools was higher than districtwide rates.
- Hmong International Academy had a rate of 61.8 percent Asian teachers. This percent significantly exceeded the district's rate.

- While 99 percent of students at Afrocentric Academy were African American, 75.8 percent of teachers were White.
- Emerson Spanish Immersion had teachers from all five ethnic groups.

To further examine the success of ethnically identified schools, the audit team compared student achievement data at Afrocentric Academy, Anishinabe Academy, Emerson Spanish Immersion, and Hmong International Academy with same grade configuration schools in the district. Exhibit 3.1.12 provides student performance data for the years 2006-2008.

Exhibit 3.1.12
Student Performance at Four Ethnically-Identifiable Schools
in Percentages
Minneapolis Public Schools
2006-2008



	2006		2007		2008	
	Math	Reading	Math	Reading	Math	Reading
Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) Scores for Grades 6-8	39%	54%	41%	50%	41%	50%
Afrocentric Academy (grades 6-8)/African American (99%)	20%	47%	20%	38%	20%	34%
MPS Scores for Grades K-8	39%	55%	39%	46%	39%	45%
Anishinabe Academy (grades PreK-8)/Native American (87%)	8%	21%	15%	18%	17%	19%
Emerson Spanish Immersion (grades K-8)/Hispanic (72%)	31%	75%	27%	50%	29%	43%
Hmong International Academy (grades PreK-8)/Asian (99%)					29%	21%

Source: Minnesota Department of Education

Exhibit 3.1.12 indicates the following regarding student performance at four ethnically-identifiable schools:

- From 2006-2008, reading scores at the Afrocentric Academy declined from 47 percent proficient to 34 percent. Math scores remained at 20 percent over the three-year period.
- At the Anishinabe Academy, math scores improved from 8 percent to 17 percent proficient from 2006 to 2008. Reading scores declined from 21 percent to 19 percent.

- Student performance at the Emerson Spanish Immersion School declined in reading over the three years reviewed. Scores declined from 75 percent proficient in 2006 to 43 percent proficient in 2008. Math scores did not change considerably and remained around 30 percent proficient.
- Data was not available for the Hmong International Academy in 2006 and 2007. However, in 2008, students at Hmong International Academy scored below district percentages in both math and reading.
- Overall, all four ethnically-identifiable schools are performing below district percentages in both reading and math; Emerson Spanish Immersion is the exception in reading. They dipped below the district percentage proficient in 2008 by two percentage points.

In summary, the creation of magnet programs to support the cultural, linguistic, and academic development of ethnic groups has not resulted in better student performance, contrary to the system's expectations. Students at the Afrocentric Academy, Anishinabe Academy, the Emerson Spanish Immersion School, and the Hmong International Academy are performing below district percentages and in some instances their performance has deteriorated over time, calling the programs' success into question.

English Language Learner Programs and Services

In 2007-08, English Language Learners (ELLs) accounted for 8,020 of the total student enrollment in the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS). As a percentage of the total MPS student body, ELLs made up 23.2 percent (*Minneapolis Public Schools, Fall 2008*).

The audit team reviewed board policies, student achievement data, and other district documents to determine the extent of programs and services for English Language Learners. Auditors found one board policy that directly addressed the needs of ELL students. *Board Policy 6280: Bilingual Student Education: Equity and Quality Instruction* states, "The purpose of this policy is to establish a process that ensures that students whose first language is not English, have language learning opportunities, comprehensible instruction and materials, and academic choices within the Minneapolis Public School system. It will ensure equity in education for students who speak a language other than English by recognizing students' native language as an asset to be built upon and maintained for educational success. It also is a framework for compliance with state and federal law governing the education of English Language Learners."

Auditors reviewed other district documents that addressed the educational needs of ELL students. The *Minneapolis Public School 2007-2012 Strategic Plan* addresses ELL needs throughout the document. Examples include the following:

- *Strategy #1-1c: Increase access to rigor for all students.* "Integrate sheltered instruction techniques for ELL students into regular professional development."
- *Strategy #1-1i: Develop a comprehensive strategy to address English Language Learner (ELL)—specific needs.* "Set clear expectations for ELL students to meet and exceed standards."
- *Strategy #1-1i: Develop a comprehensive strategy to address English Language Learner (ELL)—specific needs.* "Increase all teachers' knowledge of language development and ELL-specific best practices, e.g., sheltered instruction (SIOP) techniques, multi-modal approaches, by integrating into regular professional development and work of all coaches."
- *Strategy #1-1i: Develop a comprehensive strategy to address English Language Learner (ELL)—specific needs.* "Re-examine school allocation funding model to better align ESL [English as a Second Language] staff-student ratios with school demographics and services offered."

Auditors also reviewed the *Minneapolis Public Schools, Multi-Cultural/Multi-Lingual (MCML) & English Language Learners (ELL) Districtwide Manual (10/19/2007)*. The MCML Manual contains information about district ELL processes, practices, and procedures. Additional information includes district ELL policies and regulations and laws and guidelines.

Auditors reviewed manual contents against the audit characteristics of quality design of district-level plans for programs and services for English Language Learners. The audit team expected to find the following:

- Direction: Board policies clearly define expectations for ELL programs and services.
- Reasonableness: Programs and services offered to ELL students are feasible in number of goals and objectives and within district resources (financial, time, people).
- Comprehensiveness and Equal Access: Program and services focus on English proficiency and full and comprehensible access to the core curriculum through sheltered instruction and/or primary language support.
- Rationale: The district has a rationale for the approach used that would be accepted by proponents in the field.
- Student Identification and Progress: Systems are in place for the identification, placement, and monitoring of progress of each English Language Learner.
- Organizational Capacity: Program and services are built on effective staff improvement strategies, particularly in building the capacity of staff to serve the specialized needs of ELLs.
- New Student Orientation: The district provides an orientation program to assist student entry into the system.
- Translation: The district has mechanisms in place to translate documents, forms, notices, etc.
- Integration: Programs and services for ELL students are aligned to major districtwide goals and priorities as well as to expectations for all students.
- Budget: The district takes into account the needs of ELLs and assigns appropriate and adequate resources to support programs and services.
- Evaluation: There is a written plan for evaluation of all programs and services for ELLs.

Auditors determined that the *Minneapolis Public Schools, Multi-Cultural/Multi-Lingual (MCML) & English Language Learners (ELL) Districtwide Manual (10/19/2007)* met nine out of the 11 audit characteristics for a quality design of program and services for English Language Learners. The *MCML Manual* did not adequately identify the organization's capacity to increase the effectiveness of teachers who serve ELL students, and the *MCML Manual* made no reference to budgetary requirements for the implementation of the various ELL programs and services.

In February 2008, staff from Hamline University completed an assessment of programs and services in Area B of the Minneapolis Public Schools. Auditors requested and were given a copy of the report. The *Minneapolis Public School Area B ELL Site Assessment (February 2008)* assessed ELL programs and services in the areas of leadership, program, teachers/professional development, and systems issues. With regard to leadership, the report found that schools serving ELL students in Area B of the district had "...poor teachers working in schools, ESL and mainstream, who will not advance student performance." The report also found that "Individuals school sites have made decisions regarding service to ELLs based on limited knowledge of best practice or language learning theory." Other areas of concern are expressed in the following comments:

- "There are not enough ESL teachers."
- "Buildings with native language literacy, NLL, programs for K-2 students are not providing ESL service (with one exception)."
- "Resources in buildings for ELLs are lacking."
- "Most teachers are not using the best practices of sheltered instruction (SIOP)."
- "Teachers are not informed enough about language learning..."
- "Instruction often does not address the language and cultural differences of ELLs."

Auditors reviewed data from the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA-II) to assess ELLs' progress in meeting proficiency targets. Data from spring 2007 and spring 2008 for third graders in reading indicated that English Language Learners had improved their performance from 3 percent proficient to 8 percent. However,

ELLs lagged behind other ethnic groups by as much as 78 percent against White students and 32 percent against African American students.

On the 8th grade 2008 MCA-II math assessment, the percent of ELL students proficient in math declined from 2.5 percent to 2.0 percent. Compared to other sub-groups, the spring 2008 results indicated that ELL students had the second lowest percent proficient. Special education students had a lower rate.

In interviews with staff and board members, auditors received a range of comments regarding diversity issues in the district. The following quotations are a sample of comments shared with auditors:

- “We have students of color consistently demonstrating low achievement.” (Administrator)
- “Building principals have the autonomy to reject student programs and send these—usually for underachieving students—to other schools across town.” (Administrator)
- “We have far too many students of color not achieving.” (Administrator)
- “Students of color were saying ‘you’re trying to make us like those students’ [White middle class students]. Achievement exists with racial loyalty. We have lost whatever momentum we had before and some of our teachers, principals, students have low expectations for achievement.” (Administrator)
- “Students need attitudes of high expectations. The student who has a future is not afraid of rigorous learning. It is about making sure every child has equitable access. Making sure courses are there and instructors are trained to share that material. We must address the achievement gap.” (Administrator)
- “Expectations for all students and maintaining expectations for all students [is a problem]. We fall into the trap of not expecting the same thing for all students.” (Teacher)
- “We don’t provide the challenge needed for all kids at all sites.” (Teacher)
- “Teachers were working with kids with low expectations; kids themselves had integrated those low expectations.” (Teacher)
- “There are schools that are almost all African American, almost all Latino, and all White. And some schools that are mixed.” (Administrator)
- “Some buildings are very accepting of our kids and other buildings are very segregated academically and socially.” (Administrator)
- “One quarter of students are second language students. When we look at overall achievement, they haven’t accessed the higher level courses. People know the problem and have talked about the problem, but they haven’t done anything about it.” (Administrator)
- “We have a group of students we fail to engage. We struggle with engaging students of color.” (Administrator)
- “We have two districts—one that engages some children very well in the academic process and exemplary programs—the other group we fail to engage.” (Administrator)

During interviews, stakeholders shared their perceptions that improving services for ethnically and linguistically diverse students is of critical importance in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

Summary

The Minneapolis Public Schools have taken several steps to direct staff in providing students equal and equitable access to programs, services, and opportunities. The district has identified system-wide goals and objectives in its strategic plan to address the unique needs of its student body. Several agreements and covenants have been written and signed to enhance the educational opportunities and results for all students. However, despite these efforts, auditors found that the delivery of programs, services, and opportunities is ineffective in bringing about equitable results. For example, staff demographics do not reflect the ethnicity of the student population. Student participation in special programs is not representative of their numbers in the overall student population. African American students are overrepresented in the number of students suspended or expelled. English

Language Learners and other ethnic groups are far behind in the percent achieving proficiency on state math and reading assessments. Overall, the design of programs and services has been hindered by an ineffective delivery system.

Finding 3.2: Although plentiful, professional development activities lack formalized planning, are inadequate in directing instruction, and have not demonstrated widely shared changes in observed staff knowledge and skills necessary to improve student achievement.

A high quality professional development program enhances the knowledge and skills of administrators, teachers, and other school staff with the objective of improving employee performance and increasing student achievement. Professional development activities should be based on the careful analysis of data and guided by a comprehensive, long-term plan. Focused professional development programs follow consistent needs assessment, planning, implementation, follow-up, and evaluation procedures that are aligned with the district’s strategic plan.

To determine the status of the district’s professional development, auditors reviewed information from board policies, job descriptions, district strategic plan, school improvement plans, professional development plans, e-compass professional development system, and other system-wide planning documents presented to them. The audit team also interviewed board members, central office staff, site administrators, and teachers regarding the district’s professional development efforts. Exhibit 3.2.1 presents the documents reviewed.

Exhibit 3.2.1

**Professional Development Documents Reviewed
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Documents Reviewed	Date of Documents
Academic Retreat—Culturally Relevant Professional Development	Sep-08
Alternative Teacher Professional Pay System (ATPPS) Guidelines—Updated	2007-2008
Content Focused Coaching Minneapolis Public Schools	2008
Current and Future Evaluations	Oct-08
Curriculum & Instruction Organizational Chart	Feb-08
Disciplinary Literacy in English Language Arts—Suggested Professional Learning Community Agenda Items	Aug-08
Elementary Math Adoption Professional Development	Summer 2008
Expectations for Grade K-5, K-8 Principals	Sep-08
Foundations for Success in the Minneapolis Public Schools: Report of the Strategic Support Teams of the Council of the Great City Schools—Executive Summary of Challenges and Key Proposals	Dec-04
Guidelines for the First Elementary Math PLC	No Date
IFL Instructional Leadership Work – School Leadership Rubrics	2006-2007
Implementation Guidelines for MPS Elementary Literacy Plan	No Date
Memo—Attendance at Elementary Math training part of QPA	Oct-08
Minneapolis Content Focused Coaching Coach Final Reflections Report	2007-2008
Minneapolis Public School—Area B ELL Site Assessment	Feb-08
Minneapolis Public Schools – Building Professional Learning Communities: Professional Development in Action	Aug-08
Minneapolis Public Schools Job Descriptions and Job Postings	Various Dates
Minneapolis Public Schools—Letter to Administrators & Letter to Teachers	Oct-08
Minneapolis Public Schools—Memorandum of Agreement	2008-2009
Minneapolis Public Schools—Organization Chart	Jul-08
Minneapolis Public Schools—Philosophy of Professional Development	No Date

Exhibit 3.2.1 (continued) Professional Development Documents Reviewed Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008	
Documents Reviewed	Date of Documents
Minneapolis Public Schools Site Council Training	No Date
Minneapolis Public Schools Strategic Plan	2007-2012
MnTAP Key Elements	Apr-07
OCR Model—Classroom Organizer—Problem Solving Model	No Date
Problem-Solving Model and Response to Intervention: District Implementation	No Date
Professional Development Courses—E	2006-Present
Professional Development Plans	2008-2009
Professional Development Default Section—Rating Form	No Date
Reaching Higher—Every Child College Ready—Annual Progress Report	Fall 2008
School Professional Development Plans—Various	2008-2009
School Staff Development Goals	Sep-08
Shared Decision Making: Moving Forward Together	Dec-07
Staff Development Report Statement of Assurances	2007-2008
Summer Institute—Thinking Math	Summer 2008
TAP Schools	2008-2009
Using the Content-Focused Coaching Model to Support Elementary Literacy Inviting Effort and Supporting Rigor for Students and Educators	October 6-8, 2008
West Metro Education Program (WMEP) Cultural Collaborative	2008-2009

From their review, auditors determined that the district does not have a comprehensive professional development plan to guide district training activities and evaluate their impact on teaching and learning. Instructional and support staff have access to professional development trainings offered by individual schools, the central office, and the online e-compass professional development system. The professional development content, presence of an evaluation component, and ongoing follow-up of these training options are not coordinated or linked to identified district needs. The professional development program is inadequate in building the professional capacity needed by educators to effect higher levels of student learning.

Board policies do not provide clear or adequate direction for a comprehensive, coordinated professional development program (see [Finding 1.1](#)). *Administrative Regulation 6201b: Staff Development Policy* states, “The school district is committed to developing staff policies and processes for continuous improvement of curriculum, instruction and assessment to ensure effective implementation of the Graduation Standards at all levels.” However, no policies were presented that would: (1) provide direct planning guidance on how professional development needs should be identified, prioritized, and coordinated at the district and school sites; (2) require the identification of professional development outcomes; or (3) require evaluation procedures and criteria to determine the effectiveness of professional development activities.

Several district documents—including the *2007-2012 Strategic Plan*; *Content Focused Coaching*; *Expectations for Grades K-5, K-8 and 6-12 Principals*; site-based professional development plans; and letters from the Superintendent to teachers—contain information related to the expectations for professional development.

- *The 2007-2012 Strategic Plan* has the following recommendation for professional development: “develop high performing teacher corps and provide professional development and supports to get excellent results for all students.” However, no mechanisms to identify, coordinate, or prioritize the training offerings were evident in the documents presented to the auditors.
- *Content Focused Coaching Minneapolis Public Schools* states, “The mission of CFC in MPS is to advance rigorous literacy for all learners through high quality practice-based professional development.”

- A document entitled *Expectations for Grades K-5, K-8 and 6-12 Principals IFL Professional Development Implementation* directs principals to “Develop and implement a professional development plan which is aligned to your SIP.” At the school sites, planned professional development activities are linked to specific performance goals in the school improvement plan.
- Letter from the Superintendent to teachers: “I have directed the administration to reduce the districtwide initiatives to include only: *Principles of Learning* (including Disciplinary Literacy and Content-Focused Coaching), . . . , and specific professional development which support approved curriculum and program adoptions.”

The auditors were not provided with any district document that communicated a specific structure for aligning professional development to district goals, as outlined in the district strategic plan, throughout all levels of the system.

To assess the quality of the professional development program in the Minneapolis Public Schools, the auditors examined the program in relation to the audit’s 18 characteristics for comprehensive staff development programs. These criteria are built around principles that pertain to both the design and delivery of the district’s professional development program. Exhibit 3.2.2 presents the audit criteria and the auditors’ assessment.

Exhibit 3.2.2

Comprehensive Professional Development Program Criteria And Auditors’ Assessments Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

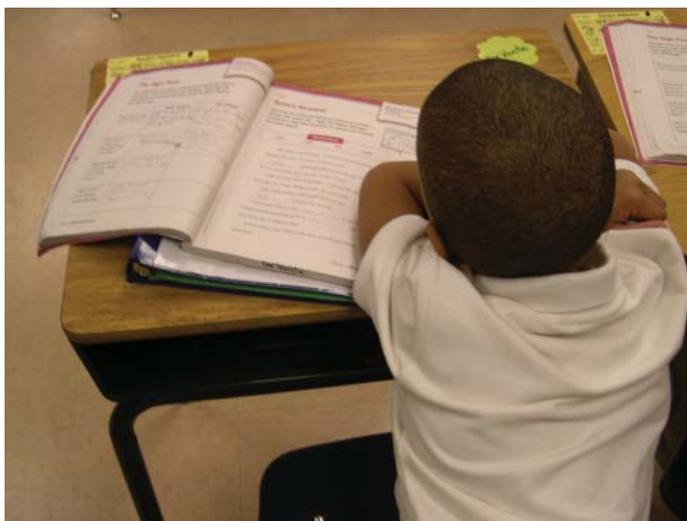
Characteristic	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Has policy staff development efforts.		X
2. Has a current plan providing a framework for integrating innovations related to mission.		X
3. Has a staff development mission in place.	X	
4. Is built using a long-range planning approach.		X
5. Fosters a norm of continuous improvement and a learning community.	X	
6. Provides for organizational, unit, and individual development in a systematic manner.		X
7. Is for all employees.	X	
8. Expects each supervisor to be a staff developer.	X	
9. Focuses on organizational change-staff development efforts are aligned with district goals.	X	
10. Is based on a careful analysis of data and is data driven.		X
11. Focuses on proven research-based approaches that have been shown to increase productivity.		X
12. Provides for three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.		X
13. Is based on human learning and development and adult learning.		X
14. Uses a variety of staff development approaches.	X	
15. Provides the follow-up and on-the-job application necessary to ensure improvement.		X
16. Requires an evaluation process that is ongoing, includes multiple sources of information, and focuses on all levels of the organization which are based on actual change behavior.		X
17. Provides for system-wide coordination and has a clearinghouse function in place.		X
18. Provides the necessary funding to carry out staff development goals.	X	

Exhibit 3.2.2 shows that the district’s professional development program satisfied seven, or 39 percent, of the 18 audit criteria. A program is considered adequate if it meets 70 percent of the audit criteria. Therefore, auditors rated the professional development program inadequate. The follow statements explain the auditors’ rating of each professional development program criterion.

Policy: This criterion is not met. In the policy review, auditors did not locate any board policies that gave direction in determining professional development goals, or how to select, prioritize, or coordinate professional activities based on those goals. *Administrative Regulation 6201b* seeks for “continuous improvement to ensure effective implementation of the graduation standards.”

Plan providing a framework: This criterion is not met. There was no single comprehensive, system-wide professional development plan provided to auditors that reflected system-wide planning or coordination of all training or resources.

Mission statement: This criterion is met. The district did present a *Philosophy of Professional Development* that included a mission statement. This statement noted the importance of professional development: “all district staff continuously learn and develop their capacity…” and addresses the goal of professional development: “... our efforts to increase the learning of all students and close the achievement gap require effective professional/ staff development.”



Textbook seatwork at Laney Elementary School

Long range planning: This criterion is not met. The auditors found professional development planning to be fragmented and implemented in isolation within the various departments and school sites. Administrators and teachers are asked to integrate a myriad of professional development initiatives. The nine *Principles of Learning (POL)* were identified as the district framework for curriculum implementation and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) were established several years ago to provide the structure for staff to discuss data and how it can be used to guide instruction. In the Work in Progress document (dated August 2008) entitled *Minneapolis Public Schools Building Professional Learning Communities: Professional Development in Action*, school sites are given “suggestions” for organizing professional learning communities. On the final page of this document is an Institute for Learning (the developers of *POL*) protocol for studying student work. Additionally, a document entitled *Disciplinary Literacy in English Language Arts-Suggested Professional Learning Community Agenda Items* outlines five principles that integrate the nine Principles of Learning. While information regarding these two major initiatives was provided to the school sites, a district plan outlining the coordination and implementation of the initiatives was not presented to auditors.

Expectation for professional growth: This criterion is met. The auditors found evidence to support the district believes in and values the use of professional development to improve the performance of staff. The expectation for professional development was mentioned in the *Philosophy of Professional Development*, the *Strategic Plan*, and in school improvement and professional development plans.

The *Professional Development Plan*, which is a part of the employee appraisal process, has strong expectations about professional growth. A memorandum of agreement between the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers (MFT) and Minneapolis Public Schools dated July 3, 2008, states that “MFT and the District have collaborated over ten years to develop and implement programs for alternative compensation that reward teachers for continuous improvement.”

Systemic approach: This criterion is not met. Professional development activities are planned and implemented through a variety of district departments and school sites; however, the offerings are not purposely coordinated throughout the district. In addition to the offerings by Curriculum and Instruction, content-specific training is provided by special education, ELL, and E-compass, an online professional development system.

At the school sites, planned professional development activities are listed within the school improvement or professional development plans. These professional development activities can be tied to district trainings as well as to local needs and programs.

For all employees: This criterion is met. Lists of professional development offerings provided to auditors revealed a number of opportunities for teachers, support staff, and administrators to receive training in areas that would improve job performance. Auditors were not given much information on who took the training, whether the training was connected to identified needs, or whether the training was effective in increasing student achievement. Although an organized and monitored system to provide professional development or training to every district employee was not provided, the *Staff Development Report Statement of Assurances*, a report completed by districts receiving staff development revenue under *M.S.126C.10 subd.2*, and *M.S. 122A.61*, did list a district and school site staff information table indicating the number of staff receiving high quality staff development according to Minneapolis Department of Education Staff Development Reporting. Based on that information the auditors determined that the current practices do not adequately meet this criterion.

Expects each supervisor to be a staff developer: This criterion is met. The auditors reviewed job descriptions, board policies, and other documents that referred to the role of supervisors. Auditors also conducted interviews with administrators and teachers at the district and site levels. In all of the documents and discussions, the importance of professional development was stressed, as was the integral role for supervisors in identifying staff training needs, planning for training, and assisting in the implementation of the training skills. Currently, the expectation is clear and adequate, but the supervisory support and the identification of indicators of progress or success have not been accomplished.

Aligned to district goals: This criterion is met. Auditors reviewed the list of staff development opportunities and the providers of the staff development that were given them by district staff. These trainings ranged from understanding and implementing *Principles of Learning* and discussing integrating best practices in math in the Professional Learning Communities to training in formative data collection and Positive Behavior Intervention and Solutions. There is a clear expectation from the *Strategic Plan* and from the guidelines for school improvement plans that professional development should be aligned to district goals (see [Finding 1.4](#)). While there is not a formal professional development plan, there is other adequate evidence of the expectation that professional development be aligned to the district goals.

Data-driven: This criterion is not met. Access to and use of clear and user-friendly data on student achievement and instructional needs is in the emergent phase. Evidence is unclear about how much the use of data has driven recent choices regarding professional development or whether choices were linked to goals. One administrator remarked, “There is lots of training for use of data but not enough on what to do with data information.”

Research-based: This criterion is not met. There is no districtwide system in place to manage, monitor, or evaluate the delivery methodology of the persons providing professional development to district employees. The approach is left to the discretion of individual trainers. Since methods and content are not coordinated at the district level, this criterion is considered inadequate.

Initiation, implementation, and institutionalization: This criterion is not met. Trainings are at the initiation level in most cases. The *Principles of Learning*, as an example, were shared initially with a small cadre of staff from a limited number of schools. Since then other schools and staffs have been phased into the trainings. Consequently, regarding the *POL* initiative, schools are in various stages of awareness, readiness, and willingness to implement the full program with enduring fidelity. Auditors determined that since the *Principles of Learning* have not been adequately implemented, they have not yet been fully institutionalized.

Based on adult learning theory: This criterion is not met. Many of the offerings include strategies such as staff collaboration, application to daily responsibilities, use of varied approaches to presentation of information, and similar factors to address adult learner needs. However, the major elements missing to provide an adequate rating on this characteristic are the lack of follow-up support, review of progress in implementation, and evaluation so that trainees know the worth of what they are learning and reliably benefit from it in their daily jobs. The lack of coordination and/or communication among the various providers of professional development has resulted in an overload of training options for teachers who find themselves coping with choices they do not fully understand. “Professional learning communities is jargon. I am struggling with [putting it into] practice... it needs focus,” on teacher said. “I don’t know what my teachers are being asked to do as part of professional learning communities,” added an administrator.

Variety of approaches: This criterion is met. Documents provided to the auditors describe professional development formats. It is clear that several approaches are used to deliver professional development. The district offerings have included large conferences, building level learning communities, grade level teams, and online learning for individuals or small groups.

Follow-up and on-the-job application: This criterion is not met. In the analysis of documents provided to auditors, it was clear that there is no systemic approach to monitoring the application of new knowledge and/or skills acquired through professional development activities. For example, one teacher commented, “Training for the new math adoption was adequate, but there was no follow-up.”

Evaluation component: This criterion is not met. The auditors found little or no evidence of the effectiveness of professional development activities in relation to specific outcomes, such as changed teacher behavior and/or student learning. There is no process to conduct needs assessments or to measure training in relationship to student achievement data. One administrator’s remark that “Professional learning that goes on needs to be evaluated” reflected other similar comments auditors received during interviews.

System-wide coordination with clearinghouse function: This criterion is not met. There is no district department that oversees, approves, and coordinates all district and school site professional development. The district e-compass online system is dependent upon building personnel to enter trainings in the system. Therefore, the district does not currently have an inclusive list of all trainings being conducted at school sites. Present activities do not meet this audit criterion because there is no clearinghouse function in place. District and building personnel may create and attend the professional development of their choice.

Provides necessary funding: This criterion is met. The variety of professional development opportunities available to staff as well as the availability of funding for professional development from a variety of sources including state alternative compensation, district Title dollars, various grants, and building funds implies ongoing support and funds for many forms of professional development. Since the auditors did not collect any evidence of restrictions placed on professional development based on lack of funding, this criterion was determined to be adequate. The problem is not the amount of resources devoted to improved employee performance, but the coordination and monitoring of this support.

The following comments were made regarding frustration and dissatisfaction with professional development activities in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

- “*Principles of Learning*: the training is not consistent or enough.” (Administrator)
- “[Leadership teams] need better training in *Principles of Learning*. It’s one thing to [give an overview of the program] to principals. It is another to train them to give competent presentations to school staff.” (Principal)
- “School site people are responsible for entering training activities in the e-compass database.” (Teacher)
- “We don’t have the professional development in place to train teachers in the strategies necessary to move [80 percent of students] to proficient.” (Teacher)
- “People in the first cohort were not really told that they were expected to implement the *POL* when they returned to their classrooms.” (Administrator)
- “The district wants *POL* in all classrooms. How can we hold teachers accountable when they have not all been trained? Some of our principals are just now receiving training.” (Administrator)
- “We’ve made a rule that we will no longer provide teachers things without professional development. We give everything to our coaches and they work with campus leadership to do professional development.” (Administrator)
- “Are the people who are designing professional development spending enough time in [the] classroom to know the needs?” (Teacher)

Summary

Professional development offerings in the district are extensive, and in some instances aligned with district goals. However, the auditors concluded that in combination, district policies, plans, and procedures are inadequate to direct and coordinate professional development in a systemic manner. The current implementation model is insufficient to support sound professional development—long-term. The lack of planning guidance and coordination has resulted in fragmented approaches to assessing professional development needs and to planning, delivering, and evaluating professional learning activities (see [Finding 3.2](#)). Finally, there are no guidelines for consistently tracking educator participation in and accountability for targeted professional activities at the district or schools levels. Likewise, auditors were not presented with guidelines for measuring the impact of individual professional development programs on improved student achievement.

STANDARD 4: The School District Uses the Results from System-Designed and/or -Adopted Assessments to Adjust, Improve, or Terminate Ineffective Practices or Programs.

A school system meeting this audit standard has designed a comprehensive system of assessment/testing and uses valid measurement tools that indicate how well its students are achieving designated priority learning goals and objectives. Common indicators are:

- A formative and summative assessment system linked to a clear rationale in board policy;
- Knowledge, local validation, and use of current curricular and program assessment best practices;
- Use of a student and program assessment plan that provides for diverse assessment strategies for varied purposes at all levels—district, school, and classroom;
- A way to provide feedback to the teaching and administrative staffs regarding how classroom instruction may be evaluated and subsequently improved;
- A timely and relevant data base upon which to analyze important trends in student achievement;
- A vehicle to examine how well specific programs are actually producing desired learner outcomes or results;
- A data base to compare the strengths and weaknesses of various programs and program alternatives, as well as to engage in equity analysis;
- A data base to modify or terminate ineffective educational programs;
- A method/means to relate to a programmatic budget and enable the school system to engage in cost-benefit analysis; and
- Organizational data gathered and used to continually improve system functions.

A school district meeting this audit standard has a full range of formal and informal assessment tools that provide program information relevant to decision making at classroom, building (principals and school-site councils), system, and board levels.

A school system meeting this audit standard has taken steps to ensure that the full range of its programs is systematically and regularly examined. Assessment data have been matched to program objectives and are used in decision making.

What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

The auditors expected to find a comprehensive assessment program for all aspects of the curriculum, PreK through grade 12, which:

- Was keyed to a valid, officially adopted, and comprehensive set of goals/objectives of the school district;
- Was used extensively at the site level to engage in program review, analysis, evaluation, and improvement;
- Was used by the policy-making groups in the system and the community to engage in specific policy review for validity and accuracy;
- Was the focus and basis of formulating short- and long-range plans for continual improvement;
- Was used to establish costs and select needed curriculum alternatives; and
- Was publicly reported on a regular basis in terms that were understood by key stakeholders in the community.

Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Minneapolis Public Schools

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard Four. Details follow within separate findings.

Auditors determined that the Minneapolis Public Schools system does not have an adequate student assessment and program evaluation plan to provide the feedback necessary to support sound decisions regarding the design and delivery of curriculum. System-wide tests assess student mastery of only 56 percent of the taught curricula in science, mathematics, social studies and English language arts. Approximately 44 percent of those core subjects are not assessed. District educators have a wealth of student achievement data at their disposal. Policy and plans emphasize the use of those data for decision making and there is a good deal of data analysis and use at school and central office levels. However, there is no systematic process to train educators in the use of those data and no assurance that the data are used effectively in the classroom to influence teaching and learning across the district.

Whatever the level of data use, recent trends in student performance suggest that data have not been used effectively to improve student achievement. In all grades and subjects, the percentages of district students demonstrating proficiency on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments have been low or declining and well below state averages in all instances. Also, achievement gaps exist among student groups identifiable by race. If effective interventions are not introduced to alter stagnant and declining trends in student proficiency rates, achievement gaps will remain, the district will not achieve its strategic goal of 80 percent student proficiency by 2012, and students will not hit the *No Child Left Behind* target of 100 percent proficiency by the year 2014.

Finding 4.1: The school district does not have a plan to generate the student assessment and program evaluation data necessary to support sound curricular decision making and to improve student achievement.

A written comprehensive assessment plan guides the collection, analysis, dissemination, and use of data to facilitate informed decision making for the design and delivery of the curriculum. A school system's plan for assessment of student achievement and evaluation of educational programs is a vehicle for examining the quality of student performance and determining if programs are actually producing the desired results. When a district lacks a plan for assessing student achievement and evaluating programs or the plan is not adequate, the board and educational leaders may lack systematic procedures for collecting reliable evidence regarding the effectiveness of programs, student learning, and instructional strategies. Further, parents and students may get incomplete feedback about student learning.

To determine if the district has plans to assess student achievement and evaluate programs, auditors reviewed policies, plans, curriculum documents, assessment materials, and data pertaining to student assessment and program evaluation. Auditors determined that, although there is some direction for program evaluation and student assessment in policies and other documents, it was inadequate to provide direction for comprehensive student and program assessment activities. Auditors also discovered that there was no comprehensive plan for such activities.



Traditional workbook seatwork at Pillsbury School

Exhibit 4.1.1 lists the policies that provide direction for student assessment and program evaluation:

Exhibit 4.1.1

**Board Policies and Procedures: Student Assessment and Program Evaluation
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Policy Number	Requirement
Policy 1692	“Site Shared Decision Leadership Teams” are to review student achievement and develop strategies for student growth.
Policy 2100	The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for preparing and presenting data which helps the board to establish policies and approve plans.
Policy 6200	Curriculum must include “some measure of knowing when the required learning has taken place.”
Policy 6204	Opportunities will be provided “for students to demonstrate and for teachers to assess achievement of the standards.”
Policy 6205	Requires “a system for recording, reporting and advising of student achievement.”
Policy 6270	Educational evaluation should serve three purposes: “the diagnostic function, the achievement function, and the instructional program assessment function to determine if there are weaknesses in the instructional program in order to improve it.”
Policy 6276	Declares that the evaluation of the curriculum and other aspects of the educational program of a school shall be done by a principal, “who shall report to the appropriate superintendent.” In turn, the superintendent is to report periodically to the board.
Policy 6278	Evaluation of the education program will be conducted by faculty and administration, and evaluation of new courses will be done annually.
Procedure 1692C	“[A]cademic achievement and related student assessments will be the ultimate accountability measures for the entire school district.”
Procedure 6411A	Instructional materials must be evaluated to determine if they have achieved the objectives of the vendor claims.

Overall, policies do not give adequate direction for comprehensive program evaluation and student assessment, nor do they require a plan to direct those activities.

Auditors also reviewed the *Minneapolis Public Schools 2007-2012 Strategic Plan* and the *Minneapolis Public Schools MFT 59, Union of Professionals, Teacher Contract 2007-2009*. Both documents contained guidance for assessment and evaluation activities, had been adopted by the board, and, therefore, carried the force of policy. In particular, the contract contained guidance on assessment and evaluation by the Site Leadership Team. However, neither document articulated a comprehensive approach to these activities or required a district plan.

The audit team also reviewed a variety of assessment-related memoranda being used to implement the *Strategic Plan*. A few contained elements of the district's approach to student assessment and program evaluation planning. Auditors analyzed the adequacy of these elements using the Curriculum Management Audit's 15 assessment planning characteristics. The characteristics and the audit team's analysis are displayed in [Exhibit 4.1.2](#).

Exhibit 4.1.2

Characteristics of Comprehensive Student Assessment and Program Evaluation Planning and Auditors' Assessment of the District's Approach Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

Characteristic	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Describes the board's policy regarding the philosophical framework for the design of the program and student assessment plan and directs both formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course and grade expectations of ongoing program evaluation, both formative and summative. Directs use of data to analyze group, school, program, and system student trends.	Partially*	
2. Explicitly includes a formative and summative assessment system to carry out board policy (if such). Provides for regular formative and summative assessment at all levels of the system (organization, program, student).		X
3. Provides for frequent diagnostic (formative) instructional assessments aligned to district curriculum which teachers use to make ongoing decisions including which students receive which learner objectives to be at the appropriate level of difficulty (e.g. provides data for differentiated instruction).		X
4. Provides a list of assessment tools, purposes, subjects, type of student tested, timelines, etc.	Partially*	
5. Identifies and provides direction on the use of diverse assessment strategies for multi-purposes at all levels-district, school, and classroom.		X
6. Specifies the roles and responsibilities of the central office staff and school-based staff for assessing all functions and operations of the system.		X
7. Specifies the connection(s) between district, state, and national assessments.	X	
8. Specifies overall assessment procedures and analysis procedures to determine curriculum effectiveness.		X
9. Requires aligned assessment examples and tools to be placed in curriculum, instruction, and assessment guides.		X
10. Specifies how equity issues will be identified and addressed using data sources as well as controls for bias.		X
11. Identifies the factors, processes, and structures of program assessment and how data will be used to determine continuation, modification, or termination of a given program.		X

Exhibit 4.1.2 (continued)		
Characteristics of Comprehensive Student Assessment and Program Evaluation Planning and Auditors' Assessment of the District's Approach Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008		
Characteristic	Adequate	Inadequate
12. Provides for appropriate trainings and development for various audiences on assessment.		X
13. Delineates responsibilities and procedures for monitoring formative and summative assessment design, implementation, and results.		X
14. Establishes a process for communicating procedures, results, and trends of student and program assessment.		X
15. Provides a method/means to use program assessments data in cost-benefit analysis.		X
Total	1	12
Percentage of Adequacy = (1/12) =	8%	
* Partially adequate items were not counted in the calculation for adequacy		

Exhibit 4.1.2 shows that the Minneapolis Public Schools' approach to student assessment and program evaluation planning lacks most of the characteristics of sound planning. In the documents provided by the staff auditors found one (eight percent) of the characteristics adequately represented and two others partially represented; 12 were inadequate. The Curriculum Management Audit minimum standard for an overall adequate rating is 12 adequate characteristics, or 70 percent. Therefore, district design for assessment planning and program evaluation design was rated inadequate.

Auditors noted the following regarding selected characteristics:

Characteristic 1: Describes the board's policy regarding the philosophical framework for the design of the program and student assessment plan and directs both formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course and grade expectations of ongoing program evaluation, both formative and summative. Directs use of data to analyze group, school, program, and system student trends. (Partially adequate.)

Board policy (see Exhibit 4.1.1) did not provide an adequate framework for these activities. However, the *Strategic Plan* contained several statements articulating the board's philosophy:

- "Rigorously evaluate all academic and student support programs,"
- "Develop consistent schedule for evaluating individual programs and link effectiveness evaluation to delivery cost,"
- "Train principals to assess rigor and instructional effectiveness in the classroom,"
- "Provide professional development to teachers and administrators on using formative assessment data to inform instruction and motivate students," and
- "Continue development and implementation of formative assessment in secondary reading, math and science."

It is more appropriate that these requirements be incorporated into policy because policies guide planning, not the reverse. Also, plans tend to be less enduring than policies.

Characteristic 4: Provides a list of assessment tools, purposes, subjects, type of student tested, timelines, etc. (Partially adequate.)

Auditors found partial evidence of this characteristic in the *Strategic Plan*. In addition, memoranda from the Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment identified the assessments to be given, timelines, and

current and future program evaluations to be conducted. However, the list of assessment tools did not include adequate information on formative assessments.

Characteristic 7: Specifies the connection(s) between district, state, and national assessments. (Fully adequate.)

The Deputy Superintendent’s memorandum of June 2008 presents a model showing the variety of assessments to be used in Minneapolis Public Schools, their purpose, and their interrelationship.

Characteristic 10: Specifies how equity issues will be identified and addressed using data sources as well as controls for bias. (Inadequate.)

Recommendation 2 of the *Strategic Plan* states, “Identify and correct practices and policies that perpetuate the achievement gap and institutional racism in all forms. The accountability system has the following elements:

- Scorecards with targets, aligned at every level,
- Departmental plans and service-level agreements,
- Individual performance evaluations tied to District goals and results, and
- Program evaluation with cost-benefit analysis.”

The recommendation does not directly address data (though data are implied), nor are controls for bias included.

Characteristic 12: Provides for appropriate trainings and development for various audiences on assessment. (Inadequate.)

There is no system for ensuring that the board, staff, and patrons who need training in interpreting and using assessment data actually get it. This is a substantial flaw in efforts to improve student achievement.

Characteristics 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15: Auditors did not find evidence of these characteristics.

Overall, district plans and departmental documents reflect some of the characteristics of comprehensive student achievement and program assessment planning, but they are inadequate to guide systematic actions.

Interviews with staff members substantiated the auditor’s documentary findings regarding the lack of systemic planning for program evaluation and assessment. The following are staff comments on this issue:

- “There is [no] document for a planning process for assessment.” (Administrator)
- “Program evaluation does not exist in many cases. However, in some departments it may be used as part of the budgeting process. It is not systematic across the district.” (Administrator)
- “In Minneapolis Public Schools, we don’t do program evaluation [districtwide], but we are doing it in our department.” (Teacher on Special Assignment)
- “Professional learning...needs to be evaluated.” (Administrator)
- “We don’t have good choices of evaluations or interventions that we have the capacity to deliver.” (Administrator)
- “We don’t know what has been successful. What is the cost?” (Administrator)”
- “[It’s] hard to know which programs are high quality and which are quality only in name and reputation.” (Patron)

Summary

The audit team determined that board policies, the district *Strategic Plan*, and department documents did contain some of the elements necessary for sound student assessment and program evaluation planning. However, as a whole, those document were inadequate. Since no comprehensive plan exists to coordinate the efforts of the staff in these areas, the audit team determined that the district’s design for student assessment and program evaluation is inadequate.

Finding 4.2: The scope of assessment for science, mathematics, social studies, and English language arts is inadequate to effectively evaluate the taught curriculum and does not provide sufficient data for making sound curricular decisions. There are no system-wide student assessments for approximately 44 percent of the taught curriculum.

The scope of a district’s assessments describes the extent to which subjects and courses taught to students in each grade are covered by system-wide assessments. A complete scope of assessment is designed to measure student mastery of major learning objectives in every subject and course in each grade. When assessments are administered in each course and grade, they generate data that inform the community of the extent to which students have mastered the entire curriculum. Assessment results also identify courses and subjects where the curriculum and/or instructional techniques need to be improved, thereby providing vital information for the district’s decision makers. When the scope of assessment does not cover all courses and grades, students, teachers, administrators, and parents lack reliable measures of student learning for the entire curriculum, data available for decision making is diminished, and the quality of decisions can be degraded.

Auditors were asked to limit review of the scope of assessment to the areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Therefore, no other curricular areas were included in this finding. To determine if the scope of assessment was adequate in the four core areas, auditors reviewed appropriate policies, administrative regulations, information provided on both district and state Websites, and related documents provided by the district staff. They also interviewed patrons, teachers, and administrative staff members. Auditors determined that the scope of assessment was adequately defined in policy. Further, a comparison of student assessments for the four subject areas to the written curriculum for each of those subject areas revealed that the actual scope of assessment was inadequate to provide sufficient data for sound curricular decision making. Forty-four percent of the combined curricular areas was not assessed.

The following board policies and regulations provide guidance for student assessment:

- *Board Policy 5393, Students, Social Promotion* states, “[The district] will...continue the practice of advancing students based on their abilities to read, write, and do mathematics as determined by their performance on benchmark tests and parent/teacher recommendations.” This policy covers only two subject areas in the curriculum, English/ language arts and mathematics. It does not address science and social studies.
- *Board Policy 5394, Students, Grade Level Promotion* directs, “Students must achieve proficiency on high school benchmark tests first administered at grade nine as a requirement for graduation from high school.” The scope of assessment defined by this policy is limited to high school reading, writing, and mathematics. Those subjects are covered in mandated Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD).
- *Board Policy 6202, Learning/ Instruction, Ensurance of Preparatory Standards Policy* mandates that “All students, including those with special needs, will receive curriculum, instruction and assessments which address the required preparatory standards...” Preparatory standards are defined as the state standards for each subject area and grade level below ninth grade. These include the audit team’s scope of work: English/ language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Therefore, this policy adequately defines the scope of assessment for the four core areas in grades K through 8.
- *Board Policy 6203, Learning/ Instruction, Ensurance of High School Standards Policy* stated, “All students, including those with special needs, will receive curriculum, instruction and assessments which address the required and elective high school content standards...” This policy indicates that all high school curricula will be assessed, including the four core curricula areas that are the subject of this audit.

Board Policy 6202 requires assessment of the four core areas in all grades below high school; *Board Policy 6203* requires assessment of those areas in high school. Together, those two policies require that the four core areas be assessed in all grades in the Minneapolis Public Schools system. Therefore, policy direction for the core curricula is adequate.

The following regulations elaborate on the policy requirements for assessments:

- *Board Regulation 6110a, Learning/Instruction, Objectives of the Educational Program* directs that “measurements of achievement will be determined centrally and directed for obligatory districtwide implementation at the building level....”
- *Board Regulation 6202a, Learning/ Instruction, Procedures for Ensurance of Preparatory Content Standards* states “The Director of Teacher and Instructional Services or designee(s) will establish, monitor and evaluate the preparatory (K-8) curriculum which fulfills...district and Minnesota...” requirements for graduation. This regulation lists the specific course requirements for grades K-8, including those for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, which a student must successfully complete before entering high school.

Overall, district policies adequately define the scope of assessment for the four core areas. Implementing regulations are specific for grades K-8, but not so for high school; they are inadequate.

Through documents and interviews, auditors identified the various student assessments administered in the four core areas. Those assessments are summarized in [Exhibit 4.2.1](#).

Exhibit 4.2.1
Summary of Student Assessments Administered
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Student Assessment	Grades Administered	Description
Beginning Kindergarten Assessment* and End of Kindergarten Assessment*	K	Criterion-referenced evaluation of beginning language skills to include Oral Expression, Vocabulary, Alliteration/ Rhyming, Phonological Awareness, Print Awareness , and Numeric Awareness
First Grade Oral Reading Assessment*	1	Criterion-referenced tests used to measure student progress in fluency, expression, and comprehension.
Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM)	1 (and higher)	Used to determine progress in reading fluency on all Title I campuses and recommended for all district beginning readers through grade three.
Minnesota Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (MN SOLOM)	K-12 ELL	Criterion-referenced teacher observation matrix that assesses the listening and speaking skills of English language learners.
Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Reading and Mathematics	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	Criterion-referenced test measuring academic progress in reading and mathematics. It is computerized and adaptive to student response levels. Used on North Side Initiative campuses.
Computerized Achievement Levels Tests (CALT) Reading and Mathematics*	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	Computerized, criterion-referenced test measuring student performance and mastery of skills in reading and mathematics.
Northwest Achievement Levels Tests (NALT) for Reading and Mathematics	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9	Non-computerized criterion-referenced tests measuring student performance and mastery of skills in reading and mathematics. Aligned with the CALT and used by students unable to take computer version.
Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment II (MCA-II/ GRAD) Reading*	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10 GRAD Retest 11	Criterion-referenced tests used to measure student progress toward Minnesota’s academic standards for reading and meet <i>No Child Left Behind</i> requirements.
Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment II (MCA-II/ GRAD) Mathematics*	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11	Criterion-referenced tests used to measure student progress toward Minnesota’s academic standards for mathematics and meet <i>No Child Left Behind</i> requirements.

Exhibit 4.2.1 (continued)
Summary of Student Assessments Administered
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Student Assessment	Grades Administered	Description
Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment II (MCA-II) Science*	MCA—5, 8, or MCAII—10 or entry level Biology students grades 9-12	Criterion-referenced tests used to measure student progress toward Minnesota’s academic standards for science.
Test of Emerging Academic English (TEAE) Reading and Writing	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	Norm-referenced reading proficiency test for English language learners, used to assess progress in acquiring academic English language.
Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) Test (Special Education) Reading and Mathematics	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11	Criterion-referenced alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards to measure the extent to which students with significant cognitive disabilities are making progress in the general curriculum. They are aligned with the Minnesota academic content standards for all students in reading and mathematics.
Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) Test (Special Education) Science	5, 8, 10	Criterion-referenced alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards to measure the extent to which students with significant cognitive disabilities are making progress in the general curriculum. They are aligned with the Minnesota academic content standards for all students in science.
Mathematics Test for English Language Learners (MTELL)	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11	Criterion-referenced, computer-delivered mathematics test with simplified English that reduces the confounding effects of language on mathematics performance. It assesses the same standards as the grade-level MCA II.
Curriculum and Instruction’s Mini- MCA II Reading Tests*	6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Criterion-referenced local test measuring Minnesota reading standards and benchmarks for the purpose of informing instruction for teachers and students.
Curriculum and Instruction’s End-of-Quarter Math Tests*	K-7, Algebra, Geometry, and Algebra II	Criterion-referenced local test measuring Minnesota mathematics standards and benchmarks for the purpose of informing instruction for teachers and students.
Graduation—Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD) Test of Written Composition*	9, Retests 10, 11	Criterion-referenced test measuring quality of written composition; replaces MBST for students who entered grade 8 in 2005-06 or later.
Minnesota Basic Skills Test (MBST) Retests	11, 12 only	Criterion-referenced test measuring basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics required for graduation in class of 2009 and earlier.
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)	4, 8, 12	Norm-referenced national assessment measuring student knowledge in various subject areas including reading, writing, mathematics, science and social studies. Subjects and campuses vary.
Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS)* EXPLORE—8TH PLAN—10TH	8, 10	The PLAN, by makers of the American College Test, is designed to help students plan for their future. The test includes an interest inventory; goals, plans, and needs inventory; and academic skills mastery (English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning).
Minnesota State College and University Systems (MNSCU)—Accuplacer tests	11	Given by state post-secondary institutions to determine need for remediation at post-secondary level for reading, writing, and mathematics.
* Indicates formal (system-wide) assessments.		

Exhibit 4.2.1 shows that the system has 12 formal assessments (that is, they are administered to all students at specific grade levels). Those assessments are:

- Beginning Kindergarten Assessments;
- End of Kindergarten Assessments;
- First Grade Oral Reading Assessment;
- Computerized Achievement Levels Tests (CALT/NALT) Reading and Mathematics;
- Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment II (MCA-II/GRAD) Reading, Mathematics, and Science**;
- Curriculum and Instruction’s Mini- MCA II Reading Tests;
- Curriculum and Instruction’s End-of-Quarter Mathematics Tests;
- Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD); and
- Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS-PLAN and EXPLORE).

These are the examinations auditors used to define the scope of assessment. The double asterisk (**) indicates high-stakes examinations that assessed compliance with *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* legislation and provided the primary measures of district progress in achieving the student proficiency goals in the district’s *Strategic Plan*.

To determine the scope of assessment for the four core areas (English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies), auditors compared the core curricula taught at each grade level to the formal assessment administered at those grade levels. The results are displayed in Exhibit 4.2.2. In order for the scope of assessment to be considered minimally adequate, at least 70 percent of the four core areas must be formally evaluated.

Exhibit 4.2.2
Scope of Formal Assessments Administered by Subject and Grade
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Curricular Area	Grades													Offered	Tested
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
English Language Arts	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	13	13
Mathematics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	13	13
Science	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	X	O	O	13	3
Social Studies	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	13	0
Areas Tested	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	52	29
Percent of Offered Curriculum Formally Tested (29/52=56%)														56%	
X = Subject offered and tested. O = Subject offered, not tested.															
<i>Source: Curriculum and assessment documents, and interviews.</i>															

Exhibit 4.2.2 shows the following with regard to assessment of the four core academic areas:

- English language arts, mathematics, science and social studies were offered in 52 instances. Those subjects/courses were formally assessed in only 29 (56 percent) of those instances.
- Forty-four percent of the curricular areas within the four subject areas were not assessed.
- Science was formally assessed in three of the 13 grade levels.
- Social studies were not formally assessed in any grade.

The audit team determined that the scope of assessment for the four core academic areas did not meet the minimum adequacy level of 70 percent and was, therefore, inadequate.

During interviews, staff members confirmed that assessment of social studies and science subjects was inadequate:

- “Social studies is only assessed by the classroom teacher. There are no district level tests.” (Administrator)
- “Social studies gets pushed to the side because it does not have a [state] test.” (Administrator)
- “Science is kit-based and is assessed at the end of the kit by the teacher. There is no common test.” (Administrator)

In summary, the audit team determined that district policy adequately defined the scope of assessment for the four core areas, requiring assessment in every grade. However, students’ knowledge and skills were not assessed in many grades and subjects. Only 56 percent of the taught curriculum in the four core areas was assessed, well below the audit minimum standard of 70 percent. Further, there were no assessments for social science, and science was only formally assessed in three grades. Therefore, in the areas that the audit team was asked to review, the scope of assessment was inadequate to provide the necessary data to inform the staff and community about student mastery of the curriculum or provide a basis for sound decisions about curriculum design and delivery.

Finding 4.3: Trends show that the percentages of students demonstrating proficiency on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments have stagnated or declined, making attainment of strategic proficiency goals improbable. Achievement gaps exist among student groups and may never close without effective interventions.

Student assessment data enable a school system’s staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the written curriculum, as well as instructional methods used to improve student achievement. The board, district staff, parents, and students use comparative assessment data to determine how effective schools and the central office have been in educating students in comparison to national and state performance averages. These data also enable the analyses of program effectiveness. Effective schools systems are able to document high achievement among all students. Disaggregated data provide information about the performance of student ethnic groups and their proficiency rates. It is expected that an analysis of test scores will indicate a consistent pattern of improvement over time and a reduction of performance gaps among segments of the student population. Without such data, leaders do not have the information necessary to assess the quality and consistency of student learning, program effectiveness, and organizational performance. Additionally, leaders do not have a sound basis for decisions about the design and delivery of curriculum.

To identify student proficiency goals and trends, the audit team reviewed state and district policies and plans, test data, and related documents. Auditors also interviewed district board and staff members, as well as representatives of the Minnesota State Department of Education and of the firm that developed the state assessments. Auditors found that student proficiency rates, as measured by state assessments, are low, have been consistently below state averages, and are, in many instances, declining. Also, achievement gaps exist among ethnic groups in the student population and are increasing. Without effective interventions to reverse current trends, it will take years to close some gaps while others may never be closed. Finally, students are not making sufficient progress to achieve the proficiency goals in the district’s *Strategic Plan* or to comply with the 2014 proficiency target in *No Child Left Behind* legislation. Overall, data trends show stagnation or declines in student proficiency rates in the majority of grades and subjects. Rates tend to decrease at higher grade levels and large achievement gaps exist among student groups identifiable by ethnicity.

The district had compiled data on a variety of assessments. After reviewing those data, the audit team elected to focus on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Series II (MCA) for several reasons. First, MCA (also referred to as the MCA-II) are high-stakes assessments used at the state and national levels to measure district success. Secondly, student MCA success rates were low and required immediate intervention to reverse performance trends. Third, achievement gaps among ethnic groups were large. Fourth, district strategic goals were based, in large measure, on successful MCA results. Fifth, lacking success on the MCA, other assessments do not matter.

MCA proficiency goals for district students were set forth in the district’s *2007-2012 Strategic Plan*. The critical goal is to have 80 percent of students demonstrate proficiency in reading and mathematics on state examinations by school year 2011-12. The MCA examines students in the following subjects and grades:

- Reading, grades 3-8 and 10;
- Mathematics, grades 3-8 and 11;
- Science, grades 5, 8, and high school; and
- Writing, reading, and mathematics in high school on the Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma (GRAD).

Auditors organized recent data from these assessments into a series of exhibits designed to highlight the salient conditions and trends of the greatest benefit to curriculum managers.

Student Proficiency on GRAD Examinations

The Minnesota Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma (GRAD) examination is a series of state tests that fulfill Minnesota’s high school graduation requirement for students who first entered grade 8 in 2005-06 or later. Assessments measure student skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. GRAD assessments are new and being phased in over the school years 2007-08 through 2009-10. The writing assessment was first administered in school year 2007-08. The first administration of the mathematics assessment will be in spring of 2009. Therefore, trend data do not exist. Exhibit 4.3.1 displays available snapshot data for GRAD assessments administered thus far; it compares district and state pass rates in reading and writing for school years 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Exhibit 4.3.1
Comparison of District and State Student Pass Rates on the
GRAD Examinations in Reading and Writing for High School Students
Minneapolis Public Schools
2007-08 and 2008-09

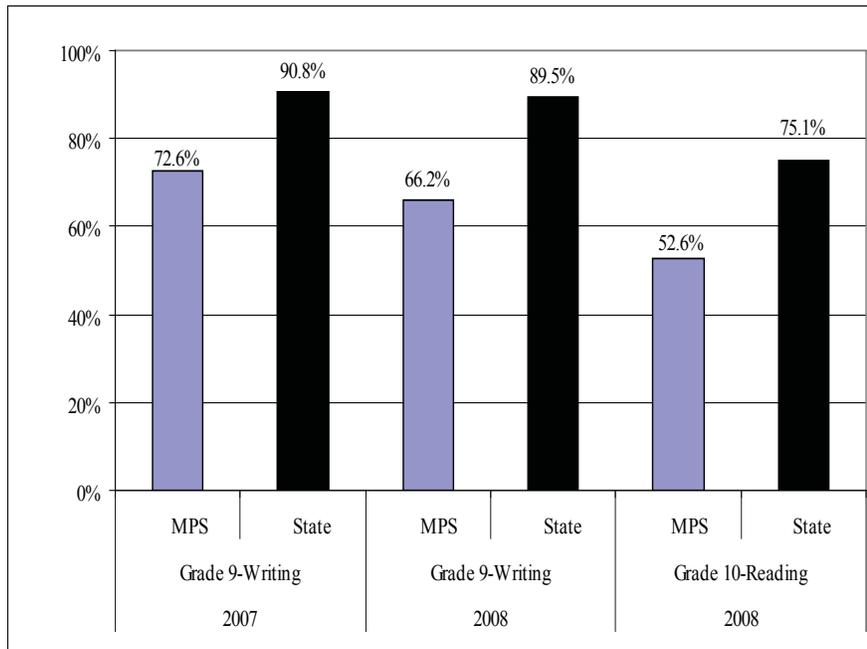


Exhibit 4.3.1 indicates the following for GRAD examination pass rates in reading and writing for students in grades 9 and 10. (Note: the GRAD Reading Examination was not given in school year 2007-08.)

- In writing, pass rates for Minneapolis students were 73 percent in 2007 (18 percent below the state average) and dropped to 66 percent in 2008 (23 percent below the state average).
- In reading, the 2008 pass rate for Minneapolis students was 53 percent, 23 percent below the state average.
- Pass rates on all examinations were approximately 20 percent below state averages, and the writing pass rate declined.

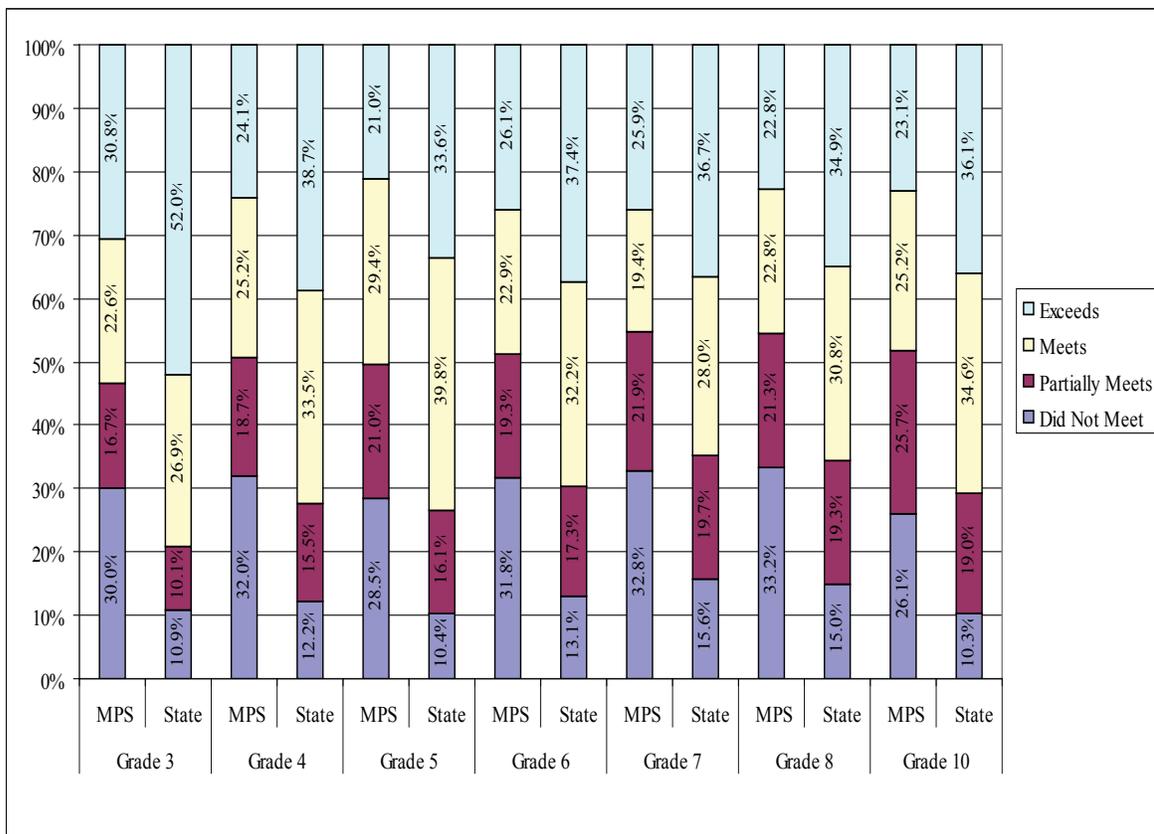
Student Proficiency on the MCA-II Examinations

Exhibits 4.3.2 and Exhibit 4.3.3 display snapshot proficiency rates for students on the MCA-II for fall 2007. Results from these assessments are reported on four levels of proficiency that appear in the exhibits that follow:

- Level D = Does Not Meet Standards.
- Level P = Partially Meets Standards.
- Level M = Meets Standards.
- Level E = Exceeds Standards.

Exhibit 4.3.2 shows a comparison of district and state student proficiency rates on the 2007-08 MCA-II reading tests for grades 3 through 8 and grade 10.

Exhibit 4.3.2
Comparison of District and State Student Reading Proficiency Rates on the
MCA-II Examinations: Grades 3–8 and 10
Minneapolis Public Schools
Fall 2007



Note: percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

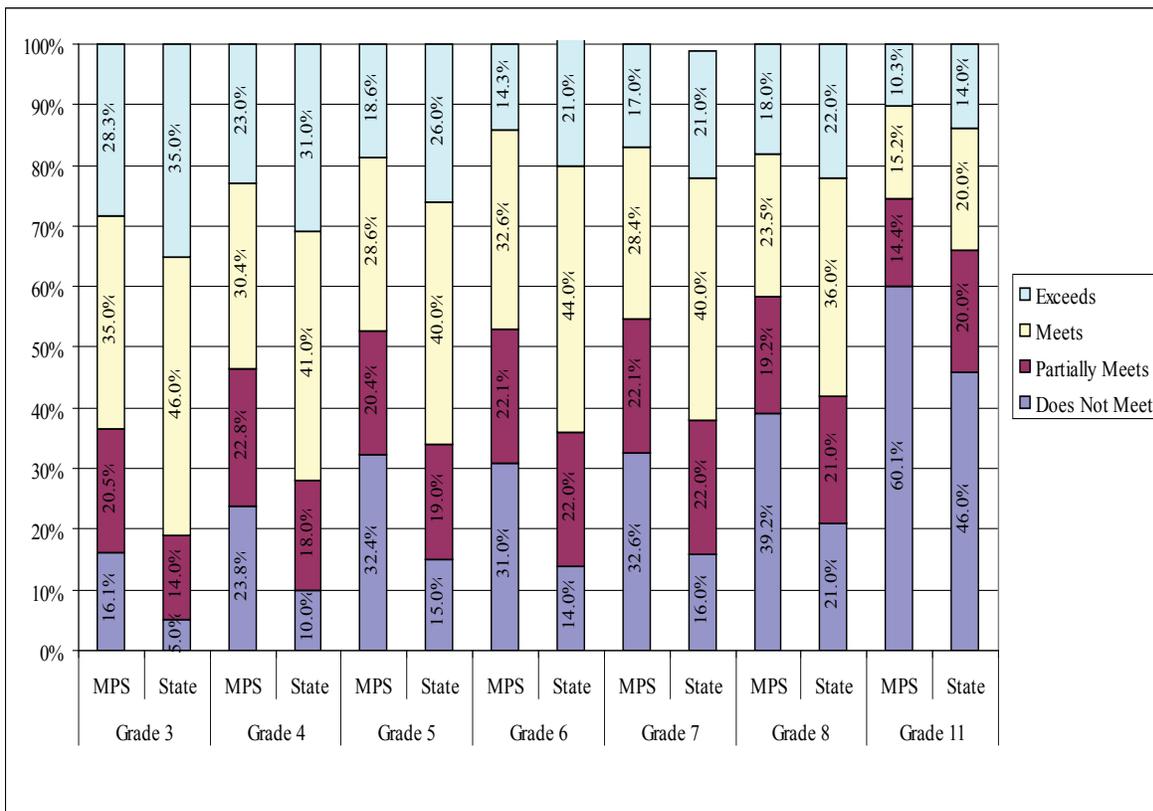
Source: Minnesota Department of Education Web Site (<http://education.mn.state.us>).

Exhibit 4.3.2 shows the following for reading proficiency rates for students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 10:

- Proficiency rates in all grades were below state averages by 20 percent or more.
- The percentages of students who met or exceeded standards were within a range of 53 to 46 percent for all grades. State proficiency rates were mostly between 65 and 73 percent, with a high of 79 percent in grade 3.
- The percentages of students who scored at the Exceeds Standards level declined from a high of 31 percent (grade 3) to a low of 23 percent (grade 10). For the same grades and level, state proficiency rates were 52 percent and 36 percent, respectively.
- The percentages of students who scored at the Did Not Meet Standards level fluctuated in a range of 33 percent (grades 7 and 8) to 26 percent (grade 10). State averages at this level did not exceed 16 percent for any grade.
- There were no consistent patterns of proficiency rates across grades.

Exhibit 4.3.3 shows a comparison of district and state student proficiency rates on the 2007-08 MCA-II mathematics tests for grades 3 through 8 and grade 11:

Exhibit 4.3.3
Comparison of District and State Student Proficiency Rates on the
MCA-II Mathematics Examinations: Grades 3–8 and 11
Minneapolis Public Schools
Fall 2007



Note: percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Minnesota Department of Education Web Site (<http://education.mn.state.us>).

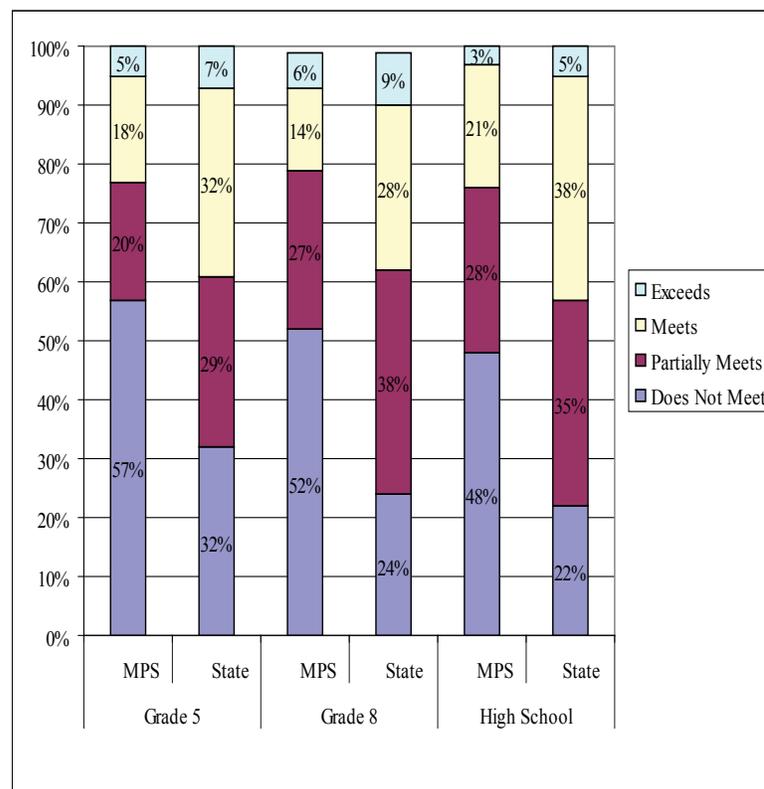
Exhibit 4.3.3 shows the following with regard to the fall 2007 MCA-II mathematics proficiency rates for students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11:

- Proficiency rates for students in all grades were below state averages.
- The percentages of students who met or exceeded proficiency standards tended to decline as grade levels increased; the proficiency rate in grade 3 was a high of 63 percent while the rate in grade 11 was a low of 26 percent. State averages reflected a similar trend, declining from a high of 81 percent in grade 3 to a low of 34 percent in grade 11.
- The percentages of students who scored at the level of Exceeds Standards declined from a high of 28 percent (grade 3) to a low of ten percent (grade 11). Likewise, state proficiency averages declined from 35 percent in grade 3 to 14 percent in grade 11.
- The percentages of students who Did Not Meet Standards increased between grades 3 and 11—from 16 percent to 60 percent. State averages increased from 5 percent in grade 3 to 46 percent in grade 11. Across all grades, the percentages of Minneapolis students at the lowest performance level were greater than the state averages. Differences ranged from 11 points in grade 3 to 18 points in grade 8.
- Across grades, there was a gradual increase in the percentages of district students in the two lowest performance categories (students who did not fully meet standards). The percentages ranged from 37 percent in grade 3 to 74 percent in grade 11.

Exhibit 4.3.4 shows fall 2007 MCA-II science proficiency rates for students in grades 5 and 8 and in high school. The test was first administered in 2007-08. Therefore, no trend data are available.

Exhibit 4.3.4

Comparison of District and State Student Proficiency Rates on MCA-II Science Examinations: Grades 5, 8, and High School Minneapolis Public Schools Fall 2007



Note: percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Minnesota Department of Education Web Site (<http://education.mn.state.us>).

Exhibit 4.3.4 reveals the following for 2007 science proficiency rates for students in grades 5, 8 and high school:

- The rates of district students scoring proficient or better were well below state averages: grade 5, 16 percentage points; grade 8, 17 percentage points; and in high schools, 19 percentage points.
- The percentages of district and state students who scored at the level of Exceeds Standards were similar, as indicated below:
 - Grade 5: Minneapolis, five percent; state, seven percent.
 - Grade 8: Minneapolis, six percent; state, nine percent.
 - High school: Minneapolis, three percent; state, five percent.
- The percentages of district and state students who scored at the level of Does Not Meet Standards varied substantially:
 - Grade 5: Minneapolis, 57 percent; state, 32 percent.
 - Grade 8: Minneapolis, 52 percent; state, 24 percent.
 - High school: Minneapolis, 48 percent; state, 22 percent.

Exhibits 4.3.2 through 4.3.4 show that Minneapolis students performed as follows on the fall 2007 state assessments:

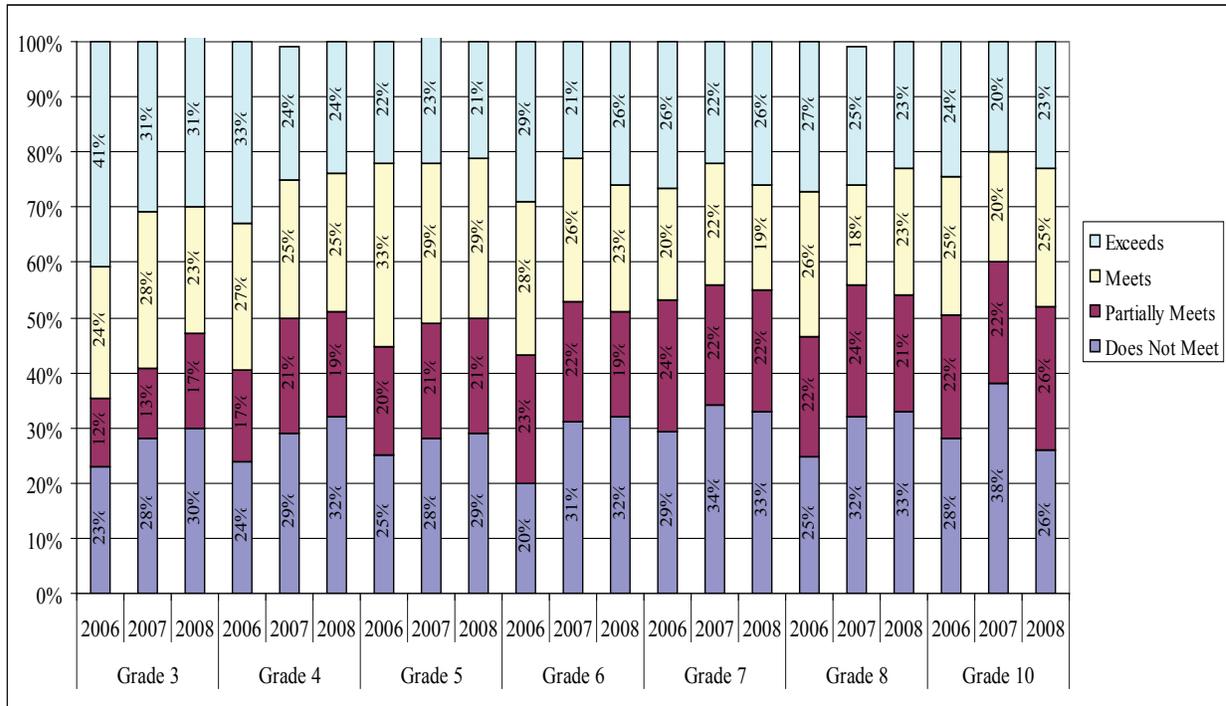
- Proficiency rates were below state averages in a range of approximately 15 to 25 points in all grades and subjects tested.
- The percentages of students in various grades who did not achieve proficiency fell within the following ranges: reading: 47 to 55 percent; mathematics, 37 to 74 percent; and science, 76 to 79 percent.
- In reading and mathematics, proficiency rates tended to decline as the grade level increased.

Exhibits 4.3.5 and 4.3.6 display proficiency rate trends in reading and mathematics over school years 2005-06 through 2007-08. (No trend data were available for the MCA-II science examination because it is new.)

Exhibits 4.3.5 displays MCA-II proficiency rate trends in reading for students in grades 3-8 and 10 during the period 2005-06 through 2007-08.

Exhibit 4.3.5

Three-Year Proficiency Trend for Students in Grades 3–8 and 10 MCA-II Reading Tests—All Proficiency Levels Minneapolis Public Schools 2005-06 through 2007-08



Note: percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Minnesota Department of Education Web Site (<http://education.mn.state.us>).

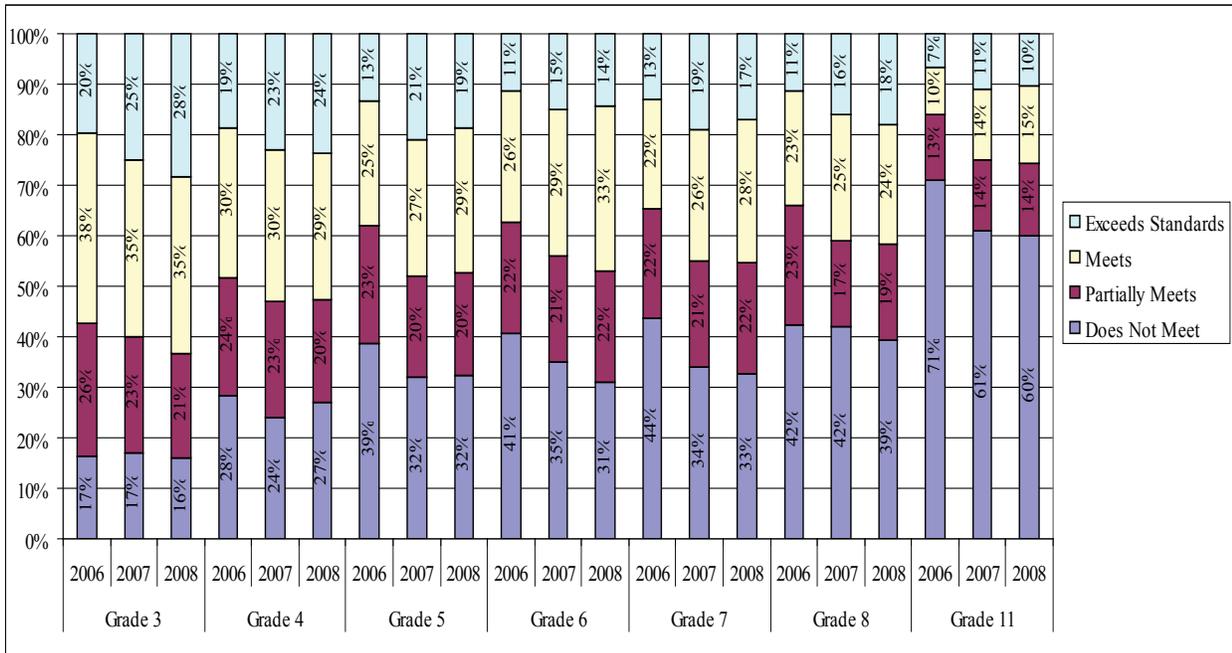
Exhibit 4.3.5 indicates the following for MCA-II reading proficiency rates for students in grades 3 through 8 and 10 during the period 2005-2008.

- Proficiency rates in most grades/years hovered near 50 percent, in a range of 40 to 65 percent.
- The percent of students who did not meet standards or partially met standards increased in all grades.
- With the exception of grade 10, there was an overall increase in students who did not meet standards (the lowest performance category) in all grades.
- The percentages of students who scored in the highest category (Exceeds Standards) tended to remain stable or decrease in most grades. In grade 3, students exceeding standards decreased by 10 percentage points.

Exhibit 4.3.6 displays MCA-II proficiency rate trends in mathematics for students in grades 3-8 and 11 during the period of 2005-06 through 2007-08.

Exhibit 4.3.6

Three-Year Proficiency Trend for Students in Grades 3–8 and 11 MCA-II Mathematics Tests—All Proficiency Levels Minneapolis Public Schools 2005-06 through 2007-08



Note: percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Minnesota Department of Education Web Site (<http://education.mn.state.us>).

Exhibit 4.3.6 indicates the following for MCA-II mathematics proficiency rates for students in grades 3 through 8, and 11 during the period of 2005-2007.

- Within each grade, the percentages of students who met or exceeded standards increased over the three-year period. Increases ranged from four percentage points in grade 4 to 10 percentage points in grades 5, 6, and 7.
- However, across grades, the percentages of students who did not meet standards or partially met standards increased as the grade level increased. For example, in grade 3 (2008) the percentage of students in the two lowest performance categories was 37 percent; in grade 11 it was 74 percent.
- The percentages of students who scored in the highest category (Exceeds Standards) increased in all grades by single digits. The range was from three percentage points in grades 3 and 11 to seven percentage points in grade 8.

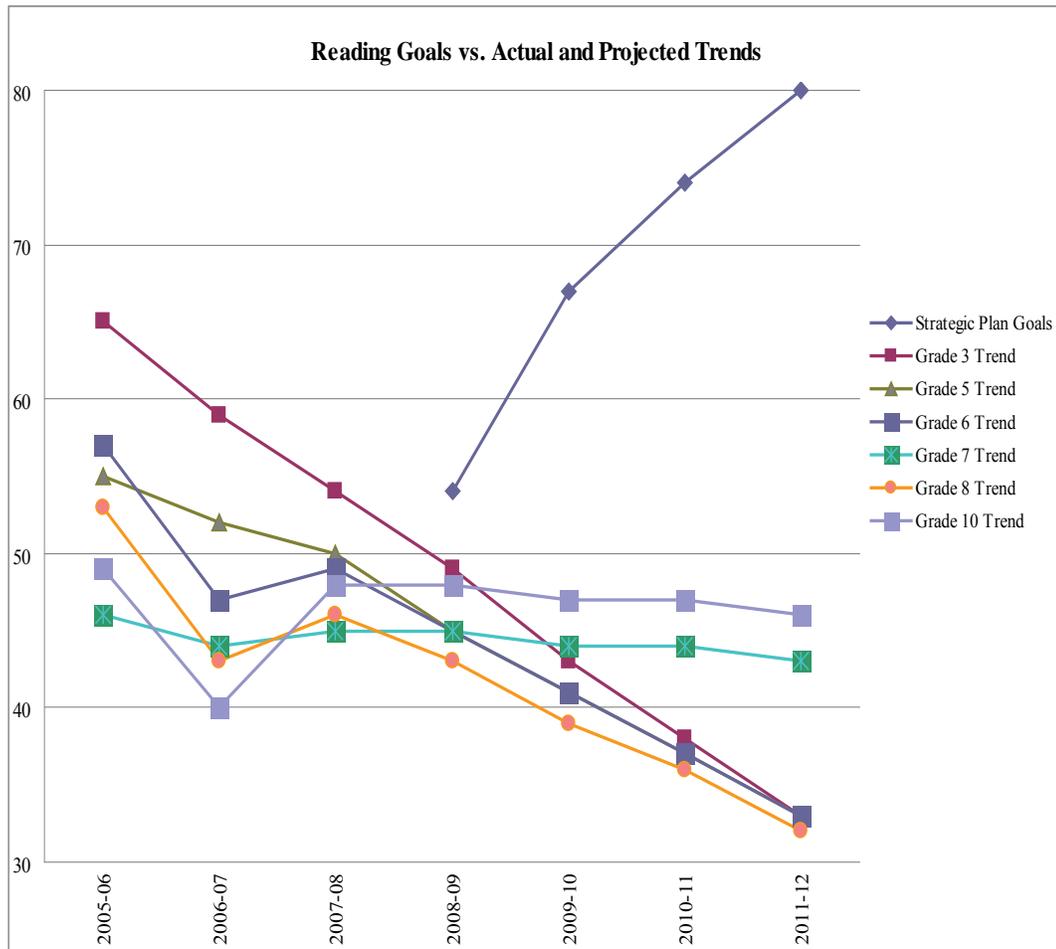
The data presented in Exhibits 4.3.5 and 4.3.6 indicate that the percentages of students demonstrating proficiency averaged approximately 50 percent for all grades in reading and mathematics. Proficiency rates tended to decrease in reading and increase modestly in mathematics.

A detailed discussion of the district’s plans is contained in Finding 1.4 and should be reviewed in connection with the following discussion on student achievement goals. Auditors noted that the district’s *Strategic Plan* contained proficiency rate goals for reading and mathematics that, if achieved, would constitute a drastic improvement in reading and mathematic proficiency rates for the students of Minneapolis. To determine if recent trends in student proficiency rates supported these ambitious goals, auditors calculated the average rate of improvement (or decline) in reading proficiency rates between years 2006 and 2008 and used those change rates to project student performance against the goals in the *Strategic Plan*. The charts in Exhibit 4.3.7 and Exhibit 4.3.8 show the results of those projections and how they compare to the goals in the district’s *Strategic Plan*.

Exhibit 4.3.7 shows the actual reading proficiency trends for school years 2005-06 through 2007-08, displays the 2009-2012 performance projections based on the trend data, and compares the projections to the student proficiency goals in the district *Strategic Plan*.

Exhibit 4.3.7

**MCA-II Reading Tests: Grades 3–8 and 10
Comparison of Proficiency Trends and Projections to Strategic Plan Proficiency Goals
Minneapolis Public Schools
2005-2012**



Note: percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Minnesota Department of Education Web Site (<http://education.mn.state.us>).

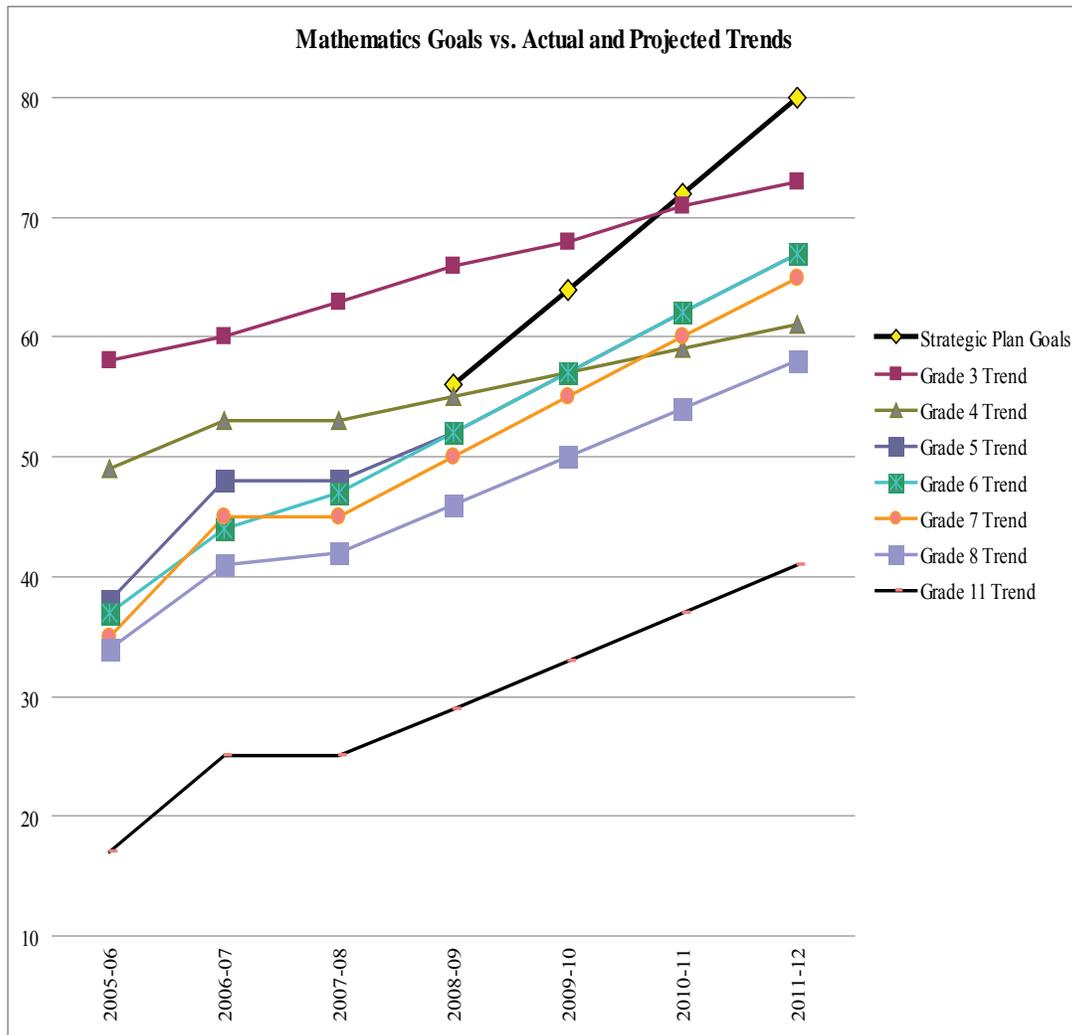
With regard to the relationship between actual and projected proficiency trends in reading and the student proficiency goals in the district *Strategic Plan*, Exhibit 4.3.7 shows:

- In every grade, reading proficiency rates showed an overall decline during the period of 2006 through 2008.
- Proficiency rate projections for the period of 2008-09 through 2011-12, based on the 2005-06 through 2007-08 actual proficiency trends, indicate that proficiency rates will decline or remain relatively flat, preventing the attainment of the *Strategic Plan* goals unless interventions improve student reading performance.
- If current trends continue, by 2011-12 there will be a gap of more than 30 percentage points between actual proficiency rates and the goals stated in the *Strategic Plan*.

Exhibit 4.3.8 shows the 2006-2008 actual performance trends in mathematics, documents the 2009-2012 performance projections based on those trend data, and compares the projections to the student proficiency goals in the district *Strategic Plan*.

Exhibit 4.3.8

**MCA-II Mathematics Tests: Grades 3–8 and 11
Comparison of Proficiency Trends and Projections to Strategic Plan Proficiency Goals
Minneapolis Public Schools
2005-2012**



Note: percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.
Source: Minnesota Department of Education Web Site (<http://education.mn.state.us>).

Exhibit 4.3.8 shows the following regarding the relationship between actual and projected proficiency trends in mathematics, on the one hand, and *Strategic Plan* student proficiency goals, on the other:

- In every grade, mathematics proficiency rates increased during the period of 2006 through 2008.
- However, proficiency rate projections based on those increases indicate that district students still will not reach the 2012 *Strategic Plan* goals in any grade, if current rates of increase continue.
- If current trends continue, by 2011-12 there will be gaps between goals and performance in the range of seven percentage points in grade 3 to 40 percentage points grade 11.

In summary, Exhibits 4.3.7 and 4.3.8 indicate that, given current trends, *Strategic Plan* goals for improving student proficiency rates are unattainable without substantial interventions.

In view of this conclusion, auditors reviewed the *Strategic Plan* in an attempt to identify strategies that held the promise of drastically reversing current performance trends. Such strategies were not apparent. Timelines for planned improvements (e.g., establishing expectations, training teachers and administrators, and implementing strategies) indicated that the district could not begin implementing major change strategies until approximately school years 2009-10 or 2010-11. In the meanwhile, current unfavorable trends will continue. Hence, auditors concluded that the proficiency rate goals in the *Strategic Plan* were not feasible.

In the absence of convincing, documented strategies to reach the *Strategic Plan*'s goal of 80 percent student proficiency by 2012, auditors asked staff members if the goal was attainable. The following are representative samples of staff responses to the question:

- “The 80 percent proficiency goal [in the *Strategic Plan*] is a laudable goal and the kids can do it, but I’m not sure that we have the right strategies in place [to reach the goal].” (Teacher)
- “We don’t have the professional development in place to train teachers in the strategies necessary to move [80 percent of students] to proficient.” (Teacher)
- “I don’t see any [teacher] training that could move the lowest performing students up two grade levels.” (Administrator)
- “I don’t believe that [80 percent goal] is possible because you would need early interventions before kindergarten. Many students do not come to school ready to learn.” (Teacher)
- “We can’t get there with current strategies.... We need to start [reading] interventions in PreKindergarten.... Students need to be taught sounds and be shown what the sounds look like [in letter form].... We are teaching letters instead of sounds. [That is not logical to a child’s brain].” (Teacher)

In summary, several conditions did not support the 80 percent proficiency goal in the district’s *Strategic Plan*. Those conditions included the following: student performance trends, preparation timelines for staff and community changes, the negative opinions of administrators and staff, and the absence of persuasive, documented interventions to generate the magnitude of student improvement required to meet the goal. Given these conditions, the audit team concluded that the 80 percent student proficiency goal stated in the district’s *Strategic Plan* is not attainable for most grades, without a substantial intervention. (See the recommendations in this report for guidance.)

Achievement Gaps and Parity Analysis

The ambitious goals in the *Strategic Plan* have two purposes: to reduce proficiency rate gaps among student groups and to put district students in a position to meet the *NCLB* goal of 100 percent of students achieving proficiency by 2014. With these purposes in mind, the audit team undertook detailed analyses of student performance trends in reading and mathematics. The purposes of these analyses were to estimate:

- The number of years necessary for the district to establish parity among various student groups in reading and mathematics;
- The number of years necessary to reach the 80 percent proficiency goals in the district’s *Strategic Plan*; and
- The annual percentage point improvement, by grade and subject, necessary to reach the 100 percent proficiency target specified in the *NCLB* legislation.

The critical assumption in these estimates is that there will be no major interventions to reverse current trends.

Conventional wisdom is that group differences in achievement are the result of disparate, inadequate, or ineffective educational experiences rather than ethnic or demographic characteristics. There is an expectation in curriculum management auditing that poverty, race, gender, or other ethnic or demographic differences should not predict differences in achievement levels. Further, all such subgroups in the student population are expected to achieve at comparable levels—demonstrating parity or equivalency in achievement, if not at the time of measurement, then at some reasonable future point in time as a result of an educational intervention.

To determine the existence and magnitude of achievement gaps among student subgroups in the Minneapolis Public Schools, auditors analyzed MCA test scores for a period of three years to identify achievement gaps. Then, they calculated the number of years necessary to close those gaps—or to achieve parity. The *years to parity* calculation is an estimation of the number of years necessary to close the achievement gap between two groups at current rates of progress. Simply stated, this is done by calculating the gap between two groups at the beginning and end of a period of years to determine the rate of change of the lagging group during the period. The rate of change is then divided into the gap and the end of the period to determine the number of years necessary to close the gap, provided there is no intervention to influence that rate of change. In the calculations that follow, the leading group consists of high-scoring White students; the lagging groups are African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics.

In addition to calculating years to parity, auditors also used variations of the years to parity formula to: (1) calculate the number of years necessary for all students to reach the district’s 80 percent proficiency goal and (2) calculate the rate of improvement necessary to reach the *No Child Left Behind* target of 100 percent proficiency by 2014. The results of those calculations are displayed in [Exhibit 4.3.9](#) and [Exhibit 4.3.10](#).

[Exhibit 4.3.9](#) shows, at current rates of progress in reading, the number of years required to achieve parity (close achievement gaps) among student groups and to reach the district’s 2012 strategic goal of 80 percent proficiency. The exhibit also shows the rates of progress necessary for students in each grade to reach the *NCLB* target of 100 percent student proficiency.

Exhibit 4.3.9

**MCA-II Reading Results: Years to Achieve Parity at Eighty Percent Proficiency
and Annual Improvement Rates Required to Meet 2014 NCLB Target
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Grade	2006 Percent Proficient	2008 Percent Proficient	2006 Percentage Point Gap	2008 Percentage Point Gap	Annualized Change (Negative No. Indicates Gap is Increasing)	Years to Parity	Years to Reach the 2012 Strategic Plan Goal of 80% Proficient at Current Rate of Change	Required Annual Percentage Point Increase to Meet NCLB by 2014
Gap between African Americans and Whites								
3	40	43.7	46.5	42.6	1.95	21.8	18.6	9.4
4	37.7	33.2	47.4	50.9	-1.75	never	never	11.1
5	35.4	34.6	45.0	48.2	-1.6	never	never	10.9
6	37.2	36.8	46.1	48.9	-1.4	never	never	10.5
7	26.0	32.9	53.7	48.1	2.8	17.2	16.8	11.2
8	32.7	32.0	50.6	51.8	-0.6	never	never	11.3
10	25.1	32.6	50.9	53.2	-1.15	never	never	11.2
Gap between American Indians and Whites								
3	51.2	39.6	35.3	46.7	-5.7	never	never	10.1
4	42.6	35.3	42.5	48.8	-3.15	never	never	10.8
5	41.1	43.0	39.3	39.8	-0.25	never	never	9.5
6	35.3	40.4	48.0	45.3	1.35	33.6	29.3	9.9
7	24.8	42.1	54.9	38.9	8.0	4.9	4.7	9.7
8	36.5	33.8	46.8	50.0	-1.6	never	never	11.0
10	40.0	43.9	36.0	41.9	-2.95	never	never	9.4

Exhibit 4.3.9 (continued)
MCA-II Reading Results: Years to Achieve Parity at Eighty Percent Proficiency
and Annual Improvement Rates Required to Meet 2014 NCLB Target
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Grade	2006 Percent Proficient	2008 Percent Proficient	2006 Percentage Point Gap	2008 Percentage Point Gap	Annualized Change (Negative No. Indicates Gap is Increasing)	Years to Parity	Years to Reach the 2012 Strategic Plan Goal of 80% Proficient at Current Rate of Change	Required Annual Percentage Point Increase to Meet NCLB by 2014
Gap between Asians and Whites								
3	81.7	49.2	4.8	37.1	-16.15	never	never	8.5
4	67.1	53.3	18.0	30.8	-6.4	never	never	7.8
5	66.7	57.0	13.7	25.8	-6.05	never	never	7.2
6	73.0	44.3	10.3	41.4	-15.55	never	never	9.3
7	58.8	40.7	20.9	40.3	-9.7	never	never	9.9
8	68.9	50.2	14.4	33.6	-9.6	never	never	8.3
10	56.4	51.7	19.6	34.1	-7.25	never	never	8.1
Gap between Hispanics and Whites								
3	73.1	36.8	13.4	49.5	-18.05	never	never	10.5
4	64.5	34.7	20.6	49.4	-14.4	never	never	10.9
5	68.5	40.1	11.9	42.7	-15.4	never	never	10.0
6	64.8	34.2	18.5	51.5	-16.5	never	never	11.0
7	57.6	34.4	22.1	46.6	-12.25	never	never	10.9
8	71.4	38.5	11.9	45.3	-16.7	never	never	10.3
10	46.5	37.6	29.5	48.2	-9.35	never	never	10.4
White Proficiency Rates								
3	86.5	86.3	NA	NA	NA	NA	achieved	2.3
4	85.1	84.1	NA	NA	NA	NA	achieved	2.7
5	80.4	82.8	NA	NA	NA	NA	achieved	2.9
6	83.3	85.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	achieved	2.4
7	79.7	81.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	achieved	3.2
8	83.3	83.8	NA	NA	NA	NA	achieved	2.7
10	76.0	85.8	NA	NA	NA	NA	achieved	2.4
NA = Not applicable								
<i>Sources: Minnesota Department of Education Web site: Test Results, November 1, 2008, and MPS NCLB Data Report, August 27, 2008.</i>								

Exhibit 4.3.9 reveals that, if there are no interventions to alter current reading proficiency rate trends, the following can be expected with regard to closing achievement gaps, achieving 80 percent proficiency for the district's students, and meeting the 2014 NCLB target:

- White students in all grades tested have achieved the strategic goal of 80 percent proficiency and require an annual increase of approximately three percentage points each year to achieve the NCLB target.
- The proficiency gaps between White students and all other ethnic groups increased in almost every grade. These increasing gaps mean that the majority of non-White students will never achieve parity with White students and will never reach the strategic goal of 80 percent proficiency for the district student body.

- While proficiency rates declined for the overwhelming majority of student groups and grades, the 2007-08 test results indicated that in order to meet the 2014 *NCLB* goal of 100 percent proficiency, the numbers of non-White students achieving proficiency must increase by between 7.2 and 11.3 percent each year between school year 2007-08 and 2014.

Overall, at current rates of progress, the achievement gaps in reading will not be closed for most students groups in most grades. Further, students are not making sufficient progress to meet the district's strategic proficiency goal in 2012 or to hit the *NCLB* target in 2014.

Exhibit 4.3.10 shows, at current rates of progress in mathematics, the number of years required to achieve parity (close achievement gaps) among student groups and to reach the district's 2012 strategic goal of 80 percent proficiency. The exhibit also shows the rates of progress necessary for students in each grade to reach the *NCLB* target of 100 percent student proficiency.

Exhibit 4.3.10

MCA-II Mathematics Results: Years to Achieve Parity and Eighty Percent Proficiency and Annual Improvement Rates Required to Meet 2014 *NCLB* Target Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

Grade	2006 Percent Proficient	2008 Percent Proficient	2006 Percentage Point Gap	2008 Percentage Point Gap	Annualized Change (Negative No. Indicates Gap is Increasing)	Years to Parity	Years to Reach 80% Strategic Plan Goal at Current Rate of Change	Required Annual Percentage Point Increase to Meet <i>NCLB</i> by 2014
Gap between African Americans and Whites								
3	40.6	44.4	45.7	43.0	1.3	31.9	26.4	9.3
4	30.1	29.2	50.7	51.9	-0.6	never	never	11.8
5	21.8	24.9	47.6	50.7	-1.5	never	never	12.5
6	19.1	25.6	53.6	50.7	1.5	35.0	37.5	12.4
7	17.7	23.7	55.9	53.5	1.2	44.6	46.9	12.7
8	17.3	18.8	51.3	54.6	-1.7	never	never	13.5
11	2.7	5.7	37.4	42.1	-2.3	never	never	15.7
Gap between Whites and American Indians/Alaskan Natives								
3	47.7	51.5	38.6	35.9	1.3	26.6	21.1	8.1
4	42.5	34.5	38.3	46.6	-4.2	never	never	10.9
5	30.1	37.4	39.3	38.2	0.6	69.5	77.5	10.4
6	22.3	34.1	50.4	42.2	4.1	10.3	11.2	11.0
7	20.7	32.5	52.9	44.7	4.1	10.9	11.6	11.3
8	20.0	14.6	48.6	58.8	-5.1	never	never	14.2
11	1.3	10.1	38.8	37.7	0.6	66.7	123.7	15.0
Gap between Asians and Whites								
3	62.9	60.6	23.4	26.8	-1.7	never	never	6.6
4	43.6	56.7	37.2	24.4	6.4	3.8	3.6	7.2
5	38.9	50.0	30.5	25.6	2.5	10.4	12.2	8.3
6	39.9	41.1	32.8	35.2	-1.2	never	never	9.8
7	33.1	43.9	40.5	33.3	3.6	9.3	10.1	9.4
8	41.7	47.0	26.9	26.4	0.2	105.6	132.0	8.8
11	13.3	27.2	26.8	20.6	3.1	6.6	17.0	12.1

Exhibit 4.3.10 (continued)
MCA-II Mathematics Results: Years to Achieve Parity and Eighty Percent Proficiency
and Annual Improvement Rates Required to Meet 2014 NCLB Target
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Grade	2006 Percent Proficient	2008 Percent Proficient	2006 Percentage Point Gap	2008 Percentage Point Gap	Annualized Change (Negative No. Indicates Gap is Increasing)	Years to Parity	Years to Reach 80% Strategic Plan Goal at Current Rate of Change	Required Annual Percentage Point Increase to Meet NCLB by 2014
Gap between Hispanics and Whites								
3	44.4	44.6	41.9	42.8	-0.5	never	never	9.2
4	34.5	34.8	46.3	46.3	0.0	never	never	10.9
5	27.3	33.0	42.1	42.6	-0.2	never	never	11.2
6	26.8	27.9	45.9	48.4	-1.3	never	never	12.0
7	20.2	28.9	53.4	48.3	2.5	18.9	20.0	11.9
8	23.1	25.9	45.5	47.5	-1.0	never	never	12.4
11	5.6	11.7	34.6	36.1	-0.8	never	never	14.7
White Proficiency Rates								
3	86.3	87.4	NA	NA	NA	NA	achieved	2.1
4	80.8	81.1	NA	NA	NA	NA	achieved	3.2
5	69.4	75.6	NA	NA	NA	NA	1.4	4.1
6	72.7	76.3	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.1	4.0
7	73.6	77.2	NA	NA	NA	NA	1.6	3.8
8	68.6	73.4	NA	NA	NA	NA	2.7	4.4
11	40.1	47.8	NA	NA	NA	NA	8.4	8.7
NA = Not applicable								
<i>Sources: Minnesota Department of Education Web site: Test Results, November 1, 2008, and MPS NCLB Data Report, August 27, 2008.</i>								

Exhibit 4.3.10 reveals that, if no interventions alter current trends in mathematics proficiency rates, the following results can be expected with regard to closing achievement gaps, achieving an 80 percent proficiency rate for the student body, and meeting the 2014 NCLB target:

- Hispanic students in all grades tested, except grade 7, will never achieve parity with White students or reach the 80 percent proficiency goal because the gap between the two groups is increasing. Hispanic students in grade 7 will require approximately 20 years to reach parity and achieve the 80 percent proficiency goal.
- African American students in grades 4, 5, 8, and 11 will never achieve parity with White students or reach the 80 percent proficiency goal; the gap between the two groups is increasing. African American students in grades 3, 6, and 7 will achieve parity in approximately 32, 35, and 47 years, respectively. In order to reach the 2014 NCLB target, the numbers of students achieving proficiency must increase by an average of 13 percent annually.
- American Indians and Alaskan Native students in grades 4 and 8 will never achieve parity with White students or reach the 80 percent proficiency goal because the gap between the two groups is increasing. American Indians and Alaskan Native students in grades 6 and 7 will achieve parity in approximately 11 years. Those in grade 3 will achieve parity in 21 years, while students in grades in grades 5 and 11 will achieve parity in approximately 70 years. In order to reach the 2014 NCLB target, an average

annual increase of approximately 12 percent in the number of students achieving proficiency is required in all grades.

- Asian students in grades 3 and 6 will never achieve parity with White students or reach the 80 percent proficiency goal; the gap between the two groups is increasing. Asian students in grades 4, 5, 7, and 11 should achieve parity in between four and nine years. However, students in grade 8 will require approximately 106 years to achieve parity with Whites. In order to reach the 2014 *NCLB* target, an average annual increase of approximately nine percent in the number of students achieving proficiency is required in all grades.
- White students in grades 3 and 4 have achieved the 80 percent proficiency goal. Those in grades 5 through 8 will achieve the 2012 goal in three years or less at current rates of improvement. Students in grade 11 will not reach the goal until 2016. In order to reach the 2014 *NCLB* target, an average annual increase of 4.5 percent in the number of students achieving proficiency is required in all grades.

Overall, at current rates of progress, the achievement gap in mathematics will never close for most Hispanic and African American students, as well as some Asian and American Indian/ Alaskan Native students. With the exception of White students, most students in all ethnic groups are not making sufficient progress to achieve the district's 80 percent proficiency goal by 2012. Most groups in most grades will have to show a substantial improvement in annual proficiency rates to hit the 2014 *NCLB* target.

Exhibits 4.3.9 and 4.3.10 demonstrate that without timely interventions, the district will: (a) never close the achievement gaps among student ethnic groups, (b) not achieve the 80 percent proficiency goal while the current group of students are in the school district, and (c) not hit the 2014 100 percent proficiency target set by *NCLB* legislation. In short, the *Strategic Plan* will not be achieved.

Given the districtwide emphasis on using data to assess student needs and improve achievement (Finding 4.4) and the abundance of assessment data available (Finding 4.2), it is logical to ask, "Why haven't students performed better on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments?" The answer may be related to three basic assumptions underlying the Curriculum Management Audit. Those assumptions are that:

- The written, taught, and tested curricula must be aligned for the best teaching and learning results;
- Alignment of the written, taught, and tested curricula optimizes a student's chance for success on high-stakes tests by preparing the student to deal effectively with the contextual, content, and cognitive demands of those tests; and
- Professional development must equip teachers to deliver the aligned, written curriculum effectively.

It is noteworthy that these three assumptions have been violated by the conditions discussed in Finding 2.2 and the following subparagraphs. While auditors did not establish cause-and-effect relationships between these conditions and MCA outcomes, there is a logical correlation between low student proficiency rates and the violations represented by the following conditions:

- Misalignment of curriculum objectives. "Learning objectives in district curriculum guidance documents were inconsistently linked to either state or national standards." (See Finding 2.2.) This lack of connectivity means that the written curriculum objectives that guide classroom instruction may not be the objectives upon which state assessments are based.
- Misalignment or absence of instructional strategies. Auditors found that instructional strategies in district curriculum documents did not prepare students to satisfy the benchmarks in the Minnesota Academic Standards. Further, "...[district] curriculum guidance documents...tended to lack reference to specific instructional strategies." In other words, the district curriculum lacked the teaching strategies necessary to prepare students to perform according to state standards (Finding 2.2).
- Misalignment of assessments. "None of the [science, mathematics, and English language arts] curriculum guidance documents presented [by the district staff] keyed each objective to district/and or state assessments." Social science documents were somewhat better, but were still inadequate. (See

Finding 2.2.) Alignment of assessments was further complicated by the fact that the Minnesota State Department of Education does not provide valid MCA exemplars so that students can be prepared for the contextual, content, and cognitive demands of state assessments.

- Conversations with the state education staff and the MCA commercial test developer verified that the available “samples” of test items do not mirror actual test questions. Lacking precise knowledge of the demands placed on students by the MCA, one district assessment developer described the process of preparing local assessments as “shooting in the dark.”

Any one of these conditions presents a serious obstacle to student success on the MCA; together, they can be insurmountable.

Summary

Recent trends on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments show that students in all subjects and grades demonstrated low rates of proficiency and performed below state averages. Trends were characterized by declines in English language arts proficiency and there were only modest gains in mathematics. However, proficiency rates declined as grade levels increased. In addition, substantial achievement gaps existed among student ethnic groups. Gaps increased in many instances, and, if current trends persist, most will never close. In light of these trends and in the absence of evidence of interventions to reverse them, the audit team concluded that the 80 percent proficiency rate goal in the district’s *Strategic Plan* was not realistic and that the district will not hit the 2014 *No Child Left Behind* proficiency target. Finally, the lack of alignment among state and district learning objectives and assessments and the absence of teaching strategies tailored to state benchmarks make it increasingly unlikely that the district staff can effect substantial, districtwide improvements in student proficiency rates in the near future.



Student receiving help at Southwest High School

Finding 4.4: Policy guidance for use of assessment data to improve student achievement is adequate, but procedures and job description guidance are inadequate. Data use has not substantially improved student proficiency rates on state tests.

A data-driven school system collects data and uses it as feedback to improve the design and delivery of curriculum. The use of data from a variety of sources is essential for sound curriculum management. Effective assessment resources include test data, surveys and follow-up studies, program evaluation, audits and reviews, and staff evaluations. The resulting data need to be made available to all levels of the school system in formats that can be effectively utilized in decision making for school improvement planning, curriculum review, modification, or adoption, instructional material selection, and district- and school-based program selection and evaluation. Administrators and teachers require data from test item analysis and disaggregated achievement data so that they can monitor and adjust curriculum design or delivery. Systems that fail to create and utilize these data sources lack the basis for sound decisions involving curriculum, instruction, and supporting operations.

To assess the use of data in the Minneapolis Public Schools, the audit team reviewed board policies, the strategic plan and other planning documents, student assessment data, job descriptions, professional development reports, and other communication documents that reflect the collection and use of data. Auditors also interviewed board members, administrators, teachers, and other support personnel about the use of data in decision making.

The audit team determined that policy and plans for data use were adequate and some procedures were in place, though they were not systemic. Job descriptions required data use, but staff members reported a lack of expertise across the district; professional development for this activity was disorganized, and there was little accountability for training provided, needed, or applied. Many staff members expressed negative or conflicting attitudes about data use and related issues. Furthermore, student achievement trends suggested that the staff had not been successful in applying data to improve student proficiency rates on state assessments. Overall, the district's design for data use was inadequate and implementation was ineffective.

The following board policies and related document address data use:

- *Board Policy 1692: Shared Leadership for Continuous Improvement* tasks the school Leadership Team “to review [student achievement data] and develop strategies...which will result in...improvement of the growth of students...”
- *Board Policy 2100: Superintendent Function* directs the superintendent to prepare and present data that helps the board to establish policies and approve plans.
- *Board Policy 6270: Evaluation* states that educational evaluation should serve three purposes: “the diagnostic function, the achievement function, and the instructional program assessment function to determine if there are weaknesses in the instructional program in order to improve it.” This policy addresses use of data for both student assessment and program evaluation.
- *Board Policy 6272: Evaluating Student Learning* requires data be used to “inform the student and the parent or guardian of the progress toward achieving educational goals.”
- The board-approved *Teacher Contract 2007-2009* with the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers requires the use of data for the parties to “review and analyze data” and “to develop goals...objectives and strategies.” Much of this language centers on school improvement planning and the Quality Improvement Process.

The contract and policies clearly direct the use of data for decision making and are adequate.

To determine if the policy requirements for data use were reflected in district plans, auditors reviewed a sample of the major planning documents. [Exhibit 4.4.1](#) lists those documents and provides a summary of what the auditors found regarding data use.

Exhibit 4.4.1

Sample of District Planning Documents Demonstrating Use of Data Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

Title	Description of Data Use Focus
<i>MPS 2007-2012 Strategic Plan</i>	This plan used data in a variety of instances. One of the most important uses was to set goals for student achievement (80 percent proficiency by 2012) in the core areas of mathematics and English language arts and measure progress toward those goals. However, the feasibility of achieving that goal was questioned by several staff members (see Finding 4.3). This calls into question how well data are being used. Additionally, there were no goals for science and social studies.
<i>MPS 2007-2012 Strategic Plan-Supplement Action steps, metrics, and timing</i>	This document identified metrics and leading indicators to assess progress in implementing strategies.
<i>School Improvement Plans</i>	Used student achievement and other data to determine goals and objectives for improvement and to assess progress toward those goals. Included summative data from the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA), the Computerized Achievement Levels Tests (CALT), and Mini-MCA, as well as student suspension and attendance rates. Formative assessments were not included.
<i>MPS Revision of the Quality Performance Awards-QPA</i>	Provides data rubrics to assess school performance and identify those in need of improvement. Rubrics are established for each of the quality standards as defined by the state.
<i>MPS Building Professional Learning Communities: Professional Development in Action</i>	Requires the routine review of data to determine student achievement needs and develop strategies to meet them.
<i>MPS Curriculum and Instruction Department Elementary Literacy Plan</i>	Contained student assessment and program evaluation duties at district, school, and classroom levels. Requires review of diagnostics, benchmark data, and both formative and summative assessments. The Research Department is to conduct an annual evaluation of the plan.
<i>Expectation for K-5, K-8, 6-12 Principals: IFL Professional Development Implementation</i>	Required principals and school improvement teams to use data to determine student achievement growth. Elementary principals were expected to implement formative assessments using Fountas and Pinnell running records.
<i>A Possible Use of Interim Assessment and Assessment Vision (Draft)</i>	Describes plans for use of formative, interim, and summative assessments.

[Exhibit 4.4.1](#) shows that the policy requirement for using data to guide student achievement was reflected in the sample of district planning documents reviewed by the audit team.

To further assess the design for data use, auditors reviewed job descriptions to identify responsibilities and accountability for data use related to instruction. The results of that review are summarized in [Exhibit 4.4.2](#).

Exhibit 4.4.2

**Job Descriptions Requiring Data Use
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Position	Data-Related Duties
Central Office Personnel	
Superintendent	Direct data-driven decision making and develop and disseminate reports on program effectiveness.
Chief Academic Officer	Sets priorities and measurable goals and improvement plans to improve student achievement. Supports district and school leaders to design and implement school improvement plans.
Associate Superintendent	Advance analytical and critical thinking skills and the ability to analyze, summarize, and effectively present data.
Executive Director, Curriculum and Instruction	The incumbent is responsible for “providing leadership, oversight, and accountability for district professional development and curriculum, instruction, and assessment initiatives.” (Auditor’s note: this includes accountability for training staff in data interpretation and use.)
Executive Director, Special Education	“Oversee the management of a data management system to allow principals and teachers to track the progress of each student. “
Executive Director, Research, Evaluation & Assessment	“Responsible for district- and state-mandated testing, program evaluation under <i>NCLB</i> , School Improvement Reporting, and internal research projects.”
Director, Professional Development & Assessment	“Lead the District Staff Development Advisory Council in establishing a district staff development plan with outcomes, goals and an evaluation plan.”
Director, Funded Programs	“Evaluate <i>NCLB</i> programs, develop and maintain a data base of all grants that can function as a planning and accountability tool, assure implementation and as necessary, revisions of the <i>NCLB</i> plan through monitoring checkpoints and problem solving.”
Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA)	
TOSA—Reading First/Content Focused Coach	“Guides teachers in the use of screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring and outcome assessments... Works with the principal, individual teachers, grade-level teams, the building Leadership Team...in the analysis and use of assessment data to identify students for appropriate instruction and to set building reading goals.”
Elementary Literacy TOSA	“Knowledge of literacy assessment strategies and reporting processes.”
TOSA—Curriculum and Testing Coordinator	“Regularly assess student learning by using multiple forms of assessment.”
Teachers	
Classroom Teacher	“[R]egularly assesses student learning by multiple forms of assessment.”
Gifted/Talented Master Teacher	“Essential functions: Oversee the collection and reporting of data as required for district, state, and federal reporting purposes, including for the OCR.”
Professional Developer/ Master Teacher in Literacy	“Leadership in the development of a comprehensive reading program including the use of assessment to drive instruction.”
Elementary Literacy Master Teacher	“Knowledge of and experience using multiple literacy assessment strategies and reporting processes.”
Elementary and Middle School Science Master Teacher	“Use data to guide program modifications that will result in greater overall student achievement and decrease achievement gaps.”
Elementary Social Studies Master Teacher	“Participate in discussion, selection, and or development of assessment tools including alternative performance measures.”

As indicated in [Exhibit 4.4.2](#), auditors found that job descriptions for several key positions clearly identified the roles and responsibilities related to the use of assessment data. However, job descriptions were not available for some key district positions, including principals and reform specialist.

Although auditors were not given a job description for principals, the district staff did provide an Institute for Learning professional document entitled *Expectations for Grades K-5, K-8 Principals*, dated September 10, 2008. It stated the following data-related duties for principals:

- “Use data analysis to develop [Professional Learning Community] goals that are monitored, reviewed and revised when needed....”
- Monitor student learning by providing opportunities [for the school staff] to study, share formative assessment practices and collaboratively analyze/design assessment that align to the [School Improvement Plan].”
- “Work with Leadership [T]eam in...reviewing data...to meet student needs.”
- “Implement formative assessments....”

Similar documents existed for principals of grades 6 to 12 schools.

Next, the audit team analyzed the district’s arrangements for delivering timely, appropriate student achievement data to teachers so that they could adjust instructional approaches to meet student achievement needs. Auditors conducted this analysis by comparing district procedures to those characteristics considered best practices by the Curriculum Management Audit team. The characteristics and the audit team’s rating of district practices against them are summarized in [Exhibit 4.4.3](#).

Exhibit 4.4.3
Characteristics of an Adequate Instructional Approach to
Summative Assessment Data Use and Auditors’ Assessment of District Approach
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Characteristics	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Provides teachers the achievement data for incoming students at the beginning of the school year. Data from the prior year(s) assessments are reconfigured so that the teacher receiving these new students has the assessment data on each student.	X	
2. Identifies for the teacher individual summative student data on each objective for level of achievement and where each student is within that level. Data includes group or subgroup levels of achievement for a given concept/standard.		X
3. Presents the individual summative student achievement level by objective connected to a district’s schedule of objectives or pacing chart.		X
4. Presents longitudinal data for each student by class roster and specifies the required gain needed to close the achievement gap within five years.		X
5. Identifies pre-teaching formative assessments to use for individual student diagnosis based upon the summative student achievement data over one or more years. Subsequently, this allows teachers to determine when students are making progress over time.		X

[Exhibit 4.4.3](#) shows that most of the characteristics of sound summative assessment data use were not in evidence in the Minneapolis Public Schools. Auditors identified only one area in five (20 percent) in which the district’s approach was adequate. To earn an overall adequate rating, the Curriculum Management Audit minimum standard is an adequate rating on four of the five characteristics. Therefore, the audit team rated the district approach to the use of summative assessment data as inadequate.

Auditors noted the following with regarding to the characteristics:

Characteristic 1: Provides teachers the achievement data for incoming students at the beginning of the school year. Data from the prior year(s) assessments are reconfigured so that the teacher receiving new students has assessment data on each student. (Adequate)

The district warehouse, OCR, has the capacity to transfer data immediately when a student moves. Data are available at the beginning of the year to be used by building level teams in their school improvement planning. These data provide comprehensive reports on individual student strengths and weaknesses in achievement growth.

Characteristic 2, 3, 4, and 5: Auditors did not find evidence of these characteristics. With regard to **Characteristic 2 and 3**, curriculum scope (at high school) and overall quality were inadequate (see [Findings 2.1](#) and [2.2](#)). Therefore, it was impossible to gauge student performance on faulty or missing curriculum objectives or objectives not clearly assessed. As noted earlier, formal assessments did not exist for social studies and were available for science at only three grade levels (see [Finding 4.2](#)). Some formative assessments were being developed to satisfy **Characteristic 5**, but not for all core subjects in all grades. Overall, the district lacked a systematic approach to the use of summative assessment data.

With regard to the design for data use, auditors concluded that policies and plans provide unequivocal statements of the board's intent to use data to determine status, develop strategies, and measure goal attainment. Available job descriptions and professional development documents for principals below the high school level supported policy. However, some key job descriptions were missing, most notably those for principals. Therefore, this aspect of the design for data use was inadequate. Finally, in the absence of formal assessments and documented procedures for delivering assessment data to the user level, the audit team concluded that the design for data use was inadequate.

The audit team also learned that professional development arrangements did not provide systematic support for data interpretation and use (see [Finding 3.2](#)). There was evidence of a great deal of training in data analysis and use, but no system to identify those staff members who required or had received this training. Although the teacher contract emphasized data use, participation in the training for this activity was voluntary. Auditors learned that several entities within schools and central office departments (e.g., Research and School Improvement) provided training without tracking or formal coordination. Professional development was often provided to—and by—school teams, but there was no consistent program of follow-up or accountability for the use of that training. In general, these disorganized arrangements were inadequate to systematically support board policies relating to data use.

With regard to policy implementation, the board's data use focus was evident. At the central office, auditors noted many examples of collection and analysis of student data related to the assessments identified in [Finding 4.2](#) and others (e.g., ACT scores). In a few instances, auditors also reviewed program evaluations assessing program costs and benefits and identifying needed improvements. For example, the results of one such study had been used to initiate school improvement strategies on the city's north side. Additionally, during their visits to schools, auditors noted that many principals and other staff members had collected assessment data, down to the individual student. They reported using those data in grade level meetings and other venues to identify student needs. Some staff members reported improvements in student achievement as a result of the data focus.

In spite of these encouraging observations, there has been no substantial improvement in student proficiency rates in recent years on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (see [Finding 4.3](#)). Over the past three years, student proficiency rates have declined in English language arts and increased only marginally in mathematics. Overall, those rates have been low and below state averages. The audit team concluded that if the data use focus has been on improving student proficiency rates, it has been ineffective. Finally, at the policy-making level, the use of test data as a basis for setting achievement goals has also been ineffective. The *Strategic Plan's* 80 percent student proficiency rate goals for school year 2011-12 are unrealistic in view of student achievement trends and the projected strategies necessary to reverse them (see [Finding 4.3](#)). The majority of district staff members who commented on the subject also shared this opinion.

The audit team interviewed central office and school staff members on a variety of data-related issues. The following samples of their comments reveal conflicting perceptions of some issues and agreement on others:

Support for Data Use. The staff provided conflicting views on this topic:

- “We are increasingly more data driven.” (Principal)
- “There is no systematic training for the use of data.” (Teacher)
- “One of the things that our office does is providing training to use the MCA to improve instruction.” (Administrator)
- “We did extensive training in Fountas and Pinnell [assessments] last year to implement this year.” (Teacher)
- “[The Research and Assessment Department] will be working on the benchmarks. It would be very difficult for [them] to take on the formative assessment.” (Administrator)
- “Specialists are more evaluation and curriculum focused. They are doing program evaluation and school improvement plans.” (Administrator)
- “We had a baseline data retreat.... There will be four more, ...at the end of each marking period.” (Principal)

Availability of Data. Staff comments on the availability of data were generally negative:

- “In the schools, they have been asked for a long time to look at the data, but they don’t get the data.” (Teacher)
- “One of our strengths is having a comprehensive data management system where everything is done online. Records move with the child and are automatically available to teachers. Data tracking for pre and post evaluations is readily available.” (Administrator)
- “There are no standardized assessments for science.” (Administrator)
- “Summative assessment is done by the state while benchmark assessment is taken by all students and developed at the local level. Formative assessment is developed by local teachers or groups of teachers and is done routinely in the classroom.” (Teacher)
- “Current data [are] not readily accessible. Data [are] too broad or old by the time they get it in their hands.” (Teacher)
- “I don’t know where the accountability is. There are formative assessments in some areas; but it needs more looking at.” (Administrator)
- “We really struggle having data in a usable form for our teachers.” (Principal)

Value of Data. The following staff comments painted a grim picture of the value of data. However, many principals and school staff did not agree with these comments.

- “With reading, we are starting Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment, and it is taking way too much time from direct instruction. I don’t see where it’s going to be valuable with the high achieving kids.” (Teacher)
- “The local reading exam is too easy. We create our own.” (Principal)
- “In truth, we have no usable data. We could make it up, but it wouldn’t be real.” (Teacher)
- “People look at the data, but nobody talks about what to do, instructionally, with the data.” (Teacher)
- “Students do well on many [assessment] measures, but [on the] MCA they do not [live up] to state expectations.” (Principal)

Capacity to Use Data. There was general agreement that many individuals in the district did not have the training necessary to interpret data and use it effectively to improve student achievement:

- “There is lots of training for use of data, but not enough on what to do with data information.” (Administrator)
- “Teachers are trained in the use of student assessment data.” (Teacher)
- “Not everyone has a deep understanding of the data and the ability to take the data and figure out what to do next.” (Administrator)
- “Most people do not know how to use the data. They cannot take the information and use it to direct actions and decisions.” (Administrator)

Program Evaluation. The following comments confirmed documentary evidence of the lack of program evaluation in the district:

- “In [this district], we don’t do program evaluation [districtwide], but we are doing it in our department.” (Administrator)
- “Professional learning that goes on needs to be evaluated.” (Administrator)
- “We don’t have...evaluation of interventions [that] we [could] deliver.” (Administrator)
- “The problem [with low achievement] may be that [teachers’] implementation does not maintain fidelity to the program. I would like to have some kind of implementation checklist.” (Administrator)
- “We haven’t had enough resources to do program evaluation.” (Administrator)
- “Some schools are using programs because they have them and not because we know they are the right intervention.” (Administrator)

Reviewing these comments, the audit team concluded that staff members held conflicting and often negative opinions about many data-related issues, in spite of the leadership focus on data-driven operations.

In summary, the board has clearly indicated its intent to have a data-driven district in policy, plans, and contracts. However, the design to implement that intent was flawed and inadequate. There is no comprehensive vision or procedures for the collection, dissemination, and use of data or professional development arrangements to identify and track employees who need or have had training in data use and interpretation. While auditors noted a great deal of data use activity at every level, from boardroom to classroom, there is little evidence that this activity had made a broad and substantial difference in student achievement. Therefore, the audit team concluded that the design for data use was inadequate and that actual use of data was ineffective in improving student achievement.

STANDARD 5: The School District Has Improved Productivity.

Productivity refers to the relationship between system input and output. A school system meeting this standard of the PDK-CMSi Curriculum Management Audit is able to demonstrate consistently improved pupil outcomes, even in the face of diminishing resources. Improved productivity results when a school system is able to create a consistent level of congruence between major variables in achieving enhanced results and in controlling costs.

What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

While the attainment of improved productivity in a school system is a complex process, caused in part by the lack of a tight organizational structure (referred to as “loosely coupled”), common indicators of a school system meeting this audit standard are:

- Planned and actual congruence among curricular objectives, results, and financial allocations;
- A financial data base and network that can track costs to results, provide sufficient fiduciary control, and be used as a viable data base in making policy and operational decisions;
- Specific means that have been selected or modified and implemented to attain better results in the schools over a specified time period;
- A planned series of interventions that have raised pupil performance levels over time and maintained those levels within the same cost parameters as in the past;
- School facilities that are well-kept, sufficient, safe, orderly, and conducive to effective delivery of the instructional program; and
- Support systems that function in systemic ways.

Overview of What the Auditors Found in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

This section is an overview of the findings that follow in the area of Standard Five. Details follow within separate findings.

In Standard Five, the auditors found interventions, classroom practices, and allocation systems in place that were not optimized or connected to the system’s goals for improved achievement.

Numerous intervention programs have been implemented in the Minneapolis Public Schools without direction from the central administration and without documentation to ensure connectedness to district goals and objectives. The district does not have processes or procedures in place to promote the effective selection, development, implementation, or evaluation of interventions. Decisions are often made at the site level to select and implement interventions without research and ongoing evaluation to substantiate how the interventions support effective teaching and learning.

The district has established expectations for classroom instruction through the implementation of the *Principles for Learning* framework. However, during brief classroom visits, the auditors observed that much of the instruction taking place was incongruent with this framework. A majority of the students observed were involved in whole group/direct instruction and/or seat work, and almost half of the teachers were utilizing teacher-dominated direct instruction strategies. The district has invested in the placement of technology in classrooms. However, with some notable exceptions, teachers observed by the auditors were not using the available technology to its fullest potential to enhance teaching and learning.

The district uses traditional budgeting processes in which allocations to schools are primarily based on per-pupil formulas consistent with state allocations to the district, and department budgets are based on the previous year’s budgets. The budgeting process is compromised by the lack of timely and accurate financial data, and the auditors found no consistent process in place to connect student achievement and program performance feedback to resource allocations.

District facilities were generally clean and well maintained. Some schools have insufficient space to accommodate a full range of instructional programs, while other schools have excess capacity. Planning processes have been established to collect and continually update data regarding the conditions of the district's facilities assets, find alternative uses of closed properties, and determine the number and location of schools needed in the future. The Program and Operations Planning initiative currently under way will include the development of a master facilities plan.

Finding 5.1: A proliferation of programs and interventions impedes quality control, and policies and procedures for planning and implementing curriculum interventions are insufficient to ensure positive student achievement results.

Effective program interventions contribute to the improvement of school district productivity when staff members receive data from various feedback sources and use these data to determine actions that advance student performance. Interventions are research based programs that support district learning goals and are selected and implemented to meet specific student needs. Ultimately, an intervention supports improving student academic performance because its strategies and underlying pedagogical constructs address the learning needs of specific groups of students not meeting academic proficiency standards. When interventions meet the following steps, programs implemented can impact teacher and student performance positively:

- Assess the current situation;
- Diagnose data collected;
- Identify the problem or issue;
- Propose and examine alternatives;
- Select an alternative that best addresses the problem;
- Develop formal plans with goals and measurable objectives to address the problem;
- Provide fiscal and human resources as needed;
- Implement the plan, with well-defined mechanisms for monitoring progress;
- Evaluate the program;
- Adjust the program as needed, based on data gathered through the evaluation process; and
- Implement adjustments as needed.

The audit team gathered data pertaining to interventions by reviewing board policies and the *Minneapolis Public Schools 2007-2012 Strategic Plan*, district and school level goals, and other curriculum and instructional documents, and intervention information on the district website. The auditors also conducted interviews with board members and central and building level staff and collected normative intervention program data on an instrument—the *Intervention Survey Form*.

In general the audit team found an extensive number of programs, initiatives, and strategies in the Minneapolis Public Schools under the “umbrella” of interventions without the benefit of clear policy to direct program selection and implementation. Confusion in distinguishing the differences among a program intervention, a districtwide initiative, and an instructional strategy exist. Staff members used the terms interchangeably when asked to identify interventions. Seldom were interventions evaluated against pre-defined goals for improving student performance. Funding was often school- rather than district-based. Intervention programming was deemed inadequate to consistently enhance student achievement when rated against Curriculum Management Improvement Model (CMIM) criteria.

Board Policy Review

One board policy on intervention was found. A standardized definition of what constitutes a program intervention was not included in the policy or other documents reviewed. Without clearly articulated policy and a common understanding of what constitutes an intervention, staff in the Minneapolis Public Schools have instituted a plethora of programs, initiatives, and instructional activities that are classified as interventions. Seldom were identified interventions evaluated against pre-defined goals for improving student performance.



Native language instruction at Emerson School

To determine the extent to which policy directs intervention programming in the school district, the auditors reviewed the 6000 series of board policy, Learning/Instruction. [Exhibit 5.1.1](#) identifies the policies reviewed.

Exhibit 5.1.1

Board of Education Policies Reviewed—6000 Series Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

Policy Number	Policy Name	Date Approved or Last Revised
6110	Goals of Educational Program	6/30/92 (revised)
6110A	Goals of the Educational Program	6/30/92 (revised)
6121	Interventions	8/31/85 (approved)
6200	Curriculum Policy	8/13/85 (approved)
6270	Evaluation Policy	8/13/85 (revised)
6272	Evaluating Student Learning	8/13/85 (revised)
6276	Curriculum Evaluation	8/13/85 (revised)

Board Policy 6121: Interventions was the only intervention policy identified by the audit team. It states, “The Minneapolis Special School District No. 1 supports students needing additional instructional support, particularly in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. These programs are available for those students with remedial educational needs.” Administrative regulations or district documentation guiding intervention programming were not identified.

Board Policy 6121: Interventions recognizes the Minneapolis School Board’s willingness to provide additional services to students not meeting achievement standards. However, it does not provide direction to staff for developing and implementing effective program interventions. The auditors identified several other 6000 policies that referenced components of curriculum program development that can be applied to program interventions. For example:

- *Board Policy 6110 and Administrative Regulation 6110A: Goals of the Educational Program* address the board's expectation that educational goals underpin all program development. The policy states, "... curriculum goals and objectives, scope and sequence, learning materials, expectation levels of students, and measurements of achievement will be determined centrally and directed for obligatory districtwide implementation at the building level through the line superintendents."
- *Board Policy 6200: Curriculum* states, "The goal of any curriculum, instructional program, or activity is to contribute to student growth by bringing about positive change in the student's attitudes, ways of thinking, knowledge, and skills" and emphasizes the board's expectation that curriculum programming supports all aspects of student growth and development.
- *Board Policy 6270: Evaluation* defines the three purposes of evaluating all educational programs implemented in the school system: "The first purpose—the diagnostic function—is to enable staff to determine the unmet needs of the students. The second purpose—the achievement function—is to measure the degree to which each student has accomplished the learning objectives. The third purpose—the assessment of the instructional program function—is to determine if there are weaknesses in the instructional program in order to improve it. The district encourages the use of evaluation techniques at the building level to determine effectiveness in meeting program objectives."
- *Board Policy 6272: Evaluating Student Learning* delineates the importance of evaluating individual students and their learning. The board specifies that evaluating student learning is intended to inform the student and the parent/guardian of progress made toward meeting educational goals and objectives. Student evaluation encompasses evaluating each student on the level of competence specified for each learning objective and progress when compared to their peers.
- *Board Policy 6276: Curriculum Evaluation* denotes the role of the building principal in curriculum evaluation. It states that the principal shall be responsible for evaluation of curriculum implementation at each school. This policy also summarizes the reporting relationships of the principal to central office administrators: "The evaluation of the curriculum and other aspects of the educational program of a school shall be directed by the principal, who shall report to the appropriate superintendent...and... It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent to report periodically to the Board of Education on the progress the district is making towards the attainment of its educational goals."
- *Board Policy 6278: Evaluation of Experimental Courses* states, "...Normally, new courses will be introduced on an experimental basis and will be evaluated at least annually."

In general, the auditors found that intervention policy does not provide sufficient information to direct staff when selecting and implementing interventions. Other curriculum policies reviewed provide useful information for administrators in making decisions regarding interventions. However, cross references from *Policy 6121, Intervention* to other policies were not provided. A standardized definition of what constitutes a program intervention was not included in documents reviewed.

Following are comments shared with the audit team that refer to the lack of definition and direction for intervention programming in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

- "We have 'philosophy wars' and we don't have a strong set of good interventions...from the district." (District Administrator)
- "We decide [what we will do]...." (Principal)
- "We do not have a standardized definition of an intervention.... I think it is a program based on research that is put in place to meet the needs of students who are not performing." (District Content Coach)
- "We have no common understanding of what an intervention is.... I see it as something that is encompassed within an initiative." (District Administrator)

Program Interventions Implemented in the Minneapolis Public Schools

Without clearly articulated policy and a common understanding of what constitutes an intervention, the Minneapolis Public Schools have instituted many programs, initiatives, and instructional activities that are classified as interventions. All schools were visited during the audit team's on-site time in the district. Administrators and some staff members were interviewed to determine the interventions implemented in each school. Data collected were recorded on the *Intervention Survey Form*. In addition, information in school documents such as newsletters and brochures was reviewed. Data were also retrieved by reviewing documents on the school system's website. From these data sources the auditors determined the numbers and types of interventions currently implemented in the school district.

All programs identified during interviews or included in district documents were listed to demonstrate the variation in what is considered an intervention program in the school system. To assess the level of alignment between the core values in the district's *Strategic Plan* and programs selected as interventions, the auditors categorized interventions as follows:

- Core subject areas: ELA, math, science, social studies (Strategic Plan Core Value #1: Rights to a quality education);
- Other areas:
 - Special Education, ELL (Strategic Plan Core Value # 3: Equity);
 - Character education (Strategic Plan Core Value #3: Equity);
 - Linkage area (colleges/university/ community agency) (Strategic Plan Core Value #6: Partnership for youth)
 - Guidance (Strategic Plan Core Value #3: Equity) and;
 - Supplemental and other (Strategic Plan Core Values #1, 3, 6).

Interventions implemented are listed in [Exhibit 5.1.2](#) and are categorized by instructional level.

Exhibit 5.1.2

Intervention Programs Currently Implemented Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

Intervention Name	Instructional Level	Core Content Areas				Special Programs					Other	
		ELA	Math	Science	SS	Sp Ed	ELL	Character	Linkage	Guidance		Supplemental
Accelerated Math	Across Levels		X									
After School Tutoring	Across Levels										X	
Assessment FOR Learning	Across Levels											X
AVID	Across Levels								X			
Corrective Reading	Across Levels	X										
Data Teams	Across Levels	X	X									
GEMS/GIES (Girls In Engineering)	Across Levels			X								
Institute For Learning	Across Levels											X
International Baccalaureate	Across Levels											X

**Exhibit 5.1.2 (continued)
Intervention Programs Currently Implemented
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Intervention Name	Instructional Level	Core Content Areas				Special Programs					Other	
		ELA	Math	Science	SS	Sp Ed	ELL	Character	Linkage	Guidance		Supplemental
Leadership Teams	Across Levels											X
Leveled Readers	Across Levels	X										
Northside Initiative	Across Levels										X	
PDP/Peer Coaching (PAR)	Across Levels					X						
PLC (Professional Learning Communities)	Across Levels											X
Principles of Learning	Across Levels											X
RTI (Response to Intervention)	Across Levels							X				
Running Records	Across Levels	X										
Secondary Academic Plan 2008-2014	Across Levels											X
QAR	Across Levels	X										
10 City Wide Classrooms	Elementary					X						
10 Programs of Math Thinking	Elementary		X									
Accelerated Reader	Elementary	X										
ACL (Area Learning Center) Homework Help	Elementary										X	
After School Band	Elementary											X
After School Spanish	Elementary						X					
ALC (Academy Learning Center)	Elementary	X	X									
American Indian Center	Elementary								X			
American Indian Math Project	Elementary		X									
American Reading Corp	Elementary	X										
Arts Focused Schools	Elementary								X			
Assurance and Mastery	Elementary	X	X									
AVMR (Advantage Math Recovery)	Elementary		X									
Balanced Literacy	Elementary	X										
Before/After School Program	Elementary										X	
Blocked Reading (Homogenous Groups)	Elementary	X										
Bringing Words to Life	Elementary	X										
CALT (Computerized Achievement Level Test)	Elementary	X										
CARS (Content Area Reading Strategies)	Elementary	X										
CCC (Curriculum Computer Corporation) Math	Elementary		X									
CCC (Curriculum Computer Corporation) Reading	Elementary	X										
Collins Writing	Elementary	X										
Comer Project (Yale Project)	Elementary								X			
Community Education After School Program	Elementary								X			
Constructed Response/Higher Level Thinking	Elementary	X										
Courageous Conversation	Elementary							X				

**Exhibit 5.1.2 (continued)
Intervention Programs Currently Implemented
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Intervention Name	Instructional Level	Core Content Areas				Special Programs					Other	
		ELA	Math	Science	SS	Sp Ed	ELL	Character	Linkage	Guidance		Supplemental
Daily 5	Elementary											
Data Has Faces	Elementary							X				
Disciplinary Literacy	Elementary	X										
Diversity of Life	Elementary							X				
DOT	Elementary	X										
Early Childhood Family Services	Elementary								X			
Early Intervention Reading	Elementary	X										
Early Success	Elementary	X										
Education City	Elementary			X								
Emeritus Teacher Tutors	Elementary								X			
Envoy Non Verbal Communication	Elementary							X				
Every Day Math	Elementary		X									
Extra Science Prep	Elementary			X								
Gifted and Talented	Elementary										X	
Gifted Catalyst Program	Elementary	X										
Ginew/Golden Eagle program	Elementary										X	
Habits of Mind	Elementary	X									X	
High 5	Elementary										X	
Hmong Literacy Program	Elementary	X										
Indian Health Board	Elementary								X			
Inquiry in a Thinking Curriculum	Elementary		X									
Inquiry in a Thinking Curriculum	Elementary	X										
Investigations Programs	Elementary		X									
K-2 phonics approach (Estrellita in Spanish)	Elementary						X					
Learning Disabilities Association Tutors	Elementary					X						
Little Earth Community Partnership	Elementary								X			
Looping	Elementary											X
Lucy Calkins Writing Program	Elementary	X										
Lunch Bunch (Homework)	Elementary										X	
Making Words	Elementary	X										
Math Recovery	Elementary		X									
McFell Music Partnership	Elementary								X			
Mentoring Mathematics Minds	Elementary		X									
Migizi Communications	Elementary								X			
Montessori Schools	Elementary											X
NLL (Native Language Literacy)	Elementary						X					

**Exhibit 5.1.2 (continued)
Intervention Programs Currently Implemented
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Intervention Name	Instructional Level	Core Content Areas				Special Programs					Other	
		ELA	Math	Science	SS	Sp Ed	ELL	Character	Linkage	Guidance		Supplemental
Odyssey of the Mind	Elementary										X	
Olweus Bully Prevention	Elementary									X		
PALS (U of M)	Elementary	X										
Parent Volunteers	Elementary								X			
Partner w/school of music for band & orchestra	Elementary								X			
Pathways	Elementary							X				
Pearson Website	Elementary											X
Promethean Boards	Elementary											X
Questioning the Author	Elementary	X										
Raising Reading	Elementary	X										
Read 180	Elementary	X										
Read Naturally	Elementary	X										
Readers Writers Workshop	Elementary	X										
Reading Core	Elementary	X										
Reading First	Elementary	X										
Reading Mastery	Elementary	X										
Reading Youth Incorporated	Elementary	X										
Retired Teacher Volunteer Program	Elementary								X			
RIF (Reading is Fundamental)	Elementary	X										
Second Step	Elementary							X				
Silent Reading	Elementary	X										
SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol)	Elementary						X					
Special Education...Touch Math	Elementary					X						
SRA Labs	Elementary	X										
Stages Theater Partnership	Elementary								X			
STAR Readers	Elementary	X										
STOP Bullying	Elementary									X		
Study Island ELA	Elementary	X										
Study Island Math	Elementary		X									
Success Maker	Elementary	X										
Success, Soars to Success	Elementary	X										
Test Prep	Elementary	X										
The Advancement School	Elementary	X										
Thinking Math	Elementary		X									
Turned Into Reading	Elementary	X										
Tutoring in Math	Elementary		X									

**Exhibit 5.1.2 (continued)
Intervention Programs Currently Implemented
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Intervention Name	Instructional Level	Core Content Areas				Special Programs				Other		
		ELA	Math	Science	SS	Sp Ed	ELL	Character	Linkage		Guidance	Supplemental
Voyager Math	Elementary		X									
Words, Words, Words	Elementary	X										
Academic Support Classes	High School		X									
Advance Placement Classes	High School		X	X	X							
Alternative Schools	High School										X	
CIS (College In Schools)	High School											
Citywide Program for American Indians	High School										X	
College In Schools	High School								X			
Content Focused Coaching Literacy	High School	X										
Digital Media	High School	X										
Digital Media	High School		X									
High School Reform	High School											X
Kansas Strategies	High School					X						
Pathways	High School							X				
Saxon Math	High School		X			X						
SummaTech	High School		X	X								
Test Prep	High School	X										
Think to Change	High School										X	
Arts in Achievement	Middle School							X				
BEST	Middle School											
Character Education classes	Middle School							X				
Check and Connect	Middle School	X										
Chunk and Chew Guided Reading	Middle School	X										
Core Knowledge Curriculum	Middle School			X	X							
CTARS	Middle School		X									
CUE Program	Middle School							X				
Discovering Algebra	Middle School		X									
Family and Community Engagement	Middle School								X			
General Mills—Healthy Schools	Middle School										X	
Individual Plans (Students)	Middle School	X	X									
Integrate science and social studies into literacy	Middle School	X										
JA (Junior Achievement) America Works	Middle School							X				
JA Economics for Success	Middle School				X							
JA Finance Park	Middle School				X							
JA Global Market	Middle School				X							
JA It's My Business	Middle School				X							

**Exhibit 5.1.2 (continued)
Intervention Programs Currently Implemented
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Intervention Name	Instructional Level	Core Content Areas				Special Programs					Other	
		ELA	Math	Science	SS	Sp Ed	ELL	Character	Linkage	Guidance		Supplemental
Junior Great Books	Middle School	X										
Knock and Talk	Middle School								X			
Middle School Reform	Middle School											X
Nguzo Curriculum	Middle School										X	
PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Model)	Middle School							X				
Peer Assisted Learning	Middle School											X
Project Success theater Company	Middle School										X	
Rites of Passage	Middle School							X				
Rocking Readers	Middle School	X										
STAR Math	Middle School		X									
Success Maker	Middle School	X										
Underground Railroad Experiences	Middle School							X				
	Total by Type	58	26	6	6	6	4	15	15	5	16	15
All Interventions Total: 165	Total Interventions by Type: 172											

Based on data in [Exhibit 5.1.2](#), 165 interventions are currently implemented in the school system. Most are implemented at the elementary school level and support ELA and math (*Board Policy 6121*; Strategic Plan Core Value #1: Right to a quality education).

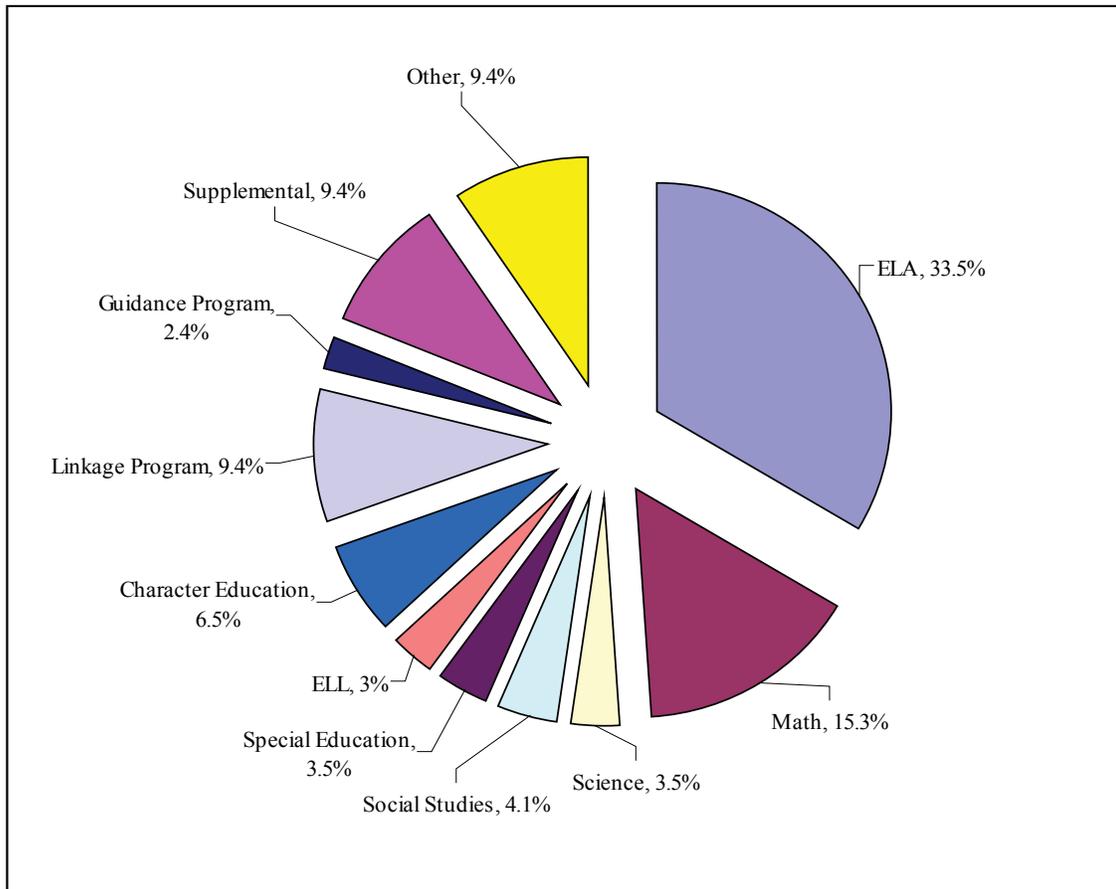
It should be noted that some interventions were initiated by the district; however, the auditors did not find that all the district initiatives were uniformly implemented in all schools.

The audit team found the following related to program interventions:

- The percentage of interventions implemented by instructional level:
 - Elementary-N=100 (60.60 percent)
 - Middle School-N=30 (18.18 percent)
 - High School-N=16 (9.69 percent)
 - Across Levels-N=19 (11.51 percent)

Based on data in [Exhibit 5.1.2](#), the auditors also determined which types of interventions were implemented at each instructional level. These findings are summarized in [Exhibit 5.1.3](#).

Exhibit 5.1.3
Numbers and Percentages of Interventions by Type and Instructional Level*
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008



*Note: Some interventions were classified as two types of programs based on comments shared with the auditors. This accounts for the differences in the number of interventions reported.

These data show the following:

- One hundred and one (101) interventions are implemented at the elementary school level; approximately 40 percent of them are ELA programs. The next highest percentages of elementary interventions are math programs (14.9 percent), followed closely by linkage programs (13.86 percent).
- The number of interventions implemented at the middle school level drops significantly (70 fewer programs) from the elementary level. The highest percentage of middle school interventions were also in the ELA content area (23.33 percent), followed closely by social studies interventions (20 percent). When taken together, character education, linkage, and guidance programs represent 19.96 percent of middle school interventions. These types of programs usually address pre-adolescents' developmental issues, which are middle school concerns.
- High schools implemented the fewest number of interventions with math programs most often implemented (26.60 percent), followed by ELA programs (15.78 percent). Supplemental programs represent 15.78 percent of high school interventions. Comments shared with the auditors during walk-throughs indicated that high school principals were often involved with identifying programs that strengthen the core academic program and provide a more engaging learning environment for students.

- Twenty programs were identified as “across levels.” These programs were implemented in at least two but usually all of the instructional levels in the school system and were sometimes referred to as district initiatives, such as the North Side Initiative and the Secondary Academic Agenda.
- Overall, 57 of the 170 (33.52 percent) interventions implemented in the Minneapolis Public Schools support ELA, and 26 (15.29 percent) are math programs. This supports wording in *Policy 6121* that states that the district’s “particular [instructional] focus” is reading, writing, and mathematics.

To ascertain how many interventions were implemented in specific schools, administrators were asked to identify the programs implemented in their schools. Auditors also anticipated learning additional information about various aspects of the programs, including funding, purpose, and the type of evaluation used to determine effectiveness. Data were analyzed to determine the numbers of interventions implemented in selected schools. The auditors randomly selected one-third (20) of the schools visited. Interventions discussed during building walk-throughs were tallied for each school. In total, 77 interventions were implemented in these schools. The data are summarized in [Exhibit 5.1.4](#).

Exhibit 5.1.4
Numbers of Interventions Implemented in Selected Schools
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Schools	Grade Levels	Number of Interventions	Comments
Elementary Schools			
Bancroft	H5; K-5	4	Interventions implemented in the school were identified. Information regarding how they were evaluated for effectiveness or how they were funded was not provided.
Bethune	H5; PK-5	9	Bethune is an arts-focused school. Information regarding program evaluation was not provided. Stages In Theater is funded by a community corporation.
Burroughs	K-5	4	General comments regarding program evaluation were provided to the audit team, including “test scores” and “Parent satisfaction.” The district and building were identified as the funding sources.
Cityview	H-5; K-8	3	All of the interventions are funded by the building. Test data were identified as the means of evaluating instructional interventions. For a character intervention, the principal commented that you can feel the impact in the building.
Dowling	K-5	4	Specific information regarding funding and evaluation was not provided with the audit team.
Hale	K-4	4	Volunteers provide services to the school, some as many as 15 hours per week. Information regarding program evaluation was not provided. Some fees are charged for after school programs. No other funding sources were identified.
Hall	H5; PK-5	7	Interventions implemented in the school were identified. Information regarding how they were evaluated for effectiveness or how they were funded was not provided.
Longfellow	H5; PK-5	3	Interventions implemented in the school were identified. Information regarding how they were evaluated for effectiveness or how they were funded was not provided.
Lucy Laney	K-8	5	Pre/post testing was identified as a means of determining the effectiveness of the intervention to impact student achievement, as well as MCA and CALT data. Interventions were funded through the district budget.

Exhibit 5.1.4 (continued)
Numbers of Interventions Implemented in Selected Schools
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Schools	Grade Levels	Number of Interventions	Comments
Elementary Schools (continued)			
Wenonah	K-3	2	Interventions implemented in the school were identified. Information regarding how they were evaluated for effectiveness or how they were funded was not provided.
Hmong	K-8	6	The district and building were identified as the funding sources for interventions. CBM test data (English and Hmong) were identified as the primary means of evaluating the effectiveness of interventions.
Green	K-8	9	In addition to MCA assessment data , the school uses monthly team meetings to assess student progress and the effectiveness of interventions. Several sources were identified to fund interventions: district, federal (OCR), the Learning Disabilities Association, and building funds.
Middle Schools			
Keewaydin	4-8	3	The only information provided the audit team pertained to moving students between instructional groups. No specific information regarding the effectiveness of interventions, their evaluation, or funding was provided.
Folwell	6-8	4	Interventions implemented in the school were identified. Information regarding how they were evaluated for effectiveness or how they were funded was not provided.
Riverbend	6-8	3	Interventions implemented in the school were identified. Information regarding how they were evaluated for effectiveness or how they were funded was not provided.
Field	5-8	2	Specific information regarding the effectiveness of interventions or program evaluation was not provided. The district provided funding for a .4 position for AVID.
Sanford	6-8	2	The only reference to evaluation was meetings of data teams. Funding and effectiveness of programs were not discussed with the auditors.
High Schools			
Harrison	9-12	3	Interventions implemented in the school were identified. Information regarding how they were evaluated for effectiveness or how they were funded was not provided.
North	9-12	3	Student attendance, retention, behavior incidents, and GPA are the indicators used to determine the effectiveness of interventions. The primary funding source identified was school-based funds.
Roosevelt	9-12	6	Several methods of evaluating interventions were discussed, including seeking feedback from community, ELL Language Acquisition data, IEP reviews, and monthly meetings with staff to discuss progress of individual students. Scores on Advanced Placement exams are also used as an indicator of program effectiveness. Funding sources identified are state, district, and school budgets.
South	9-12	4	Interventions implemented in the school were identified. Information regarding how they were evaluated for effectiveness or how they were funded was not provided.
Total Interventions Reported		90	

Based on this analysis the auditors found the following:

- The range of interventions implemented in the 21 identified schools was 2-9 program for an average of 3.66 programs per school.
- Of the 21 schools reviewed, 12 (57.14 percent) are elementary schools; five (23.80 percent) are middle schools, and four (19.04 percent) are high schools.
- Evaluation: Information related to the effectiveness of intervention implemented was not provided for 12 (58.33 percent) elementary schools, four (80 percent) of the middle schools, and two (50 percent) of the high schools reviewed. This speaks to the lack of attention administrators across the school system give to program evaluation. Thus, there is limited information to determine if interventions support improved student performance as intended.
- When funding information was provided, school/building level funding sources were usually referenced. One school identified parent volunteerism as the means for ensuring that building interventions are implemented with fidelity. No references were made regarding long term planning for the implementation of interventions and how funding for implementation, as designed, would be sustained.

Overall, the auditors found that each of the schools in the sample implemented at least two interventions. Evaluation to determine their effectiveness was limited, with only one middle school conducting program evaluations. Funding sources are most usually from building budgets. No procedures were identified for sustaining interventions long term.



City View Student receiving individual extra help with seatwork

A final finding related to the number of activities currently implemented in the school system was cited in the Superintendent's October 8, 2008 letter addressed to principals and assistant principals. It speaks to the concern voiced by staff that a considerable amount of instructional time is devoted to participation in activities that limit teacher and administrator time focused on teaching and learning. The Superintendent states, "One theme [that] surfaced from feedback of both teachers and school administrators... [Is] the need to reduce the demands we make on teachers' time for non-instructional activities." The necessity of keeping teachers focused in "laser-like" fashion on student achievement is evident and highlights the need to eliminate or at least limit non-instructional tasks and assignments that interfere with instructional time. Intervention data presented points to the current proliferation of instructional activities in the school system that impact focus on and consistency of instruction at all levels.

The following are sample comments shared with the audit team regarding the numbers of interventions in the Minneapolis Public Schools:

- “We have 90 initiatives, too many to manage, fund, show results, and integrate.... Some schools have 15-17 initiatives.” (Teacher)
- “We have so many initiatives going on in the district [that implementation is difficult].” (Principal)
- “Some schools are using programs because they have them...not because they are the right intervention.” (District Administrator)
- “Schools have had the latitude to do what they wanted.... We are all over the board... There is not always a match between the intervention and the needs of students.” (Administrator)
- “Autonomy has led people to do what they want without connecting to others...decisions are not based on research.” (Administrator)
- I feel like I’m spinning. There are too many initiatives...we need to focus on meat and potatoes.” (Teacher)
- “We are about the quick fixes; everything is added to the plate but nothing comes off.” (Principal)
- “Students’ needs are not matching the interventions.” (Administrator)

Comparison of an Intervention to CMIM Criteria

To determine the extent to which a school system intervention meets the Curriculum Management Audit criteria for adequacy, the audit team reviewed documentation for the system’s ethnic-focused schools/programs: Afrocentric Academy (Grades 6-8 Middle School), Anishinabe Academy (PreKindergarten-Grade 8), and Hmong International Academy (Kindergarten-Grade 8 Elementary School).

These programs were selected because of their direct alignment to the Strategic Plan Core Value #4: Diversity. The Minneapolis Public Schools believes that, “every student in Minneapolis has outstanding potential, and it is our duty to help him or her realize that potential. The combination of a diverse student body and staff is our District’s strength.” The Academy program created an ethnically or racially identifiable population for each school—limiting enrollment at each Academy to one racial or ethnic group of students by a unique selection process, largely to the exclusion of students of other races or ethnic groups. The auditors viewed the implementation of ethnic-focused programs as a district effort intended to create appreciation and support for the ethnic diversity of the general and school communities by restricting the enrollment of the Academies to one selective ethnic population.

The auditors requested documents pertaining to each school. They were provided with limited written documentation (most of which is on the district’s website) but learned some background information pertaining to each school during interviews. These school profiles, which were developed as parent and community information sources, provided limited amounts of information for audit team review.

The auditors reviewed the programs and rated them against CMSi criteria to determine their effectiveness as interventions that consistently enhance student academic performance. In order for the programs to be rated as adequate they must meet 80 percent (four of the five criteria). The auditors’ ratings are summarized in Exhibit 5.1.5.

Exhibit 5.1.5

**Comparison of Ethnic Academies as Interventions
to Program Intervention Criteria
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

Intervention Criteria	Academy	Adequate	Inadequate
The intervention relates to a documented need, assessment of operational curriculum effectiveness, and allocations of resources.	Afrocentric (African American) Academy		X
	Anishinabe (Native American) Academy		X
	Hmong International Academy		X
Documents exist to define the purposes of the program, why it addresses the system need, how it will impact student achievement, and plans for implementation.	Afrocentric (African American) Academy		X
	Anishinabe (Native American) Academy		X
	Hmong International Academy		X
A detailed process for implementing the program is provided, including strong communication and staff development components.	Afrocentric (African American) Academy		X
	Anishinabe (Native American) Academy		X
	Hmong International Academy		X
Human, material, and fiscal resources needed are identified to initiate the program (short term) and to sustain the program (long term).	Afrocentric (African American) Academy		X
	Anishinabe (Native American) Academy		X
	Hmong International Academy		X
Formative feedback and summative evaluation criteria are identified and are tied to program goals, objectives, and expectations.	Afrocentric (African American) Academy		X
	Anishinabe (Native American) Academy		X
	Hmong International Academy		X

The Afrocentric Academy, Anishinabe Academy, and the Hmong International Academy did not meet any of the CMSi criteria for an effective intervention program. It is important to note that, for this review, the audit team must review detailed written documentation. Detailed documentation was not provided by the system about the design and planning for the Academies, so the Academies were rated as inadequate on each of the five criteria. Following are the auditors' rationales for the ratings in Exhibit 5.1.3.

Criterion One: The intervention relates to a documented need, assessment of operational curriculum effectiveness, and allocations of resources. Finding: Not Met

Some staff members verbalized that the Academies were instituted because of community/parental interest in instilling a sense of the ethnic culture, language, and background through the educational program. However, no formal needs assessment documentation was available for auditors to review for the three Academies.

Criterion Two: Documents exist to define the purposes of the program, why it addresses the system need, how it impacts student achievement, and plans for implementation. Finding: Not Met

Limited purpose statements for each Academy were located on the school system's website. Formal planning documents were not provided. The positive impact enrollment has on student achievement was verbalized during interviews. In theory, each Academy focuses on infusing culture into the curriculum to build self-esteem, which is intended to translate into improved student performance.

No rationalization or legal validation was provided to the auditors that provided justification for the singular racial and ethnic makeup of the Academy populations, despite the Supreme Court prohibitions of using race to assign children to schools.¹ However, school personnel stressed that students are held to the same academic standards as their peers in the general education program and are required to take all Minnesota mandated

¹ *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (551 US, 2007); *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

assessments. The online magnet focus statements for the Afrocentric, Anishinabe, and Hmong Academies cite their purposes as follows:

- The Afrocentric Academy was designed to “...emphasize...academic achievement from a cultural perspective to instill and create within the adolescent a sense of personal, community and collective group pride.”
- Hmong Academy website literature describes it as a bilingual education program “that provides students with daily opportunities to engage in activities that enhance their understanding of the Hmong language and culture.” In interviews the audit team learned that instruction in Hmong language is offered one period per day, and the Academy is classified as a bilingual school.
- Web-based literature describes the purpose of the Anishinabe Academy as “...a (school) that focuses on the unique needs of Native American students and their families...that is attempting to use the characteristics that are particularly strong among our Native American students as assets to accomplish our goals” and incorporating the use of the Ojibwe language into curriculum and instruction .

Criterion Three: A detailed process for implementing the program is provided, including strong communication and staff development components. Finding: Not Met

Literature detailing processes used to implement the academies was not made available for auditors’ review.

Criterion Four: Human, material, and fiscal resources needed are identified to initiate the program. Finding: Not Met

The Academies are considered to be regular public schools and are funded the same as other schools in the system.

- Documentation related to the initial allocation of human, fiscal, and material resources for the Afrocentric Academy was not provided for review. During the site visit to the Afrocentric Academy, very few specialized materials pertaining to the African culture were observed in the classrooms or in the school itself. The school is now located within Northside High School with no administrative staff, per se. The principal of Northside is also the principal of the Afrocentric Academy. This administrative configuration puts the Afrocentric Academy at a disadvantage, as the principal of Northside is focused on upgrading and implementing rigorous and challenging programs at the high school level.
- Documentation related to the initial allocation of human, fiscal, and material resources for the Anishinabe Academy was not provided for review. The Anishinabe Academy web information indicated that administrators were allowed “to choose the ‘best qualified’ staff, both Native and non-Native.”
- Auditors also did not receive documentation related to the initial allocation of human, fiscal, and material resources for the Hmong Academy. Web-site information does not address any facet of funding for the Academy. The Hmong Academy is currently sharing a building with another school. The open space setting has been sub-divided into classrooms with temporary wall dividers. Since they do not reach the ceiling, complaints were shared with the auditors about the noise level when students’ and teachers’ voices carry throughout the school. The auditors were also told that the school does not have sufficient materials to meet the instructional needs of the school’s enrollment. The projected enrollment for the Hmong school was approximately 350 students for the 2008-09 school year. However, the enrollment is currently 450 students. The school system has not provided the funding and materials necessary to meet the needs of the additional 100 students.

Criterion Five: Formative feedback and summative evaluation criteria are identified and are tied to program goals, objectives, and expectations. Finding: Not Met

During interviews the auditors were told that the programs were effective and successful, but written documentation supporting these comments was not available. No evaluative documentation for the Afrocentric and Hmong Academies was provided. One content area evaluation was reviewed for the Anishinabe Academy. Student achievement for students attending the Academies is measured by scores on Minnesota standardized

assessments. Specific criteria against which the effectiveness of the Academy was to be determined was not provided.

- The website information provided contained a brief summary of *No Child Left Behind* Adequate Yearly Progress data for the Afrocentric Academy. The audit team was not provided with any program evaluation reports for review. When the auditors asked about student performance on state assessments, the response was, “dismal.”
- The July 2008 annual evaluation report for the Anishinabe Academy, American Indian Math Project was provided for review. This summative evaluation measured math program success of the Anishinabe Academy against four goals: (1) Increase academic achievement in one or more core areas; (2) Increase school connectedness; (3) Increase capacity of participants to become productive adults; and (4) Increase the engagement and confidence of parents in supporting students’ learning. In general, the American Indian Math Project proved to be more successful with younger students (5th grade) and was relatively successful in recruiting and retaining parent participants in the program. This assessment report was an effort to support the Academy’s goal to offer curriculum with a strong educational foundation. The school’s website information provided a brief summary of *No Child Left Behind* Adequate Yearly Progress data. However, no overall program evaluation documentation was provided.
- Among Academy program evaluation reports were not provided for review, but administrators shared that student academic performance is a concern. The numbers of non-English speakers and students with limited English speaking abilities are increasing in the school, and the lack of resources available to meet their needs is a growing concern. The website information a brief summary of *No Child Left Behind* Adequate Yearly Progress data.

The following are comments shared during interviews that support the audit team’s ratings of program intervention adequacy:

- “Resources and materials are a problem. Parents help raise money for what we need since we don’t get enough from the district to even have all of the textbooks we need.” (Principal)
- “As original options have morphed, it is hard to know which programs are high quality and which are quality in name and reputation.” (Patron)
- “We don’t have a good choices or evaluation of interventions [that] we have the capacity to deliver.” (Administrator)
- “We haven’t had enough resources to do program evaluation.” (Administrator)
- “Program evaluation does not exist in many cases.” (Administrator)

In summary, the audit team found that the Minneapolis Public School System has little to no control over selection and implementation of program interventions. Policies and regulations do not guide decision making. The sense of autonomy at the building level has resulted in numbers of programs added to the curriculum as a means of enhancing student performance without monitoring oversight. Interventions are not screened in accordance with any standards prior to implementation and are not evaluated for effectiveness. There are no processes in place to ensure that interventions are aligned to district goals and objectives. Staff verbalizes the purpose, and effectiveness of interventions, but there is virtually no written documentation to support and verify what individuals report. No evidence was provided to show that an intervention had been eliminated because evaluation indicated that it did not meet student needs.

Finding 5.2: Classroom instructional practices are not directed by of specific system expectations and are inconsistent in reflecting the *Principles of Learning* framework.

The effective delivery of curriculum provides the foundation for successful learning experiences for all students. Diversifying teaching methods promotes student growth, combats student boredom, and addresses diverse students’ learning styles and needs. In order to best meet the instructional needs of students who have varying academic skills, linguistic backgrounds, learning modalities, and levels of engagement, teachers must know and apply a wide variety of instructional techniques.

Auditors reviewed board policies, job descriptions, the *Principles of Learning*, and other school system documents to determine how teachers delivered curriculum and what strategies students were asked to implement as a means of mastering content. Auditors also interviewed staff and visited the Minneapolis Public Schools. Teachers and students in core subject area (ELA, math, science, and social studies) classrooms were observed. If time permitted, non-core classes were observed also.

In general, the auditors found that the district has established expectations for classroom instruction through the implementation of the *Principles of Learning* framework. Direct instruction and whole group teacher dominated classrooms was the primary mode of curriculum delivery in almost half of the classrooms observed. The auditors' observations indicated that the use of the *Principles of Learning* to guide instructional practice at the school and classroom levels was inconsistent.

The auditors reviewed board policy but found no board policies or administrative regulations that specifically reference expectations for delivery of the curriculum. They did find the following statements in policy that imply expectations for the delivery of instruction:

- *Board Policy 6200: Curriculum* includes the following language: "...one must determine what is to be learned, what procedures and materials will work best to reach the desired learning levels and some measure of knowing when the required learning has taken place."
- *Administrative Policy 6202A: Procedures for Ensurance of Preparatory Content Standards* states, "... The curriculum will reflect sequence, assessment and the achievements expected..."

The audit team identified documents that defined some aspects of the roles and responsibilities instructional supervisors have for observing the implementation of the written curriculum. Following is a summary of their findings:

- Associate Superintendent: "Regularly visits schools and other appropriate program sites to observe programs in operation, and assist principals and other administrators to serve most effectively as leaders."
- Elementary and Secondary Principal Candidate Pool: "... monitoring of the instructional program by understanding individual needs of students in the program; assess the programs designed to meet those needs; work collaboratively with all staff to strengthen the instructional program."

Observed Teacher and Student Behaviors

Prior to visiting the schools, the auditors asked administrators, "What should we expect to see when we observe classrooms?" Following are comments shared with the auditors:

- (At the high school level) "I expect you will see many classrooms, with students in rows as opposed to set up in group designs. You will see some effective coaching from the side lines..." (District Content Coordinator)
- "You will see some elementary classrooms in rows, directed by the teacher up front." (District Content Coordinator)
- "In classrooms you should see evidence of clear expectations and rigor." (Central Office Administrator)
- "You will see traditional rows with traditional instruction. Twenty percent of the teachers effectively use technology." (Central Office Administrator)

Definitions used to standardize observations of teachers and students are listed in [Exhibit 5.2.1](#).

Exhibit 5.2.1

Definitions of Observed Teacher and Student Classroom Behaviors Minneapolis Public Schools October 2008

Teacher Behaviors		Student Behaviors	
At Desk	Teacher is sitting at desk not assisting students.	Seatwork	Seat work is usually a form of whole group instruction. Students working at their desks doing some type of paper and pencil exercise or worksheet.
Assisting	Teacher is working with individual students (1:1).	Small Group	Students working on learning activities in groups of approximately two to five with the teacher or independently.
Small Group	Teacher is working with a small group of students (less than one-third of the class), e.g., reading group or center group instruction, group tutoring.	Transition	Students engaged in activities such as “do now” to focus them on instruction, or students are moving from one activity to another with an instructional focus, e.g., from large to small group.
Direct Instruction	Teacher is leading the class through a learning activity, e.g., lecturing, modeling a skill, explaining a sample problem, reading to the class.	Applied Practice	Students applying content to create new learnings/knowledge without teacher direction (students initiating the own learning independently).
Monitoring	Teacher is circulating in the classroom double checking students’ understanding of the content (usually visually).	Problem Solving	Students using content to find answers or investigate various alternative to finding answers to questions or situations .
Technology	Teacher using any form of technology as an instructional tool, e.g., video, audio, computer, or digital equipment to present instruction.	Direct Instruction/ Whole Group Instruction	The majority of students (two-thirds or more of the class) are sitting and listening while the teacher presents content or a student is responding, e.g., listening to lecture, listening to another student, reading aloud, answering questions, class discussions, getting directions.
Other	The teacher is involved in other types of activities that may or may not be instructional, e.g., taking attendance, gathering materials, not engaged in the learning.	Technology	Students using any video, audio, computer, or digital equipment to enhance their learning.
		Off Task	Students not engaged in instruction, e.g., talking to other students, head on desk, day dreaming.

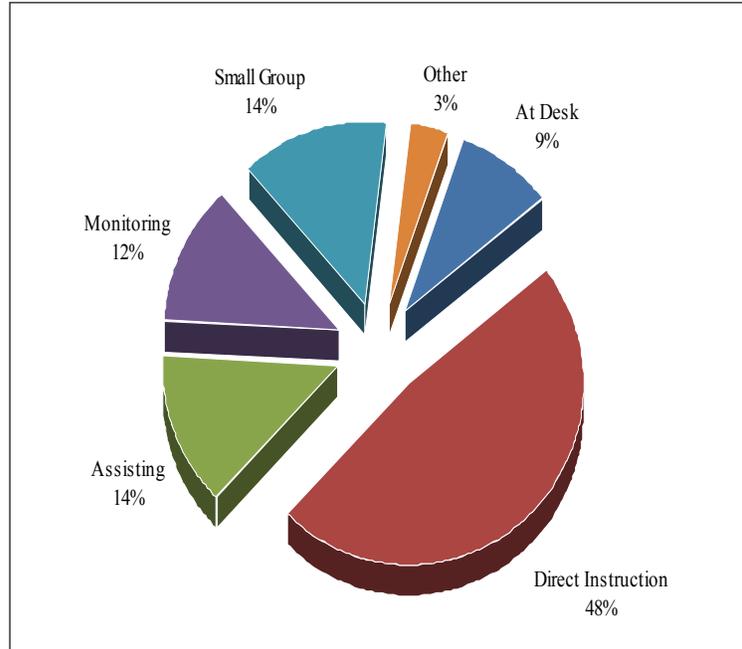
Auditors visited 747 classrooms and recorded teacher and student behavior in accordance with the definitions in [Exhibit 5.2.1](#). They were escorted by building principals while discussing the school’s curriculum and instructional program. Visits to classrooms were short in duration but allowed sufficient opportunity to observe and record data.

Teachers were not interviewed during the classroom observations. When an auditor could discretely do so, students were asked questions such as “what are you learning?” to assess if alignment existed between the teacher’s objective for the lesson and what the student understood as the lesson’s objective.

The frequency and percentages of observed behaviors for teacher and student behaviors across the school district are summarized in [Exhibits 5.2 .2](#) and [5.2.3](#).

Exhibit 5.2.2

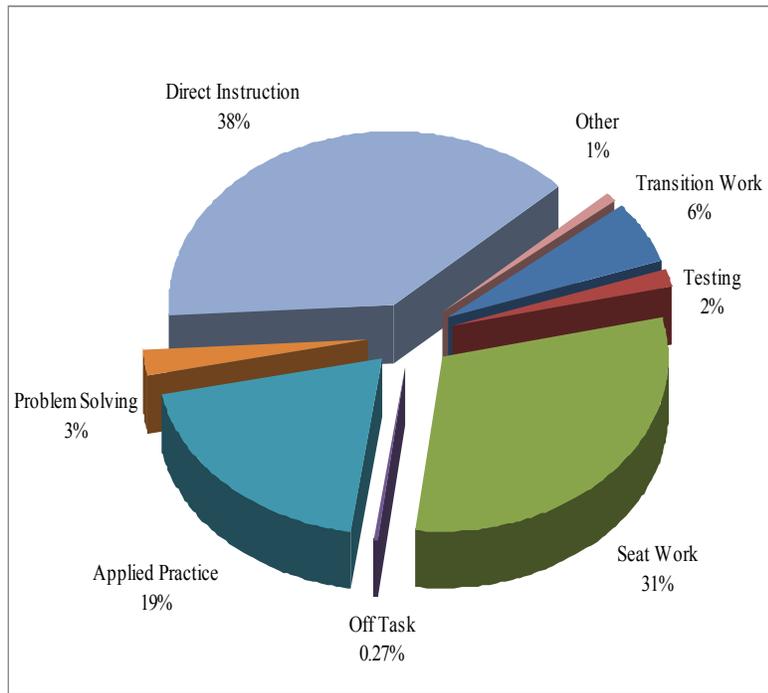
**Observed Instructional Methods Used by Teachers
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**



Teacher Behavior	N	%
At Desk	66	8.83
Direct Instruction	358	47.92
Assisting	101	13.52
Monitoring	93	12.44
Small Group	103	13.78
Other	26	3.48
Total	747	99.97

Exhibit 5.2.3

**Observed Student Instructional Behaviors
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**



Student Behavior	N	%
Transition Work	43	5.75
Testing	13	1.74
Seat Work	228	30.52
Off Task	2	0.27
Applied Practice	145	19.41
Problem Solving	19	2.54
Direct Instruction	290	38.21
Other	7	0.93
Total	747	99.37

The following are summaries of what the auditors learned from teacher observations:

Direct Instruction

Almost half of the teachers observed (358, or 47.92 percent) delivered curriculum through various direct instruction modalities. In some classrooms students were actively engaged in the lesson, dialoguing with teachers and other students, actively raising their hands to respond to teacher questions, and asking questions that demonstrated understanding of the content. However, in the majority of classrooms, students were seated in rows in a very traditional format listening to the teacher present information, and student learning was passive. Teachers were using the blackboard or technology. Classrooms were quiet and orderly.

Small Group

In 103 classrooms (13.78 percent), teachers had students working in small groups. Small group instruction was most evident in elementary schools. The teacher taught one group, while students worked with each other in small groups. Small group lessons observed were usually in the content areas of ELA (reading) and math. Students were working at their table group on assignments in the corresponding instructional content area.

The auditors also observed that while students were often sitting in small groups, they were actually working independently.

Assisting

Teachers in 101 classrooms (13.52 percent) at each instructional level were assisting students with their learning. As they circulated about the classroom, teachers answered questions for individual students or explained content. Some teacher discussion/clarification with an individual student led to an explanation or discussion with a small group of students.

Monitoring

Teachers monitoring behaviors was observed in 93 (12.44 percent) of the classes. As with assisting behaviors, teachers circulated about the classroom checking student work as assignments were completed. A few teachers were observed adjusting the instructional modality from monitoring to assisting in order to address student needs.

At Desk

Some teachers (66, or 8.83 percent) were observed sitting at their desks. Auditors noted that some of them had technology controls at the desk, which focused their attention in the desk area. When the auditors entered some of these classrooms, the teacher moved from the desk and began interacting with students.

Other

The auditors arrived at 26 classroom (3.48 percent), as the class period was beginning. Teachers were involved with classroom routines, such as taking attendance or settling the class for instruction. In one instance, the audit team observed teachers who were talking to each other and not attending to some form of classroom instruction.

The auditors observed the following student behaviors in classrooms:

Direct Instruction/Whole Group and Seat Work

Most of the school system's observed students(290 classrooms, or 38.21 percent) received instruction in some form of direct instruction or whole group teacher driven instruction. Students were seated at their desks using textbooks or worksheets as the content sources. Also in alignment with teachers using direct instruction strategies was the numbers of students involved in seat work (228, or 30.52 percent). Combined direct instruction/whole group and seat work account for the modalities by which students in most classrooms (518, or 68.73 percent) in the Minneapolis Public Schools are engaged in the instruction.

In most whole group classrooms, students were seated at their desks completing work sheets or reading silently using textbooks and worksheets. During some whole group lessons students were engaged in discussion with the teacher, answering questions or listening to other students. Other examples observed by auditors included drawing, reading silently, reading aloud, class discussion, and watching a movie. When asked what they were learning during a lesson where students were preparing to watch a movie, a high school student initially responded that he "didn't know why the class was watching the movie." He then explained that the class had read the book and now they were going to see how the book was "visualized."

Applied Practice

Students in 145 (19.41 percent) classrooms were engaged in activities in which they applied knowledge and created new learning from the content presented. For example, students in a middle school social studies class created a rap song as a means of presenting the leaders of a colonial community with their concerns about the community's governance. Elementary students wrote original stories and shared them with the class.



River Bend High School applied practice in science lesson

Transition Work

Students in 43 (5.75 percent) classrooms were involved in transition work. In some instances they were entering the classroom at the beginning of the period and instructed to complete an assignment that focused them on the day's lesson, or they were involved in moving from one instructional activity to another. When students were transitioning into the class, many teachers were waiting at the classroom door giving students direction as they entered the classroom. In the latter situation, teachers provided specific directions to keep students on task.

Problem Solving

In a few classes (19, or 2.54 percent) students were actively engaged in solving a real world problem. In one elementary talent class, for example, students were researching newspaper stock listings to determine if they should buy or sell their stocks taking into account the current financial crisis.

Testing

Some students were taking assessments at each instructional level. The auditors noted that most were formative unit tests or teacher-made tests or quizzes.

Off Task

Two classrooms (.26 percent) were coded as off task. Students were not engaged in any instructional activity. For example, students in a high school class had their books and materials packed and were waiting for the bell to ring. This was 5-6 minutes prior to the end of the instructional period. Students were milling around the classroom talking to each other. The auditors noted that in some classrooms individual students were off task. These students were quiet and not disturbing the classroom but were obviously not engaged in instructional activities. In the other class (kindergarten) the auditors were told we have "10 minutes to kill."

Other

A few students were engaged in activities such as individual work.

Overall, the auditors found that direct/whole group instruction, which includes students passively engaged in learning activities presented by the teacher, was the predominate form of instruction used by teachers. These observations verified what staff members told administrators to expect. Classrooms were orderly and students were seated at their desks and engaged in quiet learning activities. Most students, when asked, were able to explain what they were learning and why it was important. Students' answers demonstrate that there was some alignment between what the teacher identified as the objective of the lesson and what students understood to be the objective of the lesson.

Technology Usage

The auditors reviewed the Minneapolis Public Schools *Technology Plan*, which was aligned to the Strategic Plan 2007-2012. The academic goal for PreK–12 Technology Literacy is to “increase teacher knowledge, skills and dispositions in the use of technology for instruction.” Surveys were completed by elementary students (grades 3-5), secondary students, parents, and teachers. Teachers noted that they wanted more access to technology for instruction, specifically, video cameras and Smart Boards. Elementary students most often answered that “it [technology] helps me get better grades.” Secondary students most often answered that they use technology for emailing and online research and indicated that the main obstacle to using technology in school is “computers don’t always work.”

In general, auditors observed that the district is making some progress in meeting teachers’ technology needs—providing more access to technology for instruction. However, student usage of technology as an instructional tool was almost never observed during the auditors’ classroom visits.

During classroom observations, data on technology usage by teachers and students were collected. The following types of instructional technology were found in classrooms at each instructional level: document cameras, Smart/Promethean Boards, video/audio equipment, computer labs, and overhead projectors.

Technology was present in most classrooms and used by teachers in the delivery of instruction. However, it was most often used in a very traditional manner. Smart Boards and document cameras were used in ways similar to the uses of the black/white board. For example, students were copying notes verbatim which the teacher had projected onto the screen or reading documents as they would read from the textbook. Classroom desktop computers were usually not in use and had not been booted up for usage.



Hale Elementary School student works on a computer

Very seldom were students observed using the technology in classrooms. Up-to-date computer labs were available in most buildings, and some schools had multiple computer labs. When students were observed in computer labs, they were engaged in traditional types of learning activities. The auditors did not observe students engaging in web-based research during visits or using the technological equipment in classrooms. In some computer labs students were correcting their written work or using skill focused software programs.

Some staff members admitted that they were not skilled in using technology for instruction and they planned to take advantage of professional development opportunities offered by the district.

Comments shared with the auditors regarding technology as an instructional tool follow:

- “You will see some [classrooms] where a workbook is put on a document camera and teaching is from that.” (District Content Administrator)
- “Technology is one of our core values. As of next week, every class will have a Smart Board. Also, we have a ‘great site technologist’. We have a mobile lab and two regular standing labs.” (Principal)

- “Last year, for the first time we got a lot of equipment [technology] and I’m really not certain how all of the teachers are using it.” (Principal)
- “Technology support [for instruction] is not here.” (Teacher)
- “The Read 180 software update is a real headache; the old computers won’t run the new software, and often the student work is not saved.” (Teacher)
- “Twenty percent of the teachers effectively use technology.” (Principal)

Overall, auditors found the use of technology in classrooms does not consistently reflect district goals and expectations for the use of technology.

Alignment of Classroom Observation Activities to *Principles of Learning*

Principles of Learning (POL) provide the framework for curriculum and instruction in the Minneapolis Public Schools. The audit team looked for evidence of the nine components of *POL* as they visited the schools and the individual classrooms.

Each team of auditors collected data on the alignment of classroom activities to the *Principles of Learning* in half (31) of the schools visited. During building visits and discussions with principals, auditors discussed strategies used to implement *POL* in classrooms. The auditors also scanned classrooms to observe artifacts representing *POL* infusion into classroom instruction, such as classroom bulletin boards and classroom displays. They also made note of behaviors and actions that were opposed to the *Principles of Learning* framework.

The auditors summarized the frequency of observations of *POL* in the 31 selected schools in [Exhibit 5.2.4](#).

Exhibit 5.2.4

**Evidence of *Principles of Learning* Observed in Classrooms
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**

School Name	Grades	Numbers of POL Activities Observed	PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING									No POL Activities Observed
			Organizing for Effort	Clear Expectations	Recognition of Accomplishments	Fair and Credible Evaluations	Academic Rigor	Socialized Intelligence	Accountable Talk	Learning Apprenticeship	Self-Management of Learning	
Armatage	Elementary	1							X			
Bancroft	Elementary	2		X					X			
Barton Elementary	Elementary	1		X							X	
Bethune	Elementary	1										X
Burroughs Elementary	Elementary	3	X		X			X				
Dowling	Elementary	3		X				X		X		
Green Central	Elementary	4	X	X	X		X					
Hall Elementary	Elementary	4	X	X	X			X				
Kenny	Elementary	1							X			
Lake Harriet	Elementary	3		X			X	X				
Longfellow Elementary	Elementary	5	X	X			X	X	X			
Loring	Elementary	5	X	X				X	X	X		
Nellie Johnson	Elementary	5	X	X			X	X	X			
Parkview Elementary	Elementary	1										X
Ramsey	Elementary	1		X								
Seward	Elementary	6	X	X			X	X	X	X		

Exhibit 5.2.4 (continued)
Evidence of *Principles of Learning* Observed in Classrooms
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

School Name	Grades	Numbers of POL Activities Observed	PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING									
			Organizing for Effort	Clear Expectations	Recognition of Accomplishments	Fair and Credible Evaluations	Academic Rigor	Socialized Intelligence	Accountable Talk	Learning Apprenticeship	Self-Management of Learning	No POL Activities Observed
Sheridan Elementary	Elementary	2	X	X								
Waite Park Elementary	Elementary	2	X				X					
Wenonah Elementary	Elementary	2	X	X								
Windom	Elementary	1		X								
Harrison	High School	1		X								
Henry High School	High School	5	X	X	X		X		X			
North High School	High School	4	X	X	X		X					
South High School	High School	3					X	X	X			
Washburn High School	High School	1										X
Anthony Middle	Middle School	2		X					X			
Folwell Middle School	Middle School	1										X
Marcy Elementary	Middle School	2	X	X								
Northeast Middle School	Middle School	2		X			X					
Sanford	Middle School	2		X						X		
Riverbend	Special Ed.	2		X			X					
Totals			13	22	5	0	11	9	10	4	1	4

Based on data summarized in [Exhibit 5.2.4](#), the auditors found the following regarding the use of *POL* in classrooms:

- The sample included 20 (64.51 percent) elementary schools; five (16.12 percent) middle schools; five (16.12 percent high schools), and one (3.22 percent) Special Education site. To varying degrees evidence of the *Principles of Learning* components were observed in most schools (86.66 percent). The auditors noted that they did not see evidence of the *Principles of Learning* in four (13.33 percent) schools.
- The Clear Expectations principle was the most often observed (22 of the schools visited, or 73.33 percent). Examples of Clear Expectations observed in classrooms were students articulating the expectations for the lesson taught, teachers giving clear instructions that included learning targets for the lesson, and clearly visible written objectives for each lesson.
- The second most often principle observed was Organizing for Effort, which was seen in 13 (43.33 percent) of the schools visited. Examples of Organizing for Effort activities auditors observed in classrooms were differentiated reading groups, small group instruction with each of the four adults in the room assigned to facilitate instruction for a group, and students using halls to study individually or working 1:1 with an adult.
- Academic Rigor was observed in 11 schools (36.66 percent) visited. Teachers had students engage in the following types of rigorous academic activities: students learning the value of asking essential questions about the content they were learning, a grade 2 teacher had a “Million Dollar” word board in the class that included upper elementary/lower middle school vocabulary (“garrulous” and “loquacious”

instead of “talkative”), teaching outlining a problem solving process for students as a component of the lesson, and teacher probing students to respond using higher types of thinking strategies.

- Accountable Talk was observed in 10 schools (33.33 percent) visited. Teachers had wording for Accountable Talk as well as expectations for using Accountable Talk posted in classrooms.
- Socialized Intelligence was observed in nine (30 percent) schools. Classroom teachers implemented the following types of Socialized Intelligence activities in classrooms: talking with students about why they are learning specific skills and teacher-modeled “Habit of Mind” skills for students to use when working in partner groups.
- The Recognition for Accomplishment (5 [16.66 percent]), Fair and Credible Evaluation (0), Learning Apprenticeship (4 [13.33 percent]), and Self-Management of Learning (0) principles were observed to a much lesser degree in all of the schools.

During building visitations the auditors also observed behaviors that were opposed to the *Principles of Learning* framework. For example, teachers and administrators were heard using incorrect grammar (Learning as Apprenticeship [modeling for students]); students engaged in passive activities: worksheet learning activities (Academic Rigor), grading on the curve (Fair and Credible Evaluation), and Teacher Talk (Accountable Talk). In schools coded as “No *Principles of Learning* Components Observed” principals noted that they were just beginning to understand the *Principles of Learning* and not ready to implement them.

Select comments shared with the auditors regarding the *Principles of Learning* follow:

- “With *POL*, the focus has been on getting the mainstream buildings up and running. Special Education has been an afterthought.” (Administrator)
- “I am a stand-alone department. I’m not sure about IFL [*POL*] in the district. What is it? What does it have to do with me? (Content Resource Staff)
- “Our district has disconnects.... People at the district level have adopted IFL [*POL*] as an initiative, but they don’t understand it. Very disconcerting. If we are to implement this framework, it requires a shift in how we do business.” (Administrator)
- “We don’t feel prepared for *POL* in our school. We were not part of the original training cohorts like other schools and staff.” (Principal)
- “The district wants *POL* in all classrooms.... How can we hold teachers accountable when they have not all been trained? Some of our principals are just now receiving training.” (Principal)
- “We are really expecting teachers to implement DL and IFL framework(s). Our weakness is that we are not consistent in keeping people accountable to that.” (Administrator)
- “There are people who don’t like IFL [*POL*].... People feel it takes too much time and it’s one more thing to do.” (Administrator)
- “IFL [*POL*] training at my school ‘was an insult;’ we read articles that I read twenty years ago, when they were current.” (Teacher)
- “Some people [hated] *Principles of Learning*. Training does not move the teachers to another level.... It is dull and repetitive.” (Teacher)

Overall, observations of classroom teacher and student behaviors, use of technology, and alignment of practice to *Principles of Learning* components indicates that teachers and students are most often involved in traditional learning activities where students have little to no responsibility for their learning. Most teachers utilize some type of direct/ whole group instruction strategy and students are engaged in seatwork or whole group learning activities. Although the board of education has placed technology of various forms in most classrooms and equipped at least one computer lab in schools, the usage of technology continues to be very traditional—teachers use it as another form of textbook or blackboard and students are not provided an opportunity to use the technology as a learning tool that permits them to initiate some of their own learning. *Principles of Learning*

related activities were observed in pockets throughout the school system. However, examples of activities implemented in classrooms demonstrating that the *Principles of Learning* are understood and integrated into instruction were limited in quality and quantity.

Finding 5.3: Current budgeting and financial reporting processes lack clear linkages between curriculum priorities and resource allocations, inadequately reflect congruence with the system strategic plan, and ineffectively exhibit financial transparency.

A school district's productivity is improved when clear linkages exist between the curriculum and the budget. Cost-benefit analysis requires a clear delineation of costs compared to documented system gains or results obtained from allocations. Such linkages provide for a budgetary process that is driven by curriculum needs, priorities, and goals. Linkages between budget and curriculum are critical and document how the district allocates fiscal resources to support and implement its programs. Thus, the budget is the numerical expression of the curriculum and should mirror program expectations.

The auditors reviewed recent budget documents, business office procedures, school allocations, district planning documents, and *Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports*. Interviews were conducted with board members, administrators, teachers, and other staff members to determine the processes for budget development and implementation.

The auditors found no consistent process in place for linking student achievement or program performance feedback to budgetary decisions at the school or district level.

The auditors reviewed board policies to determine if parameters for aligning the budget and the instructional program were established. The auditors found the following policies addressing the need for congruence:

- *Board Policy 3005: Budget* states that the board “recognizes the importance of providing an educational environment that maximizes each child’s opportunity to learn.” It also states that “business matters and other non-instructional operations of the district must be constantly assessed to determine how well they enhance the instructional program.”
- *Board Policy 3120: Budget Preparation* indicates that “the goal of the budget preparation process is to design a budget that meets the educational goals established by the Board of Education...” and that “the annual budget preparation should be compatible with the long-range goals of the district.”
- *Board Policy 3128: Performance Indicators* states, “Where possible, the Minneapolis Public Schools will integrate performance measurement and productivity indicators with the budget.”

The auditors found no administrative regulations or procedures to guide the implementation of *Board Policies 3005* or *3128*. *Administrative Regulation 3120A* provides for line-by-line comparisons of the current year budget to the previous year and requires special notation of items “involving instructional plans, school plant modifications, and financial changes for the future.”

The auditors reviewed the *2007-08 Supplemental Budget* to ascertain how allocations from the central office to school sites were determined. The school allocation formulas for the fiscal year ending 2008 are displayed in [Exhibit 5.3.1](#).

Exhibit 5.3.1
School Allocations
Minneapolis Public Schools
Fiscal Year Ending 2008

Allocation Type	Allocation Method
Classroom Teacher Positions (Class Size)	Allocated to schools according to these ratios (K-3, 1:26, 3-8, 1:32, 9-12, 1:34)
Compensatory Education	Allocated to schools based on the state formula of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, with free lunch students counting as a whole and reduced lunch students counting as a half. Schools are required to reserve 30 percent of their compensatory dollars to support class sizes.
Title I	Allocated to schools as mandated by state and federal guidelines with each school ranked by poverty. Funding was based on the number of eligible students at \$680 per student. Schools at 35% poverty or less did not receive any Title I funds during the fiscal year 2008.
Special Education	Revenue from state aid is distributed to schools based on the Special Education program at the site. The programs receiving this funding were the citywide classrooms and special school sites. Each citywide program had a specific allocation of staff dependent upon the program and the number of students in the class. School based programs are funded by the school using either per capita or compensatory resources.
ELL	State revenues were allocated to schools with an ELL program on a projected per pupil basis.
Career and Technology Education	Allocated to each high school based on the program at the site.
Enrollment (Instructional Support)	Dollars available were allocated to schools according to per capita student enrollment based on state pupil unit weightings (kindergarten at .557, grades 1-3 weighted at 1.115, grades 4-6 at 1.06, and grades 7-12 at 1.3).

As shown in Exhibit 5.3.1, allocations to school sites are formula based. The *2007-08 Supplemental Budget* describes a “Revenue Reflective Model” in which allocations are “based on the way the legislature allocates money to the district and the need to maintain small class sizes.” In addition, each school is analyzed to determine if they can provide a minimum essential program as defined by the district in the supplemental budget. If they cannot, additional funds from the district’s basic state aid revenue are allocated to meet the minimum essential program standards.

During interviews the auditors learned that, although the 2008-09 version of the supplemental budget had not been developed, the allocation formulas had remained essentially the same. One exception is that, as part of the North Side Initiative, teachers are allocated to buildings on the North Side according to a ratio of 1:21 for kindergarten as opposed to a ratio of 1:26 as indicated in the 2007-08 document.

The auditors looked for evidence of a formal budget planning model and a process for setting instructional priorities to sustain, add, or eliminate activities or programs from the budget at the building level. They found that there was no singular model used consistently in the district for the development and administration of school budgets. Many principals noted that site councils play a role in the budget process. Interview data indicated that the level of involvement by site councils varied across the district. Differing levels of involvement are exemplified in the following statements made by principals:

- “In my building, what the site council is primarily responsible for in budgets is Title I and compensatory education.”
- “My site council reviews the budget, but there really isn’t much for them to do because I don’t have much discretionary money.”
- “I set budget priorities, but I review them with the site council.”
- “My site council is very involved in budget. We talk about the needs based on student assessments.”

- “When we had to cut support staff, we had a staff and parent survey to help the site council prioritize.”

For departments and other cost centers in the budget, allocations were based on the previous year’s budgets. Several central office administrators indicated that there is a “lag” in the data, and therefore previous year budgets, rather than actual expenses, must be used in making budgetary decisions. For the fiscal year ending 2009, large areas of the budget were cut five percent from the budgeted expenditures for the fiscal year ending 2008. The Chief Financial Officer, Chief of Policy and Operations, Deputy Superintendent, Chief of Human Resources, and Chief Communications Officer were required to cut five percent from the total budgets for which they were responsible. Within those budgets, percentages of cuts or additions could vary. No procedures were presented to the auditors demonstrating how priorities should be established in these large areas of the budget or within specific departments. One central office administrator stated, “In the past we haven’t made changes proportionally and systematically. Departments have received no specific directions. They have been told to align budgets to the *Strategic Plan*.”

No other evidence was presented regarding the prioritization of budgetary requests or the linkage of budgetary decisions to the goals of the district. In addition, no evidence pertaining to a formal effort to link student achievement or program performance feedback to budgetary decisions was presented to the audit team.

Based upon the information presented, the auditors evaluated the current year’s budget processes in the Minneapolis Public Schools using the six components of curriculum-driven budgeting, in which allocations are tied to needs and performance feedback. The criteria are listed in [Exhibit 5.3.2](#) below, along with the auditors’ assessment.

Exhibit 5.3.2
Components of Curriculum-driven Budgeting and Ratings of Adequacy
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008

Criterion	Ratings	
	Adequate	Inadequate
1. Tangible, demonstrable connections are evident between assessments of curriculum effectiveness and allocations of resources.		X
2. Rank ordering of program components is provided to permit flexibility in budget expansion, reduction, or stabilization based on critical needs or priorities.		X
3. Cost benefits of curriculum program components are delineated in budget decision making.		X
4. Each budget request or submittal is described in terms of performance or results that permit evaluation of consequences of funding or nonfunding.		X
5. Budget requests compete with each other for funding based on evaluation of criticality of need and relationship to achievement of curriculum effectiveness.		X
6. Priorities in budget allocations are set by key educational staff participating in the decision-making process. (Teacher and principal suggestions and ideas for budget priorities are incorporated into the decision-making process).		X

The characteristics of curriculum-driven budgeting were not evident in the district or school site budgeting processes. One exception was in the area of Capital Outlay, where budget requests competed with each other based on criticality of need for preventative maintenance and deferred maintenance funding. The district uses a Computerized Maintenance Management System called Team Works to track the inventory and condition of the district’s facilities investments. Information from this data warehouse is used to prioritize projects (see [Finding 5.4](#)).

Despite the expectation identified in *Board Policy 3128: Performance Indicators* that performance measures and productivity indicators be integrated with the budget, the auditors were presented with no documentation that demonstrated the use of student achievement or program performance data to determine resource allocations.

The auditors also reviewed the *Minneapolis Public Schools 2007-2012 Strategic Plan* to determine if it included recommendations to improve the resource allocation processes of district. Recommendation number nine of the *Strategic Plan* is to “Create and sustain a positive financial position.” Three action steps related to budget development and implementation are associated with this recommendation:

- Balance the 2008-09 budget and align it with the *Strategic Plan*;
- Create a more user friendly financial reporting infrastructure; and
- Develop an overall budget process that focuses on results and increases the transparency of spending choices.

To determine the district’s current status regarding this recommendation, the auditors reviewed budget documents and comprehensive annual financial reports. The information derived from these sources is summarized in Exhibit 5.3.3.

Exhibit 5.3.3

**General Fund Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balances
Minneapolis Public Schools
Fiscal Years Ending 2004–2008**

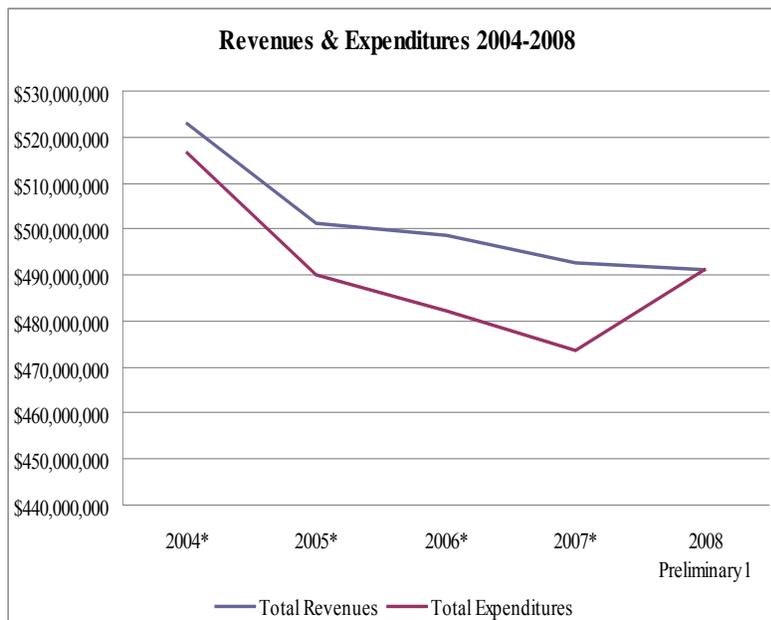
Description	2004*	2005*	2006*	2007*	2008 Preliminary ¹
Total Revenues	\$522,886,062	\$501,081,075	\$498,748,747	\$492,701,854	\$491,299,178
Total Expenditures	516,456,448	490,119,433	482,288,058	473,556,049	491,078,162
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenses	6,429,614	10,961,642	16,460,689	19,145,805	221,016
Other Financing Sources (Uses)	1,030,185	4,770,000	4,320,198	36,030,802	7,897,300
Special Items				(25,500,000) ²	
Net Change in Fund Balance	7,459,799	10,966,412	20,780,887	29,676,607	8,118,316
Ending Fund Balance	8,517,438	19,483,850	50,305,828 ³	79,982,435	86,989,096

Notes: * Audited

1. Unaudited data submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education as of October 16, 2008.

2. Payment of pension obligation.

3. Includes an adjustment of \$10,041,091 to restate the beginning fund balance to properly record state receivables, county tax receivables, deferred revenue, and payroll liabilities.



Key points to note in [Exhibit 5.3.3](#) are:

- Total revenues have decreased each year since the fiscal year ending 2004 and the preliminary total revenues for the fiscal year ending 2008 are 6.04 percent lower than the total revenues for the fiscal year ending 2004.
- Preliminary total expenditures for the fiscal year ending 2008 are 4.91 percent lower than total expenditures for the fiscal year ending 2004. Preliminary total expenditures for the fiscal year 2008 are 3.57 percent higher than total expenditures for the fiscal year ending 2007.
- There is a positive variance between revenues and expenditures for all five fiscal years. The variance between the fiscal year ending 2008 is much smaller than in previous years.
- The ending fund balance in 2004 was 1.65 percent of total expenditures and the preliminary ending fund balance for the fiscal year ending 2008 is 17.71 percent.

Board Policy 3700: Reserve indicates that the Minneapolis Public Schools will take steps to attain an undesignated and unreserved General Fund balance of “no less than the greater of 8 percent of General Fund expenditures for the following year or the sum of one month’s cash flow requirement, plus reasonable reserves for orderly budget adjustments if one month’s revenues are lost....” Fund balance data displayed on [Exhibit 5.3.3](#) include both designated and undesignated balances.

In December of 2007, Moody’s Investors Service issued the following statement regarding the Minneapolis Public Schools: “With expenditure cuts, including the closure of schools and consolidation of operations, the district has rebuilt reserves with three years of consecutive operating surpluses. Moody’s believes this demonstrated ability to make difficult budget decisions including realistic assumptions about continued pressures related to district management and enrollment declines, positions the district to be able to maintain healthy financial operations, even when faced with critical challenges.”

As noted above, the following three actions steps related to budget development and implementation processes were identified in district strategic planning documents to support recommendation number nine: balance the 2008-09 budget and align it with the *Strategic Plan*, create a more user friendly financial reporting infrastructure, and develop an overall budget process that focuses on results and increases the transparency of spending choices.

Through interviews and document reviews, the auditors reviewed the status of district efforts to implement the three *Strategic Plan* actions steps.

The *Budget Planning Committee* has begun discussion of the *Strategic Plan* action step established to “balance the 2008-09 budget and align it with the *Strategic Plan*.” This committee is made up a board of education liaison and staff members from the following departments: budget, funded programs, academic affairs, ELL, special education, operations, transportation, human resources and finance. The *Budget Committee Agenda Plan* for 2008 includes an assumption that the “budget must balance” and an assumption that the budget “must align with the *Strategic Plan*.” Key questions identified on this agenda plan include: “What is the impact of this decision on overall achievement?” and “How does this support the *Strategic Plan*?” The committee has met several times in the fall of 2008. No report or documented recommendations resulting from the meetings were presented to the auditors.

As noted earlier in this finding, department managers have been instructed to align budget decisions to the *Strategic Plan*. No further evidence was presented to the auditors regarding district efforts to establish congruence between budget priorities to the *Strategic Plan*.

Some staff expressed a belief that there was a need to improve the financial reporting system if the district is to improve budgeting processes including the processes used to estimate prospective revenues and expenditures. The district has implemented the SAP (Systems, Applications, and Products in Data Processing) software system that integrates a wide range of business functions. The following quotations from central office administrators illustrate their concerns with the SAP system:

- “The SAP process is still a problem. We have to make a lot of manual entries and it is difficult to get trial balances.”
- “The chart of accounts was never set up right in the SAP system.”
- “My perception on SAP is that we have three problems: technology systems are only as good as the end user and we need better training, SAP was not set up to be user friendly, and our systems before SAP were poor.”
- “At the district level, mostly what has happened is that we have had such a lag of data. We have budgeted based on the previous budgets because we don’t have good data on actual spending.”
- “We have a clerk who works with SAP and around it.”

One central office administrator indicated that some consideration has been given to the engagement of the SAP software company in an assessment of the utilization of the SAP product in the Minneapolis Public Schools. No other evidence was presented to the auditors regarding the *Strategic Plan* action step to “create a more user friendly financial reporting infrastructure.”

No evidence was presented to the auditors demonstrating district efforts to address the *Strategic Plan* action step regarding the development of “an overall budget process that focuses on results and increases the transparency of spending choices.”

On November 4, 2008, district voters will consider a referendum levy to provide approximately \$60 million per year for the district. The referendum would go into effect during the 2009-10 school year and run for eight years. It would replace the current referendum, which provides approximately \$29 million annually. If the referendum fails, the district would need to cut this \$29 million from its budget. Information on the district’s website indicates that, if approved, the district has committed to use “the majority of the funds to support four educational essentials.” These essentials identified in district planning documents are managing class sizes in a renewal of the 2000 referendum, improving early reading skills so every child is reading by third grade, enhancing math and science programs so every child is ready for algebra by the eighth grade and ready for the future upon graduation, and providing up-to-date technology and textbooks so every child has the learning materials he or she needs to succeed.

The auditors were not presented with processes or procedures to determine priorities for additional resource allocations within the broad categories (essentials) if the referendum passes or to determine how cuts will be made if the referendum fails.

As to data usage and clarity of information, the auditors found that financial transparency (and accuracy in planning) is hampered because central office administrators and other budget managers develop and present new budgets using previous spending estimates rather than data on actual spending. This means that new estimates are largely developed using old estimates without reconciliation with actual revenues and expenditures.

For example, one senior administrator stated, “In budgeting, we have had managers use an average salary and 34 percent for benefits. We have not yet done an analysis to see if the benefit percentage is too high (or too low).” Consequently, estimates of spending are based on previous estimations, so the accuracy of financial plans may be in question and actual financial solvency information (relationships between revenues and expenditures over time) is difficult to obtain.

In summary, the auditors found no evidence of district efforts to link student achievement or program performance feedback to budgetary decisions (see [Finding 5.1](#)). For the most part, budgetary decisions were based on previous year’s budgets and per pupil allocations rather than on criticality of need and curriculum effectiveness. Efforts to connect goals of the *Strategic Plan* to budget development processes are in the beginning stages and the connections are not yet evident. The auditors concluded that budgeting practices were not driven by curricular goals, achievement needs, or cost-benefit analyses of various programs and services.

Finding 5.4: Most school facilities are clean and well maintained. However, some schools lack sufficient space to support a full range of instructional programs. Facilities planning is evident but the district does not have a comprehensive long-range facilities plan.

The physical environment of a school is an important indicator of the educational staff's ability to deliver the curriculum effectively. Facilities that are well maintained, well equipped, and clean create a learning environment, that is pleasant and supports the delivery of the instructional program. Further, the availability of adequate space to deliver instructional programs is an important determinant of the effectiveness of curriculum delivery.

Long-range planning is imperative for effective use of funding and real estate to meet both current and future student needs. Planning should be based on careful analysis of all factors that impact the learning environment such as enrollment trends, curriculum needs, demographic changes, instructional practices, special education requirements, technological advancements, and the support services needed to maintain the system. Long-range planning insures that a school system is prepared financially for the task of maintaining the quality of existing facilities and the possibility of future construction or renovation.

The audit team visited 62 of the district's schools and most of the classrooms where instruction in the core content areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and English/language arts was taking place. The auditors gathered information on the learning environment and any special problems or impediments to teaching and learning that may exist in facilities. The auditors were specifically concerned with overall maintenance, physical atmosphere, accessibility, safety, and instructional uses of the buildings. Interviews were conducted with board members, central office administrators, building level administrators, teachers, and other staff. In addition, the auditors reviewed board policies, facilities planning documents, and other documents related to school buildings and grounds.



Overcrowded classroom at Southwest High School

The auditors found that the Minneapolis Public Schools were clean and well maintained and provided an inviting atmosphere for students and staff. Some schools lack sufficient space to support instructional programming, while other schools have excess capacity. The district has initiated several facilities planning initiatives but does not currently have a comprehensive long-range facilities plan.

Board Policy 3517: Operations, Maintenance and Security of Buildings and Grounds directs the superintendent of schools to establish rules and regulations regarding the operation, maintenance, and security of all buildings. *Regulation 3517A* ensures that all facilities projects are coordinated by the Director of Planning and Facilities, and *Regulation 3517C* outlines specific safety and security measures to be followed in all school buildings.

Board Policy 7110: New Construction identifies legal requirements for the school system to develop and maintain a “long-range building plan.”

During site visits, the auditors observed that the schools were clean and in good physical condition. A few minor maintenance issues were identified by auditors, such as rooms being too hot in some buildings and poor lighting in some hallways. However, nearly all of the building principals interviewed indicated that the maintenance department provided good service. The school system maintains a District Operations Center and shops for carpentry, electricity, grounds and trucking, painting and glazing, pipefitting, plumbing, and sheet metal work. Work orders can be submitted online and they are managed in the District Operations Center. Each school has a head building engineer who is responsible for supervision of cleaning and minor maintenance and is the contact for all work orders.

The auditors found that some schools had insufficient space to accommodate a full range of instructional programs, while other schools had excess capacity. Classrooms in some schools were insufficient in size to accommodate the number of students assigned to them. In addition, some principals reported that they had no space for assemblies, large group instruction, and professional development sessions. The auditors observed tutoring and small group sessions in hallways.

In 2007, a classroom utilization study was completed for the Minneapolis Public Schools. The study indicated that the school system had an excess capacity of 600-900 classrooms, a median utilization rate of 62 percent, and a utilization rate of less than 52 percent in one quarter of the schools. At the same time, of the 61 schools identified in the study, 15 had a utilization rate of 87-133 percent. Of these 15 schools, 11 were in the southwest quadrant of the district and none were in the north quadrant.

The district utilizes a computerized maintenance management system called Team Works, which has been customized to meet the needs of the district. This system is a data warehouse in which maintenance personnel continually assess and record the location, type, quantity, and condition of the school system's facilities assets. As maintenance workers address specific work orders, they record their work and their assessments of the condition and expected useful life of the asset they have worked on.

Information in the data warehouse is used to forecast needs for both preventative and deferred maintenance projects and to develop the scope and cost estimates for the projects. The system also allows for financial coding and tracking of the projects. A variety of customized reports can be generated to provide data for facilities planning.

The *Minneapolis Public Schools Strategic Plan* includes a strategy to "develop a long-range Master Facilities Plan as part of overall Program and Operations planning." Strategic planning documents reviewed by the auditors indicate that Program and Operations planning is one element of its strategic planning work. According to the documents, the purpose of this planning is to ensure high quality choices for Minneapolis students and families while using resources in the most effective and efficient manner. Topics considered will include elements of a core academic program for all schools, types of schools, amount of choice, and alignment of resources (i.e., transportation and facilities).

Program and Operations Planning was the subject of a board of education retreat on June 24, 2008, and the board has received updates on the planning at subsequent meetings. A committee, consisting of administrators responsible for academic programs and administrators responsible for operations of the school system, is meeting regularly. The auditors were not presented with documentation on the progress of the committee's work. Regarding the Program and Operations Planning, one central office administrator stated, "We're looking at some large planning issues and it will take a great deal of input to make decisions. We're looking at what programs we want to have and where we will have them. Then, we will start working on a facilities plan."

The *Strategic Plan* also includes a strategy to "complete the current Facility Reuse Process to identify revenue or cost-avoidance solutions." The school system currently has 12 closed school properties listed on its website as available for redevelopment. The closures have resulted from a significant enrollment decline in the district, which had its average daily membership decline from 50,211 in 2001 to less than 35,000 in 2008. In June 2007, the Urban Design Lab was hired by the Minneapolis Public Schools to develop a strategic plan for the redevelopment of its closed property and a final report on this project was submitted in June 2008. Subsequent to this report, two schools were closed as part of the North Side Initiative. The school system has hired a brokerage firm to market the properties in a manner consistent with the recommendations in the final report.

In summary, the school buildings in use in the Minneapolis Public Schools are clean and well maintained. Some buildings lack sufficient instructional space, while others have excess capacity. Data is stored and continually updated in a comprehensive computerized maintenance management system to assist school personnel in forecasting and planning renovation projects. Planning processes have been established to identify alternative uses of closed schools and to determine the number and location of schools in the future. In the *Minneapolis Public Schools Strategic Plan* the development of a master facilities plan is identified as part of the district's Program and Operations Planning.



Postnatal care for students' children at Broadway High School

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PDK-CMSI CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AUDIT TEAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Based on the three streams of data derived from interviews, documents, and site visits, the PDK-CMSi Curriculum Management Audit Team has developed a set of recommendations to address its findings shown under each of the standards of the audit.

In the case of the findings, they have been triangulated, i.e., corroborated with one another. In the case of the recommendations, those put forth in this section are representative of the auditors' best professional judgments regarding how to address the problems that surfaced in the audit.

The recommendations are presented in the order of their criticality for initiating system-wide improvements. The recommendations also recognize and differentiate between the policy and monitoring responsibilities of the board of education, and the operational and administrative duties of the superintendent of schools.

Where the PDK-CMSi audit team views a problem as wholly or partly a policy and monitoring matter, the recommendations are formulated for the board of education. Where the problem is distinctly an operational or administrative matter, the recommendations are directed to the superintendent of schools as the chief executive officer of the school system. In many cases, the PDK-CMSi audit team directs recommendations to both the board and the superintendent, because it is clear that policy and operations are related, and both entities are involved in a proposed change. In some cases, there are no recommendations to the superintendent when only policy is involved or none to the board when the recommendations deal only with administration.

Audit recommendations are presented as follows: the overarching goals for the board and/or the superintendent, followed by the specific objectives to carry out the overarching goals. The latter are designated as either "Governance Functions" or "Administrative Functions."

Recommendation 1: Bring district curriculum and program management and all related functions under system control and thoroughly align these efforts to the district's strategic plan; manage the pace and implementation of the change process to ensure that curriculum and program alignment efforts come to fruition through viable accountability.

The most critical need in the Minneapolis Public Schools is to bring curriculum development, revision, assessment, interventions, evaluation, and professional development under system control. The history inadequate control has resulted in a "system of schools rather than a school system," often resulting in employees functioning as independent contractors working in isolated schools. Auditors observed a patchwork of programs and interventions going in many directions, but without clear evidence that any given program was effective or that it was being implemented with fidelity (see Finding 5.1). Individual loyalty to a program was often more a function of proximity to and familiarity with the program than of its effectiveness. Wide ranging choices fragment the system and complicate a coherent vision and identity, leaving both parents and the professionals who serve them confused and insecure as to what curriculum quality means and how it is best designed and delivered. The current menu of program options has proven to be unsustainable as the district is annually faced with the need for more budget reductions. Frequent changes in central office leadership and high mobility of leadership in some schools has further exacerbated the fragmentation and permitted many programs to morph from their original mission. Furthermore, auditors determined that current accountability systems in the Minneapolis Public Schools are inconsistently applied and ineffective in ensuring that programs and/or personnel are meeting acceptable standards.

Governance Functions: the following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education:

G.1.1: Direct the superintendent to draft for board review and adoption current policies that meet the curriculum management characteristics for sound quality control as identified in Finding 1.1 and Recommendation G.3.4.

G.1.2: Direct the superintendent to prepare a policy for board review and adoption requiring that all program initiatives be aligned to the district's Strategic Plan (see [Finding 1.4](#)).

G.1.3: Direct the superintendent to include in both the table of organization and an associated job description the position of Chief Academic Officer (CAO) with duties described in [Recommendation G.4.4](#) (see [Exhibit R4.1](#)). It is important that the CAO maintain a balance between staff functions such as curriculum development and professional development and implementation, which is a line function. That is, the CAO can only be held accountable if he/she can control the pace of change as it impacts the schools and classrooms. This means that the CAO's office must function as a clearinghouse for all programmatic change in MPS. The kind of change intended with this recommendation is not that which is the providence of the individual school principal, but rather programmatic changes that involve preparing the written curriculum, adopting textbook/instructional materials, approving instructional or curricular interventions, supervising professional development, overseeing curriculum and program evaluation, and defining the purpose and function of assessment as it pertains to student achievement. The CAO should report directly to the deputy superintendent.

G.1.4: Direct the superintendent to (through systematic program evaluation) report on which district programs and initiatives should be continued, modified, or discontinued (see [Finding 5.1](#) and [Recommendation 6](#)). This evaluation should not only be on whether the program has been implemented with fidelity, but whether or not students are learning and making appropriate progress towards academic achievement benchmarks and goals (see [Recommendations 5, 7, and 9](#)).

G.1.5: Direct the superintendent, based upon the evaluations described in [G.1.4](#), to prioritize and budget only for those programs that provide the desired results (see [Recommendation 6](#)).

G.1.6: Direct the superintendent to streamline the evaluation of all personnel to ensure that MPS has a viable system of personnel accountability and that:

- Each employee is accountable for fulfilling the duties outlined in his/her job description (see [Finding 1.2.1](#) and [Recommendation 4](#));
- Supervisors are provided with evaluation instruments and are proficient in the skills needed to ensure that such evaluations are consistent, fair, and reliable; and
- Supervisors are provided with effective mechanisms to remediate the performance of employees whose work is judged to be unsatisfactory and to terminate such employees when remediation efforts are unsuccessful.

G.1.7: Direct the superintendent to prepare a policy as noted in [Recommendation G.3.5](#) for board review and adoption to differentiate clearly between decisions that are made at the campus, those made at the central office, and those that are shared, thus centralizing decision making for better oversight of district functions.

Administrative Functions: the following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent:

A.1.1: Draft for board review and adoption current policies that meet the curriculum management characteristics for sound quality control as identified in [Finding 1.1](#) and [Recommendation G.3.4](#).

A.1.2: Prepare a policy for board review and adoption that requires all program initiatives be aligned to the district's Strategic Plan (see [Finding 1.4](#)).

A.1.3: Include in both the table of organization and an associated job description the position of Chief Academic Officer (CAO) with duties described in [G.1.3](#) and [G.4.4](#).

A.1.4: Through systematic program evaluation, report to the board on which district programs and initiatives should be continued, modified, or eliminated (see [Finding 5.1](#) and [Recommendation 6](#)). This evaluation should not only be on whether the program has been implemented with fidelity, but whether or not students are learning and making appropriate progress towards academic achievement benchmarks and goals (see [Recommendations 5, 7, and 9](#)).

A.1.5: Based upon the evaluations described in [G.1.4](#), propose a prioritized budget that only includes those programs that provide the desired results (see [Recommendation 6](#)).

A.1.6: Using the criteria outlined in [G.1.6](#), streamline the evaluation of all personnel to ensure that MPS has a viable system of personnel accountability

A.1.7: Prepare a policy as noted in [Recommendation G.3.5](#) for board review and adoption to differentiate clearly between decisions that are made at the campus, those made at the central office, and those that are shared, thus centralizing decision making for better oversight of district functions.

By implementing all of the components of this recommendation the district can take critical steps towards bringing the district curriculum and program management and all related functions under system control and into alignment with the district's strategic plan. Furthermore, there will be a viable accountability system in place to ensure that curriculum and program alignment efforts come to fruition. Reinstating the Chief Academic Officer is critical to bringing the required organizational functions into a relationship that can move the system ahead. This position, without the daily administrative distractions and pressures, can more adequately manage and align the multiple elements within the design and delivery of curriculum that will bring about the diminution and ultimate erasure of the achievement gap. With such coordination, the change process can also be managed so as to not overwhelm teachers and administrators.

Recommendation 2: Develop and execute a curriculum management plan to coordinate, articulate, and align the written, taught, and tested curriculum that includes up-to-date, high quality, and user friendly curriculum guides with appropriate rigor to promote consistency within and among schools and ensure system-wide quality control.

The goal of every school district is to provide quality instruction to each student. In order to achieve this goal, a district must focus time, energy, and the necessary resources to ensure that each student within the district has equal access to a quality education. A comprehensive curriculum management plan allows the district to focus resources and efforts toward the goal of increased student achievement for all students through a systemic means for the design, delivery, and alignment of the curriculum. Curriculum management planning also provides for coordinated leadership (see [Recommendations 1](#) and [4](#) regarding the recommended role of a Chief Academic Officer) with clear role responsibility for the creation, implementation, and evaluation of the plan.

A quality curriculum document is based on a written, taught, and tested curriculum that is aligned in content, context, and cognitive type. Comprehensive alignment of the written with the taught and tested curriculum only occurs when that alignment is present in all three dimensions. This means that how and with what cognitive processes a specific skill or task is to be performed is written in the curriculum in a manner congruent with how it is assessed on external tests in use. It must also be written specifically enough to inform teachers how such skills and tasks must be mastered in the classroom to ensure success on those tests. When a quality curriculum is in place, learning is not left to chance but becomes an intentional, focused effort with clear direction for teachers and access to the same learning for all students across the district. A consistent format for curriculum documents across grade levels and content areas further ensures that the key components of an aligned curriculum are included: objectives that have clarity and specificity, assessments that match district and state performance evaluations, prerequisite skills and knowledge needed for new learning, instructional resources and texts that match the objective, and specific classroom strategies for each objective taught.

The auditors found that some curriculum planning components were present in the Minneapolis Public Schools in varying stages in the core subject areas; however, a comprehensive curriculum management plan is not currently in place. MPS has board policy that specifically speaks to having a written curriculum for all subject areas, utilizes frameworks for planning, and that has a curriculum adoption and review cycle (see [Finding 2.2](#)), but these are inadequate to serve as a curriculum management plan. The auditors also found that the scope of the written curriculum is adequate for grades K-8, but inadequate for grades 9-12 (see [Finding 2.1](#)), and the quality of curriculum planning documents in all grade levels is inadequate (see [Finding 2.2](#)) to guide instruction within the district. Curriculum documents varied in content from grade level to grade level and from subject to subject and lacked a common format. The auditors also found that curriculum monitoring strategies and time spent in classrooms varied from campus to campus across the district (see [Finding 1.3](#)).

The Minneapolis Public Schools need to design and implement a comprehensive system for curriculum management that focuses on the development of quality curriculum documents for core subject areas that promote alignment and depth to the content, in a consistent document format for districtwide use. MPS further needs to establish curriculum documents for all non-core subject areas, utilizing the same format, with a goal of system-wide quality control.

The auditors provide the following recommendations to create and manage the design, implementation, and evaluation of an aligned curriculum.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education:

G.2.1: Develop policies that define the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, district administrators, and teachers regarding curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation (see [Recommendations 1, 3, and 4](#)).

G.2.2: Direct the superintendent to revise and update *Administrative Regulation 6110A*, or draft new policies and/or regulations, to specifically require that written curriculum with clear goals and objectives for student outcomes be developed for each subject and grade level taught (not limited to the four core subject areas of English/language arts, math, science, and social studies). The policy should also include the expectation that teachers will implement the curriculum so that all students have equal access to the district curriculum. The policy should include the criteria listed in [Exhibit 2.2.1](#) and:

- A clear framework for the development of curriculum, which is aligned with the Minnesota State Academic Standards and incorporates the *Principles of Learning*;
- A requirement for deep alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum;
- Procedures for the design and implementation of the curriculum, including expansion of the current curriculum development and review cycle;
- An expectation that all courses offered within the district be supported by written curriculum documents;
- A process for the integration of technology with instructional strategies and resources for the purpose of enhancing student learning;
- A common format for all curriculum documents across subject areas and grade levels; and
- Formal board adoption of all curriculum documents prior to implementation.

G.2.3: Direct the superintendent to require that school site planning be linked to the implementation of the district's curriculum management plan and district goals (see [Finding 1.4](#)).

G.2.4: Direct the superintendent to align professional development to support teachers' quality delivery of the curriculum.

G.2.5: Direct the superintendent to annually review and report on the effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum management plan.

G.2.6: Direct the superintendent to establish standards, expectations, and processes for curriculum monitoring across the district (see [Finding 1.3](#)).

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public School Superintendent.

A.2.1: In accordance with [G.2.2](#), prepare a revision draft of *Administrative Regulation 6110A* for curriculum management and development, and present to the board for review and adoption.

A.2.2: Design and implement a comprehensive curriculum management plan to include the following:

- The district’s philosophical approach to the curriculum, which establishes a foundation for curriculum format and access, district and campus respective roles, and the responsibility of the district to the student in providing quality education for all based on the *Principles of Learning*;
- Adherence to a curriculum review cycle for all disciplines that ensures that every content area and grade level is addressed, with updates to meet changing state standards and high stake assessments, and includes timing, scope, team membership, and procedures;
- A consistent curriculum guide format, establishing a common design with common components for curriculum documents and incorporating design components allowing for user-friendly online access;
- Staff roles and responsibilities for curriculum management, delineating which tasks and responsibilities are primarily classroom-based, which are school-based, which are district-based, and which are board-based;
- Expectations for curriculum delivery in the classroom that establish the requirement that all teachers must teach the adopted curriculum;
- A professional development program based on the curriculum and curriculum delivery, which provides ongoing teacher training to facilitate student learning through deeper understanding of content and use of research-based classroom strategies;
- Common curriculum monitoring processes and procedures for principals and other responsible staff setting expectations and establishing processes for continuous monitoring of the implementation of the adopted curriculum;
- Selection procedures for instructional resources that determine how the materials designed to support the adopted curriculum will be selected and reviewed for effectiveness;
- A process for integrating technology into the curriculum, setting the expectation that technology will be incorporated into classroom settings to enhance student learning; and
- A process for communicating curriculum revisions to the board, staff, and community, thereby establishing information sharing procedures.

A.2.3: Building upon existing district documents, formalize and implement a curriculum review cycle that includes a model for the design of curriculum documents as follows:

Organizational preparation:

- Build upon the curriculum maps previously developed in the core subject areas, expanding them to meet the audit criteria. Gradually expand curriculum development to include all other courses taught within the district;
- Select a consistent, districtwide model format for curriculum documents and other online resource materials that is functional and user friendly;
- Re-establish a timeline for developing, evaluating, and revising curriculum documents for each subject and course offered;
- Select a curriculum design team and provide extensive training in curriculum and assessment design to this small group of individuals; and
- Select a curriculum review team to analyze the curriculum documents as they are drafted by the design team. In addition to teachers who teach the discipline under review, the review team should include a principal and teachers trained in technology, special education, gifted education, and education for English language learners.

Curriculum design:

- Review the latest research and expert thinking in the discipline;
- Assess existing curriculum documents' strengths and weaknesses based on research and the audit criteria in [Exhibit 2.2.1](#);
- Review existing goals and objectives and edit as needed for the discipline to ensure linkage to district goals and alignment to the Minnesota State Academic Standards;
- Include the following components of a quality curriculum document:
 1. A clear statement of what skills/concepts should be learned, when and how it should be performed, and the amount of time or emphasis given to each objective;
 2. Linkages between each objective and district and state assessments;
 3. Specific delineation of prerequisite skills/concepts;
 4. Linkages to adopted texts and other instructional materials; and
 5. Specific examples on how to teach the key concepts and skills in the classroom using a variety of proven instructional techniques.
- Include strategies for differentiating instruction to meet the needs of English language learners, special education, and gifted students;
- Integrate instructional technology into the curriculum;
- Obtain feedback from the curriculum review team; and
- Use external consultants to critique the process and products during the design phase.

Curriculum implementation:

- Field test the curriculum;
- Pilot the resource materials, assessments, and instructional strategies;
- Evaluate the curriculum's effectiveness in relation to student achievement;
- Revise field-tested curriculum documents based on feedback and student achievement data;
- Submit curriculum documents for adoption by the board;
- Require the availability of written curriculum documents for all teachers teaching the designated subjects; and
- Remove all outdated or unaligned curriculum documents and resources from the district.

A.2.4: Establish procedures to ensure that departmental and campus planning efforts (see [Finding 1.4](#)) are designed to support implementation of the district curriculum.

A.2.5: Establish procedures to monitor curriculum implementation across schools, subject areas, and programs (see also [Recommendation 8](#)).

A.2.6: Establish and communicate clear expectations for administrators and teachers with regard to use of the written curriculum.

A.2.7: Annually evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum management relative to achievement of all students and all student subgroup populations.

A.2.8: Provide financial resources within the budget to accomplish the elements of curriculum design, implementation, and ongoing evaluation noted in this and other recommendations.

Recommendation 3: Review, revise, adopt, and implement current board policies for meeting the characteristics of sound curriculum management, with special emphasis on integrating current planning functions into board policy.

A comprehensive set of policies is a prerequisite for sound curriculum management and local quality control (see [Finding 1.1](#) and [Recommendation 1](#)). These policies enable the board to effectively carry out its legal function of ensuring compliance to state and federal statutes and regulations and become the first source document in providing direction and oversight for the system. Without current and definitive policies, a board of education cannot ensure program focus, fidelity, effectiveness, or consistency. Policies promote constancy of purpose in district operations by providing reference points for recurring decisions. Sound policies:

- Establish clear direction for the system;
- Provide for consistency of actions over time as board members and administrators change office, thus establishing a stable historical base for district governance;
- Recall past decisions on similar issues, thus avoiding contradictory actions;
- Guide professional staff in their efforts to improve curriculum design and delivery throughout the system;
- Provide direction for evaluating program and personnel efficacy;
- Establish a framework for monitoring progress in the attainment of district achievement goals; and
- Provide a framework for allocating district resources to areas of highest need.

In combination, current board policies in the Minneapolis Public Schools do not adequately direct many critical functions necessary for curriculum control and related operational functions (see [Finding 1.1](#)). In addition, current plans and planning procedures are not adequately grounded in board policy (see [Finding 1.4](#)).

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Board of Education of the Minneapolis Public Schools.

G.3.1: Review, revise or create new, and adopt board policies that meet current legal requirements. This can be accomplished either through internal assignment or by contracting with a reputable organization familiar with Minnesota and federal statutes and regulations.

G.3.2: Revise *Policy 9310* to ensure that the “periodic review” occurs as a minimum every five years.

G.3.3: Direct the superintendent to prepare a draft of policies for board review and adoption that codify the current planning procedures in the district (see [Exhibits 1.4.2](#), [1.4.3](#), and [1.4.4](#) for relevant planning criteria).

G.3.4: Direct the superintendent to draft for board review and adoption current policies that meet the curriculum management characteristics for sound quality control. This may necessitate combining and updating several current policies that can be used as a first source document to direct the curriculum work of the district. Characteristics critical to sound quality control include, as a minimum, the following (see [Finding 1.1](#) for a complete list of quality characteristics):

- Includes a philosophical statement of curriculum approach (within the philosophical approach, curriculum should be centrally designed and delivered);
- Requires deep alignment of the written, taught and tested curriculum;
- Requires board periodic review, adoption, and funding of the curriculum (the adoption cycle should be published and adhered to);
- Requires accountability through roles and responsibilities identified in current job descriptions (see [Finding 1.2](#) and [Recommendation 4](#));
- Requires textbook/instructional resources to be aligned to curricula and assessments;

- Includes content area emphasis, e.g., establishes 3rd grade literacy and 8th grade preparation for Algebra as the district's highest priorities (see the district's current *Strategic Plan*);
- Requires program integration and alignment to school and district planning documents;
- Requires vertical articulation and horizontal coordination of curriculum across content areas and grade levels;
- Requires that curricular programs and related interventions be evaluated on a scheduled basis for effectiveness, with check points to determine continuation, modification, or termination;
- Requires specific practices for monitoring the delivery of curriculum; and
- Requires reporting mechanisms that detail progress toward established benchmarks and goals.

G.3.5: Direct the superintendent to prepare a policy for board review and adoption to differentiate clearly between decisions that are made at the campus, those made at the central office, and those that are shared, thus centralizing decision making for better oversight of district functions. Direct the superintendent to develop administrative regulations that provide further details and to train all campus personnel in the changes (also see [Recommendation 1](#)).

G.3.6: Commit adequate resources for the effective implementation of this recommendation.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent:

A.3.1: Assist the board in the development and/or revision of board policies as noted in [G.3.1](#).

A.3.2: Assist the board in revising *Policy 9310* to ensure that the “periodic review” occurs as a minimum every five years.

A.3.3: Prepare a draft of policies for board review and adoption that codify the current planning procedures in the district (see [Exhibits 1.4.2](#), [1.4.3](#), and [1.4.4](#) for relevant planning criteria).

A.3.4: Using the criteria in [G.3.4](#) and [Finding 1.1](#), draft for board review and adoption policies that meet the curriculum management characteristics for sound quality control. This may necessitate combining and updating several current policies that can be used as a first source document to direct the curriculum work of the district.

A.3.5: Prepare a policy for board review and adoption to differentiate clearly between decisions that are made at the campus, those made at the central office, and those that are shared, thus centralizing decision making for better oversight of district functions. Develop administrative regulations that provide further details and train all campus personnel in the changes (also see [Recommendation 1](#)). This action is extremely important as many MPS policies are extremely brief, allowing too much flexibility in interpreting and implementing policies, which has resulted in fragmentation of programs (see [Finding 5.1](#)) and exacerbated the achievement gap (see [Findings 3.1](#) and [4.3](#)).

A.3.6: After the complete policy revision process described in [G.3.1–G.3.5](#), develop and add a cross-reference index (by topic) to the online policy manual to facilitate finding a policy when the name and number of the policy are unknown or the total policy content is not obvious in the policy name.

A.3.7: Implement a systematic process of informing all staff of changes in board policies and training them in their proper implementation.

A.3.8: Include in each job description that each employee is responsible (see [Recommendation 4](#)) for the implementation of all board policies and administrative regulations associated with their individual job assignments through formative and summative performance evaluations (see [Recommendation 1](#)).

A.3.9: Provide the board with a budget proposal that commits adequate resources for the effective implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 4: Adopt a policy governing administrative functions and the management of job descriptions and the table of organization. Prepare and adopt a set of quality job descriptions and revise the table of organization consistent with sound management principles. Configure personnel to reinstate a Chief Academic Officer to ensure that the essential functions relating to curriculum design and delivery, assessments, data management and interpretation, professional development, and program evaluation are covered.

Alignment between job descriptions, day-to-day operations, and the table of organization is inconsistent or missing entirely. Auditors found that MPS lacks policies (see [Finding 1.1](#)) and procedures for governing administrative functions, managing the table of organization (see [Finding 1.2](#)), and job descriptions (see [Finding 1.2](#)). None of the job descriptions presented to auditors have been approved by the board. Some administrators supervise an excessive number of people, for example, the superintendent, associate superintendents, and building level administrators. Several key functions relating to curriculum design and delivery and program evaluation are missing from job descriptions. The position of Chief Academic Officer was eliminated when the district created the position of Deputy Superintendent. The current responsibilities of the deputy superintendent are so broad (see [Exhibits 1.2.2](#) and [1.2.3](#)) that key curriculum responsibilities may be neglected due to the daily administrative pressures for the person who is second in command.

MPS is in need of bold, competent curriculum leadership and managed change so that classroom teachers and site-level administrators are not overwhelmed as curriculum is revised and implemented. In addition, the district is currently providing more interventions and specialty programs than it can rationally support (see [Findings 5.1](#) and [5.3](#)). Much better alignment is required between curriculum development and revision, professional development, and the use of feedback from assessments in an implementation effort that is better sequenced and paced for teacher application than was present at the time of the audit in October 2008. Limited resources (see [Finding 5.3](#)) must be directed to the system's highest priorities.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the MPS Board of Education.

G.4.1: Direct the superintendent to prepare for board consideration and adoption a policy governing job descriptions that requires a written, up-to-date job description for each employee and requires a periodic review of those documents to be sure they are accurate, complete, and consistent with the table of organization. As a minimum, job descriptions should include the following elements:

- date approved or most recently revised with signature lines for the reviewer and employee acknowledgement;
- titles that are descriptive of the duties associated with the position;
- the physical demands of each position;
- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) status—exempt or non-exempt, including placement on a board adopted salary schedule and the number of days to be worked each year; and
- the criteria included in [Exhibit 1.3.1](#):
 - Qualifications consistent with the duties and responsibilities of the position.
 - Immediate links to the chain of command. A statement identifying the supervisor and a statement identifying all the positions supervised by the employee holding the position or that the employee has no supervisees. No employee should have more than one supervisor to whom he or she is accountable.
 - A detailed explanation of the functions, duties, and responsibilities of the position.
 - Relationship to the curriculum, e.g., expectations regarding design, delivery and/or evaluation of the curriculum.

G.4.2: Direct the superintendent to prepare a set of job descriptions for all employees consistent with the requirements in G.4.1, establish and maintain an up-to-date inventory of these documents, and submit them to the board for approval to be effective for the beginning of the 2009-10 school year.

G.4.3: Direct the superintendent to prepare for board consideration and adoption revised tables of organization based upon sound management principles (see Findings 1.2 and Exhibits 1.2.1-3) and the critical functions identified in G.4.4. As part of this policy establish guidelines (including a formula or ratio) regarding the maximum span of control for supervisors. If a maximum span of control of 12 is not financially feasible, the board should establish and communicate a number that approximates that ratio as closely as possible, support it financially, and direct the superintendent to apply it consistently.

G.4.4: Direct the superintendent to include in both the table of organization and an associated job description the position of Chief Academic Officer, who reports directly to the Deputy Superintendent (see Exhibit R4.1), with the following duties:

- Develops an annual curriculum management plan with primary function to coordinate the design, delivery, and evaluation of the written curriculum (see Findings 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3).
- Ensures that curriculum change follows a schedule of logical and timely development, sequenced so as not to overload teachers and principals with implementation responsibilities.
- Ensures that PreK–12 curriculum documents are consistent in format to promote user friendliness for use by classroom teachers (see Finding 2.2).
- Coordinates and ensures efficacy of all professional development activities (see Finding 3.2 and Recommendations 1 and 8).
- Ensures that grants are aligned to mission and system objectives and evaluates them against intended outcomes.
- Supervises all curricular personnel, professional development personnel, program managers, and other related positions for accountability and assessment of student achievement. (Note: In organizing this department it is important to comply with the Principles of Sound Management identified in Exhibit 1.2.4).
- Evaluates all programs and interventions against their intended outcomes and coordinates data management, interpretation, and usage. Through this process program efficacy can be evaluated for determination to continue, modify, or terminate (see District Strategic Planning Goals and Outcomes and Finding 1.4 and Recommendation 9). This is a critical step prior to reauthorizing funding (see Finding 5.3 and Recommendation 6).

The required set of skills for the Chief Academic Officer should include as many of the following as possible:

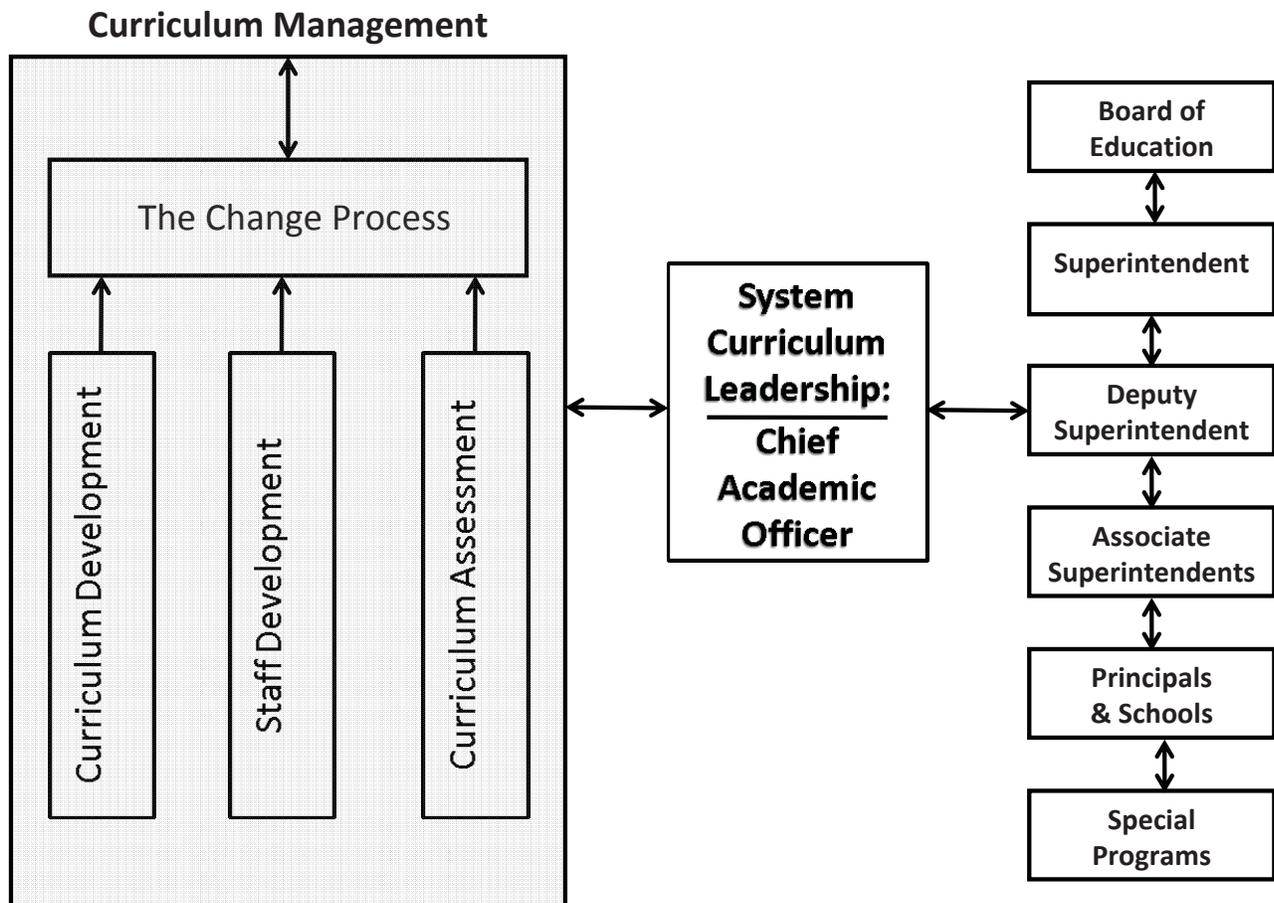
1. Knows how to design and implement deep curriculum alignment based on test item deconstruction and other forms of feedback;
2. Knows how to successfully direct large scale, successful curriculum design and delivery programs that have resulted in improved student learning gains on high stakes accountability measures;
3. Knows various strategies and approaches to successfully implement differentiated instruction within a high stakes accountability system;
4. Demonstrates the ability to work collaboratively;
5. Demonstrates the ability to perform effective staff development as a leader and can model differentiated instruction;
6. Knows and has implemented one or more classroom walk-through models;
7. Knows how to engage in internal curriculum consistency analysis;

8. Knows how to deconstruct test information and connect various forms of classroom instruction in order to improve teacher effectiveness;
9. Knows various types of curricular formats, strengths and weaknesses of each, and what works best in different contexts;
10. Knows the major curriculum trends in science, math, language arts, and social studies;
11. Understands approaches to curriculum design and instructional responsiveness to the diverse needs of students—particularly exceptional learners (special education, gifted and talented, ESOL, and other at-risk learners); and
12. Possesses working competency in key curriculum development management skills such as coordination, articulation, alignment, psychometric knowledge of tests and assessments, experience in designing highly successful staff development programs, and the management of change.

These functions are critical to the overall success of the system. Consequently, responsibilities of lesser importance should be delegated or deferred in order to provide the CAO sufficient time to carry out these high priority functions.

Exhibit R.4.1

**Table of Organization Showing Role of Achieve Academic Officer
Minneapolis Public Schools
October 2008**



G.4.5: Direct the superintendent to provide an annual status report to the board regarding the alignment of the table of organization, job descriptions, and achievement of the system’s intended outcomes.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the MPS Superintendent.

A.4.1: Prepare for board consideration and adoption a policy governing job descriptions that requires a written job descriptions for all employees and requires a periodic review of those documents to be sure they are accurate, complete, and consistent with the table of organization. As a minimum, job descriptions should include the elements identified in [G.4.1](#).

A.4.2: Prepare a set of job descriptions for all employees consistent with the requirements in [G.4.1](#); establish and maintain an up-to-date inventory of these documents; and submit them to the board for approval to be effective for the beginning of the 2009-10 school year.

A.4.3: Prepare for board consideration and adoption a revised table of organization based upon sound management principles (see [Finding 1.2](#) and [Exhibit 1.2.1](#)). As part of this policy establish guidelines (including a formula or ratio) regarding the maximum span of control for supervisors. If a maximum span of control of 12 is not financially feasible, then recommend to the board a number that approximates that ratio as closely as possible and then apply it consistently.

A.4.4: Include in both the table of organization and associated job description the position of Chief Academic Officer with the functions identified in [G.4.4](#). These functions are critical to the overall success of the system. Consequently, responsibilities of lesser importance may have to be delegated or deferred in order to provide this key leader and related associates sufficient time to carry out these high priority functions.

A.4.5: Provide an annual status report to the board regarding the alignment of the table of organization, job descriptions, and achievement of the system's intended outcomes.

It is important to note that this work cannot be implemented hastily. It cannot be emphasized enough that principals, teachers, other staff, and parents must be key stakeholders in the process of developing and implementing the written, taught, and tested curriculum. Without their individual involvement, educational priorities may not be accepted and appropriately focused on how well students are doing. All shareholders should have a more complete idea of what is needed and should contribute to commonly held goals through commonly held understandings that are clearly defined in their respective job descriptions.

Recommendation 5: To provide for more effective use of data to improve student achievement, develop and implement a plan that provides for the systematic collection, analysis, dissemination, and application of student achievement and program evaluation results. Provide professional development support for the analysis and effective use of data to support teaching and learning.

Leaders of good schools systems plan for student assessment and for evaluation of educational programs. The data generated by these activities help determine the level of student achievement and the effectiveness of supporting programs. These data are also used to and inform the staff and constituents about such matters and to support sound decisions about curriculum, instruction, and programs. When a school system lacks such a plan or the plan is inadequate, the constituents and staff may not receive the information necessary to draw sound conclusions about the effectiveness of the system or to make the decisions required to improve it.

Auditors determined that the Minneapolis Public Schools system did not have a student assessment and program evaluation plan to provide the feedback necessary to support sound decisions regarding the design and delivery of curriculum ([Finding 4.1](#)). Only 56 percent of the taught curricula in science, mathematics, social studies and English language arts was actually tested (see [Finding 4.2](#)). The audit team also determined that while data use was a priority with the district and there was much data use activity ([Finding 4.4](#)), training activities for data use were not systematic, and actual application of data had not substantially improved student achievement during the three school years prior to the audit ([Finding 4.3](#)).

To remedy the assessment-related discrepancies, the audit team provides the following suggestions to the school system:

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended for consideration to the Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education:

G.5.1: Direct the Superintendent to prepare, for board review, revision, and approval, a policy that:

- Describes the philosophical framework for the design of the program and student assessment plan;
- Directs the Superintendent to prepare and maintain such a plan;
- Directs formative and summative assessment of the curriculum by course and grade;
- Requires ongoing program evaluation, both formative and summative; and
- Directs the use of data to analyze group, school, program, and system student trends.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended for consideration to the Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent:

A.5.1: When directed, assist the board in developing the policy described in action G.4.1, above.

A.5.2: When the policy described in action G.4.1 is approved by the board, prepare and implement a student assessment and program evaluation plan containing the following elements:

- Explicitly includes a formative and summative assessment system to carry out board policy (if such). Provides for regular formative and summative assessment at all levels of the system (organization, program, student).
- Provides for frequent diagnostic (formative) instructional assessments aligned to district curriculum, which teachers use to make ongoing decisions including assigning students learner objectives at the appropriate level of difficulty (e.g., provides data for differentiated instruction).
- Provides a list of assessment tools, purposes, subjects, type of student tested, timelines, and related information.
- Identifies and provides direction on the use of diverse assessment strategies for multi-purposes at all levels-district, school, and classroom.
- Specifies the roles and responsibilities of the central office staff and school-based staff for assessing all functions and operations of the system.
- Specifies the connection(s) between district, state, and national assessments.
- Specifies overall assessment procedures and analysis procedures to determine curriculum effectiveness.
- Requires aligned assessment examples and tools to be placed in curriculum, instruction, and assessment guides.
- Specifies how equity issues will be identified and addressed using data sources as well as controls for bias.
- Identifies the factors, processes, and structures of program assessment and how data will be used to determine continuation, modification, or termination of a given program.
- Provides for appropriate trainings and development for various audiences on assessment.
- Delineates responsibilities and procedures for monitoring formative and summative assessment design, implementation, and results.
- Establishes a process for communicating procedures, results, and trends of student and program assessment.
- Provides a method/means to use program assessments data in cost-benefit analysis.
- Provides staff development to all teachers and administrators.

These recommendations, if implemented, should give the district a means of generating the data necessary to assess student progress and evaluate programs, analyze the results, disseminate those results to the appropriate

staff members, and ensure that those results are used to make sound decisions about curriculum, instruction, and supporting programs. Additionally, assessment and evaluation data can be used to inform student, parents, and other constituencies of how effective the district staff has been in educating students.

Recommendation 6 : Design and implement processes that align the curriculum monitoring strategies to the *Principles of Learning* model.

In order for the Minneapolis Public School system to improve student achievement for all students, district leaders must consistently communicate expectations for how educational programs should be delivered. Expectations should not only address what students should be learning, but how learning should be presented or approached in the classroom, how they should practice it, as well as what it should look like when they demonstrate mastery of it. The monitoring of this implementation must be ongoing and provide teachers, principals, and district administrators with feedback regarding its effectiveness. As instructional leaders, principals play a key role in the implementation of sound curriculum management practices. Providing leadership aimed at diagnosing instructional behaviors, the principal is uniquely positioned to evaluate the level of alignment among the written, taught, and tested curriculums.

In the review of instructional practices in the Minneapolis Public Schools, the Curriculum Management Audit Team observed the strategies used to monitor the effectiveness of curriculum delivery and coded the modalities teachers used to deliver curriculum and how students were engaged in the instructional process. Adequate policy, administrative regulations, and procedures directing instructional delivery were not found and instruction generally was not aligned to the *Principles of Learning* framework. Monitoring practices varied between and among district level administrators and varied greatly among building level administrators (see [Finding 1.3](#)). Administrators referred to some aspects of the *Principles of Learning* in discussion with the auditors. However, in most classrooms, the auditors observed traditional-direct instruction/whole group lessons in which teachers were the initiators of learning and students were engaged in seat work and direct instruction activities. Technology was used in a traditional manner by teachers. Students were seldom observed using technology as an instructional tool.

In order to establish stringent procedures for effective instructional monitoring practices and effective practices for teacher delivery of instruction the following recommendations are provided to the school system.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education:

G.6.1: Develop an accountability process for the board of education to review and approve all written curriculum to be taught in the school system. (see [Recommendation 3](#))

G.6.2: Write and adopt policy that clearly delineates expectations for monitoring the district's curriculum.

G.6.3: Develop procedures to ensure that the administration brings up-to-date semi-annual information to the board on the effectiveness of the district's curriculum in meeting the learning needs of all students, based on data gathered through established monitoring practices.

G.6.4: Require that monitoring the delivery of curriculum be included as a responsibility for all instructional staff in job descriptions.

G.6.5: Clarify expectations for building principals to monitor the implementation of curriculum.

G.6.6: Require alignment among the school district educational goals, core values in the *Strategic Plan*, and the *Principles of Learning* and require that evidence of their implementation be recognizable in schools and classrooms.

G.6.7: Require that specific best instructional practices be used in classrooms as evidence of effective implementation of the district's curriculum.

G.6.8: Commit the resources necessary for administrators to follow through on the monitoring process as defined in policy and for teachers to implement the curriculum as designed.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent:

A.6.1: Write monitoring policy for the board of education to review and approve.

A.6.2: Assign a qualified district administrator(s) accountability for the coordination of monitoring practices in the school system. The responsible person(s) should have knowledge of effective instructional practice and instructional efficacy and experience analyzing and diagnosing the measurement of student performance, and will be charged with oversight for activities such as:

- Developing a template for monitoring activities that should be used to generate feedback data for the superintendent and board of education that is timely and accurate;
- Developing guidelines to make sure that appropriate and necessary professional development programming related to instructional monitoring is provided for staff members with instructional oversight and;
- Meeting with principals and providing on-site support in the implementation of monitoring strategies.

A.6.3: Write administrative regulations to accompany monitoring policy that delineate the following:

- The definition of monitoring;
- Expectations for curriculum monitoring for district administrators, building administrators, and teachers (time spent in schools, classrooms);
- What serves as evidence in schools and classrooms that the curriculum is being implemented effectively (fidelity to the established process);
- What effective monitoring of classroom instruction looks like and how it is documented; and
- How data retrieved from monitoring the implementation of curriculum is used to drive decision making about the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculums.

A.6.4: Write administrative regulations to accompany monitoring policy that delineate expectations for aligning *Principles of Learning (POL)* with classroom instructional strategies.

- Define what instructional supervisors should expect to observe when visiting schools and classrooms as evidence that the *Principles of Learning* framework is being effectively implemented.
- Clarify expectations for improved instructional delivery as follows:
 - Clarify through ongoing professional development what each *POL* principle means and what it looks like when effectively infused into classroom instruction;
 - Identify best practices that must be implemented in all classrooms;
 - Align identified best practices with the nine *POL* principles;
 - Design programs to support building administrators in working with teachers, in their classrooms, on integrating *POL* into their instructional planning and delivery;
 - Train administrators to give teachers effective feedback that focuses on supporting teacher's reflection on their practice and determining how to integrate *POL* into instruction effectively (coaching and mentoring);
 - Design procedures to support administrators and teachers in evaluating *POL* activities and build their capacity to determine when instructional changes need to be made and how to make appropriate programmatic changes;
 - Use Professional Learning Communities sessions to engage staff in discussions about effective *POL* practices;

- Establish practices that allow time for staff members to observe each other implement effective instructional practices and then practice new skills in their own classrooms; and
- Train administrators to conduct classroom scans (short observations/walk-throughs) to observe how *POL* practices are being implemented.

Monitoring the implementation of curriculum design and delivery is a critical role for instructional leaders. Short visits to classrooms on a regular and consistent basis provide building administrators with information necessary to help teachers reflect on their practice and determine the effectiveness of classroom instruction. Consistent classroom visitations through scanning and monitoring activities increase principals' visibility and credibility in the role as instructional leaders. Central office administrators have responsibility for making sure that processes designed and immortalized in policy are implemented in fidelity.

Recommendation 7: Immediately implement strategic plan strategies and action steps focused on eliminating barriers to equitable access to district programs and services and move toward closing the achievement gap.

A well-managed system provides all students equal access to the programs, services, and opportunities provided by the district. Fairness to all students is apparent in areas such as academic outcomes, placement in special programs, and consistency in disciplinary actions. School districts that serve diverse communities have students that require differentiated resources in order to provide all learners with an equal opportunity to succeed in the educational program.

The auditors found that Minneapolis Public School board policies and planning documents contain numerous goals, strategies, and action steps for addressing inequalities and inequities (see [Finding 3.1](#)). The district's administrative staff has made progress in implementing some of the steps identified in the *Minneapolis Public Schools 2007-2012 Strategic Plan*. However, student performance has not improved significantly and major challenges remain in eliminating inequalities and inequities.

Despite the intent to meet the needs of all students, the auditors found that inequalities and inequities are present throughout the district. Inequalities exist on the basis of ethnicity in the graduation rates and in the participation of students in special education and gifted and talented education. Unfortunately, student achievement data indicate that the ethnically-identifiable schools have failed to demonstrate improved student achievement, and a gap between these schools and the district persists (see [Finding 3.1](#), [Exhibit 3.1.12](#)). Furthermore, a disproportionate number of these students drop out of school before graduation. Finally, auditors discovered that gender and ethnic representation among district staff does not reflect that of the student body (see [Finding 3.1](#)).

In order to not perpetuate, but rather overcome, the relative disadvantage that some students bring to the educational system, the following recommendations are presented to the board and superintendent.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Board of Education of the Minneapolis Public Schools:

G.7.1: Adopt a policy that embraces the goals and action steps delineated in the district's strategic plan.

G.7.2: Reconsider the ethnically-identifiable school programs, and evaluate their efficacy and viability given their ineffectual performance in addressing the achievement gap. Consider the kind of commitment that is required to provide the things that all schools need in order to end the achievement gap based on demographic differences and institutionalize the commitment in board policy.

G.7.3: Direct the superintendent to address, and ameliorate if possible, the disproportionate number of minority students in special education and gifted and talented education.

G.7.4: Adopt a policy that makes a commitment to improve the high school graduation rate and reduce the drop-out rate.

G.7.5: Direct the superintendent to review educational programs and outcomes at ethnically-identifiable schools.

G.7.6: Direct the superintendent to develop and implement a comprehensive and realistic recruiting plan to attract minority and male teachers to the district and to retain them.

G.7.7: Direct the superintendent to revise personnel and budget allocation formulas to ensure that resources flow to programs and services of greatest needs.

G.7.8: Direct the superintendent to provide frequent and annual updates regarding efforts and progress in eliminating inequalities and inequities within the district.

G.7.9: Adopt a board policy that delineates the district's approach in the development and implementation of agreements with ethnic groups in the community.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public School Superintendent:

A.7.1: Move quickly to implement the goals and strategies listed in the *Minneapolis Public Schools 2007-2012 Strategic Plan* and other planning documents.

A.7.2: Prepare drafts of the suggested policies for board review, critique, and approval.

A.7.3: Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of all magnet programs and ethnically-identifiable schools.

A.7.4: Evaluate existing strategies and action steps to increase secondary student graduation rate and reduce drop-out numbers. Specifically address the following:

- Increase the number of minority and male teachers at all levels, particularly at secondary schools;
- Provide staff training in cultural diversity and differentiated instruction; and
- Conduct a review of suspension and expulsion procedures.

A.7.5: Monitor placements in special education and gifted and talented programs for disparities in participation among subgroups.

A.7.6: Develop appropriate strategies and incentives to attract and retain minority and male teachers to the district.

A.7.7: Include in the *Minneapolis Public Schools, Multi-Cultural/Multi-Lingual (MCML) & English Language Learners (ELL) Districtwide Manual (10/19/2007)* specific strategies and timelines for improving the effectiveness of teachers who serve ELL students and information on resources needed. Pre- and post-measures of student progress need to be included in the evaluation of ELL programs and services, including instructional delivery within each classroom.

In summary, school leaders have taken steps, through strategic planning and other initiatives, to deal with many issues of inequities within the school system. Despite these best efforts, major challenges still remain. The *Minneapolis Public Schools 2007-2012 Strategic Plan* provides guidance to address issues related to district inequalities and inequities, but support, commitment, and strong resolve will be required to overcome the disparities in student achievement. The actions described in this recommendation will provide further support for district efforts to overcome the disadvantages that some students bring to the educational system.

Recommendation 8 : Develop and implement policies, regulations, and plans to move from a demonstration model of professional development to a comprehensive and individualized training program focused on results-oriented strategies that improve instructional skills and student achievement.

The mission of a quality professional development program is to increase student achievement. This is accomplished by developing the skills of teachers, administrators, and support personnel in the effective delivery of the curriculum. A comprehensive professional development program is long-term, is based on the curriculum and district goals, and is focused and coordinated.

The auditors found that professional development policies and procedures are not clearly defined in the Minneapolis Public Schools and do not provide connectivity among the various levels of the school district. In addition, evaluation of the effectiveness of professional development is nonexistent (see [Finding 3.2](#)).

While many professional development activities are conducted, there was little evidence that professional development offerings have had positive impacts on teacher performance and student learning. For example, the district has established expectations for classroom instruction through the implementation of the *Principles for Learning* framework and training has been provided for teachers and principals. However, the auditors' observations indicated that the use of the framework was inconsistent and the primary mode of instruction was direct/whole group instruction with students passively engaged in learning activities presented by teachers (see [Finding 5.2](#)). Also, while the district has invested heavily in providing up-to-date equipment and training in the use of instructional technology, most of the teachers observed by the auditors did not use technology in ways that promote students' creativity, collaboration, or problem-solving skills (see [Finding 5.2](#)).

Policy guidance and plans provide statements of the board's intent to use data to determine status, develop strategies, and measure goal attainment. However, the professional development program does not provide systematic support for data interpretation and use (see [Findings 3.2](#) and [4.4](#)).

The content of this recommendation is to provide a comprehensive professional development plan and central administrative guidance to focus professional development activities on district goals and objectives and to coordinate them at all levels of the district.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Board of Education of the Minneapolis Public Schools:

G.8.1: Develop and adopt a policy that describes the district's expectation and directs professional development efforts regarding the following:

- Assessing professional development needs in relation to student learning;
- Planning, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating professional learning activities in relation to student learning; and
- Tracking specific participation in professional learning activities in relation to student learning.

G.8.2: Direct the superintendent to develop regulations to implement the professional development policy across the district.

G.8.3: Direct the superintendent to develop a long-range professional development plan. The plan should span minimally three years with annual updates that ensure tight linkages to system priorities. The plan should also include the following elements:

- The policy recommended above to direct professional development efforts.
- A framework to integrate professional development innovations related to the mission.
- The board-adopted professional development mission.
- A clearly stated expectation for professional growth.
- A process to provide for organizational, site, and individual professional development in a systemic manner.
- The inclusion of all employees.
- An expectation that assessing professional development learning needs should be data-driven.
- A focus on proven research-based approaches and activities that have been shown to increase productivity.
- A process to provide for the three phases of the change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization.
- A provision to require follow-up and on-the-job application to ensure improvement.
- An evaluation process that is ongoing, includes multiple sources of information, focuses on all levels of the organization, and is based on actual behavior.

- A process for system-wide coordination and a process to perform clearinghouse functions.
- The necessary funding to carry out the professional development goals.

G.8.4: Direct the superintendent to annually report on the comprehensive professional development plan. This will help ensure that the program is meeting board policy and is aligned with system-wide goals and priorities. This report should include:

- An overview of the process used to assess the professional development needs.
- A review of the identified professional development needs, including what student learning needs were identified.
- A review of the planning process used to identify and coordinate the best approaches to address student needs, including the process to identify what knowledge and skills are required by teachers and/or administrators to address those student needs.
- A review of the major learning outcomes, or specifically what the district and sites are trying to accomplish from the training activities.
- An overview of the major learning activities offered both at the district and site levels.
- An update on the percentage of targeted teachers that participated in high quality professional development by content area.
- A review of the evaluation procedures used to measure the effectiveness of professional development activities in relation to the planned teacher and student outcomes.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent:

A.8.1: Assist the board of education with the development of the recommended policy.

A.8.2: Develop administrative rules and regulations to implement the professional development policy districtwide.

A.8.3: Assign the Director of Professional Development the responsibility to develop a comprehensive, long-range professional development plan, as described above, for your review and approval. Particular attention should be given to establishing a feasible number of priorities within established timelines.

A.8.4: Assign the Director of Professional Development the responsibility to report annually to the board of education on the comprehensive professional development plan, as described above.

A.8.5: Provide the resources and funding necessary to create a professional development tracking process that can report specific and disaggregated participation in high quality, content specific professional development activities.

Instructional quality requires sound and appropriate training and development for the people who are to deliver and support instruction. A strong professional development program has a well-designed plan for the effective delivery of curriculum. The staff is aware of the plan and recognizes how it is aligned to district goals and objectives. In addition, an effective professional development program is monitored and assessed regularly to ensure that it is improving instructional skills and having a positive impact on student achievement. With such a program, the Minneapolis Public Schools can improve instructional performance and results.

Recommendation 9: Review and revise intervention policy and develop clearly defined processes and procedures to control the proliferation of program interventions in the school system and monitor their effectiveness to enhance student academic performance.

When program interventions meet a school system's needs, written documentation and data are used to determine specific actions to improve student performance and expectations. The design of program interventions must impact student achievement and address planning, implementation, and evaluation. An intervention that has a positive impact on improving teacher and student performance is connected to district learning goals and

objectives. Effective interventions must be well planned for implementation and well funded to ensure that they can be fully implemented as designed.

As with all curriculum program development, program interventions should follow a rational process to ensure that they meet desired outcomes, sustain district productivity, and lead to the improvement of student academic performance. Critical to the process for developing program interventions is the assurance that evaluation criteria identify the expectations for improving student success. Evaluation data should result in decision makers deciding to maintain, modify, or eliminate programs based how well student achievement improves due to their implementation.

In designing procedures and processes for implementations, it is necessary to control the number of interventions implemented at any point in time. When the system is overburdened with an excessive number of programs, principals and teachers are unable to distinguish which, if any, programs helped to actually improve student achievement, have difficulty setting priorities regarding which programs will be implemented, and are unable to maintain fidelity to the design of programs.

In the Minneapolis Public Schools, the auditors identified 165 interventions, which were often implemented without direction from central administration, the benefit of policy, or documentation to ensure connectedness to district goals and objectives. Thus, individuals at the site level often made decisions regarding the selection and implementation of interventions in the absence of research to substantiate how the supported effective teaching and learning.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education:

G.9.1: Direct the superintendent to review and revise *Policy 6121* and write appropriate administrative regulations for program intervention development and board approval. Intervention policy and regulation should:

- Clearly define a program intervention and differentiate among an intervention, an initiative, and a strategy.
- Clarify all aspects of program intervention selection and implementation.
- Specify an approval process, which must be adhered to by staff at all levels of the school district.
- Ensure that all interventions have a clearly established evaluation process that defines the expectations for student academic improvement.
- Require cost estimates for every intervention. Funding for complete implementation of the program must be identified. When programs are grant funded, identify how the program will be sustained after funding is terminated.

G.9.2: Require the superintendent to develop written processes for selecting and implementing program interventions and communicate these to all staff members.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent:

The superintendent should develop procedures to control the numbers and types of interventions implemented in the school district. The following steps should be implemented:

A.9.1: Develop a policy review committee to review and revise *Policy 6121*.

A.9.2: Require the committee to develop a definition for program intervention that will standardize what an intervention is in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

A.9.3: Direct the committee to review other learning/instruction policies to cross-reference intervention policy with curriculum program development processes, as appropriate.

A.9.4: Require the committee to develop administrative regulations that specify in detail the following steps necessary for implementing effective interventions:

- Assess the current situation.
- Diagnose data collected.
- Identify the problem or issue.
- Propose and examine alternatives.
- Select an alternative that best addresses the problem.
- Develop formal plans with goals and measurable objectives to address the problem.
- Provide fiscal, material and equipment, and human resources as needed to sustain fidelity to the program.
- Implement the plan, with well-defined processes for monitoring its implementation and the achievement of student academic progress.
- Evaluate the program. Define formative and summative evaluation processes to be used and how the data will inform instruction.
- Adjust the program as needed, based on data gathered through the evaluation process.
- Implement adjustments as needed.
- Identify short-term and long-term processes for sustaining an intervention if evaluation demonstrates that student achievement is enhanced because of its implementation.

A.9.5: Establish a timeline for the committee to complete this task as a means of setting parameters for developing policy guidelines to be approved by the board of education and then communicated to the general staff.

A.9.6: Establish limits on the numbers of interventions implemented in a school at any one point in time.

A.9.7: Identify specific administrators who will be held responsible for monitoring intervention implementation at the school level.

A.9.8: Establish guidelines for the numbers and types of district initiatives implemented at a point in time and carefully monitor the impact implementation of each initiative has on the schools.

A.9.9: Determine the amount of instructional time building level staff has to invest in carrying out the various components of a district initiative. Teachers should be able to sustain their teaching responsibilities and address student needs. Building administrators should have time to monitor classroom instruction consistently.

A.9.10: Develop plans for fully funding all approved district and school interventions and identifying necessary funds as a component of the budget development process.

A.9.11: Commit all decisions, plans, procedures, and processes to writing and infuse them into district curriculum management documents.

Recommendation 10: Develop and implement a five-year plan that fully aligns district resources to strategic priorities and curricular goals and requires the use of performance-based budgeting processes focused on documentable results, positive achievement growth, and transparency in financial planning.

The development and implementation of districtwide processes to link budget allocations to district goals and priorities, curricular objectives, and program needs are needed to increase the productivity of the school district (see [Findings 5.1](#) and [5.3](#)). The probability that curricular goals will be achieved is increased when there is a thorough, well-organized process to ensure that the financial plan represents district priorities. Well-planned program driven processes implemented at the district and school levels can offer efficient and effective means for the board of education, the superintendent, and school site committees to allocate resources.

The auditors found that board policies provide some direction for the linkage of district planning to the budget process and for the use of performance measures in the budgeting process. However, administrative regulations are not in place to provide direction to staff members regarding the implementation of the policy directives (see [Findings 1.1](#) and [5.3](#)).

Budget development at the central office and school site levels did not include systematic review of performance data or extensive cost/benefit analyses (see [Finding 5.3](#)). School allocations are primarily formula-based and reflect formulas used by the state to allocate funds to the district. Some adjustments have been made to assist schools in maintaining “essential services” and to support the goals of the North Side Initiative. Central office department budgets are developed using the previous year’s budgets as the base for future, continued allocations.

The focus of this recommendation is to provide for budget processes that link district goals, needs, and priorities to the allocation of resources in all of the district’s programs.

Governance Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education:

G.10.1: Review and revise current board policies for budget development to ensure that financial planning is based on district goals and that performance measurement is integrated into the budget processes. The policies should provide specific direction regarding the goals and the performance measures to be used in the budget processes.

G.10.2: Direct the superintendent to establish procedures and prepare documents that communicate the budget process and goals throughout the system, and require that budget and staffing proposals reflect a direct connection to the established district goals.

G.10.3: Require, as part of the budget development process, a presentation from the administration to communicate how the proposed budget addresses district goals and priorities and responds to student and program evaluation data. The presentation should include a formal evaluation of the previous year’s budget in achieving district goals.

G.10.4: Direct the superintendent to develop a plan to assess the current financial information management system utilized by the district and to recommend changes to improve the accuracy and timeliness of data used in budget decision making.

G.10.5: Establish a timeline of no more than five years for the full implementation of a performance-based budget process and allocation system.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Minneapolis Public Schools Superintendent:

A.10.1: Prepare draft revisions of the budget development policies identified in [G.8.1](#) for board review, critique, and adoption.

A.10.2: Design administrative regulations that support the implementation of budget development policies with broad involvement of district stakeholders. The regulations should require budget proposals to include tangible linkages to district goals and cost/benefit analyses using student and program performance data.

A.10.3: Develop documents and procedures to communicate budget processes and goals throughout the district and to reinforce the importance of the budget process in supporting the priorities identified in the district’s strategic plan.

A.10.4: As part of the budget development process, provide a presentation to the board to communicate how the proposed budget addresses district goals and priorities and responds to student and program performance data.

A.10.5: Develop a plan to assess the current financial information management system and to identify changes to improve the accuracy and timeliness of data used in budget decision making. Consider the possibility of

contracting with the current software provider to identify and implement the necessary changes, including changes to reduce the number of manual entries made by business office staff and to allow access to financial data throughout the district for enhanced decision making.

A.10.6: Develop a five-year plan for full implementation of programmatic budgeting for the basic instructional and support areas of the budget, and establish linkages with performance information. The major steps of installing programmatic budgeting include the following:

1. Identify various educational activities or programs and group them into broad areas of need or purpose served. Try to divide the organization into the most logical (but least number necessary) subgroups possible based on the existing operating structure of the district.
2. Build budget “packages” within each of the subgroups that incrementally (or increasingly) deliver the objectives of the area of need or purpose. (For example, a given program could be defined and packaged into units that provide programs and services at: (1) 95 percent of last year’s budget, (2) 100 percent of last year’s budget, and (3) 105 percent of last year’s budget).
3. Assign responsibility for preparing budget packages for each of the identified subgroups to specific administrators. Each budget package needs to represent a level of activity that builds sequentially on the previous package. Budget packages need to be concise and meaningful and be developed with broad districtwide input.
4. Define a tentative program structure after grouping and compilation of budget packages.
5. Attach a goal statement to each program area or package that states the purpose it serves. Each budget shall be described so as to permit evaluation of the consequences of funding or nonfunding in terms of performance results.
6. Compile goal statements and budget packages and give to appropriate staff to gather data to best describe service levels, program outputs, and cost benefits.
7. Define program performance expectations and accountability with the involvement of staff (including principals, teachers, and support staff). Current results should be compared to desired expectations and related service level requirements.
8. Prepare recommendations and give to those who will develop the program budgets.
9. Compile budget packages, including costs, into a worksheet with instructions for evaluation and ranking.
10. Combine cost information, especially expenditures as a percentage of the budget, with performance data and recommendations to guide preliminary budget-building estimates.
11. Present program packages to the appropriate budget managers and staff for evaluation and ranking. The compiled results are published in a tentative budget program list in order of priority.
12. Finalize budget allocations based on revenues available, the appropriation levels to be authorized, and program funding priorities and rankings. Prepare the recommended budget to be submitted to the board.
13. Assist the board as it reviews recommendations, evaluates priorities, establishes final programs and services to be funded, determines levels of funding, and passes the budget.

A.10.7: Provide training and consultation as needed to department managers, principals, and other key staff during the transition to a programmatic budgeting process and format.

With a performance-based approach to the budgeting system, both financial and programmatic efforts are integrated and therefore monitored simultaneously. Given this approach to budgeting, changing funding or allocation levels are based on “How well are we doing?” instead of “How much did we spend last year?”

Central management, the board, and the public will have a more complete idea of what is funded (and what is not) in operations, programs, and services in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

Moreover, tangible linkages can be identified among curriculum results, curriculum objectives, and curriculum costs. The district will have a credible, rational system for reallocating resources, especially from obsolescent, unproductive programs and activities to new, emerging programs and activities of high priority.

It is important to note that such a system cannot be implemented hastily and must be developed incrementally over time. Full implementation of a programmatic budgeting process may take as long as five years. The goal is to focus resource allocation processes on monitored performance related to district priorities, goals, and needs.

V. SUMMARY

A Curriculum Management Audit is basically an “exception” report. That is, it does not give a summative, overall view of the suitability of a system. Rather, it holds the system up to scrutiny against the predetermined standards of quality, notes relevant findings about the system, and cites discrepancies from audit standards. Recommendations are then provided accordingly to help the district improve its quality in the areas of noted deficiency.

The contract between the Board of Education of the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) and Phi Delta Kappa International specified that the purpose of the audit was to assess the quality of the MPS written, taught, and assessed curriculum and provide specific recommendations of what MPS must do to have a curriculum that is aligned with the state standards and the *Principles of Learning*.

Accordingly, the MPS sought to break the grip of the old assumption that “inherited ability places a ceiling on what a student can learn.” In addition, the district wants to work to establish the “kind of curriculum and pedagogy that would ensure achievement of rigorous academic standards by all students.”

The auditors confirmed that predeterminations of the MPS were correct in pointing out that the curriculum lacks cohesion and articulation and little monitoring is conducted of what is actually taught in the classroom. The auditors found that the curriculum is uneven in its provision, tenuous in its quality, and ineffectual in its delivery.

The auditors compiled data from 62 school visitations, over 3000 classrooms visited, and interviews with the Superintendent of Schools, some members of the MPS Board of Education, approximately 30 central level administrators, coordinators, consultants and resource teachers, the president of the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers, and approximately 50 high school, middle school, and elementary school principals, as well as individual teachers and community members who responded to the district’s invitation to meet with the auditors during the site visitation. In addition, the auditors reviewed the documents listed in [Appendix D](#).

The recommendations delineated in this report include an evaluation of the current management organizational structure to improve the design, delivery, and management of curriculum; a review of applicable board policies and superintendent regulations; and recommendations for improving the efficacy of and efficiency of delivery of instructional services to promote enhanced student achievement in the Minneapolis Public Schools.

The Minneapolis Public Schools are poised to push their progress towards excellence to the next level. The MPS *Strategic Plan* has provided a unique framework towards which system educators charged with administrative duties can direct their energy and commitment. This is no mean accomplishment given the scale of the system and the diverse population of the community it serves. However, the auditors found that with the current status of the system, it is highly unlikely that the MPS will achieve its ambitious goals.

There are several major issues confronting the Minneapolis Public Schools that must be addressed for the district to be successful in accomplishing its goals. The most critical is a void of senior leadership in the area of curriculum that would bring the management of change under more focused control, thus preventing the cycle of compounding curriculum interventions, escalating data demands, and the sequencing and pacing of instructional expectations across the school system. One of this report’s main recommendations is for MPS to corral all the scattered components of curriculum management (curriculum design and delivery, assessment and feedback, and personalized professional development) under a single senior authority.

Many teachers expressed feeling overwhelmed by the proliferation of program interventions in buildings. There needs to be a central authority to relieve the pressure and anxiety of the disconnected interventions, which were clearly visible to the auditors in their interviews and classroom visitations—and listed in this report. The underlying dilemma is that no single position is in control of the curriculum for the school system, and no one is in control of the disparate and myriad calls for change emanating from many different places within the district. Consequently, the auditors have recommended the hiring of a Chief Academic Officer (CAO) who brings “control” of curriculum and change to the Minneapolis Public Schools and who reports directly to the

Deputy Superintendent. This person must bring the functions of curriculum design and delivery, professional development, and assessment together to provide a coherent focus for the school district.

The curriculum in MPS has generally reflected the Minnesota Department of Education standards, but too many elements are missing from current curriculum guides to ensure proper alignment. Auditors reviewed written documents available to teachers, both in paper and online formats, including descriptions of core content, curriculum maps, course syllabi, literacy continua, curriculum frameworks and the Minnesota Academic Standards, Minnesota assessment item samplers for language arts, and a variety of student artifacts collected during school visits.

The auditors found that the quality of the district's written curriculum was inadequate to direct teaching effectively and to ensure increased student achievement reliably. Auditors also found that the curriculum provided to teachers was ineffectively and inconsistently used throughout the system.

Auditors found several problems in internal consistency in one content area, English language arts, which were exacerbated by lack of strong district curriculum and internal problems within the Minnesota Academic standards themselves, all of which impede the delivery of curriculum as intended.

Despite efforts by Minneapolis Public Schools leaders to deal with system-wide inequities, the auditors found that staff demographics do not reflect the ethnic and gender representation of the student body. Also, disproportionate student enrollments by ethnicity were noted in special education, the gifted and talented program, and disciplinary actions. Minority students were overrepresented in special education and disciplinary actions, such as suspensions and expulsions, but underrepresented in gifted and talented programs. Minority students and economically disadvantaged students were found to be achieving below the level of other students, indicating a lack of alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. A large number of these students leave the school system between grades nine and twelve.

The auditors also found that students in the recently initiated ethnically identifiable schools were performing well below their district counterparts, indicating that this program of ethnic separation and similarity has failed to achieve its ambitious goals of closing the achievement gap.

Additionally, changes and adjustments in the MPS testing and assessment effort were found to be necessary. While there has been considerable effort to create a viable data base for decision making in the schools, this effort has not entirely been successful. Auditors determined that the Minneapolis Public Schools system does not have an adequate student assessment and program evaluation plan to provide the feedback necessary to support sound decisions regarding the design and delivery of curriculum.

System-wide tests assess student mastery in only slightly above half of the taught curricula in science, mathematics, social studies, and English language arts. Approximately 44 percent of those core subjects are not assessed at all. District educators have a wealth of student achievement data at their disposal, but there is no systematic process for the use of those data. The use of individual student progress data in the selection and prescription of instructional activities was meager in classrooms observed by the auditors.

Recent trends in student performance suggest that data have not been used effectively to improve student achievement. In all grades and subjects, the percentages of district students demonstrating proficiency on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments have been low or declining, and the numbers are well below state averages in all instances.

Another area where the Minneapolis Public Schools needs to make progress is in linking budgetary expenditures to programs and student achievement. The district uses traditional budgeting processes in which allocations to schools are primarily based on per pupil formulas consistent with state allocations to the district. Moreover, department budgets are based on previous year's budgets. The budgeting process is somewhat compromised by the lack of timely and accurate financial data, and the auditors found no consistent process in place to connect student achievement and program performance feedback to resource allocations.

One of the bright spots of this audit was in observing that the Minneapolis Public School District's facilities were generally clean and well maintained. Some schools have insufficient space to accommodate a full range of instructional programs, while other schools have excess capacity.

Despite efforts on the part of district leadership on many issues of equity within the MPS, there are many unresolved issues that interfere with equal access and the elimination of the achievement gap that persists among ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

The audit team firmly feels that if the recommendations cited in this report are followed over the next several years, it is within the capability of the Minneapolis Public Schools to be successful in moving its operations and performance to the highly sought after level of excellence and "college-ready education for all."

VI. APPENDICES

Appendix A

Auditors' Biographical Data



Kirk Banghart, M.Ed., Auditor

Kirk Banghart is Director of Teaching and Learning for Salida School District located in Salida in the central area of Colorado. Mr. Banghart has also been a middle school principal, an assistant principal, and a teacher in elementary and middle school classrooms. Mr. Banghart received his BA from Fort Lewis College and his MEd degree from Adams State College. He completed his audit training in Tucson, Arizona, in 2008.



Janice Brown, Ed.D., Auditor

Janice M. Brown is currently the Executive Director of the Kalamazoo Promise, a non-profit college scholarship foundation. Previously, she served as Superintendent of Kalamazoo Public Schools from July 2000 to August 2007. In addition, she has over 36 years working at all levels of public education as a teacher, consultant, adjunct professor, state administrator, principal, and central office director of curriculum. Dr. Brown has presented to many professional groups, most recently on the economic/educational value of the Kalamazoo Promise. She was named Michigan Superintendent of the Year for her region and has received many national and state awards. She continues to serve on a number of state and local boards providing advocacy for student achievement and success. Dr. Brown received her audit training in Austin, Texas, in 2001.



Joseph R. Busch, Ed.D., Associate Lead Auditor

Joseph Busch recently retired from the position of District Superintendent of the Broome-Delaware-Tioga supervisory district in the southern tier of New York, where he also served as the regional representative of the New York State Commissioner of Education. Formerly, he served as superintendent of the South New Berlin and Harpursville Central School Districts in central New York. He has 34 years of experience in public education and has held positions as a secondary classroom teacher, principal, and director of Special Education programs and services. Dr. Busch received his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from the State University of New York at Binghamton. He serves as an adjunct professor in educational administration at the State University College at Cortland, New York. Dr. Busch was trained as a Curriculum Management Auditor in Chicago, Illinois in 1993 and has served on numerous audit teams.



Mary R. Cannie, Ed.D., Emeritus Lead Auditor

Dr. Mary Cannie is the recently retired superintendent of Uniondale Public Schools, located on Long Island, New York. She also served as Superintendent of the Sherburne-Earlville Central School District for five years and has experience as an administrator in various public school systems and on the college level. Dr. Cannie was also a staff developer for the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction. Dr. Cannie earned her doctorate in educational administration from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She earned her bachelor's degree from the City College of New York and completed her master's studies at the Bank Street College of Education and the City College of New York. She was trained as a Curriculum Management Auditor in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1989. Dr. Cannie is currently an emeritus Lead Auditor.

Appendix A (continued)
Auditors' Biographical Data



Debra L. Grayson, M.S., Auditor

Debra Grayson is currently a counselor at Katy I.S. D. in Katy, TX. She served as the District Supervisor for Assessment and Testing and as District Supervisor for Advanced Academic Programs and Gifted Education in the San Angelo, TX, public schools. She has served in various Texas schools for 34 years as a teacher, counselor, and interim administrator. Mrs. Grayson earned her Master of Science degree from Texas A&I University in Kingsville, TX, in Psychology and Education. Her areas of certification include teaching K-8, Early Childhood, Counseling, Gifted and Talented Education, and Special Education Guidance. Mrs. Grayson completed her Curriculum Audit training in Tucson, Arizona, in September 2007.



John B. Murdoch, Ed.D., Associate Lead Auditor

Dr. John Murdoch recently retired as superintendent in Idaho Falls, Idaho. He earned his doctorate from Brigham Young University. In his 32 year career, Dr. Murdoch served as a English/language arts and elementary school classroom teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. In addition to his work as an auditor, he currently consults, teaches adjudicated youth, and serves as an adjunct professor for Idaho State and Brigham Young Universities. His school district participated in a curriculum audit in 2002. Dr. Murdoch received his audit training in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1996 and has participated in several audits throughout the country.



Carlos Pagan, Ed.D., Auditor

Carlos Pagan is a former elementary principal in the Napa Valley Language Academy (Dual Language Charter School) in Napa, California. He led that school from an Academic Performance Index (API) score from 400 in 1999 to 639 in 2004. This met or exceeded the state's targets for all sub-groups. He is currently an educational consultant in the Northern New Mexico Network in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. He also served as a modern and classical languages consultant for the New Mexico Public Education Department. He earned his EdD. from Teachers College, Columbia University, where his dissertation involved research regarding "English Learners' Academic Achievement in a Two-Way Versus a Structured English Immersion Program."



William K. Poston Jr., Ed.D., Senior Lead Auditor

Dr. Poston is an Iowa State University Professor Emeritus of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, retiring in 2004. Bill is a former math teacher and an experienced administrator, with 25 years of experience in school administration including 15 years as a superintendent in the Flowing Wells (Tucson) and Kyrene (Tempe-Phoenix) Schools in Arizona and in the Billings Public Schools, in Montana. Bill earned his B.A. at the University of Northern Iowa and his doctorate at Arizona State University. He has many distinctive professional achievements, including service as the youngest-elected international president of Phi Delta Kappa. He has led curriculum management audits for over 20 years in over 80 school systems around the United States and internationally. Dr. Poston has authored dozens of professional articles and has published 10 books. He currently serves as the Chief Consulting Advisor to Curriculum Management Systems, Inc., the nationally recognized owner of the curriculum audit trademark and intellectual property.

Appendix A (continued)
Auditors' Biographical Data



James A. Scott Ph.D., Lead Auditor

Dr. James A. Scott is an educational consultant based in Wilmington, Delaware. He served as Executive Director for Human Resources for the Gary, Indiana, public schools, and taught at Frankfurt American High School in Germany and the University of Maryland, European Division. Dr. Scott has held positions as an instructor, auditor, chief of staff, and director of U.S. Army education and training programs. He earned master's degrees in Business (Central Michigan University) and Public Administration (University of Missouri at Kansas City). His PhD in Educational Administration was awarded at Iowa State University. Dr. Scott completed curriculum management auditor training in January 1991 in San Diego, California; he is a lead auditor, participating in more than 40 audits in the United States and overseas.



Stephanie E. Streeter, M.Ed., Auditor

Stephanie Streeter is currently the Director of Curriculum K–12 and the District 504 Coordinator for the Tanque Verde Unified School District in Tucson, Arizona. Previous administrative positions include Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Instruction and Special Education, Secondary Instructional Coach, Secondary Curriculum Specialist and Secondary Assessment Coordinator for the Tucson Unified School District. Her teaching experiences include secondary English at all levels and speech communication, newspaper, yearbook, and journalism in both Texas and Arizona. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Purdue University, a Master's in Educational Leadership from Northern Arizona University, and is currently working on her doctorate in Education Leadership at Northern Arizona University. Ms. Streeter completed her Curriculum Management Audit training in Tucson, Arizona, in 2008.



Susan N. Van Hoozer, M.Ed., Auditor

Sue Van Hoozer has been an educator for 35 years. She was a teacher at the elementary level and taught developmental and remedial reading in middle school and high school. Mrs. Van Hoozer was an elementary principal, high school assistant principal, and high school principal. She worked in human resources and served as Executive Director of Schools, supervising principals, for the San Angelo Independent School District in San Angelo, Texas. Mrs. Van Hoozer currently works as an education specialist for Education Service Center, Region XV in Texas. She received her B.S. and M.Ed. degrees from Angelo State University. Mrs. Van Hoozer completed her audit training in Tucson, Arizona, in 2004.

Appendix A (continued)
Auditors' Biographical Data



Patricia R. Williams, M.Ed., Auditor

Mrs. Williams is an educational consultant based in Kalamazoo, Michigan. She also serves as the education facilitator for student retention at Western Michigan University in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. She has served public schools in urban Michigan districts as an assistant superintendent, director of special education, and principal. Her responsibilities have included supervising principals, managing special education programs that included the gifted and talented, guiding the district's student disciplinary activities, and coordinating professional development activities. Mrs. Williams received her B.S. and M.Ed. from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. She received her curriculum management audit training in Tucson, Arizona, in December 2004.



Lynn F. Zinn, Ed.D., Auditor

Dr. Lynn F. Zinn is an educational consultant in State College, Pennsylvania, providing services to a variety of entities in the public and non-profit sectors. She graduated from Middlebury College and began her career as a classroom teacher in Burlington, Vermont. She earned her MEd in Special Education (Learning Disabilities emphasis) at the University of Maine at Orono and taught in regular and special education settings. She has served as a school district resource consultant, an adjunct professor for the University of Maine-Farmington, and a district-level curriculum and staff development coordinator. Dr. Zinn completed her doctoral work in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Northern Colorado. Dr. Zinn completed her curriculum audit training in Tucson, Arizona, in December 2000.

Appendix B

List of Documents Reviewed by the Minneapolis Public Schools Audit Team

#		Located electronically @mpls.k12.mn.us
1	History of district and rationale for audit and decisions pertinent	Hard copies in workroom
2	Background info about school district	http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/about.html http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/sites/f7071225-9844-4da6-96c0-996b9c74b221/uploads/FactSheet08-09.pdf
3	Names and addresses of schools and principals	http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/sites/f7071225-9844-4da6-96c0-996b9c74b221/uploads/School-List_2008-09.pdf
4	Number of students in each school	http://studentaccounting.mpls.k12.mn.us/sites/c1e62c01-fc16-4ce9-ae5b-4c1d51297a8b/uploads/perenr11_oct_1_07_official.pdf
5	Demographics by school	http://studentaccounting.mpls.k12.mn.us/sites/c1e62c01-fc16-4ce9-ae5b-4c1d51297a8b/uploads/School_Ethnic_07-08_by_Gender.pdf MPS Annual racial/Ethnic count of students by location and gender as of 10/10/07, location and grade MPS Native student count by school 2007-08
6	Map of district	http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/sites/f7071225-9844-4da6-96c0-996b9c74b221/uploads/MPS-map-8.5x11-0809.pdf
7	Information about community	http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/Community2.html Twin Cities Living – Relocation guide 2008
8	History of school system from inception to present	https://secure.mpls.k12.mn.us/mpsHistory/index.aspx
9	Demographic data for at least 5 years prior to audit	http://studentaccounting.mpls.k12.mn.us/Racial_Ethnic.html Enrollment projections
10	All documents regarding enrollment projections and trends	http://studentaccounting.mpls.k12.mn.us/Racial_Ethnic.html Demographic and enrollment report k-12, 2006
11	Statement why district has undertaken audit, what is expected as a result of audit and how information will be used	Hard copy in workroom
12	Sample of internal memoranda from administrative officers to principals and principals to staff regarding reading and math curriculum, testing, evaluation and programs during the past year	Hard copy in workroom
13	Mission statements and goals for the district	http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/Strategic_Planning.html expectation for principals K-5, K-8 IFL implementation 6-12 principals District scorecard and targets Effort and Equity for Excellence: Academic Achievement Agenda 2006-2014 Secondary academic plan 2008–2014
14	One complete policy manual	http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/Policies.html

15	One complete administrative regulation manual	http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/Policies.html
16	List of board members and their length of tenure for the past 10 years	Hard copy in workroom
17	List of superintendents and key administrators and their tenure over the past 7 years.	Hard copy in workroom Current organizational charts available at: http://org-chart.mpls.k12.mn.us
18	District's most recent accreditation report and all other external reviews or consultant reports conducted during the past 5 years.	http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/Strategic_Planning.html http://academicaffairs.mpls.k12.mn.us IB reports to NE middle school, Hall and Whittier Elementary Schools, Reading First Cohort 2 School Change Project Yr.3 University of Minnesota, MacArthur Foundation 2002-07 final report Council of Great city Schools report of strategic support teams December 2004 Hamline University ELL report 2007
19	Latest OCR report (if one exists)	http://ocronline.mpls.mn.us/ocrnew//MM_about_us.cfm
20	Any report or document related to the takeover of the system	Not applicable
21	All curriculum guides in reading, ELA, math, science and social studies	http://elementaryliteracy.mpls.k12.mn.us/ http://elementaryliteracy.mpls.k12.mn.us/core_content.html http://ela.mpls.k12.mn.us/Core_Content.html http://math.mpls.k12.mn.us/core_content.html http://socialstudies.mpls.k12.mn.us/ http://science.mpls.k12.mn.us/core_content.html Elementary Literacy Plan June, 2008 Science notebook essentials English Language Arts Curriculum framework Minnesota Academic Standards Science K-12 Work from Committee Aligning state standards to District core curriculum Core science unit descriptions additional information, not accessible on the website will be available in the workroom
22	Any staff or community surveys or studies conducted on reading and math programs, curriculum or instruction	http://rea.mpls.k12.mn.us/
23	Textbook/instructional resource adoption procedures in reading and mathematics	http://ci.mpls.k12.mn.us/Learning_Materials.html MPS Curriculum Review and Adoption Cycle Curriculum review Cycle
24	Minutes of any major reading or math curriculum group meetings for the last 12 months	Hard copies available in workroom

25	Course descriptions books for the middle and secondary schools in reading, ELA, science, social studies and math	Family guides available at: http://schoolchoice.mpls.k12.mn.us common course catalog descriptions available at: http://ci.mpls.k12.mn.us/HS_Courses.html
26	Listing of all federal programs implemented, the objectives, amount of funding and source of funding for each. Limit to math, reading, science and social studies	Mpls Public Schools Special School District No. 1 Schedule of expenditures of Federal Awards Year ended June 30, 2007 Hard Copy in workroom http://app.education.state.mn.us/MFRSystem
27	A listing of all reading and math special programs funded by the state. E.g. compensatory funds, grant, etc. List objectives, amount of funding and funding source	Mpls. Public Schools Compensatory Education state statutes Hard copy available in workroom Listing of all funding coming from the state available at: http://app.education.state.mn.us/MFRSystem/reports.do?timeFrame=all&districtNumber=0001&districtType=03&districtName=MINNEAPOLIS
28	A listing of any other programs funded by regular or external monies addressing reading and math	Hard copies of information available in workroom. Minnesota Zoo/Mpls. Public Schools Target partnership Bakken Museum/Mpls. Public Schools Partnership Arts for Academic Achievement funded by Achieve! Mpls., Ford Foundation and arts and community partners
29	Grade distribution reports for each school by class, especially for each secondary school	Hard copy in work room
30	Demographic data for the last three years by school, grade, gender and race	http://studentaccounting.mpls.k12.mn.us/Reports_Data.html
31	Class size data for the last year by school and grade level	http://studentaccounting.mpls.k12.mn.us/Reports_Data.html
32	Student assessment reports for the past five years, disaggregated by school, race and gender	http://rea.mpls.k12.mn.us/ www.incschools.com/mpls/
33	Retention data by grade, gender, and race for the last three years	
34	Enrollment by ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status in special reading or math programs including special education	http://speced.mpls.k12.mn.us/Programs.html
35	Daily (or weekly) time allocation by discipline by grade	No longer mandated by the state. Individual buildings set time allocations in curriculum mapping process
36	Documents on grouping, class placements, access to courses, etc	Destination Excellence “Every child, college ready” High School redesign 4-14-08 Descriptions of 4-core rigorous equity framework
37	Data on discipline referrals, in-school suspensions, off-campus suspensions by school, expulsions by school, grade level, race and gender	

38	List of all tests administered in the district including name of the test, subject areas, grades tested, exemptions allowed and whether the test is required or optional	http://rea.mpls.k12.mn.us/Assessment_Calendar.html
39	All student reading and math test data within the last five years and public reports of that data	http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/Accountability.html http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/Community2.html
40	Any follow-up studies of students completed in the last five years	
41	Reading and math program evaluation data for the last 2 years- for federal, state and regular programs. Instructional and non-instructional	http://rea.mpls.k12.mn.us/ http://academicaffairs.mpls.k12.mn.us/ American Indian math project (Anishanabe)
42	System budget documents over the past 5 years	http://financeandbudget.mpls.k12.mn.us/
43	A listing of program innovations undertaken during the last 5 years—when each program began, and a contact person we could interview about the innovation	http://academicaffairs.mpls.k12.mn.us/ 2006-08 AYP High school trend Middle school 2006-08 AYP trends MPS Strategic Planning Update-Summary of Phase 2. 09/25/08
44	Any plans or project descriptions that aim to provide or improve educational facilities	http://facilities.mpls.k12.mn.us/
	Additional information	Districtwide list of Professional Workshops, courses 2006-present Job descriptions Teachers contract ELA curriculum grades 4-5, 6-8 High School Math adoption report and recommendations June 2006 Digital learning Mpls. Public School 1998-2008