

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

**For**

**English Language Arts/Students with Disabilities  
Grades K-6**

**Hudson City School District**

**July, 2010**

**Submitted by**

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## Acknowledgment

The Hudson City School District Community and Board of Education have every right to be proud of the individuals that work within its school district. During the days of Audit interviews and classroom observations, as well as the interactions via telephone and email communications, employees of the district represented the district in the most professional manner. It is clear all those we came into contact with care deeply about the district, and the children the district serves. Teachers were forthcoming and trusting in their comments, and administrators, both at the school and district level conveyed a clear mission of wanting to improve student learning and achievement. Orion is indebted to Ms. Maria Suttmeier, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for all her efforts in helping arrange for the Audit work and we are indebted, as well, to Mr. John F. Howe, Superintendent of Schools for his active and very positive support of this Audit effort.

K-6 school principals, when asked at the conclusion of final interviews what they were most proud of, responded as we would have hoped, with a sincere and engaged focus on their students and their faculty. “Our teachers have embraced what we do here. They take responsibility for their students and they are extremely devoted”, and “We have an incredible staff, always getting stronger...the best primary school in Columbia County. We are focused on children.”

The Hudson City School District has a rigorous journey ahead. We trust that Orion’s findings and recommendations will help speed that journey to its rightful destination on behalf of the school community’s children.

## Structure of the Audit Report

This document has been structured so that the reader can:

- appreciate the depth and breadth of the **Audit Approach** used by Orion
- efficiently move to identify the **Findings** and then subsequently, understand the **Recommendations**
- review the **Extended Analysis** information that follows last in the report in order to be aware of the grounded connection between the data and information collected in the district and the **Findings** and **Recommendations**.

## Introduction

This report is the result of an audit conducted for the Hudson City School District under the auspices of a grant from the NYSED. Hudson City School District is a Title I school newly identified in August 2009 as Corrective Action, Focused, and thereby required to undertake an External School Curriculum Audit (ESCA). This ESCA targets English Language Arts/Students with Disabilities (SWDs) at the intermediate grade levels and addresses:

- the alignment of the school’s ELA curriculum with the NY State Learning Standards
- the implementation and assessment of that curriculum; and
- the alignment of the curriculum to instruction

This report examined the above through the critical lens of “Guiding Questions”. These guiding questions consistently address the critical analysis components of the grant and demonstrate the triangulation of multiple data sources. The **Findings** generated are clustered into six areas of **Recommendations**, designed to facilitate implementation via the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) by the Hudson City School District. Specific direction, so as to facilitate implementation, is included as part of the Recommendations. Processes, methodology, and extent of data collected are also included in this report.

It is important to recognize, as the district does, that the English Language Arts (ELA) performance of Students with Disabilities (SWDs) in virtually all situations, cannot be viewed separate from how all students perform in the area of English Language Arts. If instruction is delivered within the context of a written, taught and tested ELA curriculum, then the performance of Students with Disabilities should increase accordingly. This report does address specific issues related to the performance of Students with Disabilities, but those issues are largely logistical and not programmatic.

## District Background

### Overview

Hudson City is the county seat of Columbia, and was named after the Hudson River discovered by Henry Hudson. The enlarged Hudson City School District was formed in 1966 by incorporating the City of Hudson and eleven adjoining school districts into one school system. The district had been comprised of four schools-one high school, one middle school and two elementary schools, plus one building which houses central administration offices. With recent capital project development, the central administration offices were relocated to the new high school and one elementary school was joined with the middle school.

The Hudson City School District is a component district of the Questar BOCES.

State reported data show a population of 1,952 students with state reported student subgroups as follows:

- Poor - 46%
- White - 54%
- Black - 29%
- Hispanic - 10%
- Asian - 7%

The Mission Statement for the district is as follows: *Hudson City School District will enable all children to meet high and challenging educational standards through quality programs and support services which promote the intellectual, physical and cultural well-being of all students and families in our community. This will provide a foundation for lifelong learning and productive citizenship. "Together We Can".*

Board of Education Goals: 2009-2010

1. Conduct a formal assessment of ALP to determine validity of program and if it proves to work, review plans (location, structure, etc.) with a report to the BOE by January 2010.
2. Conduct a curriculum inventory, analysis and process report and focus on ELA and Math curriculum for a report by end of April 2010.
3. Form a foundation 501(c)3 to channel grants through for competitive funding opportunities.
4. Determine the assessment tools used to determine how programs are evaluated K-6 (i.e. Reading Recovery, Literacy Collaborative, AP courses, AIS, etc.) and how the results are communicated to the transitional school.

## **Student Academic Performance**

The Hudson City School District, based on New York State Education Department guidelines relating to student performance, is required to have this Audit performed. Given that New York State, upon a review of student performance data, has already made this determination, this Audit Report is not designed by the RFP to complete a comprehensive data analysis. However, for the benefit of the reader and so as to provide a measure of context for the **Findings** and **Recommendations** included herein, an overview of student performance, with comments, at the elementary school level for English Language Arts and Students with Disabilities follows.

**Grades 3-8**  
**Student Performance NYSTP-ELA**  
**All Students and SWD Percent Proficient (levels 3 and 4)**

Chart 1

<b>Grade &amp; Student Group</b>	<b>2005-06</b>	<b>2006-07</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2008-09</b>
Grade <b>All</b> SWD				<u>3</u> <b>52%</b> 10%
Grade <b>All</b> SWD			<u>3</u> <b>52%</b> 21%	<u>4</u> <b>65%</b> 15%
Grade <b>All</b> SWD		<u>3</u> <b>47%</b> 5%	<u>4</u> <b>61%</b> 23%	<u>5</u> <b>76%</b> 46%
Grade <b>All</b> SWD	<u>3</u> <b>55%</b> 23%	<u>4</u> <b>63%</b> 27%	<u>5</u> <b>73%</b> 21	<u>6</u> <b>73%</b> 31%
Grade <b>All</b> SWD	<u>4</u> <b>57%</b> 20%	<u>5</u> <b>54%</b> 21%	<u>6</u> <b>51%</b> 12%	<u>7</u> <b>74%</b> 43%
Grade <b>All</b> SWD	<u>5</u> <b>50%</b> 7%	<u>6</u> <b>57%</b> 14%	<u>7</u> <b>61%</b> 11%	<u>8</u> <b>52%</b> 3%
Grade <b>All</b> SWD	<u>6</u> <b>38%</b> 3%	<u>7</u> <b>37%</b> 9%	<u>8</u> <b>35%</b> 9%	
Grade <b>All</b> SWD	<u>7</u> <b>32%</b> 7%	<u>8</u> <b>43%</b> 4%		
Grade <b>All</b> SWD	<u>8</u> <b>28%</b> 0%			

Chart 1 above, Student Performance NYSTP-ELA, compares the performance of students (percent proficient) at Hudson Middle School from year-to-year in three ways.

Reading the performance chart across from right to left will yield longitudinal data that follows the progress of the same group of students from year to year.

- Positive growth is noted for the cohort beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in the 2005-2006 school year, ending as 6<sup>th</sup> graders in the 2008-2009 school year. The overall performance for all students rose from 55% proficient to 73%.
- The performance of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade cohort beginning in 2006-2007 improved from 47% to 76% proficient. Other areas of longitudinal growth for all students can be noted as well, albeit for shorter periods of time.
- For several cohorts (2005-06 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade) growth in performance as measured by proficiency rates was relatively flat.
- Longitudinal growth for Students with Disabilities is striking at the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> for the 2008-2009 school year compared to the previous year, although there is much room for improvement. In general, even considering recent gains, the performance of Students with Disabilities is problematic.

Reading the chart down each column from top to bottom compares performance on the ELA assessment in the same year at different grade levels.

- A general improvement can be noted for the past year (2008-2009).

Reading the chart diagonally upward yields performance of students in the same grade across years.

- No growth is apparent in grade 3.
- Modest growth is noted in grade 4 performance.
- Significant growth has occurred in grade 5 over the years.
- Grade 6 has demonstrated growth for 2008-2009 over the previous year.

Considering grades 3 – 8, at best, 25% of all students are not reaching proficiency; at worse, 50%. For Students with Disabilities, at best one half is achieving proficiency, at worse, 3%. It will be important to determine whether the improved 2008-2009 results represent an aberration or are part of a trend, and if a trend, to capitalize on those practices that are supporting student achievement.

**Student Performance NYSTP-ELA  
 Grades 3 – 8  
 All Students and SWD  
2008 - 2009**

**Chart 2**

<b>Grade &amp; Student Group</b>	<b>Number Tested</b>	<b><u>Performance Level</u></b>			
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Grade 3 <b>All</b> SWD	<b>161</b> 21	<b>16%</b> 57%	<b>33%</b> 33%	<b>48%</b> 10%	<b>3%</b> 0%
Grade 4 <b>All</b> SWD	<b>138</b> 26	<b>7%</b> 27%	<b>28%</b> 58%	<b>64%</b> 15%	<b>1%</b> 0%
Grade 5 <b>All</b> SWD	<b>125</b> 24	<b>0%</b> 0%	<b>24%</b> 54%	<b>67%</b> 38%	<b>9%</b> 8%
Grade 6 <b>All</b> SWD	<b>135</b> 26	<b>0%</b> 0%	<b>27%</b> 69%	<b>65%</b> 31%	<b>8%</b> 0%
Grade 7 <b>All</b> SWD	<b>158</b> 35	<b>0%</b> 0%	<b>26%</b> 57%	<b>71%</b> 43%	<b>3%</b> 0%
Grade 8 <b>All</b> SWD	<b>148</b> 30	<b>2%</b> 10%	<b>46%</b> 87%	<b>52%</b> 3%	<b>0%</b> 0%

As regards Chart 2 above, ELA Performance 2008-2009 Grades 3 – 8, All Students and Students with Disabilities:

When the percentage of students performing at levels 1 through 4 is examined, the small number of students achieving at mastery level is apparent. While proficiency requires performance at level 3 at least, questions arise when very few are able to attain mastery.

- What are the expectations in the classroom?
- What is the strength of the instruction specifically around the standards?
- How and when are student needs assessed relative to performance indicators?
- How are data from previous assessments used to inform instruction?
- What is the re-teaching and skill practice opportunities given to students?
- How are best practices disseminated throughout the faculty?

By inculcating cycles of instruction, assessment, and revision tied to student performance based on standards, the level of achievement for all students is supported and strengthened. The goal of mastery for all lifts the performance of students at whatever level they are currently achieving. Analysis of assessment data to uncover those skills that prevent more pervasive achievement at level 4 and research into best practices of instruction around those skills will provide a foundation to improve the performance of all students.

A related observation of Data Chart 2 concerns the high number of students that achieve at level 2, just short of proficiency. For Students with Disabilities this is a critical issue as in grades 4 – 8, level 2 accounts for the majority of students in this sub-group.

- Again, what are the skills that will tip these students over the line into level 3?
- Which skills are lacking that involves the most students?
- What instructional strategies will address these skills?

Considering the effort outlined in the Academic Intervention Services (AIS plan), put into effect when students do not reach at least level 3 on the ELA assessment, an equal or greater amount of effort put into uncovering the performance skills and concomitant instructional strategies would reap far greater rewards for students in performance and achievement.

## **Orion Consulting Approach Overview**

### **Outcome**

In the effort to assist districts in meeting the NCLB legislative goals of “ensuring that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments,” Orion Educational Consulting LLC commits to complete the New York State district curriculum audit in a manner that will provide an insightful and comprehensive framework from which the district can engage in purposeful continuous improvement. Through a clear review of how the district has implemented the New York State standards via curriculum design and subsequent instruction in the classroom, Orion will not only pinpoint what learning opportunities are provided to all students, including Students with Disabilities but as importantly, will identify why particular opportunities are either provided or not provided to students. Expecting teachers and leaders within districts to make changes without a clear understanding of why certain practices are present or absent would betray the change process. Practices are improved and/or changed first in the thought processes of the district’s staff. Changes in behavior and practice are then more apt to follow. Fullan’s statement regarding the complexities in leading change is a meaningful summary of Orion’s approach. “Leading in a culture of change entails unlocking the mysteries of living organizations, with emphasis placed on understanding and insight, rather than on mere action steps” (2004, p. 58). Orion’s approach is based on this fundamental premise of understanding and insight. With this approach as a foundation for the analysis, Orion will outline a series of findings and recommendations by which the district can engage in meaningful action planning. Such action planning will have facilitation support from Orion so as to purposefully engage the district’s staff team in bringing about necessary steps for continuous improvement.

### **Standards-Based Premise**

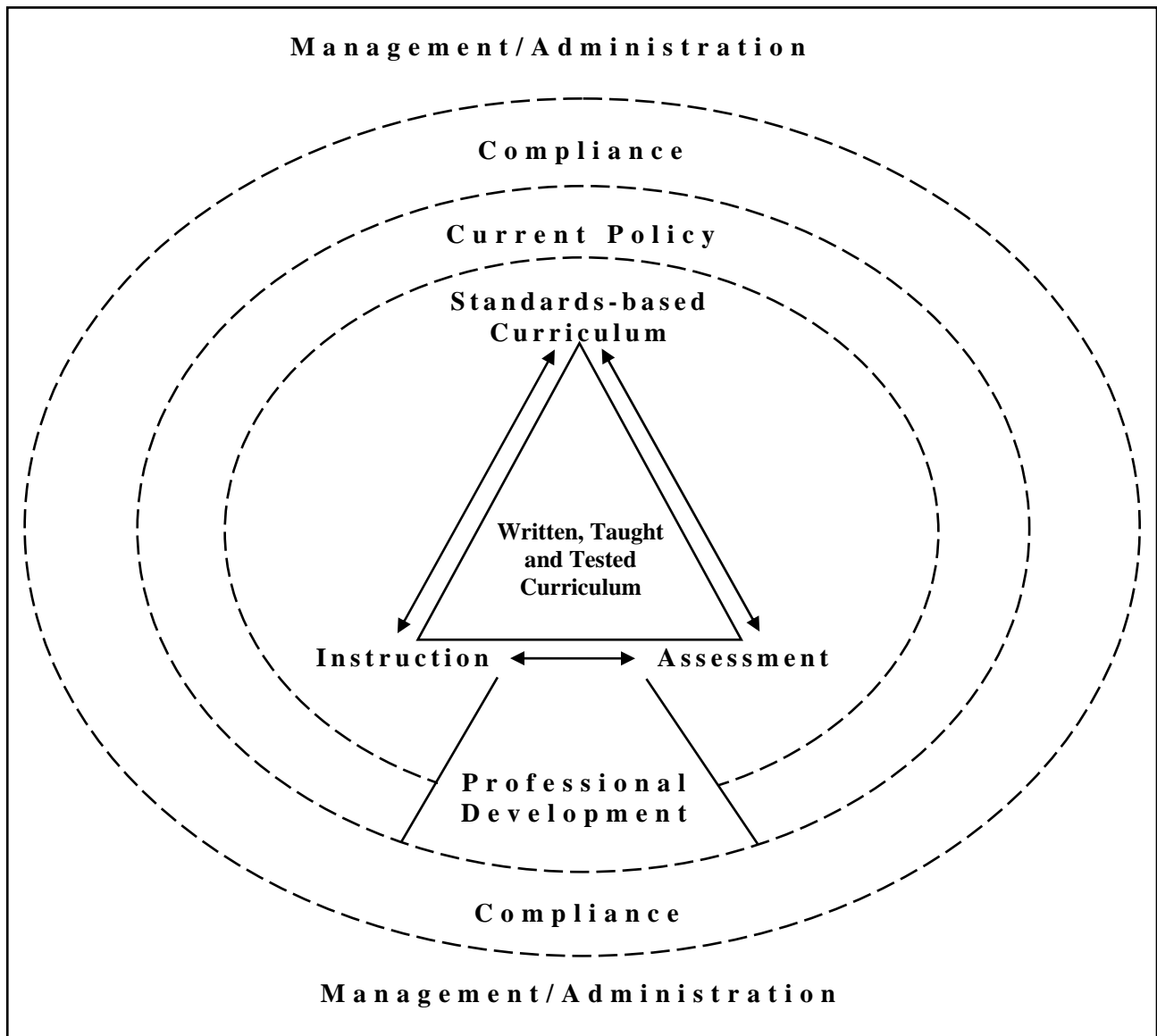
It is critical to any curricular planning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that curricula are standards-based. Virtually all states in this country have moved to adopt standards upon which state assessments are developed. The standards movement did not come about by happenstance. Rather, it was in response to how graduates of American schools would compete versus graduate of schools in Asia and European countries. It is fairly certain that as the world becomes smaller through global travel and trade, the preparation of high school graduates will become even more competitive and thus, will have to be prepared to meet higher and different standards. It is important that any school district take into account both these higher and different standards as they move to develop new curricula in the future.

Learning standards articulate the most important knowledge, skills and concepts in each content area. They are clear, well defined learning goals for teachers and students providing the foundation for deep understanding and high student performance. In a standards-based

classroom, instructional planning is centered on the learning standards, key ideas and performance indicators. Teachers select materials and resources, determine appropriate instructional strategies and assessments based on and driven by the standards. The standards then, not the textbooks, define the expectations and outcomes for what students know and are able to do. Teachers deliver focused, effective instruction, engage students in active learning, and maintain high expectations for all students.

Educational curriculum is what is taught, how it is taught, and how it is tested. Curriculum development in a standards-based environment requires teachers to begin with the standards, key ideas and indicators for their course or grade level targeting the concepts and skills to be taught in a lesson, unit or course. Teachers identify overarching ideas and essential questions based on those standards, determine instructional strategies and resources that best support those targets, and discern the products and performances that demonstrate student learning.

District-wide curriculum development, that is, development within and throughout grade levels and courses, is often referred to as curriculum mapping. Mapping determines and documents the progression of student acquisition of the learning standards at all points in the K-12 instructional program. The same components of curriculum development (standards, essential questions and understandings, strategies, resources, and assessments) are identified for all courses and grade levels. Through curriculum mapping teachers and administrators are able to determine the extent of the horizontal and vertical alignment of the curriculum against the learning standards, correct any gaps in instruction, and know what skills and concepts students have mastered in previous grades. This district-wide development and documentation of curriculum is a critical tool for communication, planning and instructional focus. The figure on the next page depicts this perspective on Standards-Based Learning.



(Written, Taught, and Tested - Figure 1)

### Research Premise

Orion's approach to the organizational audit is aligned with the assumptions of qualitative research design. That is, we believe that the best way to uncover why students in a system are not being as successful as they might be is to talk directly to the key participants, i.e. teachers and administrators, to understand classroom practices, and building and district practices. Understanding the practices that are in use not only gives rise to locating and understanding patterns, but when patterns become repetitive, systems that are in place can also be identified and described. Systems, or repeated patterns of behavior, shown to produce either desired or inadvertent outcomes of student performance, are essential to creating sustained, predictable desired outcomes. Until the researcher (Orion) understands not only how key participants

behave, but why they behave in particular ways, efforts at changing those practices are often futile. Uncovering, documenting, and describing the “why” of behavior allows us to locate the “root causes” of successful and unsuccessful practices at the classroom, building, and district levels from the perspectives of those engaged within. Successful practice is defined as practice leading to desired levels of student performance.

By the nature of our approach, the goal of Orion’s audit work is not to accomplish generality of findings to other districts. By conducting interviews with an extensive number of teachers and administrators, Orion builds a collection of participant views and behaviors that when placed together provide insight into the contextual variables that are at play in situations (classrooms and buildings), allowing us to build an understanding of how closely coupled behaviors are to district systems and expectations. These understandings are built one district at a time, given the history, culture, and practices that may have developed over time in that particular district context. Theodore Creighton, in *Schools and Data – The Educators Guide for Using Data to Improve Decision Making* (2006), speaks to the power of the qualitative approach to data collection and research in general and the in-depth insights that may be gained from this approach.

In summary, Orion audits are predicated on the notion that having systems in place that link classroom practice to building leader behaviors to district level expectations is a prerequisite to sustained, continuous improvement in student performance outcomes. Whether student performance outcomes need to be improved is a direct reflection of several factors:

- New York State’s determined level of required success
- the district’s own internal expectations
- community expectations that suggest a regional comparative performance level be attained to indicate success for their school system

## **Audit Processes**

With a focus on understanding the causes (the whys), as well as the nature of current practices, this audit will reveal the degree of alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment through two data collection methodologies: interviews and observations. Through extensive interviewing and classroom observations, carried out via Orion’s “*Guiding Questions*”, the audit will seek to create a partnership with your district and your faculty and staff. This partnership is based on an assumption that Orion’s methodology is designed to gather information, to isolate patterns of practice and behavior, and to determine where change should be initiated. The approach, while necessarily producing categories of judgments about current practices, carefully refrains from being judgmental or finding fault, which would do little to promote the forward momentum necessary for building a culture of continuous improvement. While the audit will laser its focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment, certainly the prerequisite attention will be paid to the allied district practices.

## 1. Analyze Student Learning Data, Curricula, Systems Documentation

- Specify the data and documents we require
  - Orion team specifies the data and reports documents required using Orion's Master List of Data and Reports
- Gather data and documents
  - District personnel gather data and documents according to list specified by Orion team above
- Analyze data and reports documents
  - Orion team disaggregates, studies and assembles relationships among the assessment data
  - Mandated reports documents are reviewed for their level of compliance in meeting state requirements and in their aggregate coherence
- Summarize and interpret the data analysis
  - Orion team reviews data tables and documentation overlays to identify trends and patterns

## 2. Observe District Practices (can occur concurrently with Interviewing)

- Specify classrooms to be observed
  - District personnel to provide a district-wide, by building, classroom configuration, noting for each classroom the number of SWD students, grade level and the curricula area
  - Classes providing services for SWD in separate settings (resource room, speech/language, occupational and physical therapy, self-contained classes) by grade level and curricula will be included
  - Orion team, using the district's current classroom configuration, drafts a listing of classrooms to be observed
  - Classrooms will include multiples of classes with SWD students, across grade levels, across schools and across curricula areas
  - Orion team identifies selected classrooms to be observed
  - An observation matrix of classrooms identified to be observed is reviewed with the superintendent or designee for concurrence
- Schedule classroom observations
  - Orion team maps classroom observation matrix to district and school calendar and drafts an appropriate schedule to minimize intrusiveness and disruption to the building, program and district, thus maximizing Orion's productivity
  - The proposed schedule is reviewed with the superintendent or designee for concurrence
  - Upon completion of the classroom observations, the Orion team will create a second-round observation schedule to complete observations originally

- scheduled but not conducted due to teacher absence or other mitigating circumstance
      - The proposed second-round schedule is reviewed with the superintendent or designee for concurrence
      - No pre- or post- observation requirements will be made upon the classroom teacher or other district personnel
    - Conduct classroom observations
      - Orion auditor observes classes using Danielson-based observation matrix
      - This will allow for observation of adherence to the IEP or 504 and the extent to which the IEP or 504 facilitates successful access to the general education curricula.
    - Analyze the classroom observations
      - Orion team gathers and reviews observations to identify commonality, trends, patterns, and alignment across student types, grade levels, buildings, and curricula areas
3. Interview for District Practices
- Specify interviewees
    - Orion team, using the district's current administrator and teacher leader configuration, drafts a listing of administrators and teacher leaders to be interviewed
    - Administrators, content leaders, principals, ASI, PPS and Superintendent will be included
    - A matrix of administrators and teacher leaders identified to be interviewed is reviewed with the superintendent or designee for concurrence
  - Schedule interviews
    - Orion team maps interview matrix to district and school calendar and drafts an appropriate schedule to maximize Orion's efficiency and minimize intrusiveness and disruption to the building, program and district
    - No pre-interview requirements will be made upon the administrators and teacher leaders
    - The proposed schedule is reviewed with the superintendent or designee for concurrence
    - Upon completion of the interviews, Orion team will create a second-round interview schedule to complete interviews originally scheduled but not conducted due to administrator and teacher leader absence or other mitigating circumstance
    - The proposed second-round schedule is reviewed with the superintendent or designee for concurrence
  - Conduct interviews using individuals and small groups
    - Orion auditors interview administrators and teacher leaders using guiding question matrix
  - Analyze interview comments and correlate with observations and data analyses

- Orion team gathers interview responses with data and document analyses and classroom observations to identify patterns and themes
- Orion team reveals “what is happening” from the desired state
- Orion team isolates individual problems, inhibitors and breakdowns and supports each with a combination of data, documentation, observation, and interview information

#### 4. Present Audit Report Draft

- Present recommendations as a draft Audit Report, to district team; provide clarifications and gather feedback
  - Orion team will author a draft Audit Report and present the report to the entire district team
  - Orion auditors will facilitate understanding with the district team, gathering feedback comments and clarifying for comprehension

#### 5. Present Final Audit Report

- Write, publish, present final Audit Report
  - Orion team will complete a final Audit Report that includes the District Action Plan and the planning process used to develop the Action Plan and present the final Audit Report to the entire District Team
  - Orion auditors will facilitate understanding with the district team, gathering feedback comments and clarifying for comprehension
  - Orion team will complete any modifications resulting from this presentation, append such modifications to the final Audit Report, and release the Audit Report as final and delivered.

### **Guiding Questions for the Audit**

Orion has developed a series of ‘Guiding Questions’ that frames its Audits of school districts. The specific focus for this Audit relates to the written, taught, and tested curriculum in the Hudson City School District. As such, the Orion Guiding Questions that were considered for this Audit are as follows. Please note that data collected as a result of these questions may be aligned in a variety of ways in the report and not necessarily grouped question by question.

Guiding Questions	Information Source	Potential Sources of Data, Document, Observation Criteria and Interview Questions	Evidence of Existence
1. To what degree is the written curricula aligned to New York State Standards?	Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New York State Standards</li> <li>▪ Written curriculum K-12 ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Written curriculum structured on NYS Standards</li> </ul>
	Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what degree are standards, content and process skills, made overt to students?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Observable teacher behaviors (Danielson)</li> </ul>
	Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do you decide what to teach?</li> <li>▪ Given an example of a key idea, how would you teach concept?</li> </ul>	
2. To what degree is the design and development process for writing curricula across all schools and all subject areas comprehensive?	Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curriculum review process</li> <li>▪ Curriculum review schedule</li> <li>▪ Members of review council</li> <li>▪ Written curriculum K-12 ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District supported Professional Development opportunities</li> <li>▪ Comprehensiveness and cohesiveness of the written curriculum at all grade levels and content areas</li> </ul>
	Observations		
	Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Describe the development process in detail.</li> <li>▪ How are you involved?</li> <li>▪ Describe the curriculum implementation process.</li> <li>▪ Describe the curriculum review process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discussion of development process to implementation process to review process.</li> <li>▪ Extent to which all teachers are involved, knowledgeable and supportive in curriculum writing.</li> </ul>
3. To what degree is the written curricula taught and tested?	Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Classroom assessments</li> <li>▪ Written curriculum K-12 ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies Planning documents</li> <li>▪ Planning documents – unit plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unit plans match written curriculum</li> <li>▪ Assessments match written curriculum and, therefore, unit plans.</li> </ul>

Guiding Questions	Information Source	Potential Sources of Data, Document, Observation Criteria and Interview Questions	Evidence of Existence
	<b>Observations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent do lessons match written curriculum?</li> </ul>	
	<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do you decide what to teach?</li> <li>▪ How are classroom, department, grade level and district assessments developed?</li> <li>▪ How are decisions made about what is assessed in the classrooms?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. To what degree is the process of curriculum implementation continuous within subject areas and across subject areas?</b></p>	<b>Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Written curriculum K-12 ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies</li> <li>▪ Professional development is aligned with PDP and student performance data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vertically and horizontally aligned curriculum</li> <li>▪ On-going revisions of written curriculum based on yearly student performance results</li> <li>▪ Written curricula is reviewed annually to reflect NYS Standards and student assessment results</li> </ul>
	<b>Observations</b>		
	<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the process for team planning with grade level; special education team; adjacent grade level meetings?</li> <li>▪ How familiar are you with the grade level or course curriculum for the previous and following year?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Principals, instructional leaders, teachers, support staff, as part of a strong building planning team</li> <li>▪ PDP driven</li> <li>▪ On-going revisions of written curriculum based on yearly student performance results</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. To what degree is implementation of curricula consistent across grade levels, content areas, and school buildings?</b></p>	<b>Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Written curriculum K-12 ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies</li> <li>▪ Planning documents – unit plans</li> </ul>	

Guiding Questions	Information Source	Potential Sources of Data, Document, Observation Criteria and Interview Questions	Evidence of Existence
	<b>Observations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the content of the lesson (curricular or text-based)?</li> <li>▪ Are objectives clear and standards-based?</li> <li>▪ Are expectations high and how are they communicated?</li> <li>▪ Are the criteria for assessment clear and understood by the students?</li> <li>▪ What characterizes the teacher’s style (teacher-centered or student-centered)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Observable teacher behaviors (Danielson)</li> <li>▪ Classroom artifacts (visual referents, handouts, posters, overhead transparencies or other technological representations)</li> </ul>
	<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do you decide what to teach?</li> <li>▪ How is curriculum implemented?</li> <li>▪ Who is responsible for its implementation?</li> <li>▪ What happens after curricula are written?</li> <li>▪ What opportunities do you have to discuss curriculum with your colleagues?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Appropriate curricular documents in all classrooms</li> <li>▪ Teachers meetings are held across grade levels, buildings and content areas</li> </ul>
<b>6. To what degree is equal access of curriculum afforded, and delivered to ALL students, including students with special needs and 504 students?</b>	<b>Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Written curricula</li> <li>▪ IEPs, 504 plans</li> <li>▪ Special education student schedules</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>	
	<b>Observations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the content of the lesson, is it the same for SWD?</li> <li>▪ Are expectations high and how are they communicated?</li> <li>▪ Are the same criteria for assessment used for SWD?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Observable teacher behaviors (Danielson)</li> </ul>

Guiding Questions	Information Source	Potential Sources of Data, Document, Observation Criteria and Interview Questions	Evidence of Existence
	<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do you decide what to teach and assess SWD students?</li> <li>▪ How do you plan and coordinate instruction for SWD?</li> <li>▪ How do you prepare SWD students for the State assessments?</li> <li>▪ Tell me about the typical accommodations and modifications you provide for SWD and 504 students.</li> <li>▪ What type of support do you have in your classroom to help SWD students?</li> <li>▪ Is there anything you would change about the way you educate SWD students?</li> <li>▪ Are the same criteria for assessment used for SWD?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Classroom artifacts (visual referents, handouts, posters, overhead transparencies or other technological representations, and written assessments)</li> <li>▪ IEPs</li> <li>▪ 504 plans</li> </ul>
<b>7. To what degree does staff supervision maintain focus on continuously improving learning results?</b>	<b>Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SPPT</li> <li>▪ Written description of the supervisory process</li> <li>▪ Teacher contract</li> <li>▪ Teacher evaluations</li> </ul>	
	<b>Observations</b>		

Guiding Questions	Information Source	Potential Sources of Data, Document, Observation Criteria and Interview Questions	Evidence of Existence
	<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Talk to me about the district APPR.</li> <li>▪ How does it affect you in your classroom?</li> <li>▪ Who supervises you?</li> <li>▪ How often are you supervised?</li> <li>▪ Tell me about the supervisory process (do you set goals, what determines the goals?)</li> <li>▪ How is student performance data used as part of the supervisory process?</li> <li>▪ What supports do you have to help students achieve the NYS Standards?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ APPR</li> <li>▪ Written description of the supervisory process</li> <li>▪ Teacher evaluations</li> </ul>
<b>8. To what degree are supervisory criteria aligned with the expectations of curriculum implementation?</b>	<b>Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District and Building Plans</li> <li>▪ Supervision criteria: checklist, observation form, matrix, evaluation form, teaching standards</li> <li>▪ Samples of completed observation forms and year-end evaluations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teacher goals aligned with district and building plans</li> </ul>
	<b>Observations</b>		
	<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How was the supervisory criteria developed?</li> <li>▪ Who was involved?</li> <li>▪ Observation/evaluation process: number of times/year, alternatives</li> <li>▪ Who supervises you and how are you supervised?</li> <li>▪ What is the goal-setting process?</li> <li>▪ Is process standardized for all staff?</li> <li>▪ How are tenured, non-tenured and support staff evaluated?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Written supervisory plans and schedules</li> <li>▪ Written individual year-end evaluation including goals</li> </ul>

Guiding Questions	Information Source	Potential Sources of Data, Document, Observation Criteria and Interview Questions	Evidence of Existence
<p><b>9. To what degree are professional development initiatives structured to achieve designated and defined curriculum and instruction outcomes?</b></p>	<p><b>Documents</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District and Building Plans</li> <li>▪ Professional development offerings</li> <li>▪ Professional Development Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Close alignment between student needs, instructional goals and professional development offerings</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Observations</b></p>		
	<p><b>Interviews</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do professional development initiatives reflect annual goals?</li> <li>▪ Who provides PD?</li> <li>▪ Who is responsible for accountability and follow-up re: classroom integration?</li> <li>▪ Who is involved in identifying PD initiatives?</li> <li>▪ How is PD reflected in your instruction?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>10. To what degree is the manner in which student data is <i>collected</i> and <i>verified</i> across grade levels, content areas, buildings and student sub-groups consistent?</b></p>	<p><b>Documents</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ List and samples of internally and externally generated data for grade level, building, and sub-group populations</li> <li>▪ Groups and agencies responsible for data collection</li> <li>▪ A written protocol for collecting and verifying data from scoring to Level 2 repository</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consistency of reports across buildings and grade levels</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Observations</b></p>		

Guiding Questions	Information Source	Potential Sources of Data, Document, Observation Criteria and Interview Questions	Evidence of Existence
	<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When are data collected? Across all programs?</li> <li>▪ What is collected? (Rd/Math scores across all levels?)</li> <li>▪ How are data collected? (Informal/standardized tests?)</li> <li>▪ Who collects data? (Teachers, reading specialists, others?)</li> <li>▪ How are data shared and implemented?</li> <li>▪ How are assessments scored at each grade level?</li> <li>▪ Who is involved in the scoring? What grade levels are represented?</li> <li>▪ What is the process and schedule for data collection?</li> <li>▪ Who is responsible for that process?</li> <li>▪ How do you decide what to teach?</li> <li>▪ What other data are used to inform instruction?</li> <li>▪ What data sets are used and what are their sources?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consistent reports across buildings and grade levels</li> </ul>
<p><b>11. To what degree is the manner in which student data is reviewed and used across grade levels, content areas, buildings and student sub-groups consistent?</b></p>	<b>Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meeting agendas across grade levels, buildings and sub-groups for discussions and analyses of data</li> <li>▪ Professional development opportunities in data analysis</li> <li>▪ Reports of shared data analysis and instructional implications across grade levels, buildings and sub-groups</li> <li>▪ Process for review and dissemination of data</li> </ul>	

Guiding Questions	Information Source	Potential Sources of Data, Document, Observation Criteria and Interview Questions	Evidence of Existence
	<b>Observations</b>		
	<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is the process for analyzing data?</li> <li>▪ How does it fit into the supervisory process?</li> <li>▪ How are the results of the analysis used and reviewed?</li> </ul>	
<b>12. To what degree are district-wide analytics used to directly support purposeful instructional modifications and district-wide curricula designs and implementations?</b>	<b>Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ District goals and strategic plan</li> <li>▪ Meeting agendas</li> <li>▪ Sample data analyses with instructional implications</li> <li>▪ Supervisory goal setting process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revised written curricula</li> <li>▪ Professional development opportunities to support best practices</li> </ul>
	<b>Observations</b>		
	<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How is student work and data analysis used to inform instruction?</li> <li>▪ Who is involved in examination of work and in data analysis?</li> <li>▪ What group discussions occur?</li> <li>▪ How are best practices identified and disseminated?</li> </ul>	
<b>13. To what degree are the district's separate systems tied together around the district's mission and goals?</b>	<b>Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CDEP/Strategic Plan</li> <li>▪ District Goals</li> <li>▪ PDP – Professional Development Plan</li> <li>▪ Documented supervisory process</li> <li>▪ Organization Chart</li> <li>▪ Meeting agendas</li> </ul>	
	<b>Observations</b>		

<b>Guiding Questions</b>	<b>Information Source</b>	<b>Potential Sources of Data, Document, Observation Criteria and Interview Questions</b>	<b>Evidence of Existence</b>
	<b>Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do the district's CDEP/Strategic Plan, or BOE district goals, inform the district's curriculum development?</li> <li>▪ How do supervisors ensure instructional adherence to the curricula?</li> <li>▪ How do you prioritize professional development requests?</li> <li>▪ What is the district structure in terms of departments, grade levels, curricula and student support services?</li> <li>▪ When departmental meetings occur, what is the agenda focus?</li> </ul>	

## **Key Finding Areas for District Consideration**

Key finding areas are defined, and based on the congruence of information collected from at least two sources, i.e. interview, observations, documents, data sets. These “Finding Areas” will provide the context for Orion’s recommendations to the district, which follow. By reviewing the findings, it is the desired intent for the district to understand the finding but also understand why it may be important to address the finding in the effort to create continuously improving student performance. Please note that the district may already be in the process of addressing the finding area.

### **Finding Area #1: Overview of Strengths**

In order to provide a realistic and balanced perspective on the district’s current status in terms of the written, taught, and tested K-6 ELA curriculum, it is important to recognize and honor the district’s strengths that were identified in this Audit. Most importantly, some of these strength areas should serve as ‘building blocks’ in the district’s efforts towards continuous improvement.

Beginning with the John L. Edwards Primary School, there are several noteworthy dimensions of which to be proud. First, Orion researchers found quality instruction present in many of the classrooms where observations were conducted. There was also evidence of instruction that could be seen as a foundation for standards-based instruction, wherein the teaching reflected reading, writing, and listening for literary response and expression, for critical analysis and evaluation, and social interaction. Classrooms at the K-2 level were rife with books, pictures, charts and graphs, and activities that promoted a rich literate atmosphere. From interviews, it is apparent that there is a rich tradition of staff development opportunities that have been afforded, with a significant number of instructional repertoire building, programmatic options available to staff. Teachers, staff, and the school principal appear very, very committed to the children they serve and to the profession. They demonstrated highly professional behaviors and shared candid insights reflecting a deep commitment to their school and their students throughout the audit process.

At the Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School, there are initiatives relatively new in place that can serve as building blocks for future development. Significant is the systematic, building wide use of student performance data to inform instruction led by the school principal. Instruction was observed in several classrooms that could be interpreted as standards-based instruction. Interviews with faculty pointed to an active commitment to improved English Language Arts Instruction, represented by on-going ‘meetings’ hosted by an ELA leader in the school.

In the area of special education, there is a clear expectation that special education teachers will teach the grade-level curriculum to students with special needs. There is equal access to curriculum because of the availability of the Rubicon/Atlas web-based curriculum to all teachers and special education teachers are welcome participants in the ELA meetings hosted by the ELA leader at the school. In addition, researchers found a strong culture of “shared responsibility” for the education of students with special needs at the Intermediate School. There is a concerted effort at the Intermediate level to prepare all students for the State assessments. Students with special needs are included in this effort and are prepared for the State assessments in the same way the general education students are prepared, but with student modifications and accommodations in place.

At the district level, critically important steps are being taken to move towards a written, taught, and tested curriculum. This is a broad, very comprehensive challenge which will require resilience and an ability to support and sustain. The commitment to defining an articulated, written curriculum K-12 via Rubicon/Atlas is of paramount importance and represents a strategic first step. Most staff interviewed mentioned their involvement in this process, showing an alertness and potential investment in this effort. Besides leading the Rubicon/Atlas initiative, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, through her visibility and interactions, appears to have engendered significant support and confidence from the faculty. This level of leadership will be of paramount importance as work continues towards the written, taught, and tested curriculum and ultimately, improved student performance. It is also clear that the Superintendent of Schools has invested a strong measure of support for sustained curricular growth and is providing the appropriate, contextual foundation for improvement in this area.

In review, there are several important essential elements in place in the schools, along with progressive efforts to bring about improved student performance. Part of the district’s success in being able to bring about the desired written, taught, and tested curriculum which will lead to improved learning opportunities for students, will be the use of data. Programmatic decision making as well as individual teacher decision making in classrooms must be based on not only perceptions of what students ‘need’ but also on objective, agreed upon data sets. A more focused view of assessment, integrated into written curriculum and based on systematic use of data, will support a standards-based teaching and learning environment in the district. These assessments should be both formative and on-going at the classroom level as well as connect to summative assessments at the building and district level. They are a critical element in a fully operational standards-based environment. Learning targets that are to be assessed, as defined by the standards outlined in written curriculum, must be near the center of standards-based instruction.

**Finding Area #2: There isn't a K-6 articulated, written, taught, and tested standards-based ELA curriculum in place as of yet, although direction for this appears to be set and attainment efforts begun. Instruction in the classroom, although of quality, is not based on such a curriculum.**

This finding area will not represent new information to the district, given efforts currently underway with Rubicon/Atlas. It could not be expected that a written, taught, and tested curriculum would be in place in the Hudson City School District, as standards-based written curriculum, directed supervisory practice, and comprehensive use of assessments would all need to be in place for that to occur. However, *substantial direction is being provided*, district wide, relative to written curriculum, particularly in terms of teachers identifying current curricular practices.

Instruction: While there is evidence from observation data that many lessons contain elements of standards-based instruction, there does not appear to be a comprehensive, alignment of instruction to a district wide ELA curriculum at this time.. At the Primary School level, there appears to be a relatively strong instructional skill set existing among K-2 teachers, given their experience and training over time. Virtually all lessons observed were delivered within the Fontas and Pinnell format, which is skills-based and designed to be used with any content area that requires reading, writing or listening. The program is highly reputable and is used extensively all over the United States. It certainly teaches teachers to hold out high expectations and ensure that every student reads, writes and listens at high levels. However, in itself, it cannot serve as a school's curriculum or represents standards-based instruction. While mention of the New York State Standards and the district's ELA curriculum (Binder) appears in the conversations that Orion interviewers had with faculty, its mention had no greater presence in the conversations than did a variety of other programmatic options upon which teachers based their instruction. At the Intermediate School, there appears to be an increased focus on having instruction be driven by the New York State Standards, Rubicon/Atlas, and the data derived from the state English Language Arts assessments. The co-teaching model teams demonstrate more standards-based instructional delivery than the classrooms that are comprised of general education students alone.

In both schools, teachers' responses to the question of "How do you decide what to teach?" included a variety of strategies and programs but also consistently made mention of students' levels and needs; "we/I look at student needs and where they are". The key question becomes one of student needs relative to what expectations? This is where the Standards and written curriculum come into play as they establish the nature of the expectations and then the teacher gauges where the student is and what they need relative to meeting the district defined expectation. Without a district defined expectation, the determination of what the student needs can become teacher individualized.

Curriculum: There is an important initiative currently underway in the district with teachers entering their curriculum into the Rubicon/Atlas site. Using Rubicon/Atlas has a multitude of advantages, not the least of which is the ease of access and the ability to make changes and adjustments over time. The district is to be complimented in moving to a common definition of

what should be taught. An effort of this magnitude also presents some significant challenges, given the number of faculty and schools involved. In reviewing the written curriculum currently having been uploaded into the Rubicon/Atlas site, we find that some of the written curriculum contains all the attributes of an exemplary standards-based design, i.e. *The Hudson Community* unit, second grade. It meets most, if not all, the criteria for a standards-based unit as depicted in the Detailed Analysis Section of this Report. Other curricula that has been entered onto the Rubicon site needs additional ‘work’ in terms of ensuring that performance indicators and assessments, for example, are inherently structured in a meaningful way as part of each unit and drive the learning activities listed in the unit. Pieces of content and instructional strategies are listed without attention to what underlying standards-based skill the student will learn as a result of these strategies and content. The well defined grade level standards and performance indicators need to be made overt. This will be critically important to ensuring that all Rubicon work leads to a written, taught and tested standards-based curriculum.

Assessment: There are minimally two aspects of “assessment” when speaking of a written, taught, and tested curriculum. One is the assessments that are built into each standards-based unit which reflect the grade level standards and performance indicators mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Two, is the assessments that are given, periodically, to students in more than one classroom, i.e. the New York State Assessments. In a standards-based program, these two types of assessments are closely interconnected and tied directly to curriculum and instruction.

In terms of the state assessments, there is a strong effort at the Intermediate School to use student performance assessment data, diagnostically to inform curricular and instructional practices. This practice, while very important to occur on an individual school-by-school basis, must be ‘connected’ across the district. It is incumbent upon the district, then, to have systematic assessments in place at the K-2 level, summative at 2<sup>nd</sup> grade that can be used to determine benchmarked development of ELA success at the completion of the Primary School experience. Programmatically, it is difficult to ensure students are meeting their potential against NY State ELA expectations unless commonly held and widely known expectations are in place. This underscores the importance of well designed unit assessments being included in Rubicon/Atlas as an important component of the overall assessment plan leading to the K-6 ELA written, taught, and tested curriculum.

Given the above findings, it would be expected that there are significant gaps in curriculum scope and sequence implementation. Without grade level instruction being consistently aligned to a comprehensive scope and sequence outline of standards-based units, there cannot be assurances that all students will receive the same curriculum measured by common assessments. (Additional analysis of the written curriculum follows the Recommendation Section of this Audit Report.)

**Finding Area #3: ELA Student Performance Data are not being used in a systematic fashion, K-6, to inform curriculum development and instruction.**

Student performance data should be carefully disaggregated, actively reviewed, and then discussed. This should occur in the ‘offices’ of administrators but also in a process with faculty so that they may recognize the insight offered by understanding exactly where students perform well and do not perform well. The resulting interpretation of information has multiple uses, with two applications of central and significant importance. One, the interpreted data should be entered into the curriculum review process as the data may reflect ‘gaps’ in curriculum scope and sequence. Two, the interpreted data should be then entered into the supervisory and instructional process as the data may indicate a need to instruct with a different methodology.

- There is focused and comprehensive attention to data usage at the Intermediate School level, with administrators and faculty making adjustments in curriculum and instruction at grade levels. This is a significant achievement in a relatively short period of time.
- While data is gathered at the K-2 level, there isn’t a standardized grade level assessment by which data might be used in a comprehensive fashion to inform curriculum development and instruction. With a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade standardized assessment in place, for example, grades K and 1 could benchmark their expectations/assessments to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, thereby having a system by which data could be used in a systematic, connected manner. If a non-standardized, accepted assessment with rigor that aligned with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade expectations could be identified or developed, and used in a building wide systematic way, then there would be a connected assessment by which to inform curriculum and instruction. Whether there should be more rigorous instruction in K-2 is not yet the right question. Rather, the question is to what degree does what is taught at K-2 align with what is taught in grades 3-4 and to subsequent grade levels, and to what degree are programs helping develop students’ English Language Arts abilities to the highest levels of rigor and student potential.
- There is evidence, via interview data, that teachers do use performance data on an individual basis and in instances, on a grade level basis to make instructional decisions. This is important but if these individual and grade level uses and subsequent decisions can be connected to district-wide standards, then the entire K-6 system can move forward together ensuring that each child receives the most effective effort from the highly committed educators in the Hudson City District.

**Finding Area #4: District structures are not yet adequate to direct and sustain, over time, a highly articulated district ELA curriculum.**

There are currently three board of education policies which relate directly to curriculum, instruction, and assessment; policy 4000, policy 4200, and policy 4511. These policies, while attending to the following criteria by which board of education policies can be judged in terms of their ability to ‘drive and promote’ desired organizational systems behavior, are not yet comprehensively written to ensure all the following occur in the Hudson City School District. Please note that the policies do address, directly, some of the general criteria below such as board adoption of written curriculum, for example.

- Taught and assessed curriculum that is aligned to district written curriculum
- Identify a specific approach to accomplishing the goal of providing an excellent instructional program
- Board adoption of written curriculum
- Accountability for design and delivery of district curriculum through roles and responsibilities
- Long range system wide planning processes and plan
- Provides for periodic review of curriculum and aligned resources
- Textbook /resource alignment of curriculum and assessment
- Establishment of budget priorities
- Direction to build a pre-K-12 scope and sequence
- Vertical articulation and horizontal coordination of curriculum
- Training for staff
- Monitoring the delivery of curriculum
- Student assessment
- Use of data to determine program effectiveness and goals

For example, none of the three aforementioned policies attend directly to the alignment of the written, taught, and tested curriculum in terms of the New York State Standards. In Hudson City District policy, varying groups appear to be held responsible for implementing curriculum; the superintendent, assistant superintendent, principals, and teachers. While all these parties play a role, policies at the board of education level generally should direct the superintendent toward the desired policy outcomes, and then administrative regulations “spell out” the direction set by the superintendent’s.

Hudson City District policy does speak to annual Board of Education approval of curriculum which, while meritorious in concept, suggests that a more effective, systematic process should be in place for curriculum review.

Information gathered from interviews of faculty do suggest that key organizational structures are not in place that will support the on-going, sustained focus on a written, taught, and tested standards-based curriculum. For example, currently it would appear that the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction is a key person responsible for the review and development of K-12 curriculum in the district. The ability of any one individual, no matter how

highly respected, to mobilize and gain support for change initiatives is precarious. While an Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction normally has this responsibility, there is a structure in place (curriculum council or instructional council) under this position's direct authority, that exists to advise, to communicate with others throughout the organization, and to gain support for change. To expect an Assistant Superintendent or Director of Curriculum to sustain significant change over time, as an individual effort, places the organization in a precarious position in terms of effecting a written, taught, and tested standards-based curriculum.

There does appear to be two "councils" in place in the district to address curricular needs. However, the existence of two such councils sends an unclear message throughout the organization as to who is responsible for an orderly, effective curriculum review and development process, which must be the primary purpose of any curriculum council. This coupled with board policy requiring annual approval of curriculum suggests that a different structure, with accompanying revised board policy, be instituted. Developing such a plan and corresponding policy adjustment is beyond the scope of this Audit Report wherein the focus is on the existing K-6 ELA curriculum. However, future planning should address this finding in order to ensure long term continuous improvement in curriculum development and review.

**Finding Area #5: Purposeful communication between the Primary School and Intermediate Schools is not adequate to support a K-6 culture focused on an articulated ELA curriculum.**

Although "communication" might also be considered a part of the structural finding above (#4), its importance is significant enough in the Hudson City School District to set it apart as a separate 'finding area'. There was a need expressed about increased communication and connection, particularly as it relates to curriculum, assessment and instruction. At the grade 3-4 level, teachers admit they lack knowledge of second grade curriculum, partly because 2<sup>nd</sup> grade is in another building. Third grade teachers feel that they are playing catch up at the beginning of September. Some teachers acknowledged, "We wish we had more time to meet with 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers." Others stated, "We are willing to connect more, but the directive is not going that way...there are philosophical differences between us and Primary." "There is a disconnection between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. There are too many programs at 2<sup>nd</sup>, and not enough follow-through. Limit the number of programs and enrich the follow-through to give students stronger skills so they are more prepared when they arrive here." Likewise from the Primary School perspective, "We have literacy folders that are passed on to next year's teacher at the K-2 level. We don't know what happens after that." I think it's been the goal to have the curricula flow and it does pretty well within the K-2 building, they have a different model at the Intermediate building. I have no idea what goes on there." Grade-level chairs have initiated some meetings with the K-2 grade-level chairs, and a transition activity is being planned to get 2<sup>nd</sup> graders (students) over to visit the Intermediate building before the end of the school year. It is interesting to note that there is an awareness of the current lack of communication on the part of faculty. "We are trying to identify what we can do to prepare students for the third grade assessments but we have to remind people that what we do needs to be developmentally appropriate." "Having second

graders gradually increase their sustained silent reading time until they are reading for 30 minutes per day because we know they have to do that at the third grade level.”

While increased and purposeful communication about student learning expectations is not absolutely essential to attaining a written, taught, and tested curriculum, it will advance a K-12 culture of mutual investment in preparing students, together, for highest levels of learning and achievement.

**Finding Area #6: Professional development is not yet aligned, in a comprehensive manner, to provide for short and long term increases in student performance.**

As with many of the finding areas, there is movement within the area of professional development activities towards the written, taught and tested curriculum. While this movement does not appear to be a substantial part of any comprehensive K-12 overall plan as of yet, these existing professional development activities would provide important components to any such long range comprehensive staff development plan. Faculty did respond affirmatively in terms of the Rubicon/Atlas work that is done at grade level on district conference days as productive staff development. “We appreciate spending the Superintendent’s conference days working on the curriculum; it is so much more useful...”

At the intermediate school, the work of the ELA Literacy Coach, on a weekly basis, is an extraordinary example of focused, timely, and on-going staff development. Additionally, while it might not be considered formal staff development, the work at the intermediate school to review and diagnose student performance data with faculty is an important component of achieving a written, taught and tested curriculum, once state assessments and state standards are more closely aligned with units in Rubicon/Atlas and instructional practices in the classroom. The on-going work of CELA is another strong example of productive staff development that must continue to be ‘tied’ to any written, taught and tested curriculum K-6.

At the primary school, there reportedly has been a great deal of professional development over past years, strengthening the repertoire of staff. However, these and other professional development initiatives must be tied directly to student performance, development and review of written curriculum, and the corresponding instructional practices. Student performance should be judged against the expectations of the standards and determinations must be subsequently made when students are not performing well. Fey questions should be asked as follows:

- Where are they not performing well?
- What are the remedies in terms of changed instruction and/or curriculum gaps?
- What curriculum redevelopment and/or professional development should occur to improve those levels of student performance?

The following professional development discovery confirmed, or triangulated previous findings about curriculum and instruction. In the past, the school had been involved with a Literacy Collaborative that was facilitated by a Literacy Coach. This program is viewed as extremely beneficial for promoting the instruction of common methods and language. This initiative is no longer in place, reportedly due to budget cuts. “In the past, we had literacy coaching and weekly meetings within which we discussed instructional strategies and approaches to facilitate successful reading and writing.” There is now, a palatable sense of loss and worry about what is going to happen to the literacy program. “We wonder what is going to happen with new teachers. How are they going to be trained and brought on-board with the Literacy Collaborative and what will happen to our program if they’re not?” While these comments and finding support the importance of the Literacy Collaborative as a proxy for a written curriculum, it also points out a key issue that potentially looms large for the primary school. That is, without written standards-based curriculum that is the primary source of what is taught, and without budget allocations for extensive professional literacy development, the possibility of consistent and effective ELA instruction begins to diminish.

**Finding Area #7: Instruction provided to students with disabilities in English Language Arts is not always integrated in an efficient or effective manner so as to produce improved results.**

Scheduling: At the primary level, scheduling and planning time are a major concern for both the general education and the special education teachers, with pullout instruction being seen as highly disruptive. Both general and special education teachers expressed the desire and the need to plan together but because they receive their class lists so late they are unable to get ready for the upcoming year. Class lists are not provided until the end of August. Related service providers have limited time, therefore, to schedule students by availability, levels of instruction, geographic location, and also coordinate with other related services such as counseling.

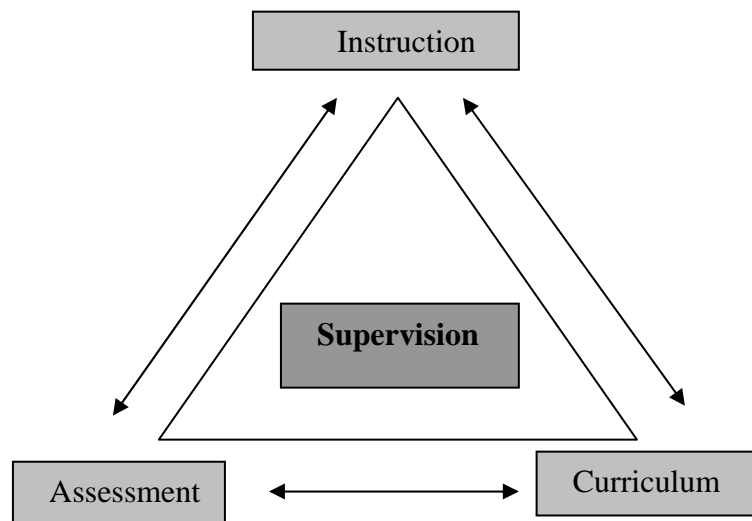
Planning: General education teachers plan and coordinate instruction for students with disabilities with limited formal planning time. Special education self-contained teachers try weekly planning, but things change due to students’ varied needs at any given time. Monthly planning may or may not include a time to discuss students with disabilities because the agenda is filled with curriculum planning and the new initiative to get it all up onto Rubicon/Atlas. This is a situation reflecting two positive needs attempting to be filled.

Service Delivery Models: At the primary level it would be helpful to consider more “push in” support for the purpose of assisting the students with special needs in the richer instructional context within the classroom while at the same time reducing fragmentation of their day. Less fragmentation in their schedules would be helpful for students, teachers and service providers. In addition, if the primary school is to use the cooperative teaching model it would be helpful to keep one teacher in one classroom as much as possible. Spreading the special education teachers across too many classrooms dilutes their effectiveness and ultimately does not provide the best possible service for the students. The special education teachers who are involved with the

Cooperative Teaching Model at the Intermediate School have much more opportunity and support for teaching and assessing the grade-level curricula and preparing their students for the state assessments. There is common planning and coordination of instruction among teachers involved with the Cooperative Teaching Model. At this level there is a full time general education teacher and a full time special education teacher in the classroom at all times. At the primary level the special education teachers are shared thus leaving a general education teacher on his or her own for part of the day.

The teachers in the Intermediate School self-contained program do not have the same opportunity or level of support for teaching the grade level curricula. Individuals in the self-contained classrooms feel isolated and find it difficult and unrealistic to teach the grade level curriculum. Self-contained special education classrooms span three grade levels and are comprised of students who are expected to take the State assessment as well as students who have been approved for an Alternate Assessment. Deciding what to teach and which grade level to align with is dictated by the grade level that has the most students for that year. If a teacher has a greater number of fourth graders in the class she attends the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level meetings. Intermediate school teachers look at benchmark data during weekly ELA meetings, and do item analyses. That data is used in the classroom and also drives AIS Instruction. The decision to teach to the grade level curriculum through differentiation of instruction was somewhat clear throughout each grade level during the interview process, but became more evident during the classroom observations especially in the cooperatively taught classrooms. Such differentiation was inconsistent in the self-contained special education classrooms. In the self-contained classes some teachers took a “skills approach” in which they taught a reading or writing skill and then provided guided practice using whatever content was appropriate for the grade levels in their class. Others took a “content” approach and taught the same lesson to the whole class despite different grade levels of students being present.

**Finding Area #8: The supervision process is not structured/implemented in a manner to ensure the comprehensive implementation of curriculum. (APPR)**



If curriculum, assessment, and instruction are the integral ‘points on the triangle of learning’, then supervision is the mechanism by which the constant and continued interaction of consistent, curriculum implementation is assured. Certainly, a key purpose of supervision is to improve instructional practice but an equally important purpose is to monitor which curricula are being implemented and the manner in which curricula are implemented. While the faculty of Hudson City Schools have represented themselves during the audit process as true professionals committed to their students, without the supervisory process each of these professionals are the sole arbitrators of what is taught in their classrooms. The district must ensure that each and every student has equal access to a high quality, 21<sup>st</sup> century curriculum and therefore, cannot rely solely on individual decision making in the single classroom environment.

A second potential purpose of the supervisory process, including the individual goal setting process for tenured teachers, is as a vehicle by which to integrate student assessment data into the instructional process. At the intermediate school level, there is a strong initiative to use student performance data, diagnostically, to inform instruction throughout the building. Considerable time is spent in meetings, reviewing and interpreting data, so that teachers are able to change instructional practice or close gaps in curriculum implementation. If the supervisory process would also be used as an opportunity to review student performance data, on an individual faculty basis, then the supervisor can assist the teacher by providing feedback on the data-driven change in instructional practices.

Based on interview data from faculty, there appears to be minimal impact of the supervision process on the implementation of curriculum or on instructional practice. Some were able to explain the process exactly as presented in the district document. Others were able to describe a system of personal goal-setting that was based on the levels of the students, curriculum development, and professional development workshops and follow-up sessions, and meetings that began in October. In virtually all instances, however, teachers did not see the supervisory process having an important effect on their work in the classroom.

What auditors would want to discover is that teachers would uniformly highly value the supervisory process, pointing out how they specifically discuss student data in pre-conference meetings and how the supervisor always wants to know which standards are being incorporated into the observed lesson. While we do not want to diminish the critical function of such a supervisory process, in our experience only few high performing districts use the supervisory process in support of a laser like focus on the integration of curriculum, assessment, and instruction, although all should. Such a supervisory process often is the critical function that enables a district to reach higher levels of improved student performance.

## Key Audit Recommendations

**Key Recommendation #1: Continue the curriculum mapping work that has been started in the district with a specific focus on developing standards-based units with specific objectives, performance indicators, assessments, and strategies being woven together, explicitly, within each unit.**

It is sometimes a conundrum of how to initiate a district-wide focus on a written, taught and tested curriculum. One option, the direction currently being followed in Hudson City, is to begin to have teachers identify current content used in the classroom. This is a more than reasonable approach, especially utilizing a vehicle such as a Rubicon/Atlas, which has long-term manageability and is easily accessed by faculty and administrators. What is key, as teachers continue to move forward in this effort, is that they begin to internalize the notion that when curricular resources, assessments and programs are aligned, student progress can be monitored in an ongoing manner. Said another way, instructional strategies, local assessments, state assessments, written curriculum and professional development must all be explicitly connected. When each unit is developed or further developed, these connections must be explicitly woven together with local assessments reflecting state standards, which will lead directly to students improved performance on state assessments. Otherwise, classroom teachers can end up preparing for state assessments which in some instances don't appear to have relevance to every-day instruction in the classroom.

More specifically, it is key to student success that teachers understand deeply the performance indicators and competencies in each ELA standard that they are held responsible for teaching their students in the course of the year. In developing curriculum, understanding of standards is critical. To begin, it is advantageous that teachers have available a complete listing of these performance indicators for their grade level (and for the grades following) as introduction to writing curriculum. The appropriate indicators and competencies need to be made visible and become THE focus for each unit and for each lesson and in the classroom for students. For the teacher it is in writing curriculum that the standards develop true meaning and serve as a springboard to generate thoughtful instructional strategies.

With a well developed standards driven curriculum, teachers are able to assess the achievement of each student on individual performance indicators and can identify areas to support that achievement. This can occur at the beginning, middle and end of the year. When instructional strategies are connected overtly to the performance indicator and competency, adjusting instruction to strengths and needs is straightforward and can effectively and efficiently affect individual student achievement. To achieve each standard at increasing levels of complexity, students benefit at each grade level by having learning experiences in reading, writing, listening and speaking that support achievement of the competencies and performance indicators for that particular standard.

**Key Recommendation #2: A K-6 process for assessment data usage should be developed and implemented, expanding initiatives in this area currently underway.**

Assessment data should continue to be gathered in a comprehensive and consistent manner at both the K-2 level and 3-6 levels. At the K-2 level, exit student performance data across all students should be gathered, sorted and analyzed in terms of specific student performance indicators and this information shared with 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. This will either require a decision to use a student performance data source currently in use at the K-2 level or select a different data source. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teachers need to be specifically informed, based on district approved data sources (a process led by, or decision made by the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction), of individual student strengths as well as grade level areas of curricular and instructional need. If the current folders that are ‘passed on’ to the Intermediate school are part of the district approved data set, then the student work in these folders needs to be held up against rubrics so that a comprehensive and consistent view of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade performance can be available. At the Intermediate school level, the data analysis surrounding standardized state assessments should be continued. However, the resulting analysis should be used in a more integrated manner. That is, after diagnosing student performance, item by item, and determining pattern areas of excellence as well as need, the curriculum scope and sequence needs to be examined to determine if students did not perform well because of curricular gaps. If there are gaps, this information needs to be channeled directly into units currently being taught or developed. The same approach would hold true if particular areas need greater emphasis. Any new addition or change in curriculum or instruction could be included as professional development, thereby linking professional development to curriculum, instruction, and assessment. In this manner, the analysis of state assessment data, or any agreed upon district assessment, will not occur as a stand-alone activity but rather will be integrated into the written, taught, and tested curriculum. As with almost every finding and recommendation area, the process of implementing this recommendation has already begun.

**Key Recommendation #3: As is stated in the District APPR Plan, the supervisory process must be more closely linked to the written, taught and tested curriculum.**

The findings shared previously show that there is a lack of clarity about the supervision process and other than “pockets” of favorable response, few staff expressed that the supervision process made any significant difference in their instructional practices. There were a few notable exceptions, wherein a staff member articulated the process and specified the actions and comments of the principal. The actions and comments shared, in this instance, clearly demonstrated the principal’s goal of connecting the written, taught, and tested curriculum via the supervisory process. Perceptions of this administrative approach are not yet widespread, however.

What is of most concern is that once a teacher receives tenure, the process established in practice and in print is that the teacher determines their instructional improvement goal(s) and has the option of the professional development option by which to achieve the goal(s). (See APPR plan, page 5, Plan Development). Given an every three year formal evaluation that is coupled with this process, it would be a significant challenge for a supervisor to use the supervision process to closely align the written, taught, and tested curriculum across an entire school system.

This is not to say that in a school district where the written, taught, and tested curriculum is highly developed, that there should not be some level of supervisory options. However, to have all tenured teachers be able to select their supervisory vehicle and then also define their goal(s) leaves supervisors without much organizational authority to effect necessary change. We recognize that this practice is now in place through the APPR and through negotiated contract. Therefore, whatever limited influence is available to supervisors in terms of influencing a tenured teacher's plan should occur and focus on Danielson's Domain 1: Planning and Preparation. Through this approach, supervisors can emphasize the importance of lesson design that includes standards-based unit structure. This lesson design approach should also take into account any student performance data from this teacher's students, either current or from the previous year, that would influence the content of the curriculum being taught through these units. Beyond this approach with the supervision of tenured teachers, non-tenured teachers' pre- and post-conferences should focus on the development of a teacher's thinking and repertoire in delivering standards-based instruction.

Obviously, supervisors need to be highly trained in standards-based instruction and the written, taught, and tested curriculum. This need is generally identified in the District's Professional Development Plan (pg 9); "Administrators will receive additional staff development in the principles and techniques of teacher observation and evaluation as per the current APPR document." However, it will be essential that a laser-like focus be brought to administrative staff development in terms of understanding what standards-based instruction looks like in practice.

**Key Recommendation #4: Professional Development must begin to move away from a menu-driven option or a self-selected option to an approach focused more directly on standards-based instruction and curriculum development.**

Professional development, ideally, should be targeted towards implementation of specific district and building goals. Moreover, the most effective, sustained professional development is embedded, wherein teachers can soon apply what they are learning. Sustained effort is also 'built in' as part of embedded professional development, as new skills can be quickly "put to work" in the classroom the next day or even during the training cycle. Any district must also consider "resources" and their availability. Providing resources is not only an issue of funding but as importantly, is the use and availability of time. The Hudson City School District cannot afford, given current student performance levels, to provide for a variety of self-directed professional development opportunities. While certainly, individual teachers recognize their own perceived professional needs, current student performance levels indicate that there must be a more comprehensive, district wide focus in determining professional development opportunities.

If an embedded approach, based on training in standards-based instruction, was available and structured in a similar fashion to the Literacy Coach position at Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School, it would represent an effective approach. The Literacy Coach at Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School holds weekly ELA in-service/professional development opportunities based on assessment results, perceived curricular gaps, and instructional areas of growth. This allows teachers the opportunity to incorporate meeting information into practice within a very reasonable amount of time. That the meetings are held weekly provides for follow-up within an appropriate window of time as well.

**Key Recommendation #5: Adjust the delivery and content of special education programming so as to assure each student receives equal access to quality instruction and to the curriculum.**

### **John L. Edwards Primary School**

At the Primary School it would be helpful for programming for students with disabilities if scheduling and class lists including students with disabilities could be completed either at the end of the school year or early in the summer. Advance scheduling such as this would allow for planning time for the teachers and service providers who are working with these students. This type of planning and advance preparation is beneficial for all individuals involved: teachers, service providers and most importantly, students.

In a similar vein, scheduling of related services and special supports must be reexamined at the Primary School. Every effort should be made to make the schedules as simple as possible. Currently, the students with disabilities' days are fragmented as they are pulled out of instructional periods for the provision of related services and time in the computer lab; they often miss all or part of what is going on in their classrooms. Since it is so difficult for these students to transition and learn easily, it would be extremely beneficial if their days were more synchronized and if they could remain in their classrooms for instructional times.

Finally, it would be extremely beneficial if the data gathered at the Primary School were used more systematically to target and track specific instruction for students with disabilities. Diagnostic use of data and tracking of progress with frequent revisions if the students are not learning at the desired rate is essential to assure progress with the complicated skills involved in learning to read, write and listen effectively.

### **Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School**

The service delivery models at the Intermediate School need to be reexamined. It would be helpful if there could be a reorganization of the self-contained classes in such a way as to assure that students who are working towards an Alternate Assessment are not mixed with students who are preparing to challenge the State assessments. Serving both ends, as is currently the case, is

an almost impossible task. A decision regarding what is essential for these students to learn and then a laser-like focus on accomplishing that learning should be made. For those teaching more than one grade level in the self-contained classrooms, there should be a re-thinking of “content” versus a “skills” approach. It is recommended that teachers teach specific skills and have them used and supported on grade-appropriate content. Learning is difficult for Students with Disabilities; they would not be classified if they did not have learning difficulties. This being said, the delivery of carefully targeted, systematic instruction is imperative as the students have little time to waste. Just as with all students, and even more critically for students with disabilities, preparation must be based on a careful analysis of their learning needs in combination with an analysis of the information and skills the students must know to be successful. Within such an instructional model it is helpful to think of tasks in terms of knowledge and skills. If all students are instructed on a daily basis in essential knowledge and skills based on learning standards and on their individual strengths and needs, and they are provided multiple opportunities to work on tasks during day-to-day instruction, tasks that are similar in format and rigor to those presented on state assessments, students become confident in their ability and they are well positioned to succeed. DBQs provide a good example of the type of instructional model being suggested here. Successfully implementing a DBQ requires a repetitive and consistent set of skills. An instructional model that promotes consistent use and generalization of these same skills is essential. Within such a model, students with disabilities are provided frequent opportunities to apply the skills. Routine assessments in English, Social Studies, and Science can be structured to duplicate a DBQ format. With such a cross-curricular approach, students with disabilities, and all students for that matter, are provided frequent opportunities to use the same skills across content areas. Such an approach promotes generalization of “how” to approach the assessments. An important component of such an instructional approach is the goal of making the skill use conscious and intentional. This is accomplished by involving the students in discussions before, during, and after a skill is used. Prior to completing an assessment or assignment in any subject, the students are involved in a discussion with the teacher about which skill they think is appropriate. The teacher initially guides the student thinking very directly but gradually turns responsibility for strategy identification and implementation over to the students. Following the completion of the task another discussion is conducted. This reflective discussion is designed to help the students identify how a skill helped them complete the task, why it was helpful and when it might be appropriate to use it in the future. The use of consistent language across content areas and the coordination of assessments provide powerful vehicles whereby all students and especially students with disabilities are well positioned for success on the state assessments.

**Key Recommendation #6: Structure and Systems: Communication about the written, taught, and tested curriculum must be increased between John L. Edwards Primary School and the Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School.**

Special emphasis should be placed on the review of comprehensive, grade level, student assessment information (see Recommendation #2 above). Potentially, some of any increased communication between schools involves the resource of time; availability and potential scheduling. However, teachers especially from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade should increase their meeting time together, especially for the purposes of sharing student performance information. This information should include the nature of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade state assessments, item analysis information, and generally any pattern or trend information that would have implications for what is taught in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. The desired outcome would be not only important information being communicated between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, but extended communication that then occurs between 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and first grade and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 4<sup>th</sup> grade. However, while there is some value in conversation alone, agendas do need to be specifically focused on assessment data and how student performance results would suggest changes in curriculum and instruction.

Given the level of current student performance at the intermediate level, it is incumbent on the district to have everyone K-6 collectively participate in improving student performance. A priority would be to jointly identify gaps based on current assessment information and plan possible solutions together. Said another way, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, between the time school begins in September and when the state assessments are given, cannot individually ensure that any gaps in language arts preparedness will be eliminated. The successful education of a child requires the effort of a total village and this effort must be a cumulative effort, not placed at the feet of those who teach at the grade levels where state assessments are given. In order to do this, focused communication and collaboration must be increased between the two schools.

**Key Recommendation #7: Establish a structure and systems by which a standards-based written, taught, and tested curriculum can be developed, monitored, reviewed and renewed.**

It is important that systems and structures be established in the district, K-12, to ensure that a standards-based curriculum is in place and is reviewed and renewed on a regular basis. In terms of Board of Education policy, the criteria outlined below should be comprehensively addressed within Board of Education Policies 4000, 4300, and Policy 4511 which currently attend to some of these criteria, but not all.

- Taught and assessed curriculum that is aligned to district written curriculum
- Identify a specific approach to accomplishing the goal of providing an excellent instructional program
- Board adoption of written curriculum

- Accountability for design and delivery of district curriculum through roles and responsibilities
- Long-range system wide planning processes and plan
- Provides for periodic review of curriculum and aligned resources
- Textbook /resource alignment of curriculum and assessment
- Establishment of budget priorities
- Direction to build a preK-12 scope and sequence
- Vertical articulation and horizontal coordination of curriculum
- Training for staff
- Monitoring the delivery of curriculum
- Student assessment
- Use of data to determine program effectiveness and goals

In terms of the systems and structures that are defined in, and supported by board of education policy, it is also centrally important that an internal curriculum/instructional council with a central mission of establishing and leading a curriculum development and review process be established. As pointed out in the findings, it is customary for the Assistant Superintendent who is in charge of curriculum and instruction to lead such a body. The key purpose of this body is to advise the Assistant Superintendent, to communicate with others throughout the organization, and to gain support for change. It cannot be expected that the Assistant Superintendent will be effective in leading and managing the change effort over time, especially the development and implementation of curriculum without such an internal structure.

## **Extended Analysis of Data in Support of Key Finding Statements**

The information below shows the further analysis of data collected which provides the support for the Key Finding Statements and subsequent Recommendations to the district. It is necessarily quite detailed so as to:

- provide for in-depth insight into the current functioning of the Elementary and Intermediate Schools
- demonstrate that the findings were “grounded” in the patterns of behavior, thought, and practices of the faculty members and administrators of the district.

### **Analysis of the Written Curriculum**

In addition to the basic premises of the Orion approach, which is based on standards-based written, taught and tested curriculum, the summary below should also provide further context for our findings. This is a summary of the “Attributes of a Standards-based Unit of Study” which provides additional context for the Orion findings and recommendations related to the Hudson City Schools and the current and future status of their K-6 ELA curriculum.

### **Attributes of a Standards-based Unit of Study**

A unit of study is a cohesive and intentional plan for teaching and learning developed to address content standards in a meaningful way. Standards-based units of study are designed to ensure that every student will learn at high levels. Teachers plan these units by identifying the desired results of the unit in terms of student learning, determining the acceptable evidence of learning, and designing purposeful lessons. Effective units of study are developed around a significant “chunk” of content from one or more courses. Any unit, whether discipline-based or interdisciplinary, whether developed by one teacher or a team of teachers, should have the following important attributes.

### **Curriculum Focus: The Unit**

- Contains a manageable number of relevant content standards to be addressed (Learner Goals, Academic Expectations, Program of Studies, Core Content for Assessment, Performance Level Descriptions, local and national standards)
  - Identifies the relevant content standard(s) to be assessed
  - Contains cohesive, sequential connections to previous and current learning and aligns with school curriculum map
  - Provides an organizer around an issue, problem, question, or goal that engages students and connects their learning to prior knowledge, experiences, skills, beliefs, and customs
  - Proposes essential questions that address selected content strands, promote students' thinking, result in active application of learning, and draw attention to the relevance of learning in students' lives
  - Includes opportunities for student inquiry, conferencing, reflection, research-based activities, and problem-based learning
  - Includes equitable instructional practices and multiple cultural perspectives that address the needs of all students
  - Contains authentic assessments that include appropriate writing tasks (i.e., open response, on-demand, and portfolio-appropriate writing tasks) that reflect the identified content and performance standards and essential questions
- 
- Communicates clearly the focus of instruction and performance expectations to students, parents, and others
  - Communicates clearly behavioral expectations to students, parents, and others
  - Aims for students' real-world understanding and lifelong application of learning including career options

[2008, Kentucky Department of Education]

### **Instruction and Assessment Practices: The Student**

- Participates in learning events/lessons/assessments that align with identified content and performance standards and essential questions
- Engages in inquiry and problem-based learning activities as a critical and creative thinker, problem-solver/generator, and investigator
- Makes links within and among disciplines through interdisciplinary connections
- Learns in an environment that promotes optimal learning and positive behaviors, incorporates research-based activities, and addresses students' needs and learning styles
- Receives instruction that addresses individual academic/physical/social/emotional needs
- Uses a variety of appropriate and culturally relevant resources
- Experiences different cultural perspectives
- Uses relevant technology
- Chooses from a variety of assessment options
- Demonstrates understanding of content, performance, product, and behavior expectations
- Demonstrates learning through varied assessments, including open response, on-demand, and portfolio-appropriate writing tasks, that address identified content and performance standards and essential questions
- Demonstrates effective communication skills (e.g., reading, writing, speaking, listening)
- Receives positive, varied, and continuous feedback on learning progress
- Engages in conferencing for the purpose of improving academic and behavioral performance
- Reflects on learning experiences
- Recognizes and celebrates achievement through a variety of options
- Engages in planning next steps for learning including connections to career choices

[2008, Kentucky Department of Education].

With the above as context, the following critical overview of Orion's review of the Hudson City curriculum as outlined on Rubicon/Atlas and in the district ELA "Binder" leads to a confirmation that while a written standards-based curriculum is not yet in place, the district is making forward progress. This forward progress is the articulation of what is currently being taught in K-6 ELA classrooms in the district. The district recognizes that there is a significant discrepancy between what is currently being taught and the goal of standards-based, written curriculum. The Rubicon/Atlas vehicle *can* provide the overarching structure to move the district forward. *However, the transfer of units and development of units within the Rubicon/Atlas structure must be done with the above unit based criterion explicitly in mind.*

Rubicon/Atlas is an enormous resource encompassing professional learning communities, standards, curriculum, communication, professional development as well as attention to Bloom's taxonomy. Rubicon/Atlas is a global educational search engine that can also be used, as Hudson City Schools has done, to make accessible and support development of the district curriculum. One resource for teachers as they develop their courses is the Atlas site "Curriculum Mapping 101". It is a user friendly tutorial on writing curriculum and includes Hudson's own succinct curriculum guidance including how to write essential questions, content, skills, vocabulary, assessments, instructional activities and resources . It isn't clear how teachers will connect their

writing to the standards while using the tutorial. To do so requires them to access a separate site in Rubicon entitled “Standards Overview” or “Core performance indicators” – essentially an independent listing of skills. The tutorial does state under “content” that “content must be aligned to NYS Standards and previous/subsequent grades”. Consideration should be given to have it stated that: the NY State Standards have to be stated up front. Under “Skills” mention needs to be made of performance indicators. There is an ‘assessment toolbox’ link to Rubicon that promotes starting with standards in developing instruction and assessments, yet is an independent site, not based on NYS Standards. Examples from this site include spreadsheets illustrating correlating and crosschecking general standards and performance indicators with learning tasks. Another link is entitled “Bloom’s Taxonomy Verb Wheel” and “Action Words for Bloom’s Taxonomy”. It’s a useful site for instruction for teachers although Hudson should not take it from a generic form to their individual district and course map to include NYS Standards specifically. Again, it is essential that over time, the district curricular units that are located in Rubicon/Atlas meet the criteria shown under “Attributes of a Standards-Based Unit” above.

The Curriculum Mapping 101 site also includes the goals, timeline, persons responsible and reflections for Hudson’s curriculum writing project. The three goals are:

- To provide time for faculty to develop curriculum into Rubicon/Atlas
- To establish a district standard by providing guidance on quality, consistent mapping through Curriculum Mapping 101
- Create a curriculum inventory and analysis report of ELA and Math curriculum by April, 2010 as set forth by BOE goals.

The issue of Standards driven curriculum mapping should be made overt in these goals. At this point it is a question of whether standards are retroactively matched to the written curriculum or whether they drive the curriculum. It may seem like a minor point but unless teachers and students are focused on clearly stated skills (and content) in appropriate daily lessons, units and assessments, energy can be dispersed without increasing achievement over time.

While we have not found, through interviews, that the majority of teachers make these sites part of their daily planning or that they access the specific curriculum sites created by other district teachers as part of their daily planning, it is an important first step in articulating curriculum in the district. Curriculum development in Hudson is a work in-progress and there is evidence in the documents that have already been uploaded and that the intent is to write strong curriculum and tie it to the standards. It is incomplete at this stage, as might be expected, and not as tightly woven together as to present a clear, functional connection to standards for lesson and unit planning.

- Teachers have transferred, to a greater or lesser extent depending on grade level, some of the information from the 2006 curriculum binder regarding the written curriculum. Many of the essential questions are present in Rubicon, but not all. Most of the resources (books, poems, Touchstone Text) have been transferred to the new curriculum. Many of the writing and listening/speaking learning experiences have not been transferred and could be easily used as “instructional strategies” in the new curriculum. There can be a benefit in separating out reading experiences, writing experiences, listening/speaking

experiences (instructional strategies) as it enables a teacher to support more specifically those skills for which individual students may need extra help.

- The essential questions, as identified in Rubicon/Atlas have been ‘confused’ by the addition of questions dealing purely with the goals of a published reading program and are not written as student centered.
- It appears that published programs have been “force fit” into the format of Rubicon/Atlas as an end in itself and teachers need to keep sight on the what, how and why of a good written curriculum. At some grade levels the instructional manual of these programs has been mistaken for curriculum. Adequate student assessments are not present to gauge student progress toward achievement of the standards. It is a daunting challenge to develop these, so taking advantage of ones that are already available and are keyed to NYS standards may be the best approach at this juncture. The Rubicon/Atlas site reflects a number of skills at each grade level. It is not clear that these are skills driven directly and specifically from the NYS standards, nor is which standard being addressed made known. A compendium of ELA skills, even though each may be an important skill, represents an incomplete and disarticulated journey through ELA instruction and not supportive of each student learning skill in a complete and developmentally constructive way. The curriculum is not the content per se. The content (specific topic, book, and subject) is the vehicle to help students inculcate the skills of the English language. It needs to be relevant, intellectually respectful at each grade level, and inherently interesting, but it is not of itself the curriculum. It is the manipulation of the content in novel ways that gives students the learning experiences that promote the development of ELA skills that will build on, transfer to, and network throughout all other areas of learning and performance. If the teacher does not walk into the classroom with a firm and clear view of the skill her students will come away with each day of the school year, and assuming the curriculum has taken into account all of the skills in the standards at that grade level, the instruction, although interesting and useful, will leave gaps in student achievement. Those gaps, without an understanding of the steps (Standards) along the way, will become larger with time, harder to identify and harder to remediate. The focus must be on the standards.
- All of this being said in the best interests of maximizing the potential of Rubicon/Atlas as the vehicle for curricular identification and further development, there is some very good curriculum currently in place at the K-6 levels. It is not yet consistent or pervasive but it is a beginning.

## ELA Curriculum Document Analysis Overview

**Kindergarten:** The curriculum for Kindergarten, although not complete, is well developed and for each unit includes the related standards and performance indicators listed separately that could be addressed in that unit. For example, in the Unit; *Fall: The World Around Us*, numerous performance indicators are listed under the standards for reading, writing, listening and speaking. These are followed by essential questions: What is a community? What are some ways that communities celebrate important events? What are some important ways to keep myself and others safe? The content is related; playground safety, fire safety, classroom rules and routines, developing relationships with others, and the Pledge of Allegiance. Skills listed are specific, clear, and age appropriate: read signs, recognize and name letters and sounds, list playground rules, make comparisons about families, listen to and respond to stories. Assessments include a visual art project to use as a prop for remembering fire safety rules. Instructional activities serve to guide teacher planning, develop classroom rules with students, participate in Fire Safety Day, discuss safety, and compose letter to firefighters. Other unit maps that include comprehensive performance indicators, important skills, and content, and descriptive instructional activities are *Spring: Plants and the World Around Me*, *Fall: Changing Seasons*, *Fall: All About Me*.

Some units are not completed or are partially complete: Winter: Changing Seasons, Spring: Changing Seasons, and Fall: Real and Make Believe are examples.

It appears that in developing the kindergarten curriculum, attention was given to the standards and the units reflect substantial learning opportunities for students. While ideally the district will want teachers to develop units from the standards and not retrofit units to the standards, these units are a match with standards-based units and as long as the teacher is aware of which standard and performance indicators he/she is addressing in the classroom, then significant progress is being made.

**Grade 1:** Many units reference standards, performance indicators and competencies. Some are more extensive (the third quarter reading unit references performance indicators from all 4 ELA standards) than others (third quarter phonics). In general, units are framed around the skills taught not around themes. With the exception of a few science and social studies units included in this curriculum map, the units are framed around phonics, writing, and reading, i.e. *September Reading*, *September Writing*, *September Phonics*, and *First Quarter Reading*, *First Quarter Writing*. As a result, the essential questions are also relegated to these skills: How to use structure/visual cues/ meaning to read books? How do I write a sentence? How do the letters and the sound connect? This is really content that is being wrapped around a curriculum map. The content that is listed along with the skills that it supports is appropriate and relevant. For instance, in the *First Quarter Phonics* unit the content is “How to tap initial, final, and medial sounds.” And the matching skills are “Demonstrate phonemic awareness” and “Blend and read three sound short vowel words.” This is strong reading instruction. The written curriculum at grade 1 is framed by instructional goals, not student friendly themes, i.e. *September Reading*, *First Quarter Writing*. These apparently are taken from published instructional materials. Contrast this with the written kindergarten curriculum whose units are structured on themes such

as *Fall: The World Around Us*, which positions the learning in a context for the student that is interesting and engaging and subsumes the instructional goals within a student centered context that allows application of learning. Instructional activities range from being descriptive, i.e. “Teacher will model story retelling”, to the less detailed, “literacy circles, guided reading groups”, to the least defined, “see instructional manual.” Assessments are not described other than “Written Unit Tests”. It appears there is a significant effort to match Fontas and Pinnell programming with ELA standards, performance indicators and competencies. The question remaining then is that of absence of context, in some cases, with just the teaching of the skills defined as the “unit”.

**Grade 2:** On the Rubicon/Atlas site the grade 2 ELA curriculum map is a 32 page document that encompasses 8 reading units, 17 Foundation units, 6 science units, and 2 social studies units.

**Reading Units:** These appear to be teacher generated curriculum, similar to grades 3 and 4. There is disjointedness in the writing of essential questions, content, skills, and instructional activities. Vocabulary and assessment headings are blank. There is not an obvious listing, inclusive or separate, of the NYS Standards addressed by each unit. The units themselves are framed in terms of student skills: *Building Good Habits, Using Strategies to Read JustRight Books, Thinking and Talking About Characters*. Essential questions do not appear to be essential from the point of view of the student, i.e. “What are the habits that will build effective stamina, engagement and fluency?” “How do we select just right books and use strategies to support comprehension and fluency?”

The lists of content are a mixture of skills, content and expectations; “Know yourself as a reader/choosing just right books, reading for longer periods of time, learn procedures and expectations for reading time reinforce previously taught skills”. Some of the skills are directly related to NYS Standards, i.e. “Sight read grade level common, high frequency words in context, listen respectfully without interrupting when others speak.” However there is no overt correlation to the standards and for each unit the standards are not listed separately as is the case for the grades 3 and 4 curriculum units.

The first unit’s instructional activities include: “introduce students to the classroom library, model steps in choosing ‘just-right books”, model what a good reader looks like, give students time to practice, gather students to discuss process”. For the rest of the 7 reading units, instructional activities include only: “Teachers will continue to introduce, model and allow practice through guided reading lessons, read alouds, and independent reading activities.”

There appears to be an inherent contextual question in the written reading curriculum. As the reading curriculum is currently described in Rubicon/Atlas, it would appear to be ‘a stand alone’ compendium of skills and expectations without an interesting or compelling context to provide motivation for the reading. It may indeed be that there is a context but it is not evident in the curriculum. It would be assumed, for example, that students reading interesting books and that the books are connected in some overarching way to the reading units, but again, it is not evident currently in the Rubicon units and would need to be included in future development of those units.

## ***Foundation Units 1- 17:***

The Foundation units have all the earmarks of a published reading program, one not written specifically for New York State. Reviewing the units in sequence, it appears to reflect a developmental approach to teaching children to read. While it is sound instructional methodology, in this case it seems to have been retrofitted into a curriculum map with no accounting evidence anywhere that the units are driven by NYS Standards. By way of example, here is the information from *Foundations* Unit 8. The *essential questions* shown are: “How do the letters and the sounds connect? How do you segment words into sounds? How do you blend sounds into words? How do you divide words into syllables? What is an r-controlled syllable?” *Content*: “To read or spell longer words, you can read or spell one syllable at a time. An r-controlled syllable contains a single vowel followed by an r (ar, er, ir, or ur). In an r-controlled syllable the vowel is neither long nor short; it is controlled by the r. High frequency and phonetically irregular words (Trick words): world, answer, eye, carry, something, different. Vocabulary words (word of the day): harm, stormy, tardy, shortcut. Skills: Visually recognize, spell, and mark up, r-controlled syllables. Divide words into syllables. Read smoothly with expression, Write dictated sentences using conventional capitalization and punctuation.” *Instructional Activities*: Follow *Foundations* Guide. The *Foundations* Program can be a valuable teaching tool, but it does not, by itself, represent or reflect strong written standards-based curriculum.

However, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Rubicon/Atlas Curriculum there is a noteworthy exemplar of a standards-based unit in the form of 6 science units (geology, waters and oceans, plants, ecology, weather, and senses) and 2 social studies units (*Black history* and *Hudson Community*). Each of these units is much more detailed and developed in the written curriculum than ones discussed so far. One in particular, the *Hudson Community* Unit, should serve the district as an exemplar for all areas and grade levels. It is the only one that includes an overt, although separate, list of ELA standards (some each from standards 1, 2, and 3). Some examples from the extensively developed Hudson Community Unit that support student learning and teacher planning and instruction are as follows: *Essential questions*: How have communities changed over time? What is a citizen and how does a citizen help make community decisions?” *Content*: Maps and corresponding symbols are tools for understanding. Communities provide goods and services to help meet the needs and wants of people. Citizens can participate in decision making, problem solving, and conflict resolution. *Skills*: Create list of the characteristics of each community (urban, rural, and suburban). Construct maps to scale. Participate in mock decision making process. *Assessment*: Create a tableau showing one type of community. Locate specific areas on maps. Create a Venn diagram comparing two communities. *Instructional Activities*: On bulletin board teachers and students will create a Venn Diagram together comparing and contrasting characteristics of rural, urban and suburban communities. Photos and vocabulary cards will be added to the diagram and will continue as the unit grows. Read “The House on Main Street” and “Uncle Jed’s Barbershop”. On chart paper have students identify needs and wants for the classroom. Break into small groups and discuss the needs and how to meet the needs. These examples from the Hudson Community Unit are standards-based exemplars for instructing students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and are also a substantive guide to teachers in their planning and active service. The origin of this unit is not apparent but it is certainly a good example of written, standards-based curriculum.

**Grades 3 and 4:** In answering the question “To what degree is the written curricula aligned to New York State Standards?” we looked at the collaborative curriculum maps dated 2009-2010 and worked through all related sites to find connections to Standards. Within Hudson City’s 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA curriculum, it would appear that all parts to the curriculum are potentially accounted for, if not yet in place. We use the word ‘potentially’ because it appears that some of the units are more complete than others, with the 4<sup>th</sup> grade units being the least complete. It looks like the intention of the curriculum development process is to set forth a working document for teachers that include, for each unit, essential questions, content, skills, vocabulary, assessment, instructional activities and resources. There are separate pages that connect each map with state standards, however it is not overt and the list of standards and performance indicators are not specifically attached to instructional activities or assessment methods. They are attached to the unit as a whole and are often related to the skills listed. Assessments in general are not well defined, if present.

The skills listed in each unit are tied loosely to the core performance indicators listed in State Education Department (SED) documents. In separate documents (sites), the list of indicators appropriate for that grade level and tied to a unit were identified. Therefore, there is evidence that the curriculum is being developed with the standards in mind. It is questionable though how accessible those specific standards and indicators are on a daily basis and exactly which skill and/or performance indicator is reflected in each instructional activity or assessment. Do teachers and students have specific performance indicators in mind in the course of teaching and learning each lesson? Is there an effort to include all of the state indicators in the “skills” listed for each unit or is there the intention to include indicators as a separate category of the curriculum map?

The Grade 3 unit calendar timelines four units. These are *Change, Opportunity and Risk, Equality and Fairness, and Responsibility*. Each unit spans approximately two to three months. The essential questions for each unit include big, overarching ideas, e.g. “Is education a right or a responsibility? How does change affect the world around me? How is life enhanced by opportunity?” The Grade 4 unit calendar timelines three units. These are *Opportunity, Relationships, and Change*. The first unit spans less than a month, the second about a month, and third unit spans the rest of the year. One conclusion is that the curriculum work at grade 4 is incomplete and there is not a fully developed third unit, or possibly a fourth. The grade 4 essential questions for the first two units are disjointed. How do readers make good book choices? What is a complete sentence? How do students use capitalization and punctuation? For the third unit, *Change*, the essential questions are the same as stated at grade 3. The skills listed do not appear to specifically identify the standards and are incomplete even though they do include the action verbs of Bloom’s and indeed are valuable skills. For example, grade 3 skills states: “Students will: Write about character change, interact with literature, actively perform in note taking, present written products using author’s chair”. Grade 4: “Students will: Select books carefully, become aware of the thinking and sharing with others, listen to others for ideas and information, and identify the main idea.”

There is an outline of NYS Standards included in each unit, but no mention of where and how they tie in directly. So a conclusion that might be drawn as a teacher is, if I teach this unit, I must be ‘covering’ the standards listed on the page. This would not, however, show that the unit was built upon and around the standard. In paragraph 5, although content is directed to be

aligned with the State Standards, it is not a tight alignment. For instance, under the grade 4 Unit, “Establishing Reading Routine, Theme Opportunity, the list of content includes: “NYS history, problem solving skills, meaning of text, how to become fluent/competent readers, and critical thinking skills” among others. While this content can certainly fit under that theme, there is a question as to how helpful it is as a guide to a teacher preparing a lesson. The connection between the content and the essential questions is a ‘loose’ connection.

Instructional Activities on the curriculum maps at grade 3 and 4 include a mixture of teaching methods and student skills. At grade 3, for instance, “writer’s notebook, literature circles, poetry, guided reading groups, guest speakers, genre study”. At grade 4, “modeling, organizational charts, books on tape, direct instruction, use print and non-print materials that reflect a variety of cultural perspectives, select, evaluate and use different types of resources to gather information, listening to presentations/speakers, and science fair exhibits.” While these are all worthy methods, experiences or skills, they are non-specific in addressing how the students will accomplish the content and competencies indicated on the curriculum map. At grades 3 and 4 the looseness of the relationship between the standards and the written ELA curriculum may not be as supportive of teaching, learning and student achievement as it could be if it reflected a tighter weave.

**Grades 5 and 6:** At grade 5, four units are evenly timed: *Identity, Success, Transformation/Change, and Inquiry/Discovery*. The first unit is the only one written to date. The Identity Unit is well developed, apparently with reference to NYS Standards. This is inferred because of the headings under Instructional Activities such as “Information and Understanding; Critical Analysis and Evaluation. The essential questions are broad and interesting to 5<sup>th</sup> graders: “What makes us unique? What characteristics and perspectives do we seem to share with others?” The content is somewhat general but important, i.e. “Relationships of historical events, draw conclusions, integrate information.” Skills are also well defined (although related to, but not driven directly by, standards), i.e. “quote from a text to support statements about text, determine theme of a text, drawing on how characters in a story respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic, differentiate between facts and opinions.” Instructional activities are detailed and relevant, i.e. “Literary Response and Reflection – personal narrative, Reflection on a key moment; inspired by ‘Dear Mr. Henshaw’ discussion and activity, Information and Understanding; Critical Analysis and Evaluation – Expository writing integrating social studies and ELA; Document Based question focused on national or regional identities, e.g., ‘consider the ways that historical figures and cultural groups have contributed to and challenged what it means to be “American”’. The assessment section of the curriculum is not complete with ‘teacher observation’ the only one listed. Overall, this is a strong example of good curriculum writing. Is it standards-based? Perhaps it is, but not obviously so at this time.

Grade 6 includes four units as well: *Exploring My Identity, Exploring Mysterious Worlds, Exploring the Imagination, and Exploring the Future*. Curriculum is written for all four units. In general, compared to the one 5<sup>th</sup> grade unit, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade units are less well developed, with headings less well defined, detailed and focused. However, this seems to be a case where teachers are heading in the right direction but just aren’t “there” yet. Standards are not evident.

The vocabulary and resources sections are well developed, however the content, skills, and instructional activities lists are short and general in nature.

## **Instruction-Observational Data**

### **Danielson Rubric:**

Orion bases their observations and conclusions about classroom observational data on the constructs of Charlotte Danielson. An increasing number of school districts statewide and nationally are incorporating the Danielson *Frameworks* into their supervisory models. Danielson's work has also been cited at the New York State Education Department (SED) level as illustrative of a strong model for instruction. The *Frameworks* is also correlated with the National INTASC (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards.) As Danielson states, "A framework for professional practice offers the teaching profession the same definition long afforded other professions." A framework answers the questions "What does an effective teacher know?" and "What does an accomplished teacher do in the performance of her duties?" Domain Three, *Instruction*, of Danielson's *Frameworks* will be the primary Component of Professional Practice examined in the Audit, although instruction reflecting Domain One, *Planning and Preparation* will also receive necessary attention as inferred from observational data.

Orion observers recorded data from each classroom observation conducted and then applied the data, as judgments, to the levels of performance as shown in the Danielson *Frameworks* shown below. Recognizing that these judgments represent only one observation per teacher there can be a cumulative effect in terms of identifying general quality of instruction across a school building. Please note that in many cases, since lesson plans were not available to Orion observers, inferences were made about Domain I: Planning and Preparation. Please also note that some components were not observed, or might be expected to be observed in a single class observation; hence, a 'ne', or 'not evident', was assigned. This should, in most cases, be seen neither as a positive or negative observation comment. Please also note that numbers in the K-2 and 3-6 categories below also include co-teachers in support of special education.

One of the earmarks of standards-based instruction is that students are aware of how they will be assessed and what the learning outcomes are for the lesson/unit. Even in this case, when we share with students what the assessment will be, we should not be sharing 'what it will cover', or what form the assessment will take necessarily, but rather, what skills students will be expected to demonstrate on the assessment?. Whether the assessment be written on the white board, or posted in the classroom, in a standards-based classroom the assessment must focus on uncovering the student's ability to master the key ELA skills, or performance indicators, as defined for each standard at every grade level. These are the foundational and transferable abilities that support learning in all other curricular areas. This issue really points out the singular consequence of ELA instruction. It is not about the content, as it is in other subjects, although

the content is necessary to convey instruction. It is about the skill and the ability to apply a skill to novel situations. Given an overall focus on standards-based instruction, if there was a single specific area for future instructional focus, we would determine the area of assessment practice to be the challenge at the K-6 level. While this finding may be a reflection of general instructional quality, we hypothesize given our findings from written curriculum review and interviews, that when standards-based unit assessments are in place in Rubicon/Atlas, the practice of making assessment expectations known to students can and will become routine. Having students know what the assessment will be provides clarity for the learning experience and helps the students see the connections between the daily learning activities and the essential knowledge to be acquired.

While Orion observers noted that co-teaching classrooms showed particularly high levels of instructional competence, “across the board” quality instructional practices were generally observed. Hudson City School District can take pride in this. The challenge, based on all types of data collected (interview, curriculum, observational), is less on teacher repertoire and skill level but rather on what is taught (curriculum) and how it is assessed. It is important to recognize that the sorting of observational data below is based on the higher standard levels of ‘proficient or distinguished’. The ‘basic’ level, inferred by Danielson to be acceptable by its title, is included with the ‘unsatisfactory data’ of observational judgments. This approach does represent a higher Orion standard and should be considered when reviewing this audit report.

## **Possible Patterns Noted**

### **Domain 1: Planning and Preparation**

**K-2:** 129 out of a potential 152 judgments were in the ‘proficient or distinguished’ levels of performance (10 ‘ne’)

**3-6:** 152 out of a potential 224 judgments were in the ‘proficient or distinguished’ levels of performance (65 ‘ne’)

**Special Education K-6:** 51 out of a potential 80 judgments were in the ‘proficient or distinguished’ levels of performance (9 ‘ne’)

### **Domain 3: Instruction**

**K-2:** 119 out of a potential 153 judgments were in the ‘proficient or distinguished’ levels of performance (10 ‘ne’)

**3-6:** 162 out of a potential 246 judgments were in the ‘proficient or distinguished’ levels of performance (37 ‘ne’)

**Special Education K-6:** 47 out of 81 judgments were in the ‘proficient or distinguished’ levels of performance (18 ‘ne’)

**DOMAIN 1: PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

**Component 1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy**

**\*Please note that nr=lesson not related to discernible instructional purpose; ne=not evident, which in most instances, should not be judged negatively, given a single observation**

Element	Level of Performance																																			
	unsatisfactory	basic	proficient	distinguished																																
<b>Knowledge of content and the structure of the discipline</b>	<p>In planning and practice, teacher makes content errors or does not correct errors made by students</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher is familiar with the important concepts in the discipline but may display lack of awareness of how these concepts relate to one another</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 ***	5	6 *	K6SE ***	<p>Teacher displays solid knowledge of the important concepts in the discipline and how these relate to one another</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 ***	2 **	3 *	4 **	5 *	6 **	K6SE *	<p>Teacher displays extensive knowledge of the important concepts in the discipline and how these relate both to one another and to other disciplines.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K *	1	2	3 ***	4	5 **	6	K6SE *
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<b>Knowledge of prerequisite relationships</b>	<p>Teacher's plans and practice display little understanding of prerequisite relationships important to student learning of the content.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6 *	K6SE	<p>Teacher's plans and practice indicate some awareness of prerequisite relationships, although such knowledge may be inaccurate or incomplete.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 ***	5	6	K6SE **	<p>Teacher's plans and practice reflect accurate understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 ***	2 *	3 *	4 *	5 *	6 *	K6SE ***	<p>Teacher's plans and practices reflect understanding of prerequisite relationships among topics and concepts and a link to necessary cognitive structures by students to ensure understanding.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K *	1	2 *	3 ***	4 *	5 **	6 *	K6SE
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<b>Knowledge of content-related pedagogy</b>	<p>Teacher displays little or no understanding of the range of pedagogical approaches suitable to student learning of the content.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6 *	K6SE *	<p>Teacher's plans and practice reflect a limited range of pedagogical approaches or some approaches that are not suitable to the discipline or to the students.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 ***	5	6 *	K6SE *	<p>Teacher's plans and practice reflect familiarity with a wide range of effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 ***	2 **	3	4 **	5 *	6	K6SE **	<p>Teacher's plans and practice reflect familiarity with a wide range of effective pedagogical approaches in the discipline, anticipating student misconceptions.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ****</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K *	1	2	3 ****	4	5 **	6 *	K6SE *
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**DOMAIN 1: PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

**Component 1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students**

Element	Level of Performance																																		
	unsatisfactory	basic	proficient	distinguished																															
<p><b>Knowledge of child and adolescent development</b></p> <p>Teacher displays little or no knowledge of the developmental characteristics of the age group.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher displays partial knowledge of the developmental characteristics of the age group.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 *	5	6	K6SE **	<p>Teacher displays accurate understanding of the typical developmental characteristics of the age group, as well as exceptions to the general patterns.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 ***	2 **	3 *	4 **	5 ***	6 *	K6SE *	<p>In addition to accurate knowledge of the typical developmental characteristics of the age group and exceptions to the general patterns, teacher displays knowledge of the extent to which individual students follow the general patterns.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ne,**</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K **	1	2	3 ne,**	4 ne,ne	5	6 ne,ne	K6SE **
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<p><b>Knowledge of the learning process</b></p> <p>Teacher sees no value in understanding how students learn and does not seek such information</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE *	<p>Teacher recognizes the value of knowing how students learn, but this knowledge is limited or outdated.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 ***	5	6 *	K6SE	<p>Teacher's knowledge of how students learn is accurate and current. Teacher applies this knowledge to the class as a whole and to groups of students.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 **	2 **	3	4 **	5 ***	6 *	K6SE ***	<p>Teacher displays extensive and subtle understanding of how students learn and applies this knowledge to individual students.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ****</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 *	2	3 ****	4	5	6 *	K6SE *
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<b>Knowledge of students' interests and cultural heritage</b>	<p>Teacher displays little or no knowledge of students' interests and does not indicate that such knowledge is valuable.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE *	<p>Teacher recognizes the value of understanding students' interests but displays this knowledge only for the class as a whole.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher recognizes the value of understanding students' interests and displays this knowledge for groups of students.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 **	2 *	3	4	5 ***	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher recognizes the value of understanding students' interests, <u>and</u> displays this knowledge for individual students.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>2 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ne,*,ne,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne,ne,ne,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 ne,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ne,ne,*,ne</td></tr> </table>	K ne,ne	1 ne	2 ne	3 ne,*,ne,ne,ne	4 ne,ne,ne,ne,ne	5	6 ne,ne,ne	K6SE ne,ne,*,ne
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<b>Knowledge of students' special needs</b>	<p>Teacher displays little or no understanding of students' special learning needs or why such knowledge is important.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE *	<p>Teacher displays awareness of the importance of knowing students' special learning needs, but such knowledge may be incomplete or inaccurate.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4 **	5	6 *	K6SE	<p>Teacher is aware of students' special learning.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1 ***	2	3 ***	4 **	5	6 *	K6SE **	<p>Teacher possesses information about each student's learning and collecting such information from a variety of sources.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ,ne,</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ne,*ne</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K ,ne,	1	2 **	3 ne,ne	4 ne	5 ne,*ne	6 *	K6SE **
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**DOMAIN 1: PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

**Component 1c: Setting Instructional Outcomes**

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	unsatisfactory	basic	proficient	distinguished																																
<b>Value, sequence, and alignment</b>	<p>Outcomes represent low expectations for students and lack of rigor. They do not reflect important learning in the discipline or a connection to a sequence of learning.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 **	5	6 *	K6SE *	<p>Outcomes represent moderately high expectations and rigor. Some reflect important learning in the discipline and at least some connection to a sequence of learning.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 **	5 *	6	K6SE **	<p>Most outcomes represent high expectations and rigor and important learning in the discipline. They are connected to a sequence of learning.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 **	2 **	3 *	4	5 **	6 **	K6SE *	<p>All outcomes represent high expectations and rigor and important learning in the discipline. They are connected to a sequence of learning both in the discipline and in related disciplines.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 *	2	3 ***	4 *	5	6	K6SE *
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<b>Clarity</b>	<p>Outcomes are either not clear or are stated as activities, not as student learning. Outcomes do not permit viable methods of assessment.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6 *	K6SE **	<p>Outcomes are only moderately clear or consist of a combination of outcomes and activities. Some outcomes do not permit viable methods of assessment.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 *	5	6	K6SE *	<p>All the instructional outcomes are <u>clear</u>, written in the form of student learning. Most suggest viable methods of assessment.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 *	2 *	3 **	4 *	5 **	6 *	K6SE *	<p>All the outcomes are clear, written in the form of student learning, and permit viable methods of assessment.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ne</td></tr> </table>	K *,ne	1 **	2 ne	3 ne,ne	4 *,ne,ne	5 ne	6 *	K6SE ne
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<b>Suitability for diverse learners</b>	<p>Outcomes are not suitable for the class or are not based on any assessment of student needs.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6 *	K6SE	<p>Most of the outcomes are suitable for most of the students in the class based on global assessments of student learning.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4 ***	5	6	K6SE **	<p>Most of the outcomes are suitable for all students in the class and are based on evidence of student proficiency. However the needs of some individual students may not be accommodated.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ****</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K *	1	2	3 ****	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE	<p>Outcomes are based on a comprehensive assessment of student learning and take into account the varying needs of individual students or groups.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ne,*ne</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 ***	2 **	3 *	4 *	5 ne,*ne	6 *	K6SE ***
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**DOMAIN 1: PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

**Component 1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources**

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	unsatisfactory	basic	proficient	distinguished																															
<p><b>Resources for classroom use</b></p> <p>Teacher is unaware of resources for classroom use available through the school or district</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher displays awareness of resources available for classroom use through the school or district but no knowledge or resources available more broadly.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 *	2	3	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE *	<p>Teacher displays awareness of resources available for a=classroom use through the school or district and some familiarity with resources external to the school and on the internet.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ****</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 **	2 **	3 **	4	5 *	6 *	K6SE ****	<p>Teacher's knowledge of resources for classroom use is extensive, including those available through the school or district, in the community, through professional organizations and universities and on the Internet.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ne,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne,ne,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>6 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K *	1	2	3 ne,ne,ne	4 ne,ne,ne,ne	5 ne,ne	6 ne	K6SE
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<p><b>Resources to extend content knowledge and pedagogy</b></p> <p>Teacher is unaware of resources to enhance content and pedagogical knowledge available through the school district.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher displays awareness of resources to enhance content and pedagogical knowledge available through the school or district but no knowledge of resources available more broadly.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1 *	2	3	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE	<p>Teacher displays awareness of resources to enhance content and pedagogical knowledge available through the school or district and some familiarity with resources external to the school and on the Internet.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K	1 *	2 **	3	4	5 *	6	K6SE ***	<p>Teacher's knowledge of resources to enhance content and pedagogical knowledge is extensive, including those available through the school or district, in the community, through professional organizations and universities, and on the Internet.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ,ne,</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ne,*,ne,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne,ne,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>6 ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ne,ne</td></tr> </table>	K ,ne,	1 ne	2	3 ne,*,ne,ne,ne	4 ne,ne,ne,ne	5 ne,ne	6 ne,ne	K6SE ne,ne
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<b>Resources for students</b>	Teacher is unaware of resources for students available through the school or district. <table border="1" data-bbox="396 306 594 537"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE	Teacher displays awareness of resources for students available through the school or district but no knowledge of resources available more broadly. <table border="1" data-bbox="646 361 841 592"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1 *	2 *	3	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE	Teacher displays awareness of resources for students available through the school or district and some familiarity with resources external to the school and on the Internet. <table border="1" data-bbox="967 445 1166 676"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1 **	2 *	3 *	4	5	6	K6SE *	Teacher's knowledge of resources for students is extensive, including those available through the school or district, in the community, and on the Internet. <table border="1" data-bbox="1230 474 1425 705"> <tr><td>K ,ne,</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ne,*,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne,ne,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ne,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>6 ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ne,ne,*,ne</td></tr> </table>	K ,ne,	1	2	3 ne,*,ne,ne	4 ne,ne,ne,ne	5 ne,ne,ne	6 ne,ne	K6SE ne,ne,*,ne
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**DOMAIN 1: PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

**Component 1e: Designing Coherent Instruction**

Element	Level of Performance																																			
	unsatisfactory	basic	proficient	distinguished																																
<b>Learning activities</b>	<p>Learning activities are not suitable to students or to instructional outcomes and are not designed to engage students in active intellectual activity.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE *	<p>Only some of the learning activities are suitable to students or to the instructional outcomes. Some represent a moderate cognitive challenge, but with no differentiation for different students.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 **	5 *	6	K6SE *	<p>All of the learning activities are suitable to students or to the instructional outcomes, and most represent significant cognitive challenge, with some differentiation for some different groups of students.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 ***	2 **	3 **	4 *	5 *	6 **	K6SE **	<p>Learning activities are highly suitable to diverse learners and support the instructional outcomes. They are all designed to engage students in high level cognitive activity and are differentiated, as appropriate for individual learners.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K **	1	2	3 **	4 *	5 *	6	K6SE *
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<b>Instructional materials and resources</b>	<p>Materials and resources are not suitable for students and do not support the instructional outcomes or engage students in meaningful learning.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Some of the materials and resources are suitable to students, support the instructional outcomes, and engage students in meaningful learning.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 ***	5	6 *	K6SE **	<p>All of the materials and resources are suitable to students, support the instructional outcomes, and are designed to engage students in meaningful learning.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 ***	2 **	3 ***	4 *	5 ***	6 *	K6SE **	<p>All of the materials and resources are suitable to students, support the instructional outcomes, and are designed to engage students in meaningful learning. There is evidence of appropriate use of technology and of student participating in selecting or adapting materials.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K *	1	2	3 *	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE *
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<b>Instructional groups</b>	<p>Instructional groups do not support the instructional outcomes and offer no variety.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="397 331 597 562"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 **	5	6 *	K6SE **	<p>Instructional groups partially support the instructional outcomes, with an effort at providing some variety.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="646 331 846 562"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 *	5 *	6	K6SE	<p>Instructional groups are varied as appropriate to the students and the different instructional outcomes.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="971 359 1166 590"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 ***	2 **	3 **	4 **	5	6 **	K6SE ***	<p>Instructional groups are varied as appropriate to the students and the different instructional outcomes. There is evidence of student choice in selecting the different patterns of instructional groups.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1230 527 1425 751"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ne,*</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K *	1	2	3 ne,*	4	5 *,ne	6	K6SE
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<b>Lesson and unit structure</b>	<p>The lesson or unit has no clearly defined structure, or the structure is chaotic. Activities do not follow an organized progression, and time allocations are unrealistic.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="397 1037 597 1268"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>The lesson or unit has a recognizable structure, although the structure is not uniformly maintained throughout. Progression of activities is uneven, with most time allocations reasonable.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="646 982 846 1213"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 **	5	6 *	K6SE	<p>The lesson or unit has a clearly defined structure around which activities are organized. Progression of activities is even, with reasonable time allocations.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="971 982 1166 1213"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ****</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 ***	2 **	3 *	4 **	5 **	6 **	K6SE ****	<p>The lesson's or unit's structure is clear and allows for different pathways according to diverse student needs. The progression of activities is highly coherent.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1230 1010 1425 1241"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ****</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE, ne</td></tr> </table>	K *	1	2	3 ****	4 *	5 *	6	K6SE, ne
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**DOMAIN 3: INSTRUCTION**

**Component 3a: Communication with Students**

Element	Level of Proficiency																																		
	unsatisfactory	basic	proficient	distinguished																															
<p><b>Expectations for learning</b></p> <p>Teacher's purpose in a lesson or unit is unclear to students.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 *	5	6	K6SE *	<p>Teacher attempts to explain the instructional purpose, with limited success.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE *	<p>Teacher's purpose for the lesson or unit is clear, including where it is situated within broader learning.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ***</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K ***	1 ***	2 *	3 *	4 **	5 *	6 **	K6SE ***	<p>Teacher makes the purpose of the lesson or unit clear, including where it is situated within broader learning, linking that purpose to student interests.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ne,*</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 *	3 ***	4 *	5 ne,*	6	K6SE
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<p><b>Directions and procedures</b></p> <p>Teacher's directions and procedures are confusing to students.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3 *	4 *	5	6	K6SE *	<p>Teacher's direction and procedures are clarified after initial student confusion.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher's direction and procedures are clear to students.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 **	2	3 **	4 **	5 **	6 *	K6SE *	<p>Teacher's directions and procedures are clear to students and anticipate possible student misunderstanding.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne,*</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 *	2 **	3 **	4 ne,*	5 *	6 *,ne	K6SE ***
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<p><b>Explanations of content</b></p> <p>Teacher's explanation of the content is unclear or confusing or uses inappropriate language.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 *	5	6	K6SE *	<p>Teacher's explanation of the content is uneven; some is done skillfully, but their portions are difficult to follow.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4	5	6	K6SE *	<p>Teacher's explanation of content is appropriate and connects with students' knowledge and experience.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ***</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K ***	1 ***	2 **	3 *	4 *	5 **	6 *	K6SE **	<p>Teacher's explanation of content is imaginative and connects with student's knowledge and experience. Students contribute to explaining concepts to their peers.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne,* ,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ne</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 ***	4 ne,* ,ne	5 *	6 ne,ne	K6SE ne
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<p><b>Use of oral and written language</b></p>	<p>Teacher's spoken language is inaudible, or written language is illegible. Spoken or written language contains errors of grammar or syntax. Vocabulary may be inappropriate, vague, or used incorrectly, leaving students confused.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="391 457 592 688"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher's spoken language is inaudible, and written language is legible. Both are used correctly and conform to standard English. Vocabulary is correct but limited or is not appropriate to the students' ages or backgrounds.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="636 348 834 579"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher's spoken and written language is clear and correct and conforms to standard English. Vocabulary is appropriate to the students' ages and interests.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="964 348 1162 579"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ****</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *****</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 **	2	3 *	4 ****	5 **	6 ***	K6SE *****	<p>Teachers' spoken and written language is correct and conforms to standard English. It is also expressive, with well-chosen vocabulary that enriches the lesson. Teacher finds opportunities to extend students' vocabularies.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1227 485 1425 716"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ****</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 *	2 **	3 ****	4 *	5 *	6	K6SE
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**DOMAIN 3: INSTRUCTION**

**Component 3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques**

Element	Level of Performance																																			
	unsatisfactory	basic	proficient	distinguished																																
<b>Quality of questions</b>	<p>Teacher's questions are virtually all of poor quality, with low cognitive challenge and single correct responses, and they are asked in repaid succession.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 ***	5	6	K6SE **	<p>Teacher's questions are a combination of low and high quality, posed in rapid succession. Only some invite a thoughtful response.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 *	3	4	5	6 *	K6SE	<p>Most of the teacher's questions are of high quality. Adequate time is provided for students to respond.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 **	2 *	3 *	4 *	5 **	6	K6SE ***	<p>Teacher's questions are of uniformly high quality, with adequate time for students to respond. Students formulate many questions.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ne</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K ne	1 ne	2	3 ***,ne	4 *	5 *	6 *,ne	K6SE
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<b>Discussion techniques</b>	<p>Interaction between teacher and students is predominantly recitation style, with the teacher mediating all questions and answers.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 ***	5 *	6 *	K6SE **	<p>Teacher makes some attempt to engage students in genuine discussion rather than recitation, with uneven results.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1 *	2 *	3 *	4	5	6 *	K6SE *	<p>Teacher creates a genuine discussion among students, stepping aside when appropriate.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 *	2 *	3 ***	4 **	5 **	6	K6SE	<p>Students assume considerable responsibility for the success of the discussion, initiating topics and making unsolicited contributions.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ne</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ne,*</td></tr> </table>	K ne	1 ne	2	3 *	4	5	6 ne	K6SE ne,*
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<b>Student participation</b>	<p>A few students dominate the discussion.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 **	5	6 *	K6SE	<p>Teacher attempts to engage all students in the discussion, but with only limited success.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4	5 *	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher successfully engages all students in the discussion.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ***</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K ***	1 **	2 **	3 ***	4 **	5 **	6 *	K6SE ***	<p>Students themselves ensure that all voices are heard in the discussion.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ne,ne</td></tr> </table>	K	1 ne	2	3 *	4 ne	5	6 ne	K6SE ne,ne
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**DOMAIN 3: INSTRUCTION**

**Component 3c: Engaging Students in Learning**

Element	Level of Performance																																			
	basic	basic	proficient	distinguished																																
<b>Activities and assignments</b>	<p>Activities and assignments are inappropriate for students' age or background. Students are not mentally engaged in them.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE *	<p>Activities and assignments are appropriate to some students and engage them mentally, but others are not engaged.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4 **	5 *	6	K6SE *	<p>Most activities and assignments are appropriate to students, and almost all students are cognitively engaged in exploring content.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *****</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 **	2 **	3 *****	4 **	5 **	6 **	K6SE ***	<p>All students are cognitively engaged in the activities and assignments in their exploration of content. Students initiate or adapt activities and projects to enhance their understanding.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 *	2	3	4	5	6	K6SE
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<b>Grouping of students</b>	<p>Instructional groups are inappropriate to the students or to the instructional outcomes.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE *	<p>Instructional groups are only partially appropriate to the students or only moderately successful in advancing the instructional outcomes of the lesson.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 *	5 *	6	K6SE	<p>Instructional groups are productive and fully appropriate to the students or to the instructional purposes of the lesson.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ***</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K ***	1 ***	2 **	3 *	4 **	5 **	6 **	K6SE **	<p>Instructional groups are productive and fully appropriate to the students or to the instructional purposes of the lesson. Students take the initiative to influence the formation or adjustment of instructional groups.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ne,ne,*</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ne,ne</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 ne,ne,*	4 ne	5	6	K6SE ne,ne
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<b>Instructional materials and resources</b>	<p>Instructional materials and resources are unsuitable to the instructional purpose or do not engage students mentally.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	<p>Instructional materials and resources are only partially suitable to the instructional purposes, or students are only partially mentally engaged with them.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ***</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 ***	<p>Instructional materials and resources are suitable to the instructional purposes and engage students mentally.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ***</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> </table>	K ***	1 ***	2 **	3 ***	4 **	<p>Instructional materials and resources are suitable to the instructional purposes and engage students mentally. Students initiate the choice, adaptation, or creation of materials to enhance their</p>																	
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<b>Structure and pacing</b>	<p>The lesson has no clearly defined structure, or the pace of the lesson is too slow or rushed, or both.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>The lesson has a recognizable structure, although it is not uniformly maintained throughout the lesson. Pacing of the lesson is inconsistent.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE *	<p>The lesson has a clearly defined structure around which the activities are organized. Pacing of the lesson is generally appropriate.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ***</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 *	2 *	3 *	4 ***	5 **	6 **	K6SE ***	<p>The lesson's structure is highly coherent, allowing for reflection and closure. Pacing of the lesson is appropriate for all students.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ****</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 **	2 *	3 ****	4 *	5 *	6	K6SE *
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**DOMAIN 3: INSTRUCTION**

**Component 3d: Using Assessment in Instruction**

Element	Level of Performance																																			
	unsatisfactory	basic	proficient	distinguished																																
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<p>Students are not aware of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *,nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ****</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ****</td></tr> </table>	K	1 **	2 *,nr	3 ***	4 ****	5	6 **	K6SE ****	<p>Students know some of the criteria and performance standard by which their work will be evaluated.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 *	2	3 *	4	5 **	6	K6SE *	<p>Students are fully aware of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K **	1	2 *	3 *	4	5 *	6 *	K6SE	<p>Students are fully aware of the criteria and performance standards by which their work will be evaluated and have contributed to the development of the criteria.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4 *	5	6	K6SE
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<p><b>Monitoring of student learning</b></p>	<p>Teacher does not monitor student learning in the curriculum.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="396 331 594 562"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE	<p>Teacher monitors the progress of the class as a whole but elicits no diagnostic information.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="646 331 841 562"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 **	5	6	K6SE **	<p>Teacher monitors the progress of groups of students in the curriculum, making limited use of diagnostic prompts to elicit information.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="967 386 1166 617"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 **	2	3 **	4 *	5 ***	6 *	K6SE *	<p>Teacher actively and systematically elicits diagnostic information from individual students regarding their understanding and monitors the progress of individual students.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1230 470 1425 701"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 *	2 **	3 **	4 *	5	6 *	K6SE **
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<p><b>Feedback to students</b></p>	<p>Teachers' feedback to students is of poor quality and not provided in a timely manner.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="396 869 594 1100"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher's feedback to students is uneven, and its timeliness is inconsistent.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="646 819 841 1050"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1 *	2	3	4 *	5 *	6 *	K6SE **	<p>Teacher's feedback to students is timely and of consistently high quality.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="967 844 1166 1075"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1 *	2 *	3 ***	4 *	5 **	6 *	K6SE **	<p>Teacher's feedback to students is timely and of consistently high quality, and students make use of the feedback in their learning.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1230 898 1425 1129"> <tr><td>K ***</td></tr> <tr><td>1 *</td></tr> <tr><td>2 *</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne,*ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K ***	1 *	2 *	3 **	4 ne,*ne	5	6 *	K6SE *
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<p><b>Student self-assessment and monitoring of progress</b></p>	<p>Student does not engage in self-assessment or monitoring of progress.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="396 1297 594 1528"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ***</td></tr> <tr><td>2 ,nr,</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *****</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *****</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *****</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 ***	2 ,nr,	3 *****	4 *****	5 *	6 **	K6SE *****	<p>Student occasionally assess the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="646 1272 841 1503"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4	5 *	6	K6SE *	<p>Students frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="967 1327 1166 1558"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K *	1	2	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Students not only frequently assess and monitor the quality of their own work against the assessment criteria and performance standards but also make active use of that information in their learning.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1230 1440 1425 1671"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>6 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4 *	5 ne	6 ne	K6SE
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**DOMAIN 3: INSTRUCTION**

**Component 3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness**

Element	Level of Performance																																			
	unsatisfactory	basic	proficient	distinguished																																
<b>Lesson adjustment</b>	<p>Teacher adheres rigidly to an instructional plan, even when a change is clearly needed.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4 **	5	6 *	K6SE **	<p>Teacher attempts to adjust a lesson when needed, with only partially successful results.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher makes a minor adjustment to a lesson, and the adjustment occurs smoothly.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1 **	2 **	3	4	5	6 **	K6SE *	<p>Teacher successfully makes a major adjustment to a lesson when needed.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ne,ne,*</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ne,ne,*,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ne,ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K ne,ne,*	1 ne	2	3 ne,ne,*,ne,ne	4 ne,ne,ne	5 ne,ne,ne	6	K6SE **
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<b>Response to students</b>	<p>Teacher ignores or brushes aside students' questions or interests.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE	<p>Teacher attempts to accommodate students' questions or interests, although the pacing of the lesson is disrupted.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3 *	4 *	5 *	6	K6SE *	<p>Teacher successfully accommodates students' questions or interests.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ****</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4 **</td></tr> <tr><td>5 *</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ****</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 ****	2 **	3 **	4 **	5 *	6 *	K6SE ****	<p>Teacher seizes a major opportunity to enhance learning, building on student's interest or a spontaneous event.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K ne,*</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 **</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>6 ne,ne</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE ne</td></tr> </table>	K ne,*	1	2	3 **	4 ne,ne	5 ne	6 ne,ne	K6SE ne
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<b>Persistence</b>	<p>When a student has difficulty learning, the teacher either gives up or blames the students or the student's home environment.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2 nr</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2 nr	3	4	5	6	K6SE *	<p>Teacher accepts responsibility for the success of all students but has only a limited repertoire of instructional strategies to draw on.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6 **</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K	1	2	3	4 *	5	6 **	K6SE *	<p>Teacher persists in seeking approaches for students who have difficulty learning, drawing on a broad repertoire of strategies.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K *</td></tr> <tr><td>1 **</td></tr> <tr><td>2 **</td></tr> <tr><td>3 ****</td></tr> <tr><td>4 *</td></tr> <tr><td>5 **</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE **</td></tr> </table>	K *	1 **	2 **	3 ****	4 *	5 **	6	K6SE **	<p>Teacher persists in seeking effective approaches for students who need help, using an extensive repertoire of strategies and soliciting additional resources from the school.</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>K **</td></tr> <tr><td>1 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>3 *</td></tr> <tr><td>4 ne,*ne</td></tr> <tr><td>5 ne</td></tr> <tr><td>6 *</td></tr> <tr><td>K6SE *</td></tr> </table>	K **	1 ne	2	3 *	4 ne,*ne	5 ne	6 *	K6SE *
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## Interview Data

### “Taught and Tested”

The “Guiding Questions” identified below were asked relative to the audit’s key purpose of ascertaining the degree to which the district’s ELA curriculum is written, taught to, and assessed? These questions are as follows:

- To what degree is the written curricula taught and tested?
- To what degree is the process of curriculum implementation continuous within subject areas and across subject areas?
- To what degree is implementation of curricula consistent across grade levels, content areas, and school buildings?

While knowing a district has a written K-12 curriculum is critical, the question often remains “Is it used and is what children are taught via the curriculum assessed?” This section of the Audit report speaks to what is actually taught and assessed.

### John L. Edwards Primary School (K-2)

Teachers mentioned all of the following in response to the question of “How do you decide what to teach?” “State-dictated standards, web-based curriculum on the Rubicon/Atlas site, IEP goals, Foundations of Reading, Literacy Profile, Guided Reading, Rankings generated by reading/AIS teachers, Literacy Learning Initiative (LLI), Fast Forward and Reading Recovery(1<sup>st</sup> grade).” There is no single formal reading program but the Literacy Collaborative appeared to have a strong influence on teachers’ instructional perspectives. “Teachers were excited and vested in teaching reading and the collaborative kept us thinking and talking about how to teach reading and writing skills. That is gone now.” Another teacher expressed a different perspective: “We have curricula for ELA and Math. Our lesson plans are based on the standards. Three years ago we took the ELA standards and developed themes to go along with it. We all had input and ownership, it has made a big difference in our teaching.” In reference to the past work, “The old curricula were thematic, now we’re trying to become more skills-based.” And another: “At this time there is no formal writing program. Our teachers know this and are beginning to focus on it on their own.” And, every teacher is using *Foundations* at the primary level; we are using a common language and common methods. I wish it was continued at the third grade level.” With all the varying answers to the question of “How do you decide what to teach?” the following comment appeared representative: “Now, most of us use what we want to use.”

It is noteworthy, however, that Rubicon/Atlas and the district ELA curriculum was mentioned in a greater portion of the interviews, although certainly not as a single, relied upon curricular source for instructional decisions. “As a new teacher, we are given a big binder (District ELA written curriculum) which has been helpful. And my mentor has helped get me into the

curriculum. We have the basics of science and social studies so we know what we are doing.” “This year we have been reformatting and putting the curricula into curriculum maps on the Rubicon/Atlas site. We all have computers this year and this has been very helpful.” Teachers are aware of the district initiative with Rubicon/Atlas, even to the point of having perceptions of how it may or may not influence their instruction. “We do so much more than what it captures. It captures individual content areas, but we are interdisciplinary”. While these perceptions cannot be judged as inaccurate or accurate, that Rubicon/Atlas is “in the conversation” is an important step in establishing an agreed upon, written curriculum upon which to make instructional decisions.

In terms of assessment of students within the context of a written curriculum that ‘drives’ instruction, the interview responses were again varied, indicating reliance on a variety of assessments and programmatic options. For example, there are literacy folders into which data are gathered and saved on each student and passed on to the next year’s teacher. The teachers reported that they know the students and their grade-level curricula so well that they adjust instruction on a daily basis. Many teachers said that the new curriculum also has assessments in it. Other assessments mentioned include Fast Forward, IST, DIBELS, standardized tests from psychologists, the Verbal and Full Scale scores are compared from year to year, language samples, SELF, Peabody, Goldman-Fristoe and Hanson phonetics. “Years ago we used the Woodcock; it was tedious but had lots of information. We don’t use it anymore. Sometimes we used the Bracken, too.” Decisions (about student learning needs) are made using year-end rankings, primary school developed quarterly assessments for K-2, running records, guided reading and LLI. Some reported to have started using the Fontas and Pinnell Kits for assessment. “We routinely administer running records, word lists and the Marie Clay Observational Survey which is based on fluency and comprehension.” Progress reports are also used. Less formal methods are also used, such as anecdotal notes and on-the-spot readiness checks for letters and sound recognition. While these may be excellent, individual instructional practices, the end result may be less systematic diagnostic instruction and interpretation of data for instructional purposes across grade levels, between grades levels and across the K-6 continuum.

In terms of the actual development of the variety of assessments, some of the K-2 teachers reported that they didn’t know how assessments are developed. Others responded that assessments are developed through grade level meetings, department meetings and occasional K-6 Special Education meetings. “Grade level assessments are developed at the grade level meetings. We meet one time per month...” “We developed our own writing rubric this year.” “We do not have a strong writing rubric; that is next on the docket...second grade teachers are developing a writing rubric.” Others were aware that “there is no district wide assessment in use at the Primary school.” Clearly, teachers at the K-2 level in the Hudson City School District are highly invested in the reading/writing program and the success of their students. “We do on-going informal assessments in our day to day instruction. We know the curriculum so well we can judge where students are.”

The findings indicate however, that despite a variety of grade level meetings and interactions, there is an absence of an agreed upon defined curricula against which students are uniformly measured to determine growth and progress against district standards. In effect, since students are not uniformly measured or assessed prior to graduating from the John L. Edwards School,

‘right standards’, allowing them to be prepared for the next set of benchmarked standards that they will encounter at the intermediate level. Having agreed upon curriculum and assessments is a critical prerequisite, within a school system, to ensuring that students will not only graduate but be prepared to enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

### **Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School**

There was considerable reference to ‘the curriculum’ at the intermediate school. “We add new resources from time to time to keep this a living and breathing curriculum document.” “It is updated quarterly.” “There are themes, essential questions, writing tasks, literature, materials, assessments, and it is all based on the Standards”, “It is written according to months of the year, like a map.” The curriculum is reportedly used at all grade levels, and discussed weekly at the ELA meetings headed by the Literacy Coach. Teachers also reported accessing Rubicon/Atlas during the meetings. Changes can be made as teachers discover more resources or materials to add. “They can use the website or make a hard copy, whichever is easier for the teacher to handle”. It was also stated that not all teachers use Rubicon/Atlas, as some use Touch-Tone Texts, a literature based program. Finally, it was shared that there used to be a Literacy Collaborative that many teachers were part of, and it was a great way to advance curriculum ideas and the students’ skills forward. Students were scheduled into two and one half hour ELA blocks. The budget was cut and so was the program. Now, ELA is watered down to shorter time frames. We need that continuum of time back, but we’ve had so many changes over the past few years. It has taken a toll on instruction.”

One literacy teacher responded a bit differently and very specifically, to the question on teaching decisions. “I start with student performance data and NY State core curriculum, and ELA curriculum for this building.” In a district where curriculum is highly articulated and used, the aforementioned response would be the desired response, demonstrating the direct influence of curriculum on teaching and learning. “Where the student is” remains centrally important, but that is assumed as part of instructional decision making.

While the ‘tested and taught curriculum’ extends beyond using student performance results on state assessments, the increased emphasis on using student data to influence what is taught is an important step in the right direction. The data that the Intermediate school is beginning to use is derived from analysis of practice ELA examinations and the data distributed by the state. “Grade level assessments were developed for the entire school this year. The 2009 ELA State Assessment was used in January, 2010 at each grade level along with other practice examinations using old ELA assessments.” “We use benchmarks from the previous year’s ELA examinations. We have given those three or four times this year and in January we participated in a school-wide mock ELA examination in which test schedules and IEP modifications and accommodations were in place.” The practice session in January was administered with the same guidelines as if it had been an actual state test. Upon completion, teachers scored it according to the rubrics as if it was a regional scoring situation. The data were then analyzed and an item analysis was done of the questions that gave students the most difficulty. Using these data, teachers were able to focus ELA content and skills on students’ weak areas and plan for

better instruction. One or two individuals talked about identifying skills strands and using them as a basis for error analysis. This data-based initiative was spear-headed by the Literacy Coach and the principal of the building, although it was also reported that “the new PPS director is very data-driven.” “It made it so much easier to pinpoint student deficits and focus on what skills we needed to strengthen before the April assessments.” Other classroom assessments mentioned for ELA include DIBELS and SRI, LLI, and Wilson Reading.

It is clear that staff trainings and faculty meetings have been centered on data and how data drive instruction but, as expected, there is an emerging but still inconsistent appreciation of the information such data analyses can provide for instruction. “We use the State performance indicators and try to link them to the content.” “I’ve been at this a long time, I just know. I am very aware of the performance indicators and what students need. That’s how I decide what to teach.” Ideally, the analysis of state assessment results will affect curriculum and in turn, impact instruction. In this manner, the test doesn’t drive directly what is taught but rather, in a systematically planned way, drives curriculum change, which then influences and defines what is taught. While there is an emerging focus on systematic analysis of selected data sets at the Intermediate level, it is still at the emergent level. District-wide agreement on which data to use and a focused systematic approach to its analysis would be helpful at this time. In any case, the emphasis on using data to direct instruction is a very positive step.

## **Implementation of Curriculum**

Understanding how ‘things get done’ is important. Organizations, once they know their program history and evolution are better able to sort out what is important to sustain and what will be difficult to ‘leverage away’ from any long time investment made by faculty. Likewise, if appropriate mechanisms are in place to improve student learning, then these mechanisms may be used to promote future improvements. Orion researchers used two Guiding Questions to learn about curriculum development and implementation and how that has occurred in the Hudson City School District.

### **John L. Edwards Primary School**

Teachers at grade levels have a considerable amount of influence as to what to teach and how to teach. Generally, it was reported that curriculum development and implementation at the K-2 level lacks consistency, according to teacher respondents. Teacher feedback mentioned this frequently. There is no formal expectation or leadership initiative, at this time, around implementing the curriculum in the K-2 building. “We’re implementing the curriculum because there is an expectation that we will use it. There is no leadership around this question.” While there was often a long period of silence in response to the question of who is responsible for implementing curriculum at the building level, it “is assumed that teachers will use it and it is left up to them to do so. How the curriculum is implemented depends upon each teacher.” “...since the curriculum maps are on the web; we could take it upon ourselves to become more familiar

with them.” Some teachers write lesson plans. Others incorporate parts of it into their theme units. Still others “had no idea” how curriculum was implemented. “We are treated like professionals and expected to implement the curricula on our own.” “It is up to the teachers to implement the curricula...if there was a problem; I suppose it would be the principal’s problem.”

One teacher, in a representative comment, stated, ‘In the past there was more of the ‘same’ curriculum for teachers to be more consistent throughout the school. Now there is more variety, less consistency.’ It was noted that related services try to plan according to what the classroom will be doing, so that students have continuity, even as they are pulled out for some services.

As mentioned above, there are some structures in place that could provide for greater consistency in curriculum implementation. Grade level teams meet one time per month, with grade level chairs meeting with the principal to set agendas. Teachers reported that curricula are written at the grade level with teachers highly vested in this process and proud of their efforts. Because the effort is collaborative, they feel ownership and implement the curriculum in their lesson planning. Some meetings are determined by administration but by in large, the agendas are left up to the grade level chairs and the teams. The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction meets with grade level chairs once a month and with grade level chairs on staff development days. There are monthly grade level meetings, faculty meetings and principal memos, and professional articles for mini-PD. Many times grade level chairs meet with the principal and then that information “trickles down to us”. It was reported that at one point there were too many meetings and now meeting frequency has decreased, although there was no definitive schedule. In terms of meeting agendas, “Agendas seem hit or miss, reactive instead of proactive, depends on the newest administrative focal point. In the past there have been more (meetings), we met once weekly but the contract now dictates one time per month. It was better when we met more often.”

At the primary level, there are minimal opportunities or discussion of *adjacent* grade-level curricula. While teachers at the K-2 level are somewhat familiar with each other’s curricula due to the curricular work that was completed in previous years, there isn’t a formal vehicle nor is there an emphasis on vertical alignment. “We’ve talked about vertical alignment but it never happens...it’s not quite there yet, either curriculum or time-wise...we would like to do this (vertical alignment) periodically.” The AIS team does meet with the ASI and discuss concerns across buildings K-12 for ELA/reading. Minutes are sent as a follow-up to the AIS teams within each school building, and each principal. Primary teachers are not familiar with adjacent content unless they have previously taught that level, or if they have a child who needs more advanced work, and then the teacher must look to the next grade level for support with expanding content. However, some teachers are more familiar with the grade level material behind them because they look for past skills and gaps that students may have. Special education teachers stated that, “With experience you get to know curriculum across grade levels, because many of the teachers have more than one grade level in their class.” Teachers say it is a personal choice, as it now stands, as to whether to become familiar with adjacent content. Teachers were aware of some initiatives across all grade levels, such as the PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Support) and LLI. Most teachers reported that there is little familiarization with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade content because it is located in another building. Most of the teachers stated they would “like more time to learn about adjacent level content”. “It’s a lot easier to align curricula at the Primary building. I have no idea what goes on at the Intermediate building. Familiarity with the previous and following year’s

curricula is better developed at the Intermediate level due to their practice of looping. Between building communication and knowledge of that building's curricula is also a problem at the elementary level." It was reported that at the district level, the AIS meetings bring K-2 and 3-6 together four times per year. "3<sup>rd</sup> grade curriculum is shown to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers so that they know what 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are expected to do."

Relative to SWD curriculum and instruction at the John L. Edwards Primary School, the findings generally support integration of students with disabilities faculty with grade level general education staff. The resource room and consultant teachers are an integral part of the grade level meetings. This is less the case with the teachers of the self-contained students. Self-contained classrooms are multi-grade, i.e. K-1 or 1-2, with the special education teacher left to self-select which grade level to attend, usually depending on the number of students at a particular grade level. General education teachers have little formal time (maybe once a month, sometimes) with special ed teachers unless they co-teach with them. "Most planning is on the fly in hallways or at lunchtime, if there is time". The special education teachers in self-contained K-6 classrooms meet monthly with the Special Ed. Director. According to special education teachers, "agenda items are more logistical than curriculum based, such as covering IEP concerns, new laws and regulations." Other support staff/related services staff meet with a particular special education teacher if that support person has or will have direct contact with a student because of an IEP goal or IST referral. This year, some of the special education teachers noted that the general education teachers have made the effort to include them in the curriculum mapping meetings. As well, special education teachers reported that "the administration is very good at including us (the special education teachers)." "OT/PT and speech-providers are all onboard as far as what we are doing. They provide both push-in and pullout services and communication among related services is excellent." While it appears that interactions between staff serving students with disabilities and general education faculty is collegial, the substance of the formal interactions, e.g. grade level meetings still remains somewhat isolated in terms of interactions between grade levels and schools.

In terms of curriculum efforts that are driven from *outside* the grade levels at the primary school, teachers report that "Some tweaking of curriculum maps has occurred, but according to the teachers nothing has been formalized. Rubicon/Atlas was referred to frequently and there appear to be a widespread understanding about its purpose, albeit some concerns as well. "Rubicon/Atlas is available to all, now that all classroom teachers have a computer in the classroom. It is all on Rubicon/Atlas." Kindergarten teachers stated that they worked on it as a group, during grade level meetings and PD/Supt. Conference Days. Curriculum is primarily written through the use of curriculum mapping. Some time may be given in the summer to work on it. The Standards are examined and then skills work is done at grade level meetings. "We had to use what we had and condense it into the Rubicon/Atlas format. The next step will be to reflect on the work we have done and build in more complex and higher order thinking." One faculty member reports that "It is a much more workable document now than it was in the binders." After curricula are written, grade level meetings focus on concepts and how to use these concepts. The curriculum can be accessed on Rubicon/Atlas. Many teachers copy/paste parts of it into their own plans to personalize the instruction for their own classes. Teachers stated, "We use theme based units and the themes are on the website, imbedded with skills we need to teach the students." And finally, "the curriculum used to be more general, but with our

curriculum maps we can follow a time frame together.” “In the past we worked together at grade levels and aligned themes with the NYS standards. That process has changed with the leadership changes. We have reformatted the curricula three times since we did the Standards work. The latest effort is to align the curricula with the curriculum maps and put it on the Rubicon/Atlas site in a consistent manner. This work is still done at grade levels.”

The level of awareness of Rubicon/Atlas is a positive reflection of the manner in which this approach to curriculum mapping has been carried out. As with any change, there was a concern expressed about the capacity of Rubicon/Atlas in that a few teachers who expressed some doubt as to whether the Rubicon/Atlas format can convey the richness and depth of the previous document. “The curricular maps are a one-dimensional tool that doesn’t allow you to do any interdisciplinary work.” However, the greater question in some faculty member’s minds related to the Standards and new initiatives in general. Many teachers noted that curriculum changes as the upper administration changes. Some teachers were concerned about the new New York State Standards which they have heard are being planned. Their concerns were as follows:

“How will these new Standards impact our current curriculum work?” Teachers are trying to turn this (question) into a positive, especially with the new ASI’s involvement. One teacher stated, “We are all excited about what’s to come!” The district focus on developing curriculum maps and putting them on-line is viewed as a positive step. Teachers feel supported in the time they have been allotted to do so and in the fact that they all have computers now. “The focus of the district this year has been on putting the curricula on the Rubicon/Atlas website. It will be nice to be able to go on-line and have curricula available.”

Teachers do report frustration with the amount of leadership change and the different initiatives coming from different leaders. “The leadership has changed five times in the last four years. “There have been so many curriculum changes due to upper administration changes.” “If this new ASI stays here, curriculum will most likely stay, too. As new upper administration changes, so do our curriculum initiatives. It is frustrating.” Other concerns were with a task force that BOE has set up for the community to look at and discuss curriculum. They fear that factionalizing the curriculum has caused some turmoil, which in turn is giving the Hudson district the perception of a bad reputation in the greater community.

### **Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School (3-6)**

At the Intermediate School there is an evident within-grade level focus on ELA curriculum as well as an understanding of what is taught in adjacent grade level curricula. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes and the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes loop, so teachers have their same students for two years and they become versed in the different grade level curricula. Although there is not formalized approach to meeting with other grade levels, teachers are familiar with some of the adjacent curriculum because of looping. “I am very familiar with the adjacent grade level curriculum at this building because we loop with our students. I do not know much at all about the curricula at the K-2 level nor the 7-8 building.” Teachers also have opportunities to discuss curriculum with

colleagues at monthly grade level meetings, weekly ELA meetings, CELA meetings across grade levels, staff development days, and faculty meetings. Grade level teachers meet on a monthly basis to discuss curriculum and long range planning. “Everyone is included in these (monthly grade level meetings); general education teachers, special education teachers and AIS providers.” There used to be weekly common planning time for grade level teachers, but with the merger with Greenport, scheduling became more difficult, so there are no common planning times. “Since we have no common planning time, we meet on the run, in the hallway, at lunch, before and after school as needed... whenever we can when we have something to discuss that worked, or maybe didn’t work so well.”

However, common planning time was preserved for the teachers in the co-instruction classrooms. Co-instructed classes meet and plan continuously. There is good communication and a strong working relationship between the co-teachers. “A good co-instructed team is like a good marriage.” “The special education and general education teachers who are using the Cooperative Teaching Model have a common planning time daily. We use these meetings to decide what we are teaching, how we’re going to do it and how we’ll modify the tasks for students with special needs without necessarily changing our expectations for them.”

Teachers meet with the Literacy Coach for ELA on a weekly basis. Many teachers thought that the weekly ELA meetings were helpful so that they could learn about and share ways to implement curriculum in their classrooms. “These meetings (Literacy Specialist meetings) are exciting and helpful, we bring work we’ve done, we share techniques that have worked, we discuss ways to help student perform successfully on the ELA.” “There is a major emphasis in the building to use reading and writing across the curricula and individuals interviewed stated that they use written curricula to design lesson plans.” The special education teachers are included in all weekly meetings with the Literacy Coach. “All teachers are language teachers”. “Even though I’m a special education teacher, I feel just like another ELA teacher at these meetings. It’s great!” The Literacy Coach, who is familiar with every grade level curriculum in the building, since she works with all teachers at all grade levels stated: “I try to keep it all flowing as a vertical continuum.” Teachers report that “these meetings are exciting and helpful, we bring work we’ve done, we share techniques that have worked, we discuss ways to help student perform successfully on the ELA. The Literacy Coach has started a K-12 book club, and members from each grade level are represented. “This is a start toward getting all staff to be more familiar with each others issues and successes.” Unfortunately, there are a few special education teachers who cannot attend these meetings due to perceived conflicts (the special education department meets at the same time one time per month and some individuals are involved in Wilson Reading training). Some teachers found that planning with the AIS teachers was helpful, but that option has been scaled back, due to scheduling issues. “When we had common planning time and common schedules, it really advanced our efforts.”

From *outside* the Intermediate school, Intermediate School teachers are unclear about who was responsible for the implementation of curriculum. Some teachers thought that Maria and Central Administration were responsible for this. Some thought the principal drove the implementation. Some teachers thought they were responsible. “You take it upon yourself; when planning, you pull it out and refer to it”. Some accorded the ASI implementation responsibility: “Maria has been here 11 months and she is the one who is driving this forward.”

Intermediate School teachers offered the following common understandings about current and historical curriculum work in the district. They recognize that implementation of curricula across grade levels, content areas and schools is a process that is a top priority in the district currently. The 2004 curriculum which was initiated by the BOE and the subsequent curriculum by Mark Jury of SUNY Albany are the foundations of the curriculum which is now being updated and uploaded to Rubicon/Atlas. He worked with teams of teachers, but at some levels, it was reported that the principal at the time did much of the work on the curriculum.

### **K-6 Implementation of Curriculum for students with disabilities (Equal Access)**

Orion interviewers posed several questions to faculty and staff regarding Students with Disabilities (SWD), especially to determine access to general education curriculum. In New York State, it is expected that teachers will teach the same curricula to students with special needs. Therefore, if a central question for the Hudson City School District is the determination of the degree to which the written curriculum is taught and tested, then it stands to reason that an equally important question is whether students with disabilities have access to such a curriculum. While we now recognize in our findings that there is not a K-6 ELA curriculum that is currently written, taught and tested by all teachers, the degree to which Students with Disabilities have access to current general education instruction is pivotal for the point in time when the district does have a K-6 ELA curriculum that is written, taught and tested in place.

### **John L. Edwards Primary School**

With the exception of the self-contained classes, students with special needs are being taught in the general education setting. Teachers are maintaining the same expectations for students with special needs. “Students with disabilities participate with the same curriculum, how they access it might be different. For example, we might use visuals or manipulatives when working with Students with Disabilities.” It was generally found that while students with disabilities are expected to do the same tasks as their classmates, they might be asked to do fewer of the same tasks, have their work accompanied with a visual format or asked to respond in a different format (i.e. matching words in a sentence strip instead of writing all the words). Another example: “We have done something different this year, students with special needs couldn’t follow the ‘work boards,’ they needed more direct, systematic instruction so we organized some teacher-centered structured instruction and maintained the same principles (i.e. systematic flash card review with sight words and letter clusters).” “Students with disabilities might be given a shorter spelling list but we try to have them working on the same spelling principle as their non-disabled classmates.” As can be concluded from the above comments, there is no formalized approach as to what is taught. Teachers decide what to teach and assess based upon IEPs, the curriculum, learning styles, and how to “put it all together”. Other considerations include assessments, test modifications and accommodations, ESL recommendations, consultant and related service recommendations, observations, baselines for behaviors, daily logs, FBA data, OS (1<sup>st</sup>), weekly

readers with vocabulary, LLI for reading, Guided Reading, *Foundations* for phonics and spelling agenda books as well as information based on contact sheets for parents. Several teachers mentioned self-assessments, as in “as a teacher, am I doing this right? Am I on target with what this child needs?” as a ‘check’ on their approaches with students with disabilities. Most teachers were in agreement that modifications and accommodations came from the IEP (separate locations, extended time, 1:1 aides, slant boards, Functional Behavioral Assessments). It was clear to Orion researchers that teachers of students with disabilities at the Primary School shared the following sentiment; “Our goal is to help ALL students be successful.”

At the primary level, special education teachers are included in curricular development efforts and are familiar with the curricula at their respective grade levels. Students with disabilities in the mainstream are well accepted; there is a sense of shared responsibility between the general and special education teachers and they are involved in the curriculum in an authentic manner. They provide both push-in and pullout services. “OT/PT and speech-providers are all onboard as far as what we are doing. Communication among related services is excellent.” Teachers at the primary level are also provided additional adult support during ELA time. There is some push-in and some pull-out. Some classes have a part time aide for two to three hours per day. Some classes have a 1:1 aide, and that aide also used to help others when needed. Also, at the primary level, there is additional adult support scheduled into the classrooms for “centered reading” times. There is also administrative support when parent issues arise, and if a child’s behavior becomes unmanageable, there is adult help available. The counseling staff is seen as very supportive as well as PMHP and some community agencies. It was stated that some students do come into a classroom with special needs that the teacher has not been adequately trained to meet. Parents are supportive because we are able to give them such informative feedback about how their child is doing. “We have a lot of contact with parents, they appreciate it and it is very positive.”

At the primary level, scheduling and planning time are the major concerns expressed for both the general education and the special education teachers. Pullout instruction was viewed as highly disruptive to the teaching process. Interestingly, during an Orion observation of a special education teacher working with students, the lesson was interrupted and stopped so that the students could be provided a related service make-up session. As mentioned previously, planning in advance for the needs of special education students was reported to be challenging given the status of class lists. General education teachers plan and coordinate instruction for students with disabilities with limited formal planning time. “There is no common planning time with special education support. We make our own time to meet with them.” The AIS team relies on classroom teacher input to tell them what to review. “Most teachers recommend lots of review and repetition.” “Scheduling is a nightmare. We learn to be very flexible.” Special Ed self-contained teachers try weekly planning, but things change due to students’ varied needs at any given time. “We know what needs to be taught but there is so much pullout and too many levels (grade and developmental) in one classroom. We try to decide what is important and what you can let slide. We make choices”. Monthly planning may or may not include a time to discuss students with disabilities because the agenda is filled...”

Other important comments are shown below:

- “We do collaborate as we can, we are constantly talking but there is no formal time in the day or during the school year for us to plan.”
- “The delivery system is fractured. Trying to find 30 minutes when you have the whole group in front of you is challenging.”
- “I know what needs to be taught but students with special needs are in and out of my classroom. It gets tricky. It seems to me that the students with special needs need the most consistent and uninterrupted with the curricula and skills but just the opposite happens.”
- “Eliminate push-in. Too many adults in the classroom can be very disruptive.”
- “Gen Ed teachers need more training, so we have more ideas in our ‘bag of tricks’.”
- “Keep special education students and ESL students separate, because too much pull out results.” “We need a chunk of uninterrupted class time with no pull-outs or push-ins so we can teach in peace!”
- “More time in the day to do all we need to do.” “I love what I do but I’d like to do more cooperative teaching with a general education teacher...Nothing beats being embedded into a general education class.”

### **Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School**

Special education teachers are expected to teach the grade-level curriculum. There is equal access to curriculum because of the availability of the Rubicon/Atlas web-based curriculum to all teachers. The special education teachers who are implementing the Cooperative Teaching Model have much more opportunity and support for carrying through on this expectation. There is common planning and coordination of instruction among teachers. They use common planning time if their schedule permits it, and the co-instructional teachers sometimes have double prep periods that they claim are very helpful. “This is the second year we have had a common planning time. It has made a huge difference in our ability to offer the general education curricula to students with special needs.”

The teachers in the self-contained program do not have the same opportunity or level of support for teaching the grade-level curricula. Individuals in the self-contained classrooms feel isolated and find it difficult and unrealistic to teach the grade-level curriculum. Self-contained special education classrooms span three grade levels and are comprised of students who are expected to take the standard state assessment as well as students who have been approved for an alternate assessment. Deciding what to teach and which grade level to align oneself with is dictated by the grade level that has the most students for that year. If a teacher has a greater number of fourth graders in the class s/he attends the 4<sup>th</sup> grade-level meetings. The special education teachers above do attend special education department meetings led by the Director of Special Ed. “An agenda is sent ahead of time, and we elicit ideas from each other. There is good communication in this group.”

### **Co-teacher comments**

- “Co-teachers plan everything together. We have a common planning time but we also take advantage of lunch and after-school time.”
- “Keeping students in the mainstream setting with the help of a cooperating teacher is the best model for working with special education students I’ve seen.”

### **Self-contained teacher comments**

- “I have such a mixture of students; it is extremely difficult to know what to teach.”
- “I feel like I’m playing catch-up all the time. The kids fall behind and then fall further behind because the test demands increase with respective grade-level increases.” “I really try to get my students ready to do well on the state tests but realistically I just don’t know how useful they are to them.” “The state assessment data is not helping me teach my students any better nor is it helping them to become better readers.”
- “Too much pullout which becomes so disruptive and destroys the flow of instruction...“The students who need the most classroom time get the least.” Too much push-in which becomes very distracting because of so many adults in the room at one time.
- “...too many initiatives, trainings (Wilson, LLI, etc.) but not enough continuity among these initiatives. Continuity is sketchy. Instruction becomes piecemeal.”

There are varied amounts and types of support in classrooms with Students with Disabilities. There is small group instruction with an extra aide, or with a reading teacher, 1:1 aides and shared aides, counselors, psychologists OT, Speech and Language therapists. Some support is push-in and some is pull-out. Trish Ross is a Co-teaching consultant, and she also provides support in the classroom and in group meetings after school. Co-teaching (co-instructed) classes have a general education teacher and a special education teacher for the entire day.

Teachers are trying to maintain the same content and skills as they are teaching their general education counterparts in preparing and administering testing modifications to students with special needs. Typical modifications and accommodations include whatever is documented on the IEP, “but we try to push the students beyond that”. “In addition to the standard modifications: of extended time, separate location, test accommodations, we observe and discuss what might make a child’s classroom life easier, such as preferential seating, left-handed mouse for the computer, chart systems, point systems, modified spelling lists, different amounts of work expected, modified worksheets, personalized word walls, extra adult support, triangle pencils for better grip.” Teachers also adhere to the recommendations found on Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA).

There is a concerted effort at the Intermediate level to prepare all students for the state assessments. Students with special needs are included in this effort and are prepared for the state assessments the same way the general education students are prepared, but student modifications and accommodations are also put in place to “level the playing field”. “We provide as much practice with the tests as we can. We have participated in three ELA practice tests this year.” “We read to students who can’t read in class but we can’t read the test. We teach test-taking

strategies to the students who cannot read the passages on their own. The students are taught to circle the words they don't understand or can't read, underline things that are interesting or important and try to figure out what the passage is saying from that. We also teach the students to read the questions and go back to find the answers. We are encouraging the students with special needs to use these strategies in all content areas." "We use test books, coach-books and make up similar question as are on the state tests." "We are using an idea we garnered from a magazine on working with Students with Disabilities that challenged students to read a poem to as many people as they possibly could over a weekend. While this seems like a simple idea, we have steadily increased the students' skill in reading and understanding poems by doing this." "In addition to the three mock ELA examinations, we are using workbooks and test-preparation exercises. These are helpful because they give the students a sense of the types of questions that are asked and a familiarity with the test format."

At the Intermediate School there are Extended Content (EC) groups for all students who need extra review and repetition, special education students are included in these EC groupings. These groups meet every other day and the Literacy Coach, reading specialist, 2 special education teachers, 2 general education teachers, and an AIS teacher for every two classes all take groups of students to work on additional skills. In addition, students are given review of test taking skills/strategies; mock assessments are given, filling in bubble sheets, reviewing multiple choice tests and strategies, how to look at a reading passage and use readers' marks, highlighting, circling for comprehension purposes. Unfortunately the EC groups meet during band and chorus time so there are some students, many of them students with special needs, who do not receive this extra instruction.

Reading teachers look at benchmark data during weekly ELA meetings, and do item analyses. That data is used in the classroom and also drives AIS Instruction. The decision to teach to the grade-level curriculum through differentiation of instruction was somewhat clear throughout each grade level during the interview process, but became more evident during the classroom observations especially in the cooperatively taught classrooms. "I look at our curriculum, the state standards and data, and that points me in the right direction. I pick meaningful, relevant parts of literature, take them apart and put them back together again to meet the needs of all the students." Such differentiation was inconsistent in the self-contained special education classrooms. In the self-contained classes some teachers took a "skills approach" in which they taught a reading or writing skill and then provided guided practice using whatever content was appropriate for the grade levels in their class. "I teach ELA skills and let it act on different content. For example, I teach the same skill but differentiate what the students use it on. I have plenty of adult support in my classroom so it is possible for me to teach in this way." Others took a "content" approach and taught the same lesson to the whole class despite different grade levels. Teachers decide what to teach based on IEPs, co-teacher discussions on individual students, the standards, and data. Teachers explained it this way, "We look at the needs of the kids and adapt to their levels. We also look at the work the kids hand in". "All get the same lesson, but we modify content to the way they learn. Our students with disabilities are intelligent in different ways. We do not 'dumb down' anything at all."

It would be helpful to prioritize the supports provided teachers working with Students with Disabilities. Teacher study groups and literary circles similar to the “book club” initiative at the Intermediate School would be a good model to follow. These meetings are collegial, supportive and focused on understanding and teaching to the standards. Individuals involved in the meeting learn and are supported by each other. This type of support is energizing and self-sustaining.

## **Supervision**

The following questions were posed to faculty and staff regarding supervision and the supervisory process:

- To what degree does staff supervision maintain focus on continuously improving learning results?
- Who supervises you?
- How often are you supervised?
- Tell me about the supervisory process (do you set goals, what determines the goals?)
- Do you use student performance data used as part of the supervisory process? How?
- What supports do you have to help students achieve the NYS Standards?

### **John L. Edwards Primary School**

School principals, assistant principals and directors are clearly responsible for supervising the teachers. In addition, special education teachers note the Director of Special Education as a supervisor. Related services people answer to the Director of Student Services, but work with the principal on a day-to-day basis. A few teachers were hesitant with this answer, and it appeared they were not as sure who their supervisor was. These teachers stated, “I guess our principal,” or “no one”. Student performance data is not used in the supervisory process, although teachers did note that data helps to drive instruction. “We may have used IEP or behavioral data.”

The process for non-tenured teachers is clear and consistently implemented. As to how often supervision takes place, the answers were varied. Untenured teachers are supervised three times per year. They determine goals to work on, and discuss these at a pre-conference with their supervisor, as well as present a lesson plan and what objectives their observed lesson will cover. A post-conference follows, with the supervisor addressing all items from the pre-conference and offering suggestions and support. This is consistent with the Teacher Evaluation and Professional Growth Document (2006-2007). The process for a non-tenured teacher involves three observations a year. These observations are shared among the school principals, assistant principals and department chairs. An observation involves a pre-conference in which the teacher reviews lesson plans with the designated supervisor, the supervisor shares his/her expectations, and then the observation followed by a post-conference within a few days of the observation.

Tenured-teachers develop a goal document (may be one, two, or three year duration) that is shared with their supervisor. The tenured teacher is then expected to work to achieve the goals and the document and progress is reviewed with the building principal on an annual basis. “The process for tenured teachers is as individual as the teacher is.” The process once a teacher is tenured is less clear and inconsistently implemented, as tenured teachers are supervised differently. Some were able to explain the process exactly as presented in the above document. Others were able to describe a system of personal goal setting that was based on the levels of the students, curriculum development, and professional development workshops and follow up sessions, and meetings that began in October. These meetings took place yearly or up to every three years, “The district requires this. We can identify goals for ourselves and share with the principal. We update every spring, but sometimes things get busy. Meetings are not formalized because life gets busy”; “It has never been clearly spelled out...pretty wishy-washy”. Some teachers were able to identify and articulate this process as above, and called it the “PDP” process or the “IDP” process. The two names were used interchangeably. Some were unable to clearly define the process; “We are pretty much left alone.” “We are treated as professionals.” “Untenured teachers are more closely followed, after tenure, it gets sketchy.” “Observations in the past were not really helpful.” “There is new leadership and they are too busy.” “When we meet we talk about student levels-nothing formalized.” “We meet in the spring.”

One component of the concept of supervision is that there is support for teaching and learning involved, in addition to formal supervision and evaluation. In terms of supports for teachers, many teachers in the Primary School pointed to their colleagues as their greatest support. Comments included “the fabulous teachers that I work with are my best support.” “Us and the programs we use.” “We are so used to not being recognized that we recognize ourselves.” “Our principal is our main support. She is on the cutting edge and gathers data. She gets money for programs and advocates for our students and programs. I feel much better off now than 18 years ago. We have sound practice and diagnostic skills as a result of her tutelage.”

### **Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School**

At this time, staff supervision is not perceived by staff to have a direct connection to continuously improving learning results. Most teachers are in agreement that the principal and vice-principal are their supervisors. In addition, special education teachers note the Director of Special Education as their supervisor. Related services people answer to the Director of Student Services, but work with the principal and vice-principal on a day-to-day basis. As to how often supervision takes place, the answers were consistent. Untenured teachers are supervised three times per year. They determine goals to work on, and discuss these at a pre-conference with their supervisor, as well as present a lesson plan and what objectives their observed lesson will cover. A post-conference follows, with the supervisor addressing all items from the pre-conference and offering suggestions and support. “As a non-tenured teacher, I am observed three times per year. Responsibility for the observations is reportedly shared among the building principals, assistant principals and department chairs. An observation involves a pre-conference in which the teacher reviews lesson plans with the designated supervisor, the supervisor shares his/her expectations, then the teacher is observed and the observation followed by a post-

conference within a few days of the observation ensues.” This description is consistent with the Teacher Evaluation and Professional Growth Document.

Tenured teachers have a different method of evaluation, which was reported as “A system of personal goal setting that is based on the levels of the students, curriculum development, and professional development workshops and follow-up sessions, and meetings. This meeting takes place in October. These meetings take place yearly for up to every three years. There did not appear to be any common focus or attempt to use the goal-setting process to drive district initiatives or on continuously improving learning results. “The process for tenured teachers is an individual as the teacher is.” Teachers can incorporate Professional Development initiatives into their annual goals if they want to but there is no expectation around this practice. Teachers who understood the supervisory process tended to be conscious of their annual goals and how they drove classroom instruction and personal development. Teachers who were unclear about supervision were also unclear about the role of annual goals in their professional and personal development. Many teachers try to use PD initiatives in their annual goal development. “During my observations, the principal notes if he sees evidence of PD in my instruction”. “One part of supervision is our attendance at PD offerings and our commitment to it in our instruction”. Other teachers noted that their annual goals are written before the new PD booklets come out, so it is difficult to include in annual goal development, although “we could look back at a previous years’ conference and apply them to our annual goals.” Some teachers took it upon themselves as a team to work on annual goal development. “We look at our weaknesses and try to fix that.”

Respondents were also probed about support and answered as follows. In addition to three observations per year for three years, non-tenured teachers are assigned a mentor. Without exception, all non-tenured teachers spoke highly of the mentoring program. “My mentor has been extremely helpful in helping me understand the district curricula.” “As for curriculum, we get a big binder and we can refer to it as we need to. As a new teacher the binder has been very helpful. And my mentor has helped get me into the curriculum.” Guidance counselors provide homework support for students and they help in providing practice examinations for ELA. Guidance personnel are also responsible for developing and implementing the testing modification schedule for state examinations. Special education teachers have additional adult support in their classrooms; all the special education teachers have at least a teaching aide some have both a teaching aide and a teaching assistant. In addition there is a distribution of one-to-one assistants depending on the needs of the students in a classroom. Observation revealed that this adult support is well-utilized in each of the classrooms and that the aides/assistants are considered a bona-fide member of the classroom team. Most, but not all, special education classrooms have computers and Smart Boards (Promethean Boards). Co-Teachers also have an additional system of evaluation and support. They are observed by a Questar trainer, 3-4 times per year. “This is a great support through Trish Ross.”

## **Professional Development**

### **John L Edwards Primary School**

At this time professional development initiatives are not yet structured to achieve designated and defined curriculum and instruction outcomes. Most agree that professional development is provided through the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and sometimes the principal. Among interviewees, there wasn't a common definition expressed of what constituted professional development. Some referenced how time was used during district conference days and others talked about professional development in terms of attendance at conferences. Some referenced the work of literacy coaches.

The process of inputting current practice onto Rubicon/Atlas can be considered a form of staff development, depending on the manner in which it is accomplished. Awareness about Rubicon/Atlas ranged from hearing about it at monthly grade level meetings, to working on a curriculum committee to get parts of the curriculum and resources updated, to working directly with the ASI to upload data to the website and turnkey train colleagues within a school building or within a grade level. Teachers will also provide professional development, especially if they are on the curriculum committee via "teaching us about how to access Rubicon/Atlas and how to use it". "This year has been much better with professional development because we can work on our own level. In the past, professional development was often geared to the upper levels." "We appreciate spending the Superintendent's conference days working on the curriculum. It is so much more useful than going to the total district-wide presentations."

Other professional development opportunities varied according to teacher perception. There is no process other than informal by which to share information obtained through conferences. Teachers can also present what they have learned at workshops, during a faculty meeting, but there is no consistent expectation that it take place. Teachers attend conferences and then "piece together" parts of what they learned and then apply it to the classroom. "We piece together the tidbits and then try them out". "No one is really responsible. If a teacher goes to a great conference, s/he can ask the principal to have time to share the information at a faculty meeting." "Bits and pieces you try and change according to the needs of your class." "Grade level supervisors report back, otherwise this process is hit or miss." Many were also aware that there were opportunities outside of the district to attend one conference per year, although, many felt that those opportunities have become limited due to budget cuts. We used to have a conference allocation one time per year but that has gone away."

In general, with regard to formal professional development opportunities, teachers are expected to fill out an evaluation form after each PD (professional development), and that information is used to generate future PD. The results are shared with the Assistant Superintendent, curriculum committee and the principals who "are supposed to share the information with us. Sometimes it doesn't get shared." In the past a literacy coach held weekly professional development sessions and teachers thought it was valuable because it focused on learning issues in the building. "When there was a literacy coach at the Primary, accountability and follow-up was great." It was

presumed that the literacy coach position was cut due to budget constraints. Teachers think that those involved in identifying PD initiatives are the upper administration (Assistant Superintendent and principals) and the State Education Department. Teachers can also suggest topics, “but we don’t know if they listen”. They think that the new Assistant Superintendent will give teachers more opportunities to express their interests. “She seems to be a good listener.” Some of the teachers also mentioned a PD committee that plans workshops by gathering information from teachers, as well as the BOE. The BOE has PD goals, but “they are often not on target with what we are doing in the schools. They tend to micromanage too much.”

The following professional development discovery confirmed previous findings about curriculum and instruction. In the past, the school had been involved with a Literacy Collaborative that was facilitated by a literacy coach. This program is viewed as extremely beneficial for promoting the instruction of common methods and language. This initiative is no longer in place, reportedly due to budget cuts. “In the past, we had literacy coaching and weekly meetings within which we discussed instructional strategies and approaches to facilitate successful reading and writing.” While these comments and finding support the importance of the Literacy Collaborative as a proxy for a written curriculum, it also points out a key issue that potentially looms large for the Primary School. That is, without a written curriculum and without budget allocations for extensive professional literacy development, the possibility of consistent, effective ELA instruction begins to diminish. There is a palpable sense of loss and worry about what is going to happen to the literacy approach. In addition, teachers wonder what will happen when new teachers are hired; the consistency in instruction brought about by the Literacy Coach is positive and individuals are worried that with no training for new teachers an inconsistent approach will spring up. “We wonder what is going to happen with new teachers. How are they going to be trained and brought on-board with the Literacy Collaborative and what will happen to our program if they’re not?”

## **Best Practices**

Best practices are shared at grade-level meetings if there is time but there is an apparent ambiguous attitude and no consistent process at the building-level for this occurring. There is an arts program called “Beyond Paper and Pencil” that the teachers support. Some teachers try to keep current with literature on their own. A book club is operating for K-12 teachers district-wide to look at best practices, and it is coordinated by the Literacy Coach at the 3-6 building. At grade level meetings teachers will voluntarily share resources. Sometimes at faculty meetings, teachers and related service staff will do a presentation on an aspect of best practices. “Teachers seem open to lots of sharing”. One group of teachers felt that best practices are not supported, due to a “lack of trust, support and comfort from the principal. You get difficult kids and that’s a backhanded compliment about your strong teaching abilities. If you ask for a schedule change or more support, you are crucified-publicly.” Another group of teachers said the principal gives a lot of support with best practices. “There is a kindergarten phonics program, a continuum of the learning literacy initiative using Fontas and Pinnell, and there are grade-level meetings which give us all an opportunity to share, but sharing is not mandatory”. Most of the teachers like the sharing aspect. “Nothing beats ‘show me’.”

## Other Quotes:

- “Best practice discussions are done inconsistently. For awhile we had a “Best Practices Box” and teachers were encouraged to put their examples of best practices in there to be discussed at faculty meetings.
- “At a building-level, teachers were embarrassed to use a best practices system; ‘We don’t want to toot our own horns. There is a real balancing act between sharing best practices and bringing and bragging.’”
- “The special education teachers have been great resources in sharing best practices at grade levels because they are in the general education classrooms. Informally we try to keep current with the literature.”
- “The principal has given us a lot of support for literacy instruction. The opportunity is there, whether people take advantage of it is questionable.”
- “We try to share what really works at grade-level meetings.”
- “The psychologists had a book on best practices but I haven’t seen it for awhile.”

## Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School

At the Intermediate School, faculty did not all hold the same definition of professional development but several, commonly referenced, initiatives were shared. One, there are very positive perceptions of a focused staff development activity lead by the Literacy Coach (shared earlier in this Audit Report but repeated in this section because of its perceived importance to faculty). The Literacy Coach is part of the P-16 Statewide Literacy Conference. After attending these, she turnkey trains. PD is provided through the Literacy Coach, who states, “No nonsense, but valuable, relevant PD based on teacher suggestions and needs, and district initiatives.” The Literacy Coach uses data to formulate PD trainings, and these trainings focus on how to drive better instruction. Teachers and staff try to align PD with their classroom instruction. The teachers agree that the Literacy Coach provides great accountability and follow-up. “She is always involved and helping us integrate training information back into our classrooms. We also meet weekly with her at ELA meetings.” “These meetings (Literacy Specialist Meetings) are exciting and helpful, we bring work we’ve done, we share techniques that have worked, we discuss ways to help student perform successfully on the ELA.” The special education teachers are included in all weekly meetings with the Literacy Coach. “All teachers are language teachers”. “Even though I’m a special education teacher, I feel just like another ELA teacher at these meetings. It’s great!” Unfortunately, there are a few special education teachers who cannot attend these meetings due to perceived conflicts, e.g. the special education department meets at the same time one time per month and some individuals are involved in Wilson Reading training.

A second professional development initiative relates to after school meetings (faculty meetings) wherein student performance assessment data are reviewed and interpreted so as to highlight areas of strength as well as indicate where students are not performing as well as desired. Some of the ELA skills work is imbedded in class projects, and at other times there are after school meetings “focused on data crunching and lesson design to move instruction forward.” This focus

on reviewing student performance data is a key element in helping bring about a written, taught, and tested curriculum. That faculty meeting agendas are being used for this purpose speaks positively to the efforts of the Intermediate School to put structures in place to improve student learning and achievement.

A third reference professional development activity, mentioned earlier as a support is the work done through CELA (Center on English Learning and Achievement), a SUNY at Albany sponsored organization, which engages school districts in best English Language Arts practices. "This year CELA is focused of staff development at the Intermediate School." Only very positive feedback was gathered from faculty in terms of the CELA staff development.

District professional development initiatives are more commonly spoken of at the Intermediate School level. For instance, it was more widely known that "Maria identifies PD initiatives with her PD committee." It was recognized that staff feedback is also used in determining future PD, as well as feedback from principals. There are evaluation forms that are filled out after every PD, and the information is used to evaluate teacher response, preferences and suggestions for the next round of PD planning. Teachers receive feedback from evaluation forms via email. Maria is responsible for synthesizing evaluation feedback, along with a PD committee. Maria also provides PD, as well as the PD Committee, technology trainers in the district, school wide ELA share out sessions, *Smartboard* trainers, Questar training, NYU, and CELA. Teachers try to take strategies they have learned and use them in their classrooms. "If it's good, we use it!" District-wide conference days consist of one full day and two half days, and when they are planned according to school-wide initiatives they are well received. When the topic is relevant to a whole group of teachers as opposed to "the smaller group", many teachers feel "it is time that could have been spent more productively with grade-level teams." PD is offered outside the district also, and teachers are entitled to attend one conference per year. Conference selection is an individual process based on interest. It seems that teachers feel that the opportunities for such conferences are less available now, due to budget cuts.

Many of the teachers have had the opportunity to score ELA assessments. Only the newest teachers in the building have not had the opportunity, and a regional scoring was taking place at the end of the week when Orion auditors were in the district and some of the teachers interviewed would be participating in that scoring. All teachers believe it is a wonderful PD opportunity. "It really helps when getting the students prepared. You see a lot of different techniques out there that other districts use."

There is no consistent process for identifying "best practices", although at the Intermediate level "best practice" discussions are beginning to occur during Book Club and ELA meeting times. At the Intermediate level, best practices were discussed at length during interviews with all teachers feeling sure they were using best practices. They are identified and disseminated in a variety of ways: Questar, Center for English Learning Achievement (CELA), RSSC, and Data Warehouse being mentioned as some of the agencies which come in the building to train teachers. Within the Intermediate School, teachers meet in collegial circles, ELA weekly meetings and participate in book and article share outs. Grade-level monthly meetings are also a vehicle for disseminating information. Casual lunchtime discussions also occur. At faculty meetings data are also shared and talked about. Teachers also concentrate on student learning styles and incorporate more

hands on learning for kinesthetic learners. “We try to identify what is most appropriate for our students; and make it engaging and useful to them.”

## **Data Usage**

The following questions were asked during interviews with faculty.

- To what degree is the manner in which student data are collected and verified across grade levels, content areas, buildings and student sub-groups consistent?
- Do you use any data in your classroom?
- What kind of data do you use?
- Is state assessment data gathered and shared? If so, how?
- How are these data implemented?

### **John L. Edwards Primary School**

Copious data (Running Records, Marie Clay’s Observational Survey, self-made rubrics, Foundations data, Fast ForWord data, and teacher rankings from year to year) are gathered on each student. Some teachers have tried DIBELS and continue to use it, while others used it for awhile and then discontinued using it. There was not a clear sense as to why it was discontinued, although one teacher remarked, “I wanted them to read better, not score better on the DIBELS.” Another teacher commented: “Last year we tried DIBELS but we found that at the end of the year, the student scores were going down so we changed back to running records. Running records are much more accurate picture of their actual reading progress.” Some switched from DIBELS to LLI, and some use both. Still other teachers use IEP data, data collections for FBAs, writing samples, and conversations with related service personnel. All of these data are definitely used for forming and adjusting student groups (“The resource room teachers meet every 10 weeks to adjust groups.”), but its interpretation and use in making instructional decisions is unclear. The manner in which student data are collected and verified across grade levels, content areas, buildings and student subgroups is not consistent. In fact, data collected and used are inconsistent from grade level to grade level, and in some cases, inconsistent from teacher to teacher within the same grade level. Benchmarks are examined at grade-level meetings. “Fontas and Pinnell are involved with primary benchmark assessments, as well as all of us”. “The data (if it were available) would probably modify student instruction.” Some teachers think that they have minimal control over data used to place children. If you go directly to the AIS team, you are sometimes heard better. When asked about the use of uniformity in the data in the classroom, the response from several teachers was, “the principal looks at overall context in reading, rather than certain, individual programs. We are professional and we can choose what works best for us.”

When asked about state assessment data, how it is gathered and shared, and how it is implemented, the consensus was mixed. What is clear is that there is little discussion or implementation of the state-assessment data at the Primary level. Some teachers had no idea

about state assessment data-what it was or where it was. When asked about how data were gathered, there were many shoulder shrugs around the table. Some recalled attending meetings where the data were shared, but there was no in-depth information. The principal shared data and the report card, but it was taken no further. “The data is shared at faculty meetings. The whole faculty breaks into groups. When asked the question, “What happens in these group sessions?” there was limited response. Some teachers thought the data were helpful at the time it was presented, but there was no follow-up meeting to discuss how it could be used to drive instruction. One teacher commented, “Error analysis would be helpful for us to have...It would be more helpful at the building level so we could see our own students’ progress.”

- “Last year there were a whole bunch of different meetings on how the state gets and uses the data...This year at one of the meetings we went back and looked at the data.” “It has been presented in a power point at superintendent’s day but there is no follow-up.”
- “The state assessment data is hard to understand, it is hard to know what to do with it.”
- “Data may be discussed and implemented at the Intermediate level but not at this level.”

Teachers are provided the opportunity to score state assessments and they find the experience helpful. When asked if they ever have the opportunity to score state assessments, the response was encouraging: “Yes, but on a volunteer basis. The district has made a point of bringing this opportunity to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers so that they can see what is expected if students in third grade”. “Some (opportunity) and the teachers who have scored the assessments have found it very helpful.”

Several particular comments made show a systematic gap in data usage and they point to the need for faculty and staff to truly understand how state assessment data might be used at the Primary School level. One comment made, and understandably so given the lack of experience with data is that: “We have no students who take the assessments because we have no third grade in our building.” Another earlier speculation was confirmed when several Primary School teachers stated that they “felt that these district wide (conference day) offerings were not effective because “their focus was always on the higher grades’ needs, like data and assessment.” Data and assessment should be an integral part of the written, taught and tested curriculum at any level. While there may be differences of perceptions as to what constitutes “data and assessment”, this apparent aversion to professional development about data and assessment may suggest an important future need for consideration.

Suppose K-2 teachers were able to item by item review the performance of third grade students on a state assessment along with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers. By recognizing general patterns of performance and reviewing 3<sup>rd</sup> grade curriculum, primary school teachers could potentially emphasize certain ELA curricular areas and deemphasize others. Systematic data usage should be used not only with current students, but when reviewed K-6, there should be evidence that adjustments might be made K-6, not just at the grade level where the student is taking the assessment.

## Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School

At the Intermediate level student data collection and verification across grade levels and content areas is becoming more consistent than in previous years. The Literacy Coach plays an important role in this. She schedules weekly ELA meetings and data is discussed and used to drive instruction. Item analysis information pinpoints students' weak skills areas. Since all teachers teach all content areas, teachers can then focus on those skills and apply best practices across all content areas. Other data that teachers use to inform instruction include DIBELS, SRI, benchmarking with Fontas and Pinnell, student writing notebooks, and teacher-made assessments. "We are trying to change the way we look at data so that, it drives everything we do."

In the 2009-2010 year, at the Intermediate level, state assessment data are being gathered and shared. A Superintendent's Conference Day was held and all state assessment data were shared on power point slides. The Literacy Coach then "broke down" the data for her building, and through ELA weekly meetings, the data have been analyzed. A mock ELA assessment was administered to all students in January, 2010, using the assessment from 2009. The assessments were then scored in-house, using the training and scoring methods used for a regional scoring. Then an item analysis was done on testing items, to pinpoint weak skills areas of students at all grade levels. These skills became the focus for data-driven instruction until the NYS Assessments were administered in May, 2010. One teacher commented: "Item analysis is much more helpful than the old scores of 1-2-3-4."

Prior to this year, teachers in the building did not have a good sense of what happened to the data after it was scored. "We give the assessments, and the scoring takes place. The results do not come back in a timely fashion so we have to look at our own students and decide what they need." "Our Literacy Coach has tried to show us some data and help us use it in our classrooms to strengthen student skills". "When scores come back, they are helpful in a looping situation, because at least we have the same students for two years, so we can use some of the data." "We examine the State assessment data in ELA at grade-level meetings. We look at general strengths and weaknesses as revealed by the data then examine the data on our individual students. We found that students were by-in-large having difficulty with non-fiction and poetry. Now they are doing better because we focused instruction on them." "This year we completed our own scoring and information at grade-level and we sat and figured out what types of questions the students did poorly on." Staff is hoping to see improvement in some of those pre-identified skills areas. However, it is important to note that there is a perception that the ELA test is separate from and requires different instruction than the curricula. One or two individuals talked about analyzing skills-strands from the ELA but by-in-large the perception was that the ELA examination is something you prepare for in concentrated bursts, and then you get back to teaching. "While getting ready for the ELA we postponed our guided reading centers and reading groups. Now that it is over, we are back to teaching."

## **Additional Document Review**

### **Professional Development Plan (PDP)**

The mission and school climate statements prefacing the PDP are strongly student centered. Some of the points in each of these statements are more focused and relevant than others. For example:

- Challenge each student using a rich curriculum founded upon research based, developmentally appropriate best practices versus:
- Embrace all challenges and celebrate all successes

The Plan itself, as it should be, is a combination of what the PDP committee will be doing to direct and focus professional development in the district, conclusions already drawn, and the inclusion of data for evidence. In the instance of the Hudson City School District PDP reviewed, it is a combination of ‘the plan’ and the required annual report. If there is a report written every year, as SED requires, it would be important to see how the plan, with data and conclusions and redirection of goals, is carried out in a forward manner.

In the Plan, the list of training opportunities and service providers is extensive (with sixteen service providers listed), and diverse e.g. Project Adventure training, Responsive Classroom, Positive Behavior Interventions Support training, Reading Recovery, suggesting a reactive approach to professional development instead of a defined, goal-oriented process focused on continuous improvement in student performance. However, in the plan itself, it states a specific goal – 80% of grades 3-8 students will score at levels 3 and 4 on ELA and Math. This is followed by objectives and an action plan which is very appropriate to remediation of the needs stated in the goal. Recognizing that the PDP is, in part, “negotiated”, it would be a desired direction to have the PDP much more heavily focused in its written form on the specific goal of student performance improvement and less attention paid to a possible “menu-centered” approach to professional development. Certainly, teachers have an introspective view of their particular development needs but this view needs to be tied directly to the focused mission and direction of the district around standards-based curriculum in order to maximize everyone’s investment in meeting the learning needs of students.

Another example where there appears to be a question about degree of focus is where graduation rates are brought into the “need area” with the following stated objective: “Expand curriculum offerings to serve a wider range of student interests and improve career exploration and opportunities.” This may just be a difference in educational philosophy, but it seems that if graduation rates need to be increased, which depends on student achievement on tests of the standards in ELA and math, then an expansion of curriculum offerings does not serve that direct purpose.

## **New Employees Mentoring Opportunity Plan (NEMO)**

Ancillary to the Professional Development Plan (PDP), this plan sets forth the procedures of the mentoring program, expectations and remuneration. However, there is no process stated for evaluation of the effectiveness of the program. All processes and programs within the district should be as focused, directly, on student learning outcomes as much as possible. Recognizing that mentoring programs need to provide a variety of supports for new teachers, a critical support could be an in-depth understanding of standards-based instruction. While instructional strategies and instructional problem solving are often topics of conversation between the mentor and person being mentored, the inclusion of developing standards-based instructional understanding is not included in the plan at this time.

## **APPR (Annual Professional Performance Review)**

The Hudson City School District's Annual Professional Performance Review [APPR] is a detailed document defining the process, goals, and standards of professional practice. It includes the forms pertinent to supervision and evaluation. These are concise and focused. The standards are based on the Danielson model and give teachers and staff a basis and direction for reflection to improve practice. The Individual Development Plan form carries the most potential to change classroom instruction, teacher-by-teacher, to improve student achievement. While all the components for an effective program of staff evaluation and supervisory experiences are in place, there are questions that we believe are important for the district to consider. Obviously, within each question is an implied "finding".

- To what extent do administrators and supervisors promote, support, "wrestle with" and hold teachers responsible for thoughtful, goal-oriented, respectful instructional reflection and improvement?
- To what extent is goal-setting, observations and supervisory discussions driven by district and school needs, i.e. student needs? Is there a focus on student achievement goals, professional development opportunities, and the supervisory process? How closely tied is the PDP and the SPPT in the daily lives of teachers and administrators?
- How much informal and formal discussion occurs between administrator and tenured teacher? With the teacher apparently establishing the goal for the "supervisory experience", it would appear challenging for the supervisor to have the teacher goal *directly* aligned with the written, taught, and tested standards-based curriculum. It also appears that with only one required observation every three years, there is limited potential for supervisor and teacher to discuss observed practice in terms of the written, taught and tested standards-based curriculum.

## **Academic Intervention Services Plan (AIS)**

This is a very detailed report on the process of the remediation of students who achieve at levels 1 and 2. It includes entrance criteria, exit criteria, identification procedures, communication requirements, service possibilities, and process monitoring. While we can appreciate that the district wants to fulfill the requirements of supporting students in need, as put forth by the NYS Education Department, the AIS Plan is laden with rules, paperwork and “leg work”, before any remediation occurs. The staff time consumed by the process, if indeed it is carried through as stated, might be greater than the time actually spent with the student. In fairness, this characterization can probably be applied to most districts’ AIS Plans. However, it should be the future direction to have the AIS plan reflects the district’s intent in practice of making sure individual student needs are constantly being identified and met within the classroom.

Questions posed for district future reflection?

- To what extent do classroom teachers and AIS teachers communicate individual student strengths and needs face-to-face and how focused are the needs and the resulting instruction?
- Is the work encompassed by this plan evaluated and tied into student achievement, professional development and supervisory goals?
- What is the past performance record of students in this program?
- Is the program growing in size?

## Clarifications to Audit Recommendations

**Key Recommendation #1: Continue the curriculum mapping work that has been started in the district with a specific focus on developing standards-based units with specific objectives, performance indicators, assessments, and strategies being woven together, explicitly, within each unit.**

**And, considering the Audit's extended analysis of the ELA Curriculum Documents.**

**Presentation Question:** What instances of exemplar standards-based unit development did the Audit team find within the District ELA Curriculum Framework Binder?

The Audit analysis identified the following three exemplars from the ELA Curriculum Binder as standards-based units:

- Grade 1 page 2: Theme: Culture, Community, Citizenship. Essential questions are appropriate, challenging and student centered. Reading, writing, listening/speaking experiences are detailed enough to support lesson planning
- Grade 2 page 1: Theme: Hudson Community. Builds on Grade 1 unit cited above. Reading experiences and essential questions are linked. Writing, listening/speaking experiences are detailed, specific to essential questions and standards.
- Grade 5 page 3: Theme: Transformation/Change. Essential questions are interesting, broad, student centered. For all themes grade 5 and 6, writing experiences are tied to specific standards that supports lesson planning.

Other informative observations made from the Audit analysis of the ELA Curriculum Framework Binder include:

- The Binder has organized the standards in a helpful manner. As we know the four ELA standards are:
  - Students will read, write, listen and speak for information and understanding
  - Students will read, write, listen and speak for literary response and expression
  - Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation
  - Students will read, write, listen and speak for social interaction
- For each grade are listed the performance indicators for each standard, separating out indicators for reading for each of the four standards, and for writing for each of the four standards, and for listening and speaking for each of the four standards. The 4x4 matrix (actually 4x3 because listening and speaking are grouped together) organization of the performance indicators provides a very easy source for teachers to understand and use.

- The curriculum in the Binder is organized by grade with usually four themes each for the year. Kindergarten has three themes based on the seasons; grade 1 and grade 4 have 5 or 6 themes. Each theme has essential questions, reading experiences, writing experiences and listening/speaking experiences. Some grades (grades 5, 6, 7, and 8) further sub-divide the writing experiences by standard (e.g. writing experiences for information and understanding, writing experiences for literary response and expression, etc.)
- Standard 4 is not well documented in the Binder so it is not complete.

**Key Recommendation #5: Adjust the delivery and content of special education programming so as to assure each student receives equal access to quality instruction and to the curriculum.**

**Presentation Question:** Any recommendation for a cost-effective way to do this in the Intermediate School?

We recognize there is not ever a perfect manner in which to accomplish this recommendation. However, based on our recollection of your specific structures and staff, we recommend the following instructional approach for your further consideration.

This first section on approach is followed by an outline of a possible pathway to accomplishing this end.

As per our Recommendation #5, instead of dividing students by age and grade-level, students can be divided by Assessment tasks, in this way keeping all the Alternate Assessment students and all the State Assessment students in two separate groupings. Doing this would require that the groupings span grade-levels. We believe that up to a three year span is already approved by the State. If you have only one or two students at a particular grade-level that does not fit within the three year span, you could apply for a variance. Then, the Alternate Assessment group could take more of a functional approach while the group including the students challenging the State Assessment could focus on the essential-to-know skills and content. With this latter group, you can then shift from a content to a skills approach. Perhaps all teachers working with this group of students could do some Curriculum Skill mapping whereby they select skills for mastery and all teach those skills in a period of the day entitled a "skills" approach. It would make sense to teach the skills in homogeneous groupings based on need. The students could then be grouped among different teachers according to grade-level and with the teachers focusing on content lessons in which they facilitate use of the agreed upon skill, thereby promoting generalization and practice of the essential skills on selected content.

Taking such an approach will require significant scheduling support. For instance, the students in the self-contained classes might have to be the first scheduled for 'specials' so that the teachers are then able to organize their days in such a way as to have a skills period based on student need and then divide the students up by grade-level based on content.

While we do not have current information on student counts, it seems that there are approximately 30-35 students per grade-level. We reconstructed this from our interview schedules and other information we had available at the beginning of the audit project. According to this analysis, there are 6 full-time reading teachers, 10 special education teachers and 1 part-time special education/reading teacher at the Intermediate School.

Currently the reading teachers do not work with special education students. We believe they could be of significant help in teaching skills and helping to meet the needs and spread the load of the special education students.

While we know there is no perfect way to do this, we believe that if you can free up one of the special education co-teachers to teach a self-contained class there could be a workable reconfiguration with the present staffing.

Reading		Special Education (10 total)	
Green	3-4 Reading	<u>Self-contained</u>	
Kreig	3-4 Reading	McCagg	(12:1:1)
Blake	3-4 Reading	Ordway	(12:1:2)
Fiorino	5-6 Reading	Sheridan	(8:1:2)
Becker	5-6 Reading	<u>Co-teachers</u>	
Dolan	3-6 Reading	Gaylord	3
Semanick	Special Education	Audinino	4
	Reading (.5)	Hungerford	4
		Seminak	4 (.5)
		McGeary	5
		Merwin	5
		Spanakos	6
		Van Alphen	6

Reconfiguring the model will require that the special education co-teachers pick up a few more students in their classes so that they can free-up one of these teachers to teach a self-contained group. This reorganization depends on the number of students at each grade-level.

- 2 Self-contained State Assessment 12:1:2 Classes (grades 3-4 and grades 5-6)
- 1 Self-contained 8:1:2 class (grades 3-6) \*
- 1 Self-contained Alternate Assessment Class (grades 3-6) \*

\* Both the last two above will likely require a state variance.

Again, such organization will necessitate creative scheduling for specials so that the teachers can group more effectively for instruction.

Reading teachers could be used in the two 12:1:2 classes to teach small skill groups thus allowing for some targeted content and facilitated skills generalization teaching by the special education teachers. Targeting and mapping skills over the year so that there is a coordinated effort would be essential. Skills would need to be thought of not just as reading, writing, and listening skills but also as the skills necessary for performing on the State Assessment. (i.e., how to write a DBQ, how to read questions strategically, etc.).

If Lisa Dolan, or someone as knowledgeable as she, could help facilitate the skills identification and work with the reading and special education teachers to help organize skills mapping and related generalization training to the content, we believe this model could work well for the Montgomery C. Smith Intermediate School.