DISTRICT AUDIT TOOL: A METHOD FOR DETERMINING LEVEL OF NEED FOR SUPPORT TO IMPROVEMENT

Jan Sheinker, Kimberly Hambrick, Diane Lowery, David Lamitina, Christine Steele, Kathy St. Clair, Keith Butcher, and Ted Jarrell

with

Capacity Building for Support and Corrective Action to Districts and Schools under AYP Study Group

and

Region IV Comprehensive Technical Assistance Center at Edvantia (Formerly AEL)

Comprehensive Assessment Systems for ESEA Title I
State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards

December 2005

Acknowledgements

This paper resulted from the work of the Capacity Building for Delivery of Support and Corrective Action to Districts and Schools under AYP Study Group comprised of state education specialists and consultants the Comprehensive Assessment Systems for ESEA Title I (CAS) State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS). The members of the Study Group benefited tremendously from discussions among SCASS colleagues throughout 2003, 2004, and 2005:

Margaret MacKinnon, Alaska
Cathy Anderegg, Alaska
Maria Reyes, California (former co-chair)
Ronald Houston, Delaware
Ted Jarrell, Delaware (co-chair)
Tony Ruggiero, Delaware
Bernadette Morris, Louisiana
Ed Roeber, Michigan
Peter Winograd, New Mexico
Kathy St. Clair, Nevada
Diane Lowery, South Dakota (co-chair)
Gary Skoglund, South Dakota
Deborah Brown, West Virginia
Keith Butcher, West Virginia
James Wall, Wisconsin
Cheryl Schroeder, Wyoming
Christine Steele, Wyoming (co-chair)
John Ross (Edvantia/AEL)
Doris Redfield (Edvantia/AEL)

H. Gary Cook (Affiliate)
Grace Ross (ED)

Jan Sheinker, CAS SCASS Coordinator
Kimberly Hambrick, Edvantia/AEL, Researcher
Arthur Halbrook, Editor, CCSSO

CCSSO received financial support for the development of this paper from the SCASS member states and Edvantia/AEL received support from the U.S. Department of Education.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

ISBN 1-933757-01-9

Table of Contents

Introduction

Overview of the Tool

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires States to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) determinations for all districts/schools to develop school support systems for schools that do not make AYP and to provide direct support to districts in need of improvement under AYP. Given that the proportion of schools and districts likely to be identified under AYP criteria are likely to continue to increase rapidly, most States lack the capacity in fiscal and human resources to deliver uniform levels of quality support to all identified districts and to other districts in their delivery of support to schools. The support needed should be of a nature and quality that can reasonably be expected to lead to significant improvement. In addition, the same assistance may not be needed and may, in fact, interfere with the districts' progress if the assistance is inappropriate or distracting from the problems that resulted in the failure to meet AYP in the first place. Although technical assistance is provided in some form for every district missing AYP targets for two consecutive years, the intensity and the focus of assistance will vary depending on level of need and each district's specific barriers to success.

The District Audit Tool was designed to assist in formulating intensity and focus of technical assistance by helping the State:

- Prioritize which districts failing to meet AYP requirements require the most intense and immediate assistance;
- Quantitatively and qualitatively judge the status of these districts against the research-based elements that represent successful schools and districts;
- Identify their short, medium, and long term needs to improve student learning; and
- Assign/confer with districts on a plan for how, when, and by whom technical assistance will be delivered and progress will be monitored on plan implementation.

This tool examines the quantitative and qualitative data that most States have collected in some form about their districts. This data are examined in several stages that differentiate the degree of failure to meet AYP and information about the districts' reform efforts. Areas of investigation are based upon available research concerning those elements that correlate to success in producing high student achievement.

The user is reminded that all districts and schools that miss AYP targets will receive technical assistance. The District Audit Tool is designed to increase the validity of judgments about the degree and intensity of technical assistance to be delivered.

Pilot States

Four States participated in the field test of the District Audit Tool: Nevada, South Dakota, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Each State used and customized the District Audit Tool to

meet their individual needs and to provide a seamlessly integrated system of support to improvement where complementary systems existed.

South Dakota implemented the first four stages as designed during the field test year. The final stage, which is a monitoring stage, will be implemented in the coming school year. Each of the other States used various stages of the tool for varying purposes.

Nevada used the tool at the school level rather than the district level. The rubrics used for conducting the desk audit and on-site investigations were developed simultaneously with the District Audit Tool. As a result, rubrics useful for prioritizing technical assistance to schools were available.

West Virginia used the tool to prioritize levels of technical assistance and to identify exemplary schools. Having a system already in place for carrying out a comprehensive school improvement initiative, the State found the activities of Stage 3 were taking place using methodologies that paralleled those provided in the later stages of the District Audit Tool.

Wyoming used the tool to prioritize technical assistance to Title I schools and to assist them in determining funding allocations for school improvement. The State plans to make the District Audit Tool available for use by districts in prioritizing technical assistance to their schools identified under AYP provisions of the NCLB Act.

Evolution of the Tool

The final District Audit Tool as described in this document has evolved as a result of the experiences of these States. Their experiences also led to the development by Edvantia (formerly AEL) of a user friendly software package called the Metric Calculator to provide a simple means of conducting the data analysis of AYP results for Stage One of the tool. The software is highly adaptable because the needs and intentions of the States in the field test group varied. This software package is available from Edvantia at the following website address: **http://www.edvantia.org/aypmetric.**

Review of the Literature

In developing a tool that is essentially diagnostic, the CAS SCASS Capacity Building for Support and Corrective Action to Districts and Schools Under AYP (CBDS) Study Group wanted to learn what might be found in the research literature regarding those elements that may have an impact on student achievement. A literature review was conducted by Edvantia for the Study Group. The CBDS Study Group also examined the many examples available from their own and other States in their efforts to identify and define those elements most critical to success in producing improved student achievement. The information gleaned from the review of the literature was used to determine which of the elements found commonly in the many State documents were most critical to success. This information helped to define what data analyses would be need from the Metric Calculator. The research was also used to define the criteria for each element measured

by the District Audit Rubric, described later in this document. These elements and criteria are used to diagnose the areas that may be interfering with improved student achievement in the district. The complete review of the literature is available in Appendix A. The bibliography found in Appendix G resulting from that literature review includes the key source documents for the development of the District Audit Tool.

The literature review identified a number of correlates of school district effectiveness or difficulty: leadership, academic content and achievement standards, curriculum and instruction, staff qualifications, professional development, assessment and accountability, budget and resources, school culture and climate, and parent and community relationships. A combination of coherent structures and policies, and supportive organizational culture, aids districts in their efforts to support schools, staff, and students with varying needs. Moreover, according to researchers, clear focus on nurturing students' academic development—extending through leadership decisions to classroom instruction to respectful and inclusive community relationships— is a hallmark of effective districts. In such districts, assessment is used to tailor curriculum and instruction, and data are examined regularly by a variety of stakeholders to improve student learning. Resources and staff time are leveraged to optimize student outcomes, while staff themselves are supported with meaningful professional development and collegiality. Effective districts are also committed to educational equity, with staff who reject deficit views of at-risk students.

Ultimately, the literature suggests that district effectiveness is a complicated matter. The interplay of various structures and organizational norms is clearly important to the success of district efforts; yet, precisely how they interact varies across districts. Nonetheless, the literature indicates that the issues listed earlier, ranging from leadership to community relationships, are key to the efficacy or ineffectiveness of districts.

Overview of Stages

The District Audit Tool consists of a five stage process resulting in a technical assistance plan that is developed in collaboration between the State or its designee and each district and culminating in an evaluation of the plan. A team of individuals may be designated to carry out the quantitative and qualitative procedures required to determine level and type of technical assistance needs based on the District Audit Tool. This "Decision Team" may have different membership configurations and responsibilities depending upon the organization.

Decision Team Membership

At the outset, a determination needs to be made concerning who will take responsibility for conducting the desk audit. The State may already have a team who collects this type of information for other purposes that are a likely group to conduct the audit. The State may wish to designate a Decision Team that will examine the data and conduct the audit that represents a cross-section of those who are likely to have access to the necessary data and a need for the information. This team may be cross departmental units and may include representation from the units or workgroups responsible for the following functions:

- **Title I:** As the driving force of NCLB and the program charged with insuring that technical assistance is provided appropriately to districts who do not meet AYP targets, this group has the highest level of interest in the outcome of the district audit.
- **Assessment:** As the individuals who are responsible for the key information on student achievement, this group is a major source of data both for conducting the audit and for monitoring district progress.
- **Accountability:** As the individuals responsible for AYP determinations, this group is also a major source of data used in the audit process.
- **State improvement, accreditation or related programs:** As the individuals who often conduct quantitative and qualitative review of districts with regard to many of the elements included in the audit rubrics, this group not only is a major source of data used in the process but may be a major beneficiary of the product. They also have an interest in ensuring that the qualitative data are valid and reliable because of its usefulness for their other tasks.
- **Teacher quality:** As individuals responsible for data regarding teacher qualifications and charged with improving teacher quality, this group is both a major source of data for the audit and a key resource for carrying out support activities.
- **Safe schools:** As individuals responsible for data regarding school safety, this group is a major source of data for the audit.
- **Professional development:** As individuals responsible for delivering support to districts, this group has a significant interest in the process and the outcome of the audit.

The Decision Team may designate individuals to collect specific pieces of data from within the Department for use by the group and specify individuals to conduct the on-site

investigation depending upon the results of the desk audit. The Decision Team may or may not participate in on-site investigations because the elements of concern will differ from district to district. Therefore, team members will vary from district to district.

Conducting the Audit

Each stage in the audit adds to the information that can be used to ensure the districts with the greatest challenge to achieving AYP receive the most intensive technical assistance and that the technical assistance plan ultimately formulated in collaboration with the district focuses on those elements of the system that present the greatest barriers to success. The close examination of multiple data sources allows the Decision Team to triangulate the data about a district so that the evidence converges to reveal which districts require what kind of technical assistance. The Decision Team uses both quantitative and qualitative data to make these determinations and, in so doing, guards against misinterpretation resulting from the use of isolate data that may describe an event rather than a persistent pattern of failure.

Stage 1

Stage 1 is a process for conducting an initial identification of each district's level of need for technical assistance using adequate yearly progress data. A procedure is described for analyzing AYP data to take into account the extent to which entire student populations and percent of subgroups missed achievement, participation, and other indicators. These data are systematically weighted. This weighting creates a scale that sufficiently differentiates districts by the number and degree by which they missed targets.

Using the cumulative data from this analysis, districts or school scores are rank ordered. Using the rank ordered list, the districts or schools are divided into quintiles and placed into a chart based on the number of consecutive years they have failed to meet AYP targets and the quintile into which their rankings fall.

The State then develops level of need performance descriptors to be used in setting cut points on the chart. These cut scores are set (cells are identified) to separate the continuum of districts into levels of need. Findings from this standard setting process will be used in the next stages. See the Stage 1 in the next chapter for a detailed explanation of this procedure.

Stage 1

Stage 1a: Data Analysis: Priority Point Prioritizing
- Calculate priority points using formula and other indicators
- Rank order districts or schools based on priority points formula

Stage 1b: Preliminary Decision Point: Initial Determination of Level of Need
- Assign districts/schools to cells based on quintiles and years missing AYP targets
- Develop Level of Need performance descriptors
- Set cut points for Levels of Need

Stage 2

Stage 2 refines the determination of level and type of assistance needed based on an analysis of additional information. The State has grouped districts or schools into Preliminary Levels of Need from the Standards Setting findings at the end of Stage 1. This information is then re-examined at the beginning of Stage 2 to verify the validity of those decisions based on additional data. In re-examining the assigned level of need, the State takes into account the participation, graduation, and attendance rates and other indicator AYP targets. An examination of the validity of the determinations made in Stage 1 is conducted based on an analysis of these and other factors that may call the validity of the determination into question. Many of these circumstances will have been considered as part of an appeals process. These include factors such as inaccurate data input, erratic trends, changing demographics, and other factors that may result in movement of a district from one level to another.

Finally, adjustments are made to the level of need assignments of each district based upon these findings. For example, a district or school may be moved up or down a level, depending upon the impact of this information. Districts missing these targets in addition to achievement targets may be moved down a level. Districts that missed these targets but did not miss rates and other indicators are already ranked according to achievement and may not be moved. Or, judges may choose to move the district to a high level of need if the graduation rate is the area of concern but not if participation rate is the area of concern since the true achievement of the district will not be known until all students are tested. Districts that did not miss these targets but did miss achievement targets may be considered appropriately ranked already

The next step in Stage 2 involves conducting a desk audit. The focus of this analysis is to examine more closely those districts assigned to the highest levels of need, usually levels 3 through 5. However, a State may decide that only levels 4 and 5 will be examined further depending upon their capacity to deliver intensive assistance. In some cases, States will conduct Stage 2 investigations for levels 3 through 5 the first year or two when fewer districts are identified and drop the Stage 2 investigations to levels 4 and 5 in subsequent years when more districts are identified. This is a policy decision based on capacity and resources since all levels will receive some type of technical assistance.

Locating Data Sources for the Desk Audit

Once the adjustments are made so that districts accurately fall into the highest levels of need are properly placed, the State determines the location of data sources from across the Department that are useful for conducting a desk audit of key elements related to district effectiveness. States collect large volumes of information about districts as required by State and federal laws, by compliance requirements, or by various State board and legislative requirements. These data are often housed throughout the State department of education with no overall organizational structure to provide access across the department to the information these data sources contain. In addition, some of this information may be duplicative or even contradictory. However, the process of

organizing the information for use in conducting the desk audit has the added benefit of allowing States to utilize the information they collect more efficiently, to reduce duplication in data collection, and to create a broad view of the operations of districts within the State. A *District Desk Audit Data Tool: Data Sources and Analyses* (hereafter cited as *Data Tool*) is provided that links various data sources to elements and criteria included in the Desk Audit Rubrics used to conduct this part of the investigation. The State is encouraged to customize the list of data sources to specify those available in their State based on that research.

A set of rubrics are used in Stage 2 to evaluate the information gathered. These rubrics are used to determine areas of concern for the district. The elements and criteria are based on a review of the literature on those elements present in districts that are successful in producing high levels of student achievement for all of its students. The criteria for each element are based on descriptions of the operations of these districts related to the elements. These elements and criteria are familiar to readers of educational research.

The intended outcome of this analysis is to clarify the level of need of districts based on the areas of concern, use qualitative information to further inform level of need, group districts for assistance based on area of concern, and narrow the focus of on-site investigations to those elements and criteria that both quantitative and qualitative data suggest are potential sources of interference in meeting AYP targets.

The steps in the Stage 2 are briefly outlined below:

Stage 2

Stage 2a: Desk Audit Analysis of other consideration = Validity of the priority determination

- Examine participation rates for districts, and graduation and other indicators for schools (failing AYP)
- Gather data from other SEA sources
- Examine all available data elements over at least the last 3 years
- Adjust level of need assignment based on findings
- Determine which districts will receive desk audit (eligible for intensive assistance)

Stage 2b: Desk audit conducted on districts to receive intensive assistance

- Customize *Data Tool*
- Gather each of data sources for each target district
- Conduct desk audit
- Use rubric tool to record evidence for each of the criteria and list findings

Stage 2c: Data analysis: Score and identify areas of concern

- Score desk audit to identify priority areas of the rubric for each district
  - areas of clear problems identified in the desk audit based on scoring of

desk audit where complete data are available
  - areas of uncertainty = bad data, data contradictions, missing data
  - areas of no data
- Review results of desk audit
- Form initial hypothesis for areas of greatest concern
- Determine areas for further investigation during on-site visit

Stage 2d: Decision point: Adjust level of assistance based on rubric scores
- Level 1 – (low need) Data analysis workshop only; school improvement conference
- Level 2 – (moderate need) Targeted regional professional development; trainer of trainer for district personnel; district TA to schools
- Level 3 – (high need) State district support team; regional service center assistance
- Level 4 – (intensive need) on-site State district support team; direct and sustain mentoring
- Level 5 – (urgent intervention) restructuring; alternative governance

Stage 3

Stage 3 involves planning and conducting the on-site visit. Districts that remain at high need levels depending on the State's policy decision (Level 3 through 5 or Levels 4 and 5) will be visited to further investigate areas of concern. This stage is intended to focus attention on specific elements, not to investigate all of the elements in the rubric. At least some of the elements should have been eliminated based on the desk audit. Both efficiency and effectiveness militate against an on-site investigation of all elements.

In this stage, the State will also determine the team that will participate in the on-site investigation based on their expertise in the area of concern. The information gathered will be used in the development of the technical assistance plan. Care and expertise are needed in gathering information that will lead to support for improved performance by the district in meeting AYP targets.

Training for on-site investigators will be needed to ensure consistency in evaluating and reporting on what is observed. Investigators will also need training on the tools such as survey and observational tools they will use to gather information and clarify concerns. Some survey tools may be used to collect additional information prior to the visit. During the visit, the team will confirm results from these surveys.

Finally, the team will use the same rubrics used in the desk audit to score and summarize information about those elements they are investigating further. Two raters should be assigned to each element under investigations. The group uses the information gathered to draw conclusions about which areas are still of concern, what criteria present the

greatest challenge for the elements of concern, and identify and summarize key findings for use in formulating the technical assistance plan. The steps for Stage 3 are as follows:

Stage 3

Stage 3a: Pre on-site visit activity

- Determine team based on expertise in areas of concern identified in the desk audit
- Assign team members to specific areas for on-site investigation
- Train personnel in on-site investigation procedures
- Plan investigation of specific areas to be examined
- Schedule review time to be used to examine each relevant element
- Facilitator/Team leader works with the Superintendent to facilitate review
- Gather all materials and tools needed by each review team member

Stage 3b: Conduct on-site visit: Gather data on elements of concern

- Use survey tools, observation protocols, focus group protocols to gather data
- Clarify the rules of engagement
- Discuss State investigators' norms of behavior/code of ethics for their conduct during the on-site visit

Stage 3c: Decision point: Analyze data from on-site visit and summarize findings

- Score areas investigated
- Draw conclusions and form hypotheses
- Review findings and create summary report

Stage 3d: Evaluation of the process:

- Gather data to refine process
- Analyze data to revise documents and process procedures

Stage 4

Stage 4 is the point at which the State uses the data gathered in Stage 1 through 3 to formulate the technical assistance plan in collaboration with the district. The State needs to share the information gathered and collaborate with districts on the priorities for each. Once those priorities have been set, the State may decide there are a number of districts with similar concerns that could be grouped for delivery of professional development, collaborative work on shared problems, and oversight by assigned State or regional personnel.

Each district will need to be involved in a review of the District Audit Report. Using this information, the State or its designee and the District confer to develop a specific plan of action for the State's support to the District and the District's support to its schools. An agreement on timelines, personnel assignments, and tasks will be needed. The success of

this plan will depend upon the precision with which the elements of concern and relevant criteria have been identified in order for the collaborators to determine a beginning and milestones for the work. The district technical assistance providers agreed upon may not be State personnel at all. However, the State has responsibility for oversight, monitoring, and assurance that the plan is being carried out. Those districts at the highest level of need will require the closest monitoring.

Stage 4

Stage 4a: Setting priorities for Technical Assistance Plan

- Specify priorities for TA plan
- Group districts with similar needs

Stage 4b: Formulating the District Technical Assistance Plan

- Review report
- Confer with district
- Develop plan

Stage 5

The State monitors each district's progress in plan implementation and progress in improving student achievement. This oversight is necessary, even if a regional agency or other entity provides the direct assistance. Mechanisms for reporting on the completion of targets set within the technical assistance plans and evaluation of the success with which those targets have been met are necessary to ensure tasks are carried out, that they are operating as designed and producing the expected results. In short, there is evidence the plan has been operationalized and evidence of the degree of success it has produced.

If another entity is responsible for providing the direct assistance, the State needs to ensure the primary technical assistance provider receives feedback on the progress of the plan and is giving feedback to the district on implementation of the plan. Adjustments may be required if a fully implemented plan is not producing the desired results. The State may need to take action if the technical assistance provider is failing to provide the agreed upon assistance or oversight of the plan.

Stage 5 is designed to create a feedback system for use in examining progress at a deeper level than possible through AYP changes. Revisiting both the qualitative and quantitative analysis features of the District Audit Tool is necessary for this purpose.

Stage 5

Stage 5a: Progress reports on completion of timeline targets
- Targets completed
- Evaluation of success
- What worked/what did not work
- Proposed changes or adjustments

Stage 5b: Quantitative measurement of progress: AYP Achievement Metric revisited
- Measuring Progress using Methods #1 or #2
- Determining Method(s) to be used

Stage 5c: Feedback on progress
- Evaluation and feedback on progress
- Suggestions for changes or improvements

Stage 5d: Decision points
- Continuation or adjustment of plan
- Verifying predictions and identification of exemplars

Serving all districts in need of improvement

Whether a district is at the lowest level of need or the highest, the States provide some form of assistance in the improvement effort. Districts at the lowest level of need may receive help in the form of data analysis workshops to assist them in using AYP data to plan improvement efforts. Some districts that have a well-developed system of guidance, professional development, and oversight for schools may require little else to produce improved achievement in its schools. States may group districts at lower levels of need by the subgroups in which they failed to meet AYP targets for delivery of specific professional development or other assistance. For example, many districts may fail to meet AYP targets for special education only or limited English proficient students only. These districts might benefit from working together with experts in these populations to plan strategies for improvement. Other districts may require some assistance from regional service centers or "arms length" assistance such as web based resources and internet checks. To find a more in-depth discussion of the menu of assistance and strategies for determining assistance to low level of need districts, see Appendix B-E.

Using the audit tool data to serve alternative purposes

Some States have found that the depth of analysis provided by the audit tool lends strength to other decisions. Each State will use the findings from different stages of the audit tool to assist them in making a variety of decisions about recognition and rewards, professional development planning, and funding priorities as well as focusing technical assistance efforts.

One State plans to use the District/School Audit Tool in four ways:

1. First, completion of the audit process will determine not only the degree of technical assistance the LEAs and schools need in order to close the achievement gap while reaching the goal of proficiency for all students in reading and mathematics, but will yield a blueprint for the specific professional development and technical assistance that will be necessary for each LEA and school. For this purpose, all five stages of the audit tool will be used.
2. Second, school improvement funding and Comprehensive School Reform funding will be based on the degree of need identified by the completion of stages 1 and 2 of the audit tool.
3. By using the audit tool with high performing schools, the State can identify exemplary practices that can be replicated throughout the State to increase student achievement in low-performing schools. All five stages of the audit tool will need to be completed to identify research-based practices and strategies that can be replicated in other school or districts.
4. Finally, the State will use the results from the completion of stage one of the audit tool combined with site visits to identify Title I Distinguished Schools.

Another State is using the results of this analysis first to prioritize the flow of State remediation money to schools that did not meet AYP targets or are already in school improvements. When the State reads applications from these schools, the State will use the prioritized list to establish funding priorities starting with those with the highest priority and continuing down the list until funds have been exhausted. This approach allows the State to provide funding to schools with the highest level of need at a level that can be useful for making substantive changes necessary to improve student outcomes, rather than spreading the money so thinly that no school can do anything meaningful.

This State also anticipates another alternative use of the priority points system. The results will be used to determine which schools the State will fund for the Comprehensive School Reform Program. The State used the results of the priority points analysis to invite Title I eligible (but not served) schools to indicate whether or not they would like pursue this funding. Then, the State will use the Audit Rubrics from Stages 2 and 3 to make site visits to the schools which have indicated interest. Based on scores schools receive based on the rubric, the State will determine which schools will receive CSR funding this year.

Another State will calculate priority points for both schools and districts. However, the school information will be passed on to districts. Districts in this State have sole responsibility for providing technical assistance to their schools. Because Title I schools identified for school improvement are eligible to receive school improvement funds, the priority points will be used to determine allocations. Finally, the State will use the priority point system to verify eligibility for identification as a distinguished school.

STAGES

Stage 1: Evaluating Districts for Level of Assistance

Stage 1 is intended to use available quantitative data to create an initial evaluation to differentiate the performance of districts in meeting requirements set forth in the States' accountability plans for NCLB. An analysis of the AYP results for each district identified as failing for at least two consecutive years is conducted based on the number of subgroups failing to meet AYP and the degree to which those subgroups missed their AYP achievement targets.

Several dimensions of AYP analyses were identified as significant in determining the degree to which the district failed to meet AYP. These included whether the district failed to meet AYP:

- primarily as the result of missing achievement targets
- also as the result of missing participation rates and other indicators
- due to missing achievement targets in the "all students" cell
- due to missing achievement targets in a high percentage of subgroups
- for more consecutive years

Large urban districts in most States often have more subgroups that meet the minimum *n* requirements than small districts. Therefore, the percentage of subgroups that fail to meet the AYP requirements is more relevant than the number of subgroups when placing large and small districts on the same continuum of need. Whether the "all" cell misses the achievement target is also more relevant to the continuum because students are included in this cell whether or not their subgroup is large enough to meet minimum *n*.

States involved in an initial field test of Stage 1 found that the unique characteristics of each State and its accountability system affect how the quantitative analysis needs to be conducted. In addition, certain policy decisions may affect rules the State uses in analyzing the data. For example:

- Whether the State has an individual database may affect the detail of the data available for the analysis.
- Whether the State chooses to use the accountability *n*, the confidentiality *n*, or no *n* for needs based analyses will affect the results of such analysis.

Two different methods are provided depending upon the State's available data and chosen data source. The data elements to be included are actually the same for each method. However, the method of weighting may vary. The methods for weighting the data are intended to:

- give priority to student achievement as the most important element to consider
- differentiate those districts that missed their AYP achievement targets by a small amount from districts that missed their AYP achievement targets by a large amount.

- consider both the proportion of subgroups that did not meet their AYP achievement targets as well as the magnitude by which such groups' performance was short of their targets.

Stage 1a: Data Analysis: Using the AYP Achievement Metric

Calculating the AYP Achievement Metric to represent the magnitude by which districts not making AYP missed their achievement targets

The obvious first step in preparing to conduct the quantitative analysis is gathering the data elements necessary to the analysis. For purposes of this analysis, States will need only the aggregate student achievement data used to make annual AYP classifications. Of the pilot States involved in this project, most chose to calculate the metric for districts that did not make AYP in the current school year. However, one State involved in the field test chose to include results for all districts in their analysis by judging their districts' AYP achievement data relative to the final NCLB's achievement target of 100% proficiency for all student groups. Their hope was that by including districts that made AYP this year, the State might be able to identify districts that were most at risk of not making AYP in the future. Having the capacity to provide technical assistance to these districts in order to avert later identification is an essential consideration for States when deciding whether or not all districts should be included in the analysis.

Some States choose to conduct the analysis at the school level, whereas others conduct it at only the district level. In either case, a decision needs to be made at the beginning so the State knows what data elements to collect for use in the analysis. As AYP determinations must be made by all States for both schools and districts, the data already exist and do not have to be created. However, the field test States found that, because many State departments are highly compartmentalized, the data may not be readily available to the individuals who will conduct these analyses. When this is the case, care in being certain to request all of the data elements needed in the necessary detail is essential to completing this stage of the work.

At a minimum, the individual conducting the analysis will need district AYP results (and school, if so desired) for the following:

<u>ELA/Reading</u>

- Current year ELA achievement status for each of the 9 AYP subgroups
  - Yes – met ELA/Reading Achievement Target
  - No – did not meet ELA/Reading Achievement Target and Safe Harbor
  - TF – too few students in a group to be analyzed (did not meet minimum n-size criteria)
- Percent of students proficient in ELA/Reading for each of the 9 AYP subgroups
- Percent Reduction in the percentage of non-proficient students in ELA/Reading for each of the 9 AYP subgroups
- Annual Measurable Reading Objective target(s)

- Safe Harbor percent reduction target

Mathematics

- Current year Math achievement status for each of the 9 AYP subgroups
  - Yes – met Math Achievement Target
  - No – did not meet Math Achievement Target and Safe Harbor
  - TF – Group had too few students to be analyzed (did not meet minimum n-size criteria)
- Percent of students proficient in Math for each of the 9 AYP subgroups
- Percent Reduction in the percentage of non-proficient students in Math for each of the 9 AYP subgroups
- Annual Measurable Math Objective target(s)
- Safe Harbor percent reduction target

A State may decide to compute level of need without using *n* size. This choice may be made to prevent minimum *n* from masking the level of need that may ultimate result in continued failure to meet AYP targets. In this scenario, the State uses the percent of students meeting the target for each cell, regardless of the group's n-size. Since the emphasis on student achievement is in keeping with the philosophy of NCLB, only achievement is used (i.e., percent proficient and safe harbor reduction), not participation rates or other indicators.

Calculating the AYP Achievement Metric

Distance from the Goal: Numerator Calculation

The method for calculating the AYP Achievement Metric relies upon the difference in observed performance from AYP goals (e.g., annual measurable objectives [AMOs] – actual % proficient, 10% safe harbor target – actual % reduction in the % of non-proficient students). The differences are calculated by subtracting the observed performance for each subgroup that missed its achievement target from the AMO. For example, if the ELA proficiency rate for Hispanics in a school were 30%, the difference from the ELA AMO goal of 45% would be 15% (i.e., 45%-30%). If the math proficiency rate for Asian students were 20% and the reduction in non-proficient students shown were 5%, the combined difference from the math AMO and Safe Harbor goals (40% & 10% respectfully) would be 25% (i.e., 40% -20% plus 10% - 5%). The differences across all achievement areas for subgroups which did not meet AYP achievement criteria (i.e., came up short in comparison to their AMO and did not meet the safe harbor provision) are then summed to create the numerator of the AYP metric.

Differences in Goals: Standardizing Numerator Values across Educational Levels

In some States, AYP achievement targets (i.e., AMOs) have been set differentially for elementary, middle, and high schools. The need to do so is predicated on variation in the distribution of proficiency rates across tested grade levels in such States. This variation

can be attributed to differences in the depth and breadth of content assessed at each grade level, as well as differences in the rigor of tests across such levels.

For example, an accountability plan that uses a high stakes exit exam from high school to make AYP decisions is likely to result in a different AMO target for high schools because the content domain and cognitive rigor of this assessment is defined based on a different purpose than was used to develop a State's elementary criterion referenced testing program. As such, significant differences in the percentage of students which must score at the proficient level or higher in order for a student population to meet AYP achievement targets may exist between high school and elementary levels.

To account for such differences and ensure metric values are comparable across educational levels, the distance from goal must be adjusted to account for the value of the goal. This can be achieved by dividing the distance from the target by the target value. Doing so yields a ratio value, which represents the percentage by which the target level was missed. Therefore, regardless of variations in goals across educational levels, the distance from target for populations can be expressed in a standardized way.

Weighting the Metrics: Denominator Calculation

Once a numerator value is calculated, the value is divided by the total number of subgroups evaluated in the respective metric's area to yield the metric value. The AYP achievement metric would include all subgroups who meet the minimum *n*-size to be evaluated in achievement. In essence, the purpose of this inclusion is to provide a control on the metric by considering the number of evaluations that were made for a school. The justification for doing this is that some schools are very diverse, while others are less diverse; resulting in a wide range of the number of evaluations which are made for schools.

Controlling by the number of evaluations takes into account the importance of the challenges schools face in serving more heterogeneous student populations. A more heterogeneous student population expands the need for more differentiated instruction. Schools serving a heterogeneous student population should understand and embrace the culture and traditions of its students' heritage if they are to make learning relevant (Dewey, 1916). Controlling by the number of evaluations recognizes the amount of success that was observed.

The confounding issue of overlap between the populations NCLB requires performance be disaggregated among, requires that these metrics be weighted by the total number of evaluations. This helps to mediate the contribution of students whose performance is considered multiple times in AYP analyses (e.g., a student who belongs to an ethnic group, has an individualized educational plan (IEP), is of limited English proficiency (LEP), and/or who receives free or reduced price lunches (FRL).

Metric Calculation Example: How Weighting Works

An example of how the AYP Achievement Metric is calculated is provided next. Assume two schools both fell short of the AMO and safe harbor targets in the area of Asian mathematics achievement. Further, both schools had the same observed percent proficient rates (25%), falling short of the ELA AMO of 30%, and neither school showed any amount of reduction in the percentage of non-proficient Asian students since last year. However, School A also had enough students to be evaluated in the Hispanic, white, and FRL groups, while School B was also evaluated only in their white group. Each school met the AMO goals for these additional groups. Calculating the ELA Achievement Metric for each school would yield the results shown in Table 1.

As can be seen in the table below, both schools fell short of the target in the same area and by the same amount. However, School A is given a lower metric value, indicating it missed its AYP target by a lesser degree than school B, due to having been evaluated and meeting ELA status in 4 additional groups. Weighting the metric using number of groups evaluated recognizes the amount of success a school has demonstrated in other areas. The rationale for this rests upon the assumption that success with some groups suggests that the school has demonstrated a capacity to deal effectively with struggling groups.

Table 1

School	NUMERATOR [Sum of distances from goal (i.e., Status + Safe Harbor)]	DENOMINATOR [# of Groups Evaluated in ELA Status (9 possible)]	ELA Status Metric Formula	ELA Status Metric
School A	**Observed Values** Asian Math proficient = 25% Safe Harbor = 10% **Goals** Math AMO = 30% Safe Harbor Target =10% **Calculation** [(30% - 25%) / 30%] + [(10%-0%)] = 26.7%	5 groups (School, Asian, Hispanic, White, SES	26.7% / 5	5.34
School B	**Observed Values** Asian Math proficient = 25% Safe Harbor = 10% **Goals** Math AMO = 30% Safe Harbor Target =10% **Calculation** [(30% - 25%) / 30%] + [(10%-0%)] = 26.7%	3 Groups (School, Asian, White)	26.7% / 3	8.9

The resulting metric values for each district can then be ranked on a continuum, with high metric values indicating the district missed its target by more and lower scores indicating the district missed its target by less. This determination is preliminary since other information will be necessary to determine a level of need.

The formula for calculating the AYP Metric is given as:

$$\textit{Achievement Metric} = \frac{\sum_{\text{Group 1}}^{\text{Group 9}} \left[\textit{ELAStatusDist} + \textit{MathStatusDist} + \textit{ELASafeDist} + \textit{MathSafeDist}\right]}{\textit{\# of subgroups evaluated for ELA Achievement (Status/SH) \& Math Achievement (Status/SH) (up to 18 Possible)}}$$

Where:

Variable Name	*Description*
ELAStatusDist	*The difference between a group's ELA percent proficient rate and the relevant ELA AMO, standardized by dividing by the respective ELA AMO (ELA AMO – Group's ELA percent proficient rate) / ELA AMO*
MathStatusDist	*The difference between a group's Math percent proficient rate and the relevant Math AMO, standardized by dividing by the respective Math AMO (Math AMO – Group's Math percent proficient rate) / Math AMO*
ELASafeDist	*The difference between a group's ELA % reduction and the Safe Harbor Target (10%) (Safe Harbor Target – Group's ELA % reduction)*
MathSafeDist	*The difference between a group's Math % reduction and the Safe Harbor Target (10%) (Safe Harbor Target – Group's Math % reduction)*

Explanation of Summation Function used in Metric Formula

$\sum_{\text{Group 1}}^{\text{Group 9}}$ = Sum of the distance between observed performance and the goal for all groups that *did not meet the relevant target*. Groups 1-9 represent the school as a whole, American Indian/ Alaskan Native, Asian, Hispanic, Black/ African American, White, IEP, Limited English Proficient, and Free or Reduced Price Lunch groups.

The steps for **Stage 1a** are as follows:

STEP 1: Calculate priority points using formula and other indicators
STEP 2: Rank order districts or schools based on priority points formula

Stage 1b: Preliminary decision point: Initial determination of level of need

Initial determination based on AYP Achievement Metric value, In Need of Improvement status, and other consideration.

At the end of Stage 1, each district is preliminarily assigned to one of five levels of need based on data analyses conducted thus far. Districts are first divided into a quintile group based on a rank ordering districts using the AYP Achievement Metric values derived in Stage 1a. Then, the districts are placed into a "panty-hose" chart at each level based on the number of years in which the district has failed to meet AYP targets. The steps are as follows:

STEP 1: Rank order districts based on AYP Achievement Metric
STEP 2: Place them in the quintiles, rank order districts and place a cut between every 20% of the districts.
STEP 3: Place districts in the chart below using their current In Need of Improvement Status and Metric derived quintile,.

For example, if the Middleby School District was ranked in the third quintile but has failed to meet AYP targets for four consecutive years, the district is in Year 3 of school improvement or at the corrective action stage. In this case, the district would be placed in the middle cell as seen below:

Level of AYP	Quintile 5 Smallest Metric Values	Quintile 4	Quintile 3	Quintile 2	Quintile 1 Largest Metric Values
Year 1 – Choice					
Year 2 – Choice & SES					
Year 3 – Corrective Action			Middleby School District		
Year 4 – Plan for Restructuring					
Year 5 – Restructuring					

Standard Setting

The process of placing districts in the grid has been based on statistical calculations and quantitative evidence to this point. The next stage requires a standard setting process that is both qualitative and quantitative. Placement of districts in levels of need will be determined by identifying which cells in the grid represent which levels of need. To do this, the State will need to develop performance descriptors that will also be applied to this determination.

To determine which cells will be at which levels of need, a set of performance descriptors will be needed. Each State will need to determine the descriptors to be used for each level of need. Provided below is an example set of performance descriptors:

Level of Need	Performance Descriptor
Level 1 (low need)	Typically, the districts or schools at this level may have only one subgroup that missed AYP by a small DFG. This group may require only external supervision and arms-length support.
Level 2 (moderate need)	Typically, the districts or schools at this level have missed AYP by one or two subgroups with a percent proficient that is closer to the AYP target. This group may require limited but specific assistance to improve the performance of specific subgroups in their district.
Level 3 (high need)	This group has failed to meet AYP in numerous subgroups with high percentages of students in those subgroups not proficient. This group is likely to need more direct assistance to the district in assisting schools as the problem impacts several different student groups.
Level 4 (intensive need)	This group has failed to meet AYP in the total group and numerous subgroups with high percentages of students not proficient. This group is likely to require close assistance on-site in order to provide assistance to schools in need of improvement. Due to the urgency, the plan may call for direct and sustained mentoring of the district.
Level 5 (urgent intervention)	This group has failed to meet AYP for three or more years in several subgroups with high percentages of students not proficient in the total group and in subgroups. The group is either eligible for or in eminent danger of designation for restructuring or alternative governance under NCLB guidelines. The plan may call for on-going, sustained, direct coaching of the district with specific attention to the timeline and faithful implementation of each element of the plan.

Based on the State's Level of Need Performance Descriptors, determine which boxes would be shaded light gray or a particular color to indicate the lowest level of need,

which would be shaded black to indicate the highest level of need and the variations in between to indicate the each intervening level of need. For example, the shaded chart might resemble the one below based on the State's Level of need descriptors.

Level of INOI	Metric Quintile 5	Metric Quintile 4	Metric Quintile 3	Metric Quintile 2	Metric Quintile 1
Year 1 – Choice					
Year 2- Choice & SES					
Year 3 – Corrective Action					
Year 4 – Plan for Restructuring					
Year 5 – Restructuring					

Level 1	
Level 2	
Level 3	
Level 4	
Level 5	

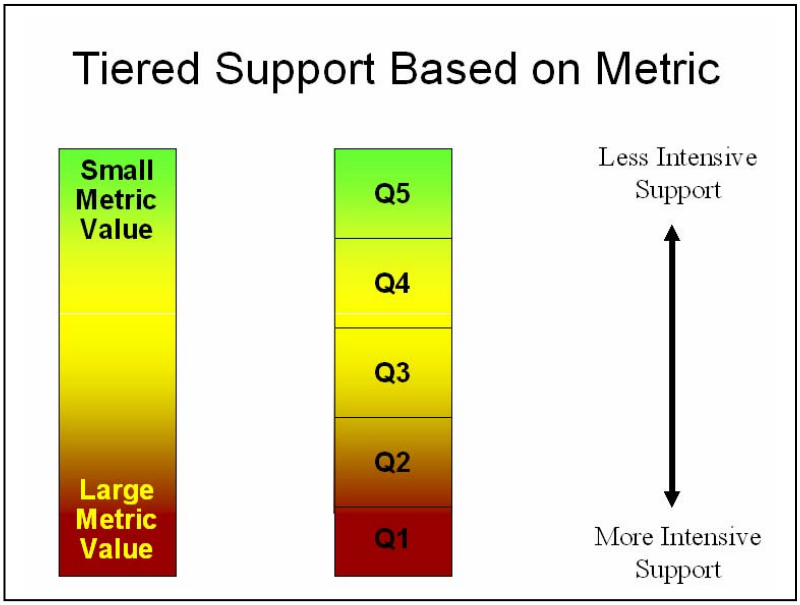
The State may decide that districts not meeting AYP targets for two consecutive years whose priority point scores fell into the fifth, fourth, and third quintiles (the lowest metric values) and districts that failed to meet AYP targets for three consecutive years but only in one subgroup (usually not the same subgroup) would be included in the lowest level of need. These districts will be grouped to participate in regional workshops that address the instructional needs of the subgroups in which they failed to meet AYP targets.

The second lowest level of need are districts that failed to meet at least one AYP target for four consecutive years (usually not the same subgroup) or for three consecutive years in more than one subgroup. The group whose priority point score placed them in the second quartile were included even though they failed to meet AYP targets only two

consecutive years because they missed AYP targets by a significant distance and for a significant proportion of the subgroups for which they were accountable.

The middle level of need includes districts that are planning for or are in the process of restructuring but only as a result of one subgroup (not usually the same subgroup over the years) and are in the corrective action or the planning year for restructure but only for one or two subgroups (not necessarily the same subgroups from year to year). Also placed in this middle level of need are districts in year 3 of corrective action and Quintile 3, year 2 Quintile 2 and year 1 Quintile 1. Even though these last groups have failed to meet AYP targets for shorter and shorter periods of time, they have failed to meet targets at an increasingly substantial margin and for more and more subgroups for which they are accountable. The intensity and the pervasiveness of the failure to meet the target suggests that intensive assistance is needed immediately for this trend to be reversed or that, at least, a much closer look at the district's needs through the desk audit process will be required for an adequate response to be made.

Levels 4 and 5 include those districts that have missed the targets for a substantial period of time, by a significant distance from the goal, and for most or all of the subgroups for which they are responsible. These districts are either likely to be in restructuring within a year or two, in the planning year for restructuring, or already in restructuring. Intensive assistance with be needed with close technical assistance provided by the State and other organizations tasked by the State to provide such assistance. The district's activities and progress are closely supervised and monitored based on the State's sanctions and legislative requirements.



The steps for **Stage 1b** follow:

STEP 1: Assign districts/schools to cells based on quintiles and years missing AYP targets

STEP 2: Develop Level of Need performance descriptors

STEP 3: Set cut points for Levels of Need

Stage 2: Determining Level and Type of Assistance

Stage 2 involves validation of Level of Need assigns made at the end of Stage 1 and an additional qualitative review of the districts deemed by the end of Stage 1 to be most in need of assistance based on State capacity and policy (Levels 3 through 5 or Levels 4 and 5, depending upon the State). Only those districts in these groups will be examined in Stage 2.

Several tools are provided to help States conduct this stage of the investigation of need. The District Audit Rubrics (Rubrics) are scoring guides for evaluating information about the district that can help determine areas of concern for technical assistance. The Rubrics are divided into elements that researchers have suggested may correlate to success in improving student achievement. During the desk audit procedure, the State applies these Rubrics to an evaluation of the information about the district collected from sources throughout the Department.

The *Data Tool* provides examples of data sources for the criteria under each element. The State should customize this Guide to specify the data sources available from information collected by the State and the location of each source.

Stage 2a: Data Analysis: Analysis of other consideration

Validity of the priority determination

At this point, the State needs to take into account factors other than achievement that may have resulted in failure to meet AYP targets. Districts that failed to meet AYP targets for participation and their schools that failed to meet graduation rate, attendance or other academic indicators are a part of the analysis of level of need standard setting. But, if they met AYP targets for achievement, they are placed in the fifth quintile. Due to the inclusion of fifth quintile districts in at least the three lowest levels of need, they are likely to receive varying levels of technical assistance based on the number of consecutive years they failed to meet AYP. However, there may be some variation among these districts that requires particular attention and perhaps reflects a greater or lesser level of need for technical assistance.

Examining non-academic indicators

For example, a district that has consistently failed to meet participation targets may be systematically excluding students or having difficulty finding ways to ensure all students participate appropriately in their accountability system. Another district may have several schools that consistently fail to meet AYP targets for graduation rates. This consistent failure may indicate there is a significant challenge to their ability to retain students in school long enough to complete their education. In these cases, the district may need closer attention and may require movement to a higher level of need for a more intense form of technical assistance. Another district may fail to meet AYP targets for participation one year, and schools that failed to meet graduation rates the next and attendance rates the next. This pattern may not reflect any systematic problem and may require no change in level of need. These decisions are made by looking at trend data for

participation, graduation, attendance, and other indicators. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis but generally would not require movement of more than one level of need.

Examining trends over time, changing demographics, and subgroup trends

Stage 1 accounts for distance from the target for each cell and trends over time for the overall rating. However, performance over time for individual subgroups may provide insight into the areas of concern and the level of need for a district. The conjunctive nature of the AYP determinations results in an increase in the impact of random changes in subgroup progress, composition, and membership. In Stage 2, the State examines trends within subgroups to determine whether there is evidence that the progress, composition, or membership of a subgroup affect the meaning of the data for providing technical assistance. If the trends within a subgroup are consistent over time, the State has some confidence that the district has failed to produce improvement in subgroup achievement. If the results indicate that the subgroups failing to meet AYP targets change from year to year, there is less certainty that the failure to meet AYP targets is specific to a particular subgroup. This information is important to formulating technical assistance plans and to assigning level of need.

Demographic changes in a student population may include a significant change in a particular population. Change in school boundaries may increase one subgroup and decrease another. A change of this kind may transform a school from one in which the majority of students have preschool experience to a school in which the majority of students do not have preschool experience. An influx of some populations may dramatically change the membership in the student population. A concentration of students with particular characteristics such as students' with disabilities or English language learners' disproportional representation at a particular grade level or grade span can affect results. Some States have already accounted for these special circumstances in the appeals process, thereby mitigating their affect on AYP determinations. If that is the case, no adjustment may be necessary. If not, adjustments may be made by moving the district to a lower or higher level of need, depending upon the findings.

Adjusting level of need

Factoring in the findings from the review of trends and other related data may result in moving districts to a higher or lower level of need based on the findings. (States that have already taken some of these factors into account in the appeals process will already have made changes to AYP identifications. In those cases, these States may have already dropped some districts out of the AYP identification.) Districts are moved to a higher level of need under the following conditions when there is evidence that the problem is sustained over time. For example, even though NCLB does not allow the State to consider whether the same subgroup had failed to meet the AYP target for more than one consecutive year, a sustained failure is evidence of a problem that has defied solution thus far. Accordingly, the level of need when the same subgroups fail consistently is greater than the level of need when a subgroup has only failed to meet AYP intermittently. In the case of a sustained failure, the district would be moved to the next higher level of need.

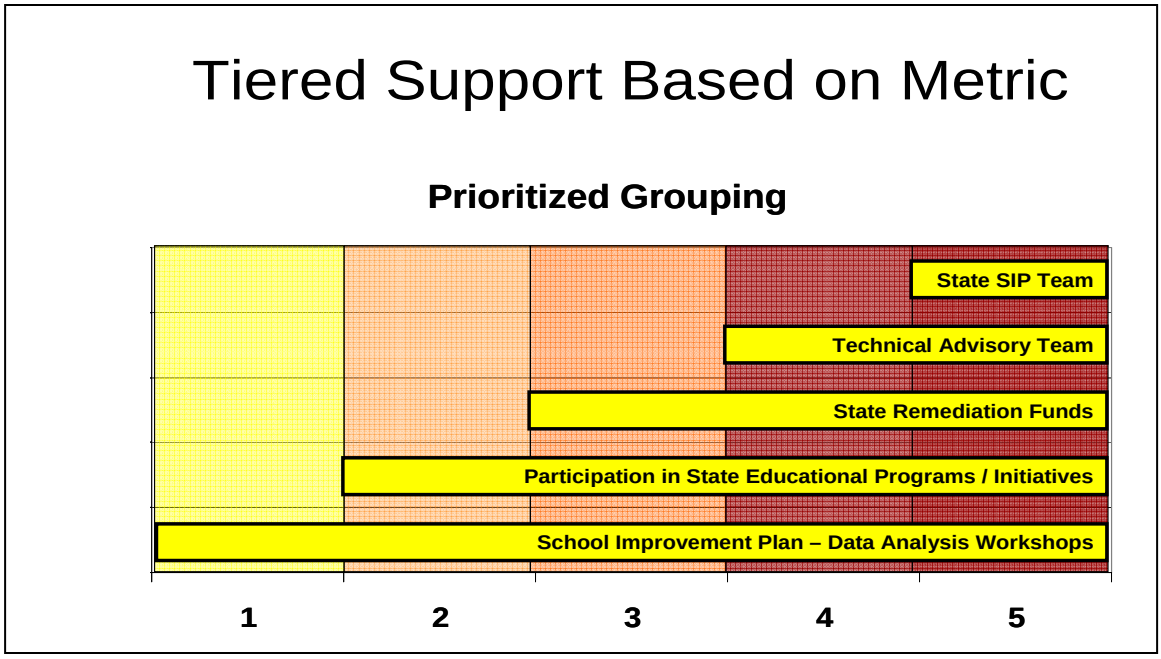
A district may experience an unusual event or a sudden change in the demographics of the district's population. Failure to meet AYP targets may have been affected in ways that do not reflect the long term capacity of the district to meet achievement targets. These changes may be the result of redrawing of district boundaries, the move of a large employer into or out of the district, or the movement of a small but significant group of special education students through the system. Discovery of factors such as these may motivate a State to move the district to a lower level of need for one year to determine if the impact continues to negatively affect AYP status or the district is able to retrench and cope with these changes on its own.

Determining priorities for desk audit

Once adjustments are made to level of need assignments, the State must determine its capacity to provide intensive services. During the initial years, the State may be able to provide intensive assistance to districts at levels 3 through 5. With increases in the number of districts failing to meet AYP over time, the State may be able to provide intensive assistance to districts at levels 4 and 5 only. In either case, the districts that remain in those levels that the State has determined as the highest levels of need will be the subject of the Stage 2b.

Districts that do not fall into these highest levels of need are also provided assistance in their improvement work. States develop a menu of assistance for the districts falling at a lower level of need. For example, many States provide data analysis workshops to assist districts at the lowest levels of need in analyzing data and developing improvement plans. A menu of the kinds of assistance kind of assistance provided to low need districts can be found in State examples in Appendix B through E.

The chart below depicts the kind of tiered leveling of support that can be provided to districts falling at the various levels of need.



The steps for **Stage 2a** follow:

STEP 1: Examine participation rates for districts and graduation or other academic indicators for schools.

STEP 2: Gather Data from other SEA sources

STEP 3: Examine all available data elements over at least the last 3 years for the following evidence:

A. Trends = performance over time

B. Situational changes = significant increases/influxes of poor, low performing, LEP or SWD students; changes in boundaries; changes in community make-up.

C. Small group with big impact moving through the grades (shift in problem across grades from one year to next)

STEP 4: Adjust level of need assignment from Stage 1b based on findings

STEP 5: Determine which districts will receive desk audits

Stage 2b: Desk audit conducted on districts to receive intensive assistance

Customize Data Tool, gather data, and conduct desk audit

In Stage 2b, the State customizes the *Data Tool*, gathers the data from across the Department, and conducts a desk audit of the data for those districts that have been determined to be at the highest levels of need. The District Audit Rubric is used to determine to what degree the district has met the criteria described for each element.

Customize Data Tool

First, the State customizes the possible data sources identified in the *Data Tool* to meet the State's needs by identifying the data sources readily available within the State

department. States collect large volumes of information about districts as required by State and federal laws, by compliance requirements, or by various State board and legislative requirements. These data are often housed throughout the State department of education with no overall organizational structure to provide access across the department to the information these data sources contain. In addition, some of this information may be duplicative or even contradictory. The task of creating an organizational system to access the information for purposes of this desk audit may present a challenge to some departments. However, the process of organizing the information for this purpose has the added benefit of allowing States to utilize the information they collect more efficiently, to reduce duplication in data collection, and to create a broad view of the operations of districts within the State. No State is likely to have all of these data sources or to need all of them to conduct this analysis. The list of possible data sources is intended to be comprehensive enough to provide examples from which a State might select those most readily available within the State for purposes of this analysis.

Gather data

However, in some States, the data sources in each of the categories examined in the Audit Tool are readily available as gathered through other processes. Several of the items listed may be found within other reports such as accreditation reports, district improvement plans, or consolidate grant applications. A *Data Tool* is provided that links various data sources to elements and criteria included in rubrics used to conduct this part of the investigation. Once the State has determined what data are available from across the Department, the State customizes the *Data Tool* to reflect the location and type of data available.

Examples of possible data sources may include but are not limited to the following:

- Accreditation reports, district improvement plan
- Standards alignment document, course guidelines for alignment with standards, course sequences, class schedules, example units and lesson plans, curriculum revision plan and schedule, graduation requirements
- Consolidated grant application, Title IV annual report
- District assessment plans, body of evidence plans
- Board minutes, grading policies and procedures
- Corrective action plan for persistently dangerous schools, discipline and incident reports, youth risk behavior survey
- District monitoring reports, policies on assessment reporting, report cards, and website
- Per pupil expenditures, fiscal audit reports
- Professionals development plans and agendas for instructional leaders
- Special education reports, State audits of district assessment accommodations and alternate assessment rates and procedures
- Technology plan and handbook
- Teacher quality enhancement grants, teacher certifications and endorsements, incentive policies, personnel/staffing reports, professional development plan

Conduct desk audit

A set of rubrics are used in Stage 2 to evaluate the information gathered. These rubrics are used to determine areas of concern for the district. The elements and criteria are based on a review of the literature on those elements present in districts that are successful in producing high levels of student achievement for all of its students. The criteria for each element are based on descriptions of the operations of these districts related to the elements. These elements and criteria are familiar to readers of educational research. The elements and criteria are organized as follows:

- For the leadership element, the criteria include clear vision and mission, instructional leadership, district policies and administrative procedures, leadership decisions, monitoring process, and parent community council.
- For the academic content and achievement standards element, the criteria include academic content standards and academic achievement standards.
- For the curriculum/instruction element, the criteria include curriculum alignment, access to grade level standards instruction, scientifically research-based strategies, and access to instructional materials.
- For the highly-qualified staff element, the criteria include highly-qualified annual measurable objectives (AMOs), teacher assignments, incentives for teacher assigned to high need schools, and administrator assignments.
- For the professional development element, the criteria include identified needs, highly qualified and effective teachers, scientifically research-based instructional strategies, methodologies for delivery of scientifically research-based instruction, professional development through coaching, mentoring, and collaboration, data analysis of State, school, and classroom assessments, and use of assessment data to evaluate impact.
- For the assessment and accountability element, the criteria include quality assessments aligned to State content and achievement standards, curriculum planning based on student results, standards-based grading policies and procedures, accommodations, alternate assessments, assessment reporting, accountability reporting, and use of reports.
- For the school culture/climate element, the criteria include high expectations for students related to State goals, high expectations for staff related to State goals, celebrating success, safe and drug-free learning environments, and support for at-risk students.
- For the budget and resources element, the criteria include district funding of schools targeted to program improvement with an emphasis on identified subgroups and grade levels, comparability of funding, comparability of teachers, time management, monitoring budget priorities, guidance on school budget priorities, and district independent performance audits,
- For the parents and community element, the criteria include parent/community council, parent communication and involvement, and community communication and involvement.

Using the customized District Audit Rubric, a team or individual gathers, analyzes, and records the data for assigned districts in the *Data Tool*. Only those districts that are candidates for on-site visits would be subject to the desk audit. These would be districts

at the highest levels of need, depending upon the number of districts failing to meet AYP targets and the capacity of the State to deliver direct, intensive technical assistance. In some States in years when few districts fail to meet AYP targets, most or all districts who fail may be subject to desk audit. In States or years in which many districts fail to meet AYP targets, only those at the highest two or three levels of need might be subject to desk audit.

The team assigned to collect, analyze, and record the data for a particular district may divide up the elements they will investigate with different team members investigating those parts of the data most relevant to their areas of expertise. The *Data Tool* is then used to record data source, relevant information, and findings as they relate to the scoring guide criteria and indicators.

The steps for **Stage 2b** follow:

STEP 1: Data index: Customize Possible Data Sources to facilitate data gathering in DOE (See *Data Tool*)
STEP 2: Gather each of data resources for each target district
STEP 3: Conduct desk audit
STEP 4: Use rubric tool to record evidence for each of the criteria = must have at least three (3) data sources in order to give a score (make judgment)

District Desk Audit Data Tool: Data Sources and Analyses

This document is intended as a tool for use in collecting data for the desk audit with the information being used to further refine placement of districts in the "Level of Need Index." The information will also be used to determine which elements are the focus for further investigation during on-site visits and to eliminate areas that do not require on-site investigation. Each SEA collects data on many of the elements investigated during the desk audit. The type and location of this data will vary from State to State. Each SEA will need to determine where and whether they collect this data somewhere in their Department and create an index that is specific to the type and location of the information. In so doing, the State is able to maximize the usefulness of this evidence and reduce duplication of effort on both the Department's and the LEA's part. Each State will need to customize this general index to their State. The purpose of the index below is to provide examples of possible data sources linked to each element.

I. LEADERSHIP					
Criteria	***Possible Data Sources***	***Description***	***Sources Date (Document from what years)***	***Location (Where it is?)***	
1. Clear vision and mission	• Board Minutes • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument • District Improvement Plan • Accreditation Reports • District Website				
2. Instructional leadership	• Board Minutes • Professionals Development Plans and Agendas for Instructional Leaders				
3. Policies and procedures	• Accreditation Reports • District Website • District Policies, Procedures, Handbooks				
4. Leadership decisions	• Technology plan • Technology handbook • Consolidated Application • District Monitoring Instrument • District Website • District Improvement Plan				

5. Monitoring process	• District Improvement Plan • Consolidated Application • District Monitoring Instrument • Accreditation Reports				
6. Parent / community council	• Consolidated Application • District Monitoring Instrument • District Improvement Plan • Accreditation Reports • District Website	-			

II. ACADEMIC CONTENT AND ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS					
Criteria	***Possible Data Sources***	***Description***	***Sources Date (Document from what years)***	***Location (Where it is?)***	
1. Academic content standards	• Standards Alignment Document • Accreditation Reports • Online Data Sources (District Websites) • Consolidated Applications • District Monitoring Instrument				
2. Academic achievement standards	• Standards Alignment Document • Accreditation Reports • Online Data Sources (District Websites) • Consolidated Applications • District Monitoring Instrument • District Assessment Plans				

III. CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION					
Criteria	***Possible Data Sources***	***Description***	***Sources Date (Document from what years)***	***Location (Where it is?)***	
1. Curriculum alignment	• Course Guidelines (e.g., document that shows how the curriculum is aligned to the standards…or standards are embedded in the curriculum) • District Professional Development • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument • District Improvement Plan				
2. Access to grade level standards instruction	• Course Sequence • Summary Class Schedules • Example Units and Lesson Plans • Teacher Certifications and Endorsements				
3. Scientifically research-based strategies	• Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument • District Improvement Plan				
4. Access instructional materials (e.g., textbooks, software, manipulatives)	• Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument				

IV. HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF					
Criteria	***Possible Data Sources***	***Description***	***Sources Date (Document from what years)***	***Location (Where it is?)***	
1. Plans to meet high qualified AMOs	• Accreditation Reports • Districts Personnel/Staffing Reports • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument • Consolidated State Application				

2. Teacher assignments	• District Personnel/Staffing Reports • Teacher Certifications and Endorsements				
3. Incentives for teacher assign to high need schools	• Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument • Incentive Policies				
4. Administrators	• District Personnel/Staffing Reports • Accreditation Reports				

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
Criteria	***Possible Data Sources***	***Description***	***Sources Date (Document from what years)***	***Location (Where it is?)***	
1. Identified needs	• District Improvement Plan • District Professional Development Plan • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument • Teacher Certifications and Assignments				
2. Highly qualified and effective teachers	• District Personnel/Staffing Reports • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument				
3. Scientifically researched-based instructional strategies	• District Improvement Plan • District Professional Development Plan • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument				
4. Methodologies for delivery of scientifically researched-based	• District Improvement Plan • District Professional Development Plan • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument				

5. District provides professional development through coaching, mentoring, and collaboration	• District Professional Development Plan • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument • Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants				
6. Data analysis of the State, school, and classroom assessment	• District Professional Development Plan • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument • District Improvement Plan				
7. Use assessment data to evaluates the impact	• Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument • District Assessment Data				

VI. ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY					
Criteria	***Possible Data Sources***	***Description***	***Sources Date (Document from what years)***	***Location (Where it is?)***	
1. Quality assessments aligned to State content and achievement standards	• District Assessment Plans • District Standard Alignment Matrix				
2. Curriculum planning based on student results	• District Improvement Plan • District Assessment Results • Curriculum Revision Plan and Schedule				
3. Standards-based grading policies and procedures	• Body of Evidence Plans (some States have this) • Graduation Requirements • District Grading Policies and Procedures				

4. Accommodations	• Special Education Reports • State Audits of District Assessment Accommodations Rates and Procedures • District Assessment Reports • District Professional Development Plan				
5. Alternate assessments	• District Assessment Reports • Special Education Reports • State Audit Results on District Alternate Assessment Rates and Procedures				
6. Assessment reporting	• District Policies on Assessment Reporting • District Assessment Reports • District Report Cards • District Websites				
7. Accountability reporting	• District Accountability Reports • District Websites • District Report Cards				
8. Use of reports	• District of Improvement Plan • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument				

VII. SCHOOL CULTURE/CLIMATE					
Criteria	***Possible Data Sources***	***Description***	***Sources Date (Document from what years)***	***Location (Where it is?)***	
1. High expectations for students (student mastery of standards and participation, attendance, graduation rates) related to State goals	• District Improvement Plan • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument • District Report Card • District Websites				
2. High expectations for staff (teacher and administrator performance) related to State goals	• District Professional Development Plan • District Personnel/Staffing Reports • Consolidated Grant Application				

	• District Monitoring Instrument				
3. Celebrates success	• District Websites				
4. Safe and drug-free learning environments	• Title IV Annual Report • Corrective Action Plan for Persistently Dangerous Schools • Youth Risk Behavior Survey • District Discipline and incident Reports • Consolidated Grant Application • District Improvement Plan				
5. Support for at-risk students	• Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument				

VIII. BUDGET AND RESOURCES (If site-based, see this element on the school rubric.)					
Criteria	***Possible Data Sources***	***Description***	***Sources Date (Document from what years)***	***Location (Where it is?)***	
1. District ensures school funding is targeted toward program improvement with emphasis on identified subgroups and grade levels.	• Accreditation Process/Reports • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument				
2. Comparability of Funding	• Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instrument • Per pupil expenditures				
3. Comparability of Teachers	• District Personnel/Staffing Reports • Consolidated Grant Application • District Monitoring Instruments				
4. Time Management	• District Websites • Accreditation Reports/Process • District Improvement Plan • District Professional Development Plan				

	• District Monitoring Instruments • Annual Audit Results				
5. Monitoring Budget Priorities	• District Audit Reports • District Improvement Plan				
6. Guidance on School Budget Priorities	• District Improvement Plan				
7. District independent, performance audits	• Single/Annual Audits				

IX. PARENTS* AND COMMUNITY					
Criteria	***Possible Data Sources***	***Description***	***Sources Date (Document from what years)***	***Location (Where it is?)***	
1. Parent / community council	• District Websites • Board policies • Accreditation reports				
2. Parent communication and involvement	• District Websites • District Monitoring Instrument				
3. Community communication and involvement	• District Websites • District Monitoring Instrument				

*Throughout the ***District Audit Tool***, the term “Parents” is used broadly to encompass both parents and guardians.

Stage 2c: Data analysis: Score and identify areas of concern

In Stage 2c, the information recorded in the *Data Tool* is examined, data sources are noted, and scores are assigned based on the District Audit Rubric. Two raters, scoring independently, are preferred to ensure the consistency of the scoring.

For some elements, the data are clear and indisputable. This may be particularly true for records related to certification and financial audits since those determinations are made or reports are housed at the State level in many States. Where complete data (a minimum of three data sources in order to make a judgment about the score) are available, a score should clearly indicate whether the element is an area of concern or not. In some cases, the available data are incomplete, inadequate, inconclusive, inaccurate, or totally missing for the purposes of this desk audit. This finding should be indicated on the *Data Tool* record and no score assigned until information can be gathered through further investigation during an on-site visit. However, an effort should be made to minimize these omissions and seek further data within the Department to avoid overly comprehensive on-site investigations. The findings should support the score the district receives on each criterion and the overall score received for each element.

Scoring the desk audit

First, each criterion is scored separately by each rater. If the two raters disagree, a third rater should be enlisted to determine the final rating. Some States with larger numbers of districts to audit will sample with a second rater from the overall group each year or double rate all scores the first year and sample in subsequent years to establish the inter-rater reliability of the results.

The scores for all criteria in each element are summed to create an overall total for each element. The total score for each element is then divided by the number of criteria within the element. In this way, no element is weighted simply because there are more criteria assigned.

Reviewing results of the desk audit

The intended outcome of this analysis is to clarify the level of need of districts based on the areas of concern, use qualitative information to further inform level of need, group districts for assistance based on area of concern, and narrow the focus of on-site investigations to those elements and criteria that both quantitative and qualitative data suggest are potential sources of interference in meeting AYP targets.

After all findings are entered, the areas of concern should be evident from the overall score for the element. A review of the findings and scores should enable the State to formulate an initial hypothesis regarding areas of greatest concern and areas that require further investigation during an on-site visit. Those areas for which no data were available for use in conducting the desk audit are obvious areas of concern.

Form initial hypothesis and determine areas for further investigation

Most States will investigate further any element that receives an average score of 2 or lower unless the group judges the available data to be conclusive enough to warrant no further investigation. This element becomes an element to be included in the technical assistance plan. An average score of 3 or above on an element suggests that, although some criteria may not have been fully met within the element, other criteria were met to such a degree that overall performance in that element was strong. These elements would not warrant further investigation and would not be a focus of the technical assistance plan. Based on these conclusions, the group identifies the areas that will be the subject of further investigation during the on-site visit.

An outline of the steps in **Stage 2c** follows:

STEP 1: Score desk audit to identified priority areas of the rubric for each district
- A. areas of clear problems identified in the desk audit based on scoring of desk audit where complete data is available
- B. areas of uncertainty = bad data, data contradictions, missing data
- C. areas of no data

STEP 2: Review results of desk audit

STEP 3: Form initial hypothesis for areas of greatest concern

STEP 4: Determine areas for further investigation during on-site visit

Stage 2d: Decision point: Level of assistance

At this point, the State may wish to reconsider the group into which a district has been placed based on the initial findings from Stages 1, 2a, and 2b. Any adjustment to the assigned group is important at this point because Levels 1 and 2 will not be subject to an on-site visit. Closer examination of a district placed in Level 3 or Level 4 after Stage 1 may require adjustment up or down, depending on findings from the desk audit concerning capacity of the district to provide assistance to schools not meeting AYP targets. If the district moves to a lower level of need due to new findings about reforms underway and on track in a district, an on-site visit may not be required. If the district moves to a higher level of need due to the number of elements and criteria that are insufficiently implemented or for which there is insufficient evidence to make an adequate judgment, this information will be important to the on-site investigation.

Another factor that may influence the level of need is the relative value the State gives to each element. Some States may view some elements as more essential than others to the success of the district. If this is the case, a district with fewer elements lacking—which demonstrate deficient performance in those elements judged by the State to be more essential—may still be moved to a higher level of need. The State should examine the research literature provided in this document and others before making judgments concerning relative value before adjusting level of need on this basis.

As stated earlier, assistance provided to low need districts may take several forms: (a) statewide conferences, (b) regional professional development, (c) training of district level personnel, or (d)other assistance in which districts are grouped by the area of need for assistance that does not involve on-site work by State personnel except at the explicit request of a district. Some examples of the types of assistance or intervention that each group may need are listed below. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive and only provides examples. The types of assistance will be subject to reconsideration for the groups visited on-site based on additional information gathered and the specifics of the technical assistance plan that is developed collaboratively.

Stage 2d: Decision point: Levels of assistance

- **Level 1** (low need) – Data analysis workshop only; school improvement conference Level
- **Level 2** (moderate need) – Targeted regional professional development; trainer of trainer for district personnel; district TA to schools
- **Level 3** (high need) – State district support team;
- **Level 4** (intensive need) – On-site State district support team; direct and sustained mentoring
- **Level 5** (urgent intervention) – possible restructuring or alternative governance; ongoing, sustained, direct coaching

District Audit Rubric

In the following section, the District Audit Rubric used to score districts for the desk audit is provided. Specific elements and criteria are selected for closer examination during the on-site investigation of those districts that fall into groups 3 through 5 or groups 4 and 5, depending on the State's determination of capacity. Only those elements and criteria that can be described in one of the categories below would be included in the final audit tool used in the on-site investigation:

- areas of clear problems identified in the desk audit based on scoring of desk audit where complete data is available
- areas of uncertainty = bad data, data contradictions, missing data
- areas of no data

The review of the research literature in Appendix A provides the basis for the selection of elements and the criteria included in the rubric. The scale for evaluating the district's performance on each criterion is based on the information from this literature review on the characteristics and behaviors found to correlate to success in fostering high student achievement.

DISTRICT AUDIT RUBRIC
ELEMENTS RELATED TO DISTRICT SUCCESS

Scale:
4 = Exemplary: This element contributes to the district's success, and provides a model for other districts to emulate.
3 = Meets expectation: This element is fully functional and all indicators are evident.
2 = Area of Concern: This element is marginal. Some indicators for this element are evident. Performance in this area should be monitored for change and impact on Areas of Need.
1 = Area of Need: No evidence that this element is met or understood by the district. This element would be identified as a priority for technical assistance.

I. LEADERSHIP					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	***Sub-total***
1. Clear vision and mission Evidence: • Vision and mission statement posted at the district office • Board minutes • Administration meeting minutes • Newspaper articles • District publications • Presentations, interviews by district leadership • Interviews with district leadership	• District leadership knows, understands, and effectively communicates a sustained vision and mission of the district to <u>all constituents</u> of the district.	• District leadership has developed and communicated a clear vision and mission.	• District leadership knows and understands the vision and mission of the district.	• The district's vision and mission are not evident.	
Data Sources					
Findings					

2. Instructional leadership Evidence: • Board minutes • Administrator meeting agendas • Professionals development plans and agendas for instructional leaders • Observations and interviews with district leadership	• The district leadership sustains and models a focus on improving and supporting instructional leadership.	• The district leadership maintains a focus on improving and supporting instructional leadership.	• The district leadership provides minimal support for instructional leadership. • Frequent priority is given to management and crisis issues.	• There is no evidence that the district leadership maintains a focus on improving and supporting instructional leadership.	
Data Sources					
Findings					
3. Policies and procedures Evidence: • Written policies, procedures, and forms	• District policies explicitly direct district leadership to focus all activities on increased student achievement. • Administrative procedures specify alignment of all activities to increase student achievement.	• District policies direct district leadership to focus activities on student achievement. • Administrative procedures align activities to student achievement.	• District policies and procedures require some activities to be focused on student achievement.	• No mention is made of student achievement in district policies and procedures.	
Data Sources					
Findings					
4. Leadership decisions Evidence: • Board minutes • Process for data analysis • Administrative meeting minutes and participant lists • Observations and interviews	• Leadership employs a systematic process for decisions that are data driven, collaborative decisions and focused on increased student achievement. • Leadership provides useful information to appropriate stakeholders.	• Leadership decisions are data driven, collaborative and focused on increased student achievement.	• Leadership decisions are related to student achievement.	• Leadership decisions are unrelated to student achievement.	
Data Sources					
Findings					

5. Monitoring process Evidence: • Monitoring instrument • Monitoring schedule • Examples of plan revisions • Documentation of timely implementation of school improvement interventions • Board reports of monitoring results	• The district has implemented a systematic and regular monitoring process to evaluate the effectiveness of school improvement plans to improve student achievement. • District leadership monitors the timely implementation of school improvement interventions and adjustments to plans when activities prove ineffective.	• District leadership has implemented a school monitoring process focused on improved student achievement.	• District leadership has implemented a school monitoring process which includes student achievement.	• District leadership has not implemented a monitoring process related to student achievement.	
Data Sources					
Findings					
6. Parent / community council Evidence: • Council mission and vision • Council membership list • Meeting agendas and participants • Observations / interviews	• The district has an active parent/community council that meets regularly, is involved in all aspects of district educational planning, and monitors the implementation of plans. • The district ensures the advisory council is comprised of individuals who represent or are knowledgeable of the various student subgroup characteristics and representatives of community demographic groups.	• The district has an active parent/community council involved in all aspects of district educational planning. • The district advisory council is comprised of individuals who represent or are knowledgeable of the various student subgroup characteristics and representatives of community demographic groups.	• The district has a functioning advisory council.	• There is no evidence the district has an advisory council.	
Data Sources					
Findings					

I. LEADERSHIP IMPLICATIONS	**Total Score (Total Points ÷ 6)**

II. ACADEMIC CONTENT AND ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	***Sub-total***
1. Academic content standards Evidence: • Academic content standards documents • Professional Development Plan • Observation and interviews	• The district communicates the State standards to staff, students, parent and the community. • The district communicates a commitment to the achievement of academic content standards by all students to staff, students, parents, and the community. • The district has provided awareness, training, and follow-up support to the teaching of academic content standards.	• The district communicates the State standards to staff, students, parents, and the community. • The district communicates a commitment to the achievement of academic content standards by most students to staff. • The district has provided awareness and training for the teaching of academic content standards.	• The district communicates the State standards to staff, students, parent and the community. • The district has provided awareness and training for the teaching of academic content standards.	• The district communicates the State standards to staff and students.	
Data Sources					
Findings					
2. Academic achievement standards Evidence: • Academic achievement standards documents • Professional Development Plan • Observation and interviews	• The district communicates the State academic achievement standards to staff, students, parent and the community. • The district relates the academic achievement standards to their uses in teaching and learning. • The district requires schools to employ the academic achievement standards for judging and reporting the progress of students in meeting the content standards as part of teaching and learning.	• The district relates the academic achievement standards to their uses in teaching and learning. • The district encourages schools to employ the academic achievement standards as a guide for judging the progress of students in meeting the content standards as part of teaching and learning.	• The district relates the academic achievement standards to their uses in teaching and learning.	• The district relates the academic achievement standards to State test results.	
Data Sources					
Findings					

II. ACADEMIC CONTENT AND ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS	**Total Score (Total Points ÷ 2)**

III. CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	***Sub-total***
1. Curriculum alignment Evidence: • Written curriculum • Sample units and lessons • Professional Development Plan • Observation and interviews	• The district has aligned curriculum to content standards, vertically and horizontally. • The district ensures all district personnel have participated in professional development on the content and achievement standards and aligned curriculum. • The district provides exemplars of standards aligned with instructional units, lessons, and classroom assessments.	• The district has aligned curriculum with content standards, vertically and horizontally. • The district provides professional development on the content and achievement standards and aligned curriculum.	• The district has curriculum related to content standards. • The district provides copies of the content standards and curriculum.	• The district has a written curriculum that is not clearly related to content standards.	
Data Sources					
Findings					
2. Access to grade level standards instruction Evidence: • Course sequence • Course syllabus • Summary class schedules • Observation and interviews • Example units and lesson plans • Teacher certifications and endorsements	• The district ensures all students have access to and are receiving grade level standards instruction designed to help them achieve at the proficient and advanced levels. • District utilizes all available methods to provide every student access to aligned standards and advanced instruction.	• The district ensures all students have access to and are receiving grade level standards instruction adequately designed to help them achieve at the proficient level. • The district utilizes a variety of methods to provide students access to standards instruction.	• The district provides access to grade level standards-based instruction.	• District provides access to instruction relevant to standards.	
Data Sources					
Findings					

3. Scientifically research-based strategies Evidence: • Research used to develop aligned curriculum • Research used in endorsing instructional strategies • List of district endorsed instructional strategies • Professional Development Plan	• Curriculum content and district endorsed instructional strategies exclusively employ scientifically research-based strategies • The district ensures all educators receive on-going, sustained professional development in scientifically research-based instructional strategies.	• Curriculum content and district endorsed instructional strategies are supported by scientifically-based research. • The district provides professional development in scientifically research-based instructional strategies.	• Curriculum content and instructional strategies are supported by research.	• District endorses instructional strategies based on research.	
Data Sources					
Findings					
4. Access instructional materials (e.g., textbooks, software, manipulatives) Evidence: • Instructional materials based on sound research • List of district approved textbooks and curriculum materials • Observation and interview • Technology plan	• All students are provided with scientifically research–based instructional materials aligned with grade level standards.	• All students are provided with instructional materials aligned with grade level standards.	• All students are provided with instructional materials.	• Not all students are provided with instructional materials.	
Data Sources					
Findings					

III. CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION	Total Score (Total Points ÷ 4)

IV. HIGHLY-QUALIFIED STAFF					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	***Sub-total***
1. Highly-qualified AMOs Evidence: • Teacher certifications • Plan for meeting highly-qualified AMOs	• The district employs only fully-qualified teachers in all of its schools. • The district has developed a plan to fill future positions with highly-qualified teachers.	• The district employs mostly qualified teachers in all of its schools. • The district has a plan for meeting highly-qualified AMOs. • The district is fully implementing the plan.	• The district employs mostly qualified teachers in all of its schools. • The district has a plan for meeting highly-qualified AMOs.	• The district employs a significant number of under-qualified teachers. • The district does not have a plan to meet highly-qualified AMOs.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
2. Teacher assignments Evidence: • Teacher certifications and endorsements • Teacher transcripts	• The district assigns highly-qualified teachers to schools and classrooms based upon their qualifications and characteristics as related to educational outcomes. • The District Assigns highly-qualified, experienced teachers with additional training/expertise in the area of concern (Reading/Language Arts or Mathematics) to classrooms with a majority of students performing below proficiency.	• The district assigns highly-qualified teachers to schools and classrooms based upon their qualifications and characteristics as related to educational outcomes.	• The district delivers assistance in meeting academic achievement standards by giving some consideration to the qualifications of the teachers and student needs.	• Teacher assignments are based on teacher selection, schedules, and class-size policies.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
3. Incentives for teacher assigned to high-need schools Evidence: • Incentive policies	• The district offers incentives for master teachers to accept assignments to the most challenging schools and students. • The district offers on-going incentives for teachers to continue assignments to the most challenging schools and students.	• The district offers incentives for teachers to accept assignments to the most challenging schools and students.	• The district offers incentives for teachers to accept assignments to low-performing schools.	• The district does not offer incentives.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

4. Administrators	• The district assigns highly-qualified administrators to schools based upon their qualifications and characteristics as related to educational outcomes. • The district offers on-going incentives for successful administrators to continue assignments to the most challenging schools. • The district provides additional support to administrators who have demonstrated success in the most challenging schools.	• The district assigns highly-qualified administrators to schools based upon their qualifications. • The district offers occasional incentives for administrators to accept assignments to the most challenging schools. • The district provides additional support to administrators in the most challenging schools.	• The district gives some consideration to the qualifications of administrators. • The district offers incentives for administrators to accept assignments to low performing schools.	• Administrators' assignments are based on seniority or other non-educational criteria. • The district does not offer incentives.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

IV. HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF	**Total Score (Total Points ÷ 4)**

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	***Sub-total***
1. Identified needs Evidence: • Professional Development Plan • District Improvement Plan • Teacher qualifications • District Professional Development Needs Assessment • District curriculum development cycle • Consolidated Application Title II Section • Observation and interviews	• The district professional development plan is identified through data analysis, assessment of schools' professional development needs, district improvement goals, State standards and district curriculum, and instruction and assessment initiatives.	• The district professional development plan is based on needs identified through district improvement goals as dictated by student achievement results, State standards and district curriculum, and instruction and assessment initiatives.	• The district professional development is related to student achievement results.	• The district professional development is sporadic, random, and unrelated to student achievement.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

2. Highly-qualified and effective teachers Evidence: • Personal Development Plans • Highly Qualified State Definition • District Highly-Qualified Teacher and Paraprofessional Plan • Consolidated Application • Teacher assignment/ certification information • Equity of the assignment of teachers across schools • Observation and interviews	• Professional development is based on systematic personal development plans and increases the number of highly-qualified teachers in the district.	• Professional development is provided to assist currently employed teachers and paraprofessionals in meeting highly-qualified requirements.	• Professional development includes certification courses.	• Professional development is provided upon teacher request.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
3. Scientifically researched-based instructional strategies Evidence: • District Professional Development Approval Criteria and Plan • District Improvement Plan • Consolidated Application Title II Section • Observation and interviews	• The district ensures all district personnel receive professional development that is based on high quality scientifically researched-based instructional strategies. • The district approval criteria for school professional development topics include research basis, identified need, and student achievement results with a clear relationship to State standards and district curriculum, instruction, and assessment initiatives. • The district delivers highquality professional development that ensures gender equity and safe schools.	• District Professional development is based on high-quality, scientifically researched-based instructional strategies. • The district approval criteria for school professional development topics include research basis, identified need, and student achievement results.	• District Professional development is based on instructional strategies.	• District Professional development topics are by request.	
DATA SOURCES					

FINDINGS					
4. Methodologies for delivery of scientifically researched-based Evidence: • Professional Development Plan • District Professional Development approval criteria • District Improvement Plan • Professional Development Evaluation form and analysis • Observation and interviews	• The district ensures all district personnel receive professional development based on high quality scientifically researched-based methodologies. • District approval of both district and school professional development is based on criteria linked to student achievement that includes on-going, sustained efforts over years, follow-up training, job-embedded learning, administrative support, and evaluation of implementation and effectiveness.	• District Professional development is based on high quality scientifically researched-based methodologies. • District approval of both district and school professional development is based on criteria linked to student achievement that includes on-going, sustained efforts, follow-up training, job-embedded learning, and administrative support.	• District approval of both district and school professional development is based on criteria linked to student achievement.	• District approval of both district and school professional development is based on requests.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
5. District provides professional development through coaching, mentoring, and collaboration Evidence: • Professional Development Plan • District Professional Development approval criteria • District Improvement Plan • Professional Development Evaluation form and analysis • Observation and interviews	• The district requires planned follow-up administrative, budgetary, and resource support (fiscal, time, and human) to on-going professional development through coaching, mentoring, and collaboration with evaluation of implementation and effectiveness.	• The district provides planned follow-up administrative, budgetary, and resource support to on-going professional development through coaching, mentoring, and collaboration.	• The district provides planned follow-up support to professional development.	• No district support for follow-up to professional development is evident.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

6. Data analysis of the State, school, and classroom assessment Evidence: • Professional Development Plan • District Professional Development approval criteria • District Improvement Plan • Professional Development Evaluation form and analysis • Observation and interviews	• The district provides professional development to increase knowledge and use of data analysis over time of State, district, school, and classroom assessment results to guide instruction and improved student achievement. • The district evaluates the effectiveness and implementation of data analysis and professional development.	• The district provides professional development to increase knowledge and use of data analysis of State, district, school, and classroom assessment results.	• The district provides professional development to increase understanding of data analysis of the assessment results at the State level.	• The district shares information on required assessments.	
DATA SOURCES	-				
FINDINGS	-				
7. Use assessment data to evaluates the impact Evidence: • Professional Development Plan • District Improvement Plan • Professional Development Evaluation form and analysis • Student achievement data analysis • Observation and interviews	• Using assessment data, the district evaluates the impact and effectiveness of professional development on teacher practice and student achievement through data analysis and classroom observation.	• Using assessment data, the district evaluates the impact and effectiveness of professional development on teacher practice and student achievement.	• District evaluates the impact of professional development on teacher practice through self-report.	• There is no evidence the district uses assessment data to evaluate the impact of professional development on teacher practice and student achievement.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Total Score (Total Points ÷ 7)

VI. ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	***Sub-total***
1. Quality assessments aligned to State content and achievement standards Evidence: • State and district assessment results • District assessment plan • District assessment alignment criteria and study results • Observation and interview	• District assessments are aligned to State content standards in terms of breadth, depth, comprehensiveness, and range. • The district ensures classroom assessments are aligned to State content standards and district curriculum and are used to monitor progress formatively towards achievement of the standards. • State, district, and classroom assessment results are used in a systematic combination to guide instruction in a manner appropriate to their purpose.	• District assessments, if present, are aligned to State content standards. • Classroom assessments aligned to State content standards are used formatively to monitor progress toward achievement of the standards. • State assessment results are used to guide instruction.	• District assessments, if present, are aligned to State content standards. • State assessments are used in the district.	• State assessments are the only assessments used in the district.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
2. Curriculum planning based on student results Evidence: • State and district assessment results • District policies and procedures for curriculum revision • Curriculum revision plan and schedule • State and District assessment results • Observation and interview	• A continuous district curriculum revision process that utilizes assessment results to determine needed revisions to improve learning is planned and carried out systematically.	• District curriculum planning and revisions are based on analysis of student assessment results.	• District curriculum planning is based on general observations of student strengths and weaknesses.	• District curriculum planning is unrelated to student assessment results or general observations of student strengths and weaknesses.	

DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
3. Standards-based grading policies and procedures Evidence: • Match between State and district assessment results • District assessment plan • District grading policies and procedures • Examples of report cards from each grade span • Observation and interview	• The district has standards-based grading policies and procedures that support student achievement of standards. • The district report cards are designed so parents are continuously aware of how their children are progressing in achieving the standards throughout the school year.	• The district has standards-based grading policies and procedures that support student achievement of standards.	• The district has grading policies and procedures that report student progress.	• There is no evidence of district grading policies or procedures related to content standards or consistent evaluation of student progress across classrooms.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
4. Accommodations Evidence: • Rates of accommodation use • Reports on district monitoring of match between IEP and accommodation use • Records of accommodation training	• Assessment accommodations are provided on State assessments consistent with State policy. • Each student receives the assessment accommodations specified in his/her IEP, and are those used routinely in the student's classroom instruction and assessment. • Personnel trained in the proper use of assessment accommodations administer them in a manner consistent with State policies and procedures.	• Assessment accommodations are provided on State assessments consistent with State policy. • Each student receives the assessment accommodations as specified in each student's IEPs, and are those used routinely in the student's classroom instruction and assessment.	• Assessment accommodations are provided on State assessments consistent with State policy. • Each student receives the assessment accommodations as specified in each student's IEPs.	• Assessment accommodations are provided on State assessments consistent with State policy.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

5. Alternate assessments Evidence: • Rates of alternate assessment use • Reports on district monitoring of match between IEP and alternate assessment use • Records of district participation in alternate assessment training	• Alternate assessments are provided to students with significant cognitive impairments as specified by each student's IEP. • District administration communicates and supports the use of alternate assessments for only those students whose participation in the general assessment even with accommodations would not be possible. • Personnel trained in the proper procedures administer the alternate assessment.	• Alternate assessments are provided to students with significant cognitive impairments as specified by each student's IEP. • Personnel trained in the proper procedures administer the alternate assessment.	• Alternate assessments are provided to students with significant cognitive impairments as specified by each student's IEP.	• Alternate assessments are provided to students based on teacher recommendation.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
6. Assessment reporting Evidence: • State and district assessment results • District assessment plan • Sample reports • Distribution and dissemination policies • Observation and interview • Distribution policy and parental notification	• Individual student assessment results are reported to educators and parents. • District and school assessment results are reported to the educators, parents and the community. • All assessment results are reported in a manner that meaningfully communicates the achievement of standards to the intended audience in multiple formats and languages as appropriate. • District reporting is timely for planning and instructional uses. • District reporting makes the connection between assessment results and improvement goals transparent.	• Individual student assessment results are reported to educators and parents. • District and school assessment results are reported to educators, parents and the community. • All assessment results are reported in a manner that meaningfully communicates the achievement of standards to the intended audience in an appropriate format and languages. • District reporting is timely for planning and instructional uses.	• District and school assessment results are reported to educators and the community.	• Individual student assessment results are reported to the educators.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

7. Accountability reporting Evidence: • State and district accountability results • Distribution policies and parental notification requirements • District plan for achieving AYP goals • District improvement plan • Sample reports • Observation and interview	• District and school accountability results are reported to educators, parents and the community. • All accountability results are reported in a manner that meaningfully communicates district, school, and subgroup progress toward the achievement of standards. • District reporting of school and district status occurs before the beginning of the school year for the application of sanctions. • District reporting makes the connection between accountability results and improvement goals transparent.	• District and school accountability results are reported to educators, parents, and the community. • All accountability results are reported in a manner that meaningfully communicates district, school, and subgroup progress toward the achievement of standards. • District reporting of school and district status occurs before the beginning of the school year for the application of sanctions.	• District and school accountability results are reported to educators, parents and the community.	• Accountability results are reported to educators.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
8. Use of reports Evidence: • Distribution policies on distribution and use of reports • District improvement plan • Observation and interview	• The district provides support and training for the use of reports in planning instruction, revising curriculum, and developing units of study and/or lesson plans related to areas in which students are not achieving. • The district requires principals to monitor the use of information from assessment results that teachers employ in planning instruction.	• The district provides support and training for the use of reports in planning instruction, revising curriculum, and developing units of study and/or lesson plans related to areas in which students are not achieving.	• The district encourages the use of reports in planning instruction, revising curriculum, and developing units of study and/or lesson plans related to areas in which students are not achieving.	• The district encourages the use of reports in planning instruction.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

VI. ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY	**Total Score (Total Points ÷ 8)**

VII. SCHOOL CULTURE/CLIMATE					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	***Sub-total***
1. High expectations for students (student mastery of standards and participation, attendance, graduation rates) related to State goals Evidence: • Vision, mission • Board minutes • Media articles • District and school report cards • Extended and after school academic programs • Observation / interviews • Climate surveys	• The district articulates high expectations for mastery of standards by all students. • Physical, cultural, behavioral, and intellectual needs are addressed. • Additional academic assistance is provided to all students identified in need.	• The district holds high expectations for mastery of standards by all students. • Additional academic support is provided to meet student needs.	• The district promotes awareness of student mastery of standards.	• There is no evidence that the district promotes awareness of or expectations for student mastery of standards.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

2. High expectations for staff (teacher and administrator performance) related to State goals Evidence: • Vision, mission • Board policy and procedures for employee evaluation • Teacher and administrator certification documentation • Sample employee evaluation forms and criteria • Board minutes • Media articles • Professional development plan • Consolidated Plan Highly Qualified Plan • Observation / interviews • Climate Surveys	• The district holds and consistently communicates high expectations for teacher, staff, and administrator performance. • All teachers are highly qualified and administrators hold appropriate credentials. • Parents and Community are informed of teacher qualifications.	• The district holds high expectations for teacher and administrator performance. • There is a district plan for all teachers to become highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.	• There is a district plan for all teachers to become highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.	• The district has data on qualifications of teachers.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
3. Celebrates success Evidence: • Media reports • Vision and mission • Board minutes • Newsletters • Observation / interview • Climate survey • System of recognitions and monetary or non-monetary rewards	• The district values, acknowledges, and publicly celebrates academic success.	• The district acknowledges and celebrates academic success.	• The district exhibits some recognition of student success.	• The district does not recognize or celebrate academic success.	

DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
4. Safe and drug-free learning environments Evidence: • Policies and procedures • Minutes and participant lists from meetings • Documentation of safe and drug-free activities • Youth Risk Behavior Survey • Discipline and incident reports • Consolidated plan • Improvement plans	• The district facilitates and maintains safe, drug-free, and orderly environments conducive to learning through consistent implementation of all policies and procedures. • Environment is created through collaborative efforts with community, parents, educators, and students.	• The district facilitates safe and drug-free learning environments through consistent implementation of its policies and procedures. • Stakeholders are involved in the planning process.	• The district inconsistently implements and enforces its policies and procedures for safe and drug-free learning environments. • The district leadership develops policies and procedures, and they are shared with the stakeholders.	• There are no policies or procedures in place or enforced to provide a safe and drug-free environment. • No input from stakeholders is sought.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
5. Support for at-risk students Evidence: • Policies and procedures • Curriculum support for at-risk students • Youth Risk Behavior Survey • Prevention and after school programs • Discipline and incident reports • Consolidated plan • Climate survey	• The district promotes teaching and reinforcement of self-discipline and responsibility. • District policy and procedure provides for student assistance, counseling, and referral. • The district has systemic policies and procedures for identification, prevention, and intervention of at-risk behaviors.	• The district promotes teaching and reinforcement of self-discipline and responsibility. • District policy and procedures provide for student assistance, counseling, and referral.	• District policy and procedure provides for referral of students with at-risk behaviors	• There is no evidence of district policy and procedures regarding students with at-risk behaviors	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

VII. ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY	Total Score (Total Points ÷ 5)

VIII. BUDGET AND RESOURCES (If site-based, see this element on the school rubric.)					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	***Sub-total***
2. District ensures school funding is targeted toward program improvement with emphasis on identified subgroups and grade levels: a. If Site-based, see School Rubric #1? b. If Collaboration between district and school, see above.	• The district's policies and procedures prioritize allocation of fiscal, facilities, technological and human resources based on student achievement of standards by all subgroups and grade levels. • The district has a long-term three to five year fiscal plan that bases facilities, technology, and human resources priorities on achievement of student standards by all subgroups and grade levels.	• The district's policies and procedures include allocations of fiscal, facilities, and technological and human resources based on student achievement of standards by all subgroups and grade levels. • The district has an annual fiscal plan that allocates facilities, technology, and human resources based on priorities for achievement of student standards.	• The district targets excess funds towards identified subgroups and grade levels according to student performance results after fixed costs and previously planned activities.	• District funds are randomly prioritized after fixed costs.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
2. Comparability of Funding Evidence: • Consolidated Plan • Fiscal records • Per pupil expenditures • FTEs • Board budget policies and procedures	• The district demonstrates systematic procedures for ensuring student academic achievement results are priority for facilities, and fiscal, technological, and human resource planning beyond fixed costs.	• The district demonstrates comparability of funding across schools and academic programs to support student academic achievement.	• The district demonstrates comparability of funding across schools and academic programs.	• There is no evidence of equity in district funding across schools and student populations.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

3. Comparability of Teachers Evidence: • Board policy and procedures regarding teacher assignment • Student demographics • Student assessment data • Consolidated Plan • FTEs • Highly qualified teacher assignment • Certification records	• The district demonstrates comparability of highly-qualified teachers across schools that results in matching the needs of students in schools to the assignment of teachers.	• The district demonstrates comparability of the assignment of highly-qualified teachers across schools.	• District demonstrates comparability of teachers across schools	• There is no evidence that the district has a system for teachers assignments across schools.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
4. Time Management Evidence: • Board scheduling policies and administrative procedures • Board minutes • Professional Development Plan • District Improvement Plan • Calendars and scheduling procedures • Board budget policies and procedures regarding release time • Calendar of professional development events	• The district designs its time resources around school improvement, professional development, mentoring, and common planning time in ways that support teacher collaboration on increasing student academic achievement. • The district makes timely expenditures of all federal, State, and local funds. • The district provides release time (e.g., during and after school day, weekends, summer, extended day) for professional development, including on-going, job-embedded activities in support of new professional development initiatives (e.g., mentoring and coaching).	• The district provides time for on-going, sustained work in school improvement, professional development, and, mentoring.	• The district provides time for school improvement planning and professional development events.	• The district allows school improvement planning and professional development events during teacher planning time or after school hours.	
DATA SOURCES					

FINDINGS					
5. Monitoring Budget Priorities Evidence: • Board budget policies • District administrative procedures for budget development • System for expending funds in timely manner • Board minutes • District Improvement Plan • District Budget • District Audit Reports (Performance, Internal, & Independent)	• The district has a systematic process for the continuous monitoring of school plans for budgeting priorities involving achievement of standards and school improvement and provides feedback to schools for making adjustments to budgets.	• The district monitors school plans for budgeting priorities for achievement of standards and school improvement.	• The district monitors school plans for budgeting priorities.	• There is no evidence the district monitors school budgets or provides feedback to schools on adjustments the district makes.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
6. Guidance on School Budget Priorities Evidence: • District administrative procedures for budget development • Board minutes • District Improvement Plan • District Budget	• The district provides guidance to schools on budget priorities for achievement of standards and school improvement efforts. • The district continuously monitors school budgets to ensure these priorities are appropriately implemented to carry out school plans.	• The district provides guidance to schools on budget priorities for achievement of standards and school improvement efforts.	• The district informs schools on budget priorities for achievement of standards and school improvement efforts.	• The district informs schools on budget priorities.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

7. District independent, performance audits Evidence: • Performance audits • Resolution plan	• The district has written and fully implemented plans for any citation resulting in resolution to audit findings in a timely manner.	• The district has written and begun implementing plans for any citation resulting in resolution to audit findings in a timely manner.	• The district has written but not implemented plans for some citations but not all.	• The district has no written plans to resolve citations.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

VIII. BUDGET AND RESOURCES	**Total Score (Total Points ÷ 7)**

IX. PARENTS AND COMMUNITY					
Criteria	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	***Sub-total***
1. Parent / community council	See Leadership	See Leadership	See Leadership	See Leadership	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

2. Parent communication and involvement Evidence: • District parent involvement policy • Newsletters, notifications, and publications • Meeting agenda and participation documentation • Consolidated applications • Observations / interviews • "Satisfaction" surveys	• The district has policies and procedures that maximize access to information and meaningful involvement for all parents relevant to student learning. • The district notifies, recruits, and involves all parents. • The district supports and encourages parent volunteerism in schools in support of the learning process. • The district ensures frequent, continuous, and meaningful two-way communication with all parents. • The district provides on-going training for all parents to support student learning. • The district reports evaluation of programs and plans to parents and seeks feedback from them.	• The district has policies and procedures that provide access to information and involvement opportunities for all parents. • The district notifies, recruits, and involves all parents. • The district supports parent volunteerism in schools. • The district ensures meaningful communication with parents. • The district provides training for parents to support student learning. • The district reports evaluation of programs and plans to parents.	• The district notifies and involves parents. • The district allows parental involvement in schools. • The district communicates with parents.	• There is no evidence the district encourages parental involvement or communicates with parents.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					
3. Community communication and involvement Evidence: • District community involvement policy • Newsletters, notifications, and publications • Meeting agenda and participation documentation • Consolidated applications • Observations / interviews	• The district has policies and procedures that maximize access to information and meaningful involvement for community members relevant to student learning. • The district notifies, recruits, and involves all community members in activities relevant to student learning. • The district supports and encourages community volunteerism in schools in support of the learning process. • The district ensures frequent, continuous, and meaningful two-way communication with all community members. • The district reports evaluation of programs and plans to the community and seeks feedback from them.	• The district has policies and procedures that provide access to information and involvement opportunities for community members. • The district notifies, recruits, and involves community members. • The district supports community volunteerism in schools. • The district ensures meaningful communication with the community.	• The district notifies community. • The district allows community involvement in schools. • The district communicates with the community.	• There is no evidence the district encourages community involvement or communication.	
DATA SOURCES					
FINDINGS					

IX. PARENTS AND COMMUNITY	Total Score (Total Points ÷ 3)

Stage 3 Planning and conducting the on-site visit

Stage 3 involves planning and conducting the on-site visit to perform an in-depth investigation of specific elements in districts at the highest levels of need. Not all districts that failed to meet AYP would be subject to this intensive on-site investigation. Districts that remain at high need levels depending on the State's policy decision (Levels 3 through 5 or Levels 4 and 5) will be visited to further investigate areas of concern. This stage is intended to focus attention on specific elements, not to investigate all of the elements in the rubric. During the on-site investigation, the on-site team will examine only those elements that remain of significant concern after the Stage 2 desk audit data analysis. At least some of the elements should have been eliminated based on the desk audit. Both efficiency and effectiveness militate against an on-site investigation of all elements. The purpose of the on-site visit is to clarify any concerns.

In this stage, the State will also determine the team that will participate in the on-site investigation based on their expertise in the area of concern. The information gathered will be used in the development of the technical assistance plan. Care and expertise are needed in gathering information that will lead to support for improvement performance by the district in meeting AYP targets.

Training for on-site investigators will be needed to ensure consistency in evaluating and reporting on what is observed. Investigators will also need training on the tools such as survey and observational tools they will use to gather information and clarify concerns. Some survey tools may be used to collect additional information prior to the visit. During the visit, the team will confirm results from these surveys.

Stage 3a: Pre on-site visit activities

Many States carry out comprehensive audits of districts that include both program and fiscal investigations. This on-site visit is neither comprehensive nor an audit in the traditional sense. Only those elements for which satisfactory evidence of adequate performance could not be located are investigated during this on-site visit. Awareness of the specific focus of the on-site visit is essential to efficiency in conducting the visit and effectiveness in gathering and examining the needed evidence for those specific elements for which additional evidence of performance is needed.

Determining team based on desk audit

When the desk audit is complete, the make-up of the on-site team should be evident. Those individuals with expertise in the elements that require on-site investigation are assigned to carry out the visit. Since only those elements that have been found to be significant areas of concern will be investigated, the team does not need to be large, comprehensive, or represent expertise in all of the elements.

In selecting on-site team members, the Decision Team considers team member characteristics and experience. Team members are asked to investigate the selected elements in a meticulous and objective manner applying a thorough knowledge of both the research about the element and the rubric. Scoring is based on the descriptions provided for each performance level of the rubric only. "Internal" rubrics are not used, regardless of the individual's expertise.

Where possible, individuals with expertise in more than one of the elements of concern are assigned to the team so that a cross check can be conducted. This individual conducts the in-depth investigation of the element according to assignment and also investigates a second area as a second rater. Where there is wide disagreement between the two raters, further questioning is needed.

Training the team

Training is provided to the team on the procedures used during the on-site investigation, including a thorough grounding in the rubric for the elements to be investigated. Team members are familiarized with the kind of evidence that needs to be gathered and examined to determine the extent and nature of the district's deficits. Team members are trained in procedures for gathering the evidence, examining it, and evaluating the information against the rubric for the element. This training includes direction concerning the likely location of the evidence, and observational methods and procedures, as well as developing skills in using other tools that are employed in the investigation.

Plan areas to be investigated

The results of the desk audit are used to determine the extent and nature of the district's deficits or if the desk audit materials lacked evidence that the district is actually performing better in the element than information used in the desk audit indicated. In some cases, the desk audit fails to uncover data adequate to judge accurately the performance of the district. The on-site visit may uncover the additional evidence needed to eliminate that element as an area of focus for technical assistance.

Develop a schedule for the review

The District Superintendent and the State On-Site Team Leader plan a schedule for the visit. When possible, the district locates and has ready information that may not have been available during the desk audit. Coordination of schedules may be necessary where observations or interviews are needed. These details need to be arranged prior to the arrival of the team to avoid delays and ensure effective use of the limited time on-site.

The On-Site Team Leader makes the district aware of the specific elements to be investigated during the on-site visit so the district can assemble any evidence they may have that may not have been available during the desk audit. In some cases, districts may elect to provide as much of this information as possible prior to the visit.

The steps for **Stage 3a** follow:

STEP 1. Determining team based on desk audit
- A. Expertise in area of investigation
- B. Recent experience

STEP 2: Team member characteristics and experience = Determine make-up of the team Who is the team? Things to consider.
- A. pros and cons of = inside people, content knowledge, special pops, parent involvement,

STEP 3: Train personnel
- A. Gather additional data to complete missing data
- B. Gather data to verify questionable data

STEP 4: Plan specific areas to be examined = specific to identified areas of the rubric for each district
- A. areas of clear problems identified in the desk audit based on scoring of desk audit where complete data is available
- B. areas of uncertainty = bad data, data contradictions, missing data
- C. areas of no data

STEP 5: Schedule review time to be used to examine each relevant element

STEP 6: Facilitate review by having Facilitator/Team leader work with the Superintendent

STEP 7: Gather all materials and tools needed by each review team member

Stage 3b: Conduct on-site visit

Gather data and rate specified elements

During the on-site visit, the State may gather additional documents, conduct observations or focus groups, or administer surveys. The tools used are selected prior to the visit and are tools that used consistently for on-site investigations. Districts may provide information from surveys they routinely conduct which may not have been available during the desk audit. The Team may locate information that the District may not realize is important to judgments about their performance in a specific element.

Upon arrival, the Team Leader confirms the purpose of the visit and clarifies any questions the district may have. The district should be aware that the visit is for purposes of gathering information to be used in formulating a technical assistance plan in collaboration with the State. It is not intended as a technical assistance visit. The district should be made aware of the preliminary work the State has done in gathering information prior to the visit for setting priorities and determining elements of emphasis for the visit. The reason for focus on specific elements rather than conducting a comprehensive investigation should be evident to the district from this explanation.

As team members gather evidence, two scorers examine each of the specific elements that the State Team is investigating. Where possible, the Team attempts to gather three sources or types of evidence to cross-validate the information. A single information source may be unreliable while cross-referencing various sources is more likely to yield accurate information. Both qualitative information and quantitative information should be considered and included. Qualitative information alone is seldom sufficiently reliable as the basis for final judgment.

Considerations for **Stage 3b** include the following:

State resources available = survey tools, observation protocols, focus group protocols, and other related sources.

A. Rules of engagement
    - Clarifying purpose of the visit (is/is not)
    - Two (2) scorers on each element to be examined
    - Three (3) sources of data
    - Types of data = qualitative and quantitative
    - Basis of joint TA plan
B. Norms of behavior/Code of ethics
    - Observation/Data gathering – not TA

Stage 3c: Decision point

This stage of the review involves making sense of what has been learned about the district from both the desk audit and on-site visits combined and using the information to formulate a report of the findings. The report will be used by the State and the district in their collaboration to create the technical assistance plan. No final findings on rubric scores or specific needs are possible for those districts deemed to be at the highest level of need and therefore visited on-site until this point. Caution should be exercised in sharing any preliminary scores with the districts until after all scores are finalized.

Finalizing Team scores

In examining the scores of each team member, the team leader will calculate inter-rater reliabilities on the final scores of the rubrics. Team members should have taken into account all information gathered on each criteria of the elements for which they were responsible when determining the final score.

If the team leader finds there is not exact agreement on the scores between the two scorers, a third team member may be asked to conference with the two team members, examine the evidence they have collected, and score the element or criteria in which exact agreement is not found independently of the two initial scorers. If this score is in exact agreement with one of the two initial scores, this score will become the final score. If the score does not agree exactly with one of the two initial scores, the three scorers will discuss resolution and arrive at a final score upon which they can all agree. Once scores for all elements and their criteria are finalized, the team leader will then compile a report of all final scores.

At this time, the performance descriptors for each level of the Level of Need Grid will be revisited by the Team Leader and the standard setting group. This team leader will present the evidence that has been accumulated, the team's scores, and their rationale for the scores. The standard setting group may then decide to confirm the previous district level of need determination or adjust the level of need determination for the district if the final findings suggest that final findings justify moving the district to a higher or lower level of need consistent with the performance descriptors.

Drawing Conclusions and Forming Hypotheses

The Team Leader will then compile all information for writing the report. This process involves drawing conclusions about the areas found to be functional and those requiring attention in developing the technical assistance plan. Some areas that appeared to be of concern during the desk audit may have been resolved before the visit through examination of additional materials provided by the district or through observations and data gathered during the on-site visit. The areas resolved can be eliminated as focuses of concern for the report and the subsequent development of the technical assistance plan.

Reviewing Findings

The Team Leader will develop a narrative summarizing the findings of the desk audit and on-site visit combined. The narrative is organized around the elements of the rubric and the criteria for each element. For example, the elements for the Curriculum/Instruction Element are curriculum

alignment, access to grade level standards instruction, scientifically research based strategies, and access to instructional materials. The report should make it clear which of these criteria are met by the district and which criteria were not met. The evidence used in determining failure to meet one of the criteria should be discussed and the reasons the district did not meet the criteria should be documented in two ways: (1) the part of the rubric description not satisfied and (2) the documentation or evidence not found in the desk audit and the on-site visit.

Finalizing the Report

The report should completely summarize the findings in terms of both the positive news (areas found sufficient to score at least a 3 on the rubrics), and the areas of need (those that will be the focus of technical assistance discussions for finalizing the plan). The conclusion to the report should state key findings. These key findings should focus on elements that should be considered potential goals for the technical assistance plan. Final scores on the rubric should be provided in an appendix to the report.

There are important rules for the contents of this report. The report writer should remember this document may become public under certain circumstances and should be written with that in mind.

Several of the rules for report writing include the following:

- Any statement of a deficiency must be supported by clear evidence and specific reference to the aspect of the rubric not attained.
- Comments are objective in tone and wording.
- Comments are stated in terms of what is evident and what needs to be improved.
- Any comments of team members included in the report need to be reviewed by the report writer for these conditions prior to inclusion in the report.

The steps for **Stage 3c** include the following.

STEP 1: Investigate Team scores areas
STEP 2: Examine Inter-rater reliability
STEP 3: Draw Consensus
STEP 4: Standard setting =
  A. How good is good enough?
  B. Cut scores
STEP 5: Draw conclusions and form hypotheses
STEP 6: Eliminate areas found to be functional on-site
STEP 7: Eliminate areas dealt with/resolved before visit
STEP 8: Review of finding
STEP 9: Development of narrative – summary of findings organized by element and criteria
STEP 10: Identify key findings
STEP 11: Report
  A. Summary
  B. Scoring

Stage 3d: Evaluation of the process

A method for on-going evaluation of the process is a necessary component of the system. This will ensure continuous improvement of the methods used and maximizing the use of lessons learned in the process of conducting desk-audits and on-site visits.

Data may be gathered about how the process is working both formally and informally. During the on-site visit, the team should record its own observations about the process. A formal survey can also be administered to both the District and the audit team. Informal opportunities such as discussions between the audit team and the district concerning findings from the desk audit and the on-site visit should also be undertaken.

When the audit team completes the visit, the team leader can use the information gathered to evaluate the process and convey ways of improving the process to the State. Questions may include queries about the degree to which the information that was gathered and analyzed as part of the desk audit informed the audit team and was found to be accurate by the district, and the degree to which the on-site visit clarified the information for the audit team and provided the district with an opportunity to elaborate what the desk audit had revealed.

Steps for **Stage 3d** include the following:

STEP 1: Gather data to refine process
STEP 2: Analyze data to revise documents and process procedures

Stage 4: Formulating the TA Plan

Stage 4 is the point at which the State uses the data gathered in Stage 1 through 3 to formulate the technical assistance plan in collaboration with the district. The State needs to share the information gathered and collaborate with districts on the priorities for each. Once those priorities have been set, the State may decide that there are a number of districts with similar concerns that could be grouped for delivery of professional development, collaborative work on shared problems, and oversight by assigned State or regional personnel.

Once the reports are complete, the State will use the findings to determine priorities for the districts at the highest levels of need. If several districts have common priorities, these districts might be grouped together to work on common concerns or to access shared resources as a means of maximizing cost benefit. For example, if several districts need to more closely align their instruction with the State standards, those districts that are in proximity to each other geographically may find it useful to exchange ideas, share professional development on the State standards, and work together on alignment activities.

Each district will need to be involved in a review of the District Audit Report. Using this information, the State or its designee and the district confer to develop a specific plan of action for the State's support to the district and the district's support to its schools. An agreement on timelines, personnel assignments, and tasks will be needed. The success of this plan will depend upon the precision with which the elements of concern and relevant criteria have been identified in order for the collaborators to determine a beginning and milestones for the work. The direct technical assistance providers agreed upon may not be State personnel at all. However, the State has responsibility for oversight, monitoring, and assurance that the plan is being carried out. Those districts at the highest level of need will require the closest monitoring.

Stage 4a: Setting priorities for TA plan

Prioritizing TA and grouping districts according to need

Specify priorities for TA plan

In Stage 4a priorities are specified for the technical assistance plans based on data the State has gathered in Stages 1 through 3. The districts that were determined to have one of the lowest levels of need are likely to fall into categories of need based on the number and type of subgroups failing to meet AYP. In the lowest level of need group, there are likely to be commonalities across districts in the subgroups missed. Those districts that have common subgroups needing improvement may be grouped for support either from the State or self-selected technical assistance. In either case, the State may make available technical assistance opportunities that offer districts a chance to collaborate with one another on common needs and to share professional development and other support costs for carrying out improvement plans. In general, the State does not necessarily directly collaborate with the districts that are at lower levels of need in writing their plans. However, many States review and approve these plans to ensure they are aligned with the evidence of need revealed by AYP and student achievement data.

Once the State decides there are a number of districts with similar concerns that could be grouped for delivery of professional development and collaborative work on shared problems, they may also determine assignments of State personnel, regional service centers, or other support team members for oversight of each district's participation and progress in implementing their plans.

States may also have regulations or rules in place that affect the support for and development of technical assistance plans. For example, Wyoming established five Technical Assistance Regions with specific State personnel assigned to each region. The State technical assistance providers work together with the North Central Accreditation (NCA) regional representative for each region and other providers, such as regional labs, to provide resources to the districts. This system was part of a legislative task force recommendation for sanctions and rewards.

For districts identified as in need of improvement, States are required in Section 1116c(9)A and 1117a(4)A to write technical assistance plans with each district in improvement, if requested. Districts may decline the offer of assistance from the State, but for those districts that request technical assistance, the State must assist the district in developing and implementing its improvement plan and better enable the district to work with its own schools in improvement. In providing this assistance, the State must incorporate a variety of approaches, including:

- establishing a school support team, providing such support as necessary and available in order to ensure the effectiveness of the teams.
- designating and using distinguished teachers and principals who are chosen from schools that have been especially successful in improving academic achievement.
- devising additional approaches to providing assistance (e.g., providing assistance through institutions of higher education and educational service agencies or other local consortia, and private providers of scientifically based technical assistance).

Section 1117 also requires States to work with its national comprehensive center to deliver this support.

Grouping districts with similar needs

Some examples of the ways States organize support to districts based on the level of need might resemble the following:

> Lowest level of need: These districts may participate in such statewide activities as data analysis workshops, school improvement conferences, professional development academies, and implementations of scientifically researched programs in the content areas of concern. The State may arrange showcases or demonstrations of various interventions on a specific content area or topic for representatives from groups of districts with similar needs. These might be regional or statewide and might involve program developers, CSR program providers, researchers, regional services centers and regional or national educational laboratories.
>
> Moderate level of need: These districts may also participate in the above, but because they have demonstrated an inability to show improvement over time, they may be required to engage assistance in closely evaluating their plans for improvement and the interventions they have selected. Documenting results for students who have participated in the selected interventions may be required to examine the effectiveness of the programs and consider the need to adjust interventions. The State may arrange collaborative planning meetings and demonstrations of various interventions for specific subgroups of students for representatives from groups of districts with similar needs. These might be regional or statewide and might involve program developers, CSR program providers, researchers, regional services centers, and regional or national educational laboratories.
>
> High level of need: These districts may participate in the opportunities available to the groups above. Because these districts are likely to have multiple subgroups missing AYP targets in most of their schools, the State may decide to include this level in their desk audit process even if they ultimately determine that the district does not require on-site TA from the State. The State will require close supervision by any TA provider working with district, direct approval of improvement plan, and frequent reporting from the district on their progress in implementing the planned activities.
>
> Intensive intervention level of need: These districts are likely to have all subgroups missing AYP targets and many having done so for several years. For this reason, participation in the statewide, regional, or cross district activities will not provide sufficient support to expect improvement in results. In addition, self-selected activities are likely to prove a diversion of the job-embedded work that needs to take place on-site. The State usually includes this group in the on-site review, direct supervision of improvement plan development, and oversight of the districts' efforts to support their schools missing AYP targets.

Urgent intervention level of need: These districts require comprehensive assistance. In many States, these districts are already engaged in restructuring with direction from the State for all major activities. Comprehensive reform activities are pervasive throughout these districts with the district under close scrutiny. The State conducts frequent on-site review, direct supervision of improvement plan development and restructuring activities, and over site of the districts' efforts to support their schools missing AYP targets.

The steps for **Stage 4a** include the following:

STEP 1: Specify priorities for TA plan

A. Based on determined level of need
B. Based on subgroups missing AYP targets
C. Based on content areas missing AYP targets

STEP 2: Group districts with similar needs

A. Based on determined level of need
B. Based on lack of effectiveness in the common elements of the rubrics
C. Based on demographic and subgroup characteristics
D. Based on proximity to one another
E. Based on similar subgroups missing AYP targets
F. Based on same content areas in same grade ranges missing AYP targets

Stage 4b: Formulating the District TA plan

Reviewing the report, conferring with the district, and developing the plan

The State and districts operate as partners to the degree possible in formulating the plan. The State and district examine the findings of the combined report that reflects the findings from the desk audit and the on-site visit. The priorities are the content areas in which AYP targets were not met, subgroups evidencing the greatest need, and the elements from the rubrics that were found to be of the greatest concern.

To further focus in on those elements that the report indicates are of greatest concern for the district, the State and district refer to the criteria within those elements in which the district attained the lowest score. Discussing the criteria and what aspects of the report found lacking should be instructive for identifying the priorities for the TA plan. Some of these elements are specific to decisions and activities at the district level and others are related to how the district interacts and supports schools in their own improvement planning and implementation efforts. Districts sometimes see missing AYP targets as a function of the schools' failure to meet the needs of their students when a close examination of the findings may suggest areas in which district operations fail to provide a systematic and efficient infrastructure; decisive, timely and supportive leadership, and close supervision; and assistance to schools and their building leaders. Those elements most likely to have direct impact on student achievement are obviously a priority if the findings indicated a significant need. However, in a well-aligned system such as that necessary to facilitate the achievement of the standards by all students, activities in all elements are directed to that goal.

Review the Report

For those districts that were selected to receive on-site audits in Stage 3, the report developed at the end of Stage 3 is used to formulate the technical assistance plan in collaboration with the district. The State needs to prepare to meet with the district to collaborate in formulating a technical assistance plan by carefully reviewing the findings of the report, assembling possible resources with potential for providing assistance in the areas of concern revealed by the report, and schedule a time to meet with the district to confer on the findings of the report. State or regional personnel may be involved, but the State is ultimately responsible for oversight of these districts' efforts.

The State should make the report available to the district in advance of the meeting to confer on the findings and formulate the plan. The districts should also be given an opportunity to select the kind of assistance they need based on the findings. Giving the district time to go through the report themselves, conduct internal discussions among district leaders, and develop possible proposals for their course of action during the upcoming discussions with the State is useful to the expeditious development of the TA plan. However, the district should not make final determination prior to conferring with the State, nor prioritize assistance in an area that did not emerge as a concern over one that was a clear finding in the report.

Criteria also need to be established for how the decision to include particular strategies in the improvement plan will be made. Among these are the degree to which SBR criteria are met, the

evidence that the selected strategies can produce improved achievement for the subgroups in the content areas in question, evidence that the strategies have proven successful in schools and districts with similar demographics, and feasibility of funding the cost of implementing the strategies for the necessary duration to show improvement.

The State needs to consider, among other things, how to conduct a cost-benefit analysis for interventions or strategies and to determine how findings from this analysis will be taken into account. In addition, the State needs to have its own strategy for responding when districts in improvement select strategies that do not meet one or more of the criteria discussed above. Criteria are also needed concerning who will participate in the decision-making process and what will be the consequences to the district if they select strategies that do not meet these criteria. The State needs to document how recommendations are made, the extent of authority to approve or disapprove district plans, and the appropriate response to district decisions. Many States are able to exercise more authority over decisions made by districts that would fall into the highest level of need, particularly those that are in restructuring. However, the State needs to be prepared to back recommendations they make during collaboration and planning activities all districts.

A State research team may need to be assembled to investigate various strategies either as part of the process of conferring with individual districts or prior to meeting with the districts. Many States have already followed a process of examining and selecting a small group of supportive strategies, given fiscal limitations and limited staff to monitor such program. The research team would be charged to investigate the strategies based on the criteria set by the State and report on their findings to the State. The State is then able to make an informed decision about what strategies it can afford and support.

The research team should keep in mind other federal and State funded initiatives that could impact the level of assistance for the strategies that the State selects. For example, if the State has an existing State framework for professional development that districts use in designing their local staff development activities, the research team should consider the impact of its choices on the already existing initiatives or consider if the chosen strategy would improve the State initiative.

For each district deemed to be at a sufficient level of need to require on-site collaboration with the State in developing the TA plan, a research team needs to be assigned. This team will be one of two study groups involved in studying the plan in preparation for developing a mutually acceptable plan. The second team is a district leadership team. Each group has specific roles and responsibilities in studying the report.

TEAM 1: Research team – District improvement coordinator and State support team leader co-chair this group:

- District improvement coordinator
- External support - State support team leader, in-State education service agency, lab partners
- State support - State curriculum people or special education (individuals in State with expertise in areas of concern) would be the

consultants to the research team to help them find and evaluate resources.

TEAM 2: Leadership planning team – assemble planning team and have them review the report (if the district has a district leadership team, begin with them)

- District administrator who is most responsible for the elements being the greatest areas of concern
- One representative from each school that failed to make AYP = (if a district improvement coordinator and school improvement team exists, they may serve this purpose)

The research team will work together to coordinate the collaborative work, plan the on-site work to develop the TA plan, and research the efficacy of possible interventions that are relevant to the areas of need identified in the study report.

Confer with the district

Next, the research team and the district leadership team meet to share their reflections on the report and to discuss their findings and conclusions. The research team may begin by leading a review of the process the State used in developing the report and of the elements and criteria that make up the District Audit Rubrics. In these discussions, the District Audit Rubrics are used as a guide for the discussion of strengths and weaknesses found in the report. Attention should be paid to the descriptions of scores and clarification of their meaning.

The two study groups then discuss together their conclusions about the findings of the report. Specific details about the content areas and subgroups that missed their AYP targets and their relationships to the elements in the report that were of the greatest concern are shared.

To sharpen the focus of their work, the groups share their own analyses of the data for the criteria in which the district received the lowest scores for the elements of concern. The district and research team also share which criteria they believe had the greatest impact on the content areas and subgroups for which the district missed AYP targets.

The district may then wish to meet again without the research team to have an internal discussion of findings and conclusions of the research teams and consider the available options. The district uses this time to discuss what they have heard from and shared with the research team. They also may develop some additional conclusions about what options might be most useful for them, given the added insights from the joint meeting.

Subsequently, the research team and the district meet a second time. At this meeting, the research team and the district leadership will negotiate the details of a TA plan.

Develop the plan

The research team helps the district prioritize what assistance should and can be provided. These options are based on the research team's investigation of available options, feasibility, research basis, and level of support available from State and national regional service centers and providers. The State should ensure that the options offered are available with an adequate level of job-embedded support to implementation before making the recommendation. While the

research team will provide options and the district leadership team will have an opportunity to select from those options or present an alternative, the district will need to provide a rationale for each option chosen and each that is ultimately rejected. Once decisions are made, the selected options are incorporated into an action plan that will include both LEA and SEA responsibilities. The action plan would include goals, objectives, individuals responsible for carrying out the various steps, resources available to carry out the steps of the action plan, and steps for evaluating the overall effectiveness of the plan. States can use various models and forms for these action plans.

When the plan is complete, it is submitted to the SEA for final approval. The State considers the research evidence of effectiveness, the fiscal feasibility, and the availability of job-embedded support for implementation. While a particular intervention may be preferred, States have found that the level and availability of support to implementation can vary widely State-to-State for a particular intervention depending upon the proximity of program developers, the availability of trained staff developers, and the frequency of their presence in the State.

Once the State and district reach an agreement on the plan, the research team takes the plan back to the district. The district leadership team and the research team review the benchmarks for activities to be completed in the plan and agree on a schedule to monitor the district's progress in implementing the plan. The State responsibilities in the plan are also reviewed and deadlines agreed upon.

The steps for **Stage 4b** are as follows:

STEP 1: Review Report
- A. Examine the findings of the report
- B. Assemble possible resources in the areas of concern
- C. Schedule a time to meet with the district to confer on the report
- D. Make report available to the district in advance

STEP 2: Confer with District
- A. Bring report to the district meeting to formulate the TA Plan
- B. Examine the results of the combined report (includes desk finding and on-site findings).
- C. Which are areas of achievement (proportionality of domain achievement)
- D. Which subgroup are of greatest
- E. Which elements are of greatest concern
- F. Sharpen your focus
  - Where were the lowest scores on the elements?
  - Within those elements, what criteria were lowest?
  - What criteria had the most impact on the achievement areas that failed AYP?

STEP 3: Develop TA Plan
- A. Study plan
  - Leadership planning team – assemble planning team and have them review the report (if the district has a district leadership team, begin with them)

- District administrator who is most responsible for the elements that proved to be the greatest areas of concern
- One representative from each school that failed to make AYP = (if a district improvement coordinator and school improvement team exists, they may serve this purpose)

- Research team – District improvement coordinator and State support team leader co-chair this group:
  - District improvement coordinator
  - External support - State support team leader, in-State education service agency, lab partners,
  - State support - State curriculum personnel or special education (individuals at State with expertise in areas of concern) would be the consultants to the research team to help them find resource and evaluate resources.

B. State Returns to draft the plan:
   - Research team reports recommendations to the planning team
   - Leadership planning team works with State to formulate plan

Stage 5: Monitoring Implementation of the Technical Assistance Plan

In Stage 5, the State monitors each district's progress in plan implementation and progress in improving student achievement. While monitoring the progress of plan implementation are ongoing, this stage is completed when the next year's AYP data is available. This oversight is necessary even if a regional agency or other entity provides the direct assistance. Mechanisms for reporting on the completion of targets set within the technical assistance plans and evaluation of the success with which those targets have been met are necessary to ensure tasks are carried out, and they are operating as designed and producing the expected results. In short, there is evidence that the plan has been operationalized and the degree of success it has produced.

If another entity is responsible for providing the direct assistance, the State needs to ensure the primary technical assistance provider receives feedback on the progress of the plan and is giving feedback to the district on implementation of the plan. Adjustments may be required if a fully implemented plan is not producing the desired results. The State may need to take action if the technical assistance provider is failing to provided the agreed upon assistance or oversight to the plan.

Stage 5 is designed to create a feedback system for use in examining progress at a deeper level than possible through AYP changes. Revisiting both the qualitative and quantitative analysis features of the District Audit Tool are necessary for this purpose.

Stage 5a: Progress reports on completion of timeline targets

Revisiting Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses to Evaluate
targets met, degree of success, and plan adjustment

Evaluating the Technical Assistance Plan: Implementation

The first step in evaluating the technical assistance plan is to determine if the plan were implemented as designed. The evaluator must investigate not only what was done but also how it was done. This is accomplished by examining each of the strategies listed in the plan and determining whether or not the strategy was implemented. The reason why a strategy was not implemented should be uncovered and recorded. If the strategy were employed, the extent of the planned implementation must be determined. Consideration of each phase of strategy implementation should be investigated: initiation, continued application, and acculturation. A strategy may be initiated with good intent but fade over time or have the fidelity of the strategy compromised. If the strategy is not accepted into the school's culture, it is unlikely that the strategy will survive over time, even if proven effective. An explanation of the factors involved in less than full implementation must be documented for each strategy. This phase of implementation evaluation centers on individual strategies.

The plan as a whole must also be evaluated for implementation. How many of the listed strategies were actually executed? How many were employed in some manner but not carried out in full? A simple chart could be constructed listing the strategies under each objective and goal and noting the degree of implementation ranging from none to full. Patterns of execution should also be noted. Is there a particular goal or objective with few, if any, strategies implemented? The level of administrative support for the technical assistance plan should also be queried and noted with a summarization of the plan's implementation as well as individual included in the evaluation report.

Evaluating the Technical Assistance Plan: Effectiveness of Strategies

Once it has been determined which strategies included in the technical assistance plan were actually implemented, the focus turns to effectiveness. Were the strategies effective in producing the intended results? This can be determined by examining the indicators listed in the technical assistance plan for each strategy. Data must be gathered relative to each indicator and findings compared to the expectation as provided in the plan. Once the data analysis is complete, the evaluation team must make a determination of effectiveness for each strategy. Was the target met? Progression towards the target should be noted as well as any declines. It is not unusual to see an actual dip in student achievement when new programs are first implemented. Continued decline or stagnant scores indicate a concern.

Again, once the effectiveness of individual strategies has been determined, the plan as a whole should be observed, with a focus on strengths of strategies within each goal or objective. The outcome of each goal or objective can be measured by noting the results for the given goal/objective.

Determining Targets Met and Evaluating Success: Revisiting Qualitative Analyses

In the desk audits and the on-site visits, the District Audit Tool Rubrics were used to conduct a qualitative analysis of factors that may influence the success of improvement efforts. In Stage 5, revisiting the degree to which districts have addressed the key areas of concern in the implementation of their plans may shed light on why an implementation may or may not have succeeded. Rubrics may be used to update desk audit findings or to repeat on-site visits in selected districts in relation to movement from one level of need to another over time. The rubrics might be used in two ways:

1. SEA teams may revisit LEAs to examine progress in specific focus areas of the technical assistant plans
2. LEAS may be asked to conduct a self-assessment based on the rubrics prior to a team conducting a follow-up site visit.

Support systems within a district may have failed in such a way that the intervention could not be faithfully implemented or sustained over time. Sometimes an intervention is abandoned prematurely, not because the intervention in failing but because the support system was not operational thus producing an inconsistent implementation of the intervention. It is important to determine if this is what happened in order to correct the situation and (a) achieve the desired outcome quickly and make an appropriate decision about whether to abandon an intervention in the plan, (b) correct the system element that is failing to support the implementation, or (c) strengthen some element of the implementation such as professional development or supervision of the implementation.

What worked/What did not work

Reflecting on the qualitative and quantitative elements of a plan is useful both in identifying exemplar districts and in determining causes for the failure of a plan to produce a successful outcome. Achieving the AYP target is obviously the primary measure of success, but a finer look at the results is also important to determine what seems to be working given time and attention.

At this point, the SEA needs to help districts reflect on the progress results and determine what elements of their plans seem to be working, what elements seem not to be working, and what possible reasons for success or failure were discovered in revisiting the quantitative and qualitative analysis. A finer grained look at the direction of results can also produce useful information:

- Did the intervention produce improvement but not quite enough to meet the AYP target?
- Did it produce improvement in the groups failing to meet the target before. Did others fall behind that had met the target before?
- Did it produce a reduction in the distance from the target for all groups, some groups or none?
- Were system supports operationalized?
- Were those elements of the rubric addressed in the plan improving? Is so, to what degree? Was the improvement adequate to support change in student achievement?
- Is the intervention working? To what degree? What needs to be intensified to produce the desired result?

- If the intervention is not working, can a cause be pinpointed? Is it an intervention failure or a system support failure?

The State needs to ensure the technical assistance provider has conducted a full analysis of the data gained by the annual Metric Calculator analysis and the Desk Audit information. The results of this investigation should be used to inform the next step in determining what needs to happen next.

Proposed changes or adjustments

Based on the determination of what seemed to work and what did not, the State should be prepared to propose what kinds of changes to the plan, if any, may be needed. If the plan is working and improvement is resulting, that progress should be acknowledged by the TA provider. If the plan is not working, the TA provider needs to be prepared to share findings from the analysis with the district and suggest possible course corrections that may improve results for the coming year.

However, care should be taken to avoid changing course when interventions are moving in the right direction to produce significant improvement, even when it is not quite sufficient to push the district over the AYP threshold. Course corrections made too early in the process may result in abandonment of an intervention that may have the potential to support sustained improvement over time.

The steps for **Stage 5a** include the following reviews:

STEP 1: Targets completed
STEP 2: Evaluation of success
STEP 3: What worked / What did not work
STEP 4: Proposed changes or adjustments

Stage 5b: Quantitative measurement of progress: AYP Achievement Metric revisited

Measuring the progress made following the implementation and execution of the technical assistance plan is important for both the LEAs/schools and the SEA as a gauge of the effectiveness of the technical assistance plan in improving student achievement. Two methods of using the AYP Achievement Metric to measure progress over time are described below. For purposes of discussion, the methods are described as though they were being applied to schools. However, the method would be identical for determination of the progress of districts.

It is important to note that the safe harbor component of AYP and the AYP Achievement Metric value should not be included when measuring progress. The Metric Calculator allows the option of including or excluding the safe harbor component. The metric values for progress over time are calculated using the AYP performance targets and percent of students meeting proficiency only. The exclusion of safe harbor ensures a school that made AYP in a cell based on safe harbor does not receive the same credit for making progress as a school that actually reached the performance target for that cell. In short, anything less than reaching the performance target is treated as not making AYP for a cell. However, a school would still get credit for moving closer to the target over the time periods being compared.

Measuring Progress: Method #1

The first method is preferred assuming that there has not been a substantial change in the SEA's accountability system between the two years being compared. This does not include changes in the AMO targets but does include one or more of the following.

1. A change in the grades included in the accountability system
2. A change in the cut points used to define proficiency
3. A new or substantially modified assessment

If one or more of the conditions above apply, Method #2 should be used. If there have been no changes of the type described above then the method below is preferred because progress is determined for each school by comparing where the school was in Year 1 to where it was in Year 2 independent of the performance of other schools. In short, the school is compared to itself only.

The method involves calculating the AYP Achievement Metric for each school in Year 1 based on the Year 2 AMOs and likewise calculating the Metric for each school in Year 2 based on the Year 2 AMOs. For each school that missed AYP or was under improvement in Year 1, there would be a Metric value in Year 1 and Year 2 based on the same AMO targets. By taking the ratio of the Year 2 and Year 1 Metric values, the SEA could categorize the progress of each school based on the ratio as follows:

Exemplary improvement

- Ratio value = 0, (i.e., Year 2 Metric value is 0)
- Interpretation: Met all AYP achievement targets in Year 2
- Example
  Year 1 Metric value = 0.21
  Year 2 Metric value = 0
  Year 2/Year 1 ratio value = 0/0.21 = 0

High improvement

- Ratio value > 0 and ≤ 0.33
- Interpretation: On track to meet AYP achievement targets next year
- Example
  Year 1 Metric value = 0.21
  Year 2 Metric value = 0.06
  Year 2/Year 1 ratio value = 0.06/0.21 ≈ 0.29

Moderate improvement

- Ratio value ≥ 0.34 and ≤ 0.67
- Interpretation: On track to meet AYP achievement targets in next 1-2 years
- Example
  Year 1 Metric value = 0.21
  Year 2 Metric value = 0.11
  Year 2/Year 1 ratio value = 0.11/0.21 ≈ 0.52

Low improvement

- Ratio value ≥ 0.68 and < 1
- Interpretation: On track to meet AYP achievement targets in next 2-3 years
- Example
  Year 1 Metric value = 0.21
  Year 2 Metric value = 0.16
  Year 2/Year 1 ratio value = 0.16/0.21 ≈ 0.76

No improvement or continued regression

- Ratio value ≥ 1
- Interpretation: Not making progress toward AYP achievement targets (value = 1) or moving farther away from AYP achievement targets (value > 1)
- Example
  Year 1 Metric value = 0.21
  Year 2 Metric value = 0.23
  Year 2/Year 1 ratio value = 0.23/0.21 ≈ 1.10

Schools in the *Exemplary improvement* (and perhaps *High improvement*) category may serve as exemplars for other schools. Schools in the *No improvement or continued regression* (and perhaps *Low improvement*) category raise reasons for concern about either the faithful implementation and/or appropriateness of the technical assistance plan, particularly if little or no progress is made after two to three years.

Measuring Progress: Method #2

The second method uses a cross-tabulated matrix of the AYP data for the two years to be compared. It should be used when one or more of the limiting conditions described under Method #1 apply to the SEA's AYP system.

Like Method #1, Method #2 also involves calculating the AYP Achievement Metric for each school in Year 1 based on the Year 2 AMOs and likewise calculating the Metric for each school in Year 2 based on the Year 2 AMOs. However, the methods diverge after that point. In contrast to the Method #1, a Year 2 to Year 1 comparison for a particular school using Method #2 is not independent. Using Method #2, schools are divided into quintiles[1] separately for Year 1 and Year 2 with the lowest Metric values being in Quintile 5 and the highest values being in Quintile 1. The quintile in which a school falls is dependent not only on its unique Metric value but also the Metric values of the other schools. As such, it is not an independent measure of progress and also a somewhat less precise measure of progress. However, it is still a useful method under conditions where Method #1 cannot be used.

In addition to the five categories (quintiles), a sixth category is formed by schools that met all AYP targets. The data for each year are compiled in a 6 X 6 matrix where the percent distribution of schools in Year 2 is shown separately for each category in Year 1.

[1] Quintiles are five categories containing roughly equal numbers of cases. An SEA might want to choose to use quartiles (four categories) if the number of districts or schools identified as missing AYP or under improvement is less than 80.

Sample data are shown below for purposes of illustration. Of all the schools that made AYP in Year 1 below, 72% also made AYP in Year 2. By contrast, 6% of schools making AYP in Year 1 were in the worst quintile (1) in Year 2. At the other extreme, 19% of schools in the worst quintile (1) in Year 1 made AYP in Year 2.

Achievement Metric Year2 (Quintiles)	Achievement Metric Year 1 (Quintiles): Met All Achievement Targets	5	4	3	2	1
Met All Achievement Targets	72%	47%	43%	32%	25%	19%
5	8%	13%	19%	8%	15%	2%
4	8%	9%	17%	9%	11%	9%
3	4%	17%	9%	26%	13%	9%
2	3%	9%	9%	17%	21%	26%
1	6%	4%	2%	8%	15%	35%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The shaded areas of the matrix can be used as indicators of schools substantially regressing (red, bottom left), moderately regressing (orange), making little or no progress (yellow), moderately improving (blue), and substantially improving (green, top right).

Schools in the green shaded areas may serve as exemplars for other schools and inform the discussion of effectiveness of intervention strategies. Schools in the red shaded areas raise reason for concern about either the faithful implementation and/or appropriateness of the technical assistance plan, particularly if little or no progress is made after two to three years.

Determining and Applying Methods: Additional Considerations

A few other important issues are noteworthy in regard to use of the methods for measurement of progress. First, there is no reason why an SEA cannot look at the results of both methods as long as there are no limiting conditions that preclude the use of Method #1. Second, it may be helpful to the SEA to calculate separate progress measures for ELA and Math using either of the two methods. If a school missed AYP achievement targets in both content areas, it may be useful to look at the school's progress in each area separately. Finally, caution should be used when measuring progress in the first year of implementation of the technical assistance plan. Failure to see significant progress should not be taken as an immediate indication of the success of the plan. However, if progress is not made over the course of two to three years, there is clearly reason for concern.

The steps for **Stage 5b** include:

STEP 1: Measuring Progress using AYP Metric Methods #1 or #2
STEP 2: Determining Method(s) to be used

Stage 5c: Feedback on progress

Evaluation and feedback on progress

Armed with the results of the analysis, the TA provider should meet with the district to review progress and share the evaluation of progress. Information should be specific and repeat the initial work with the district in a progress format. Prior to the meeting, the TA prepares a report, and the district is asked to conduct and submit a self-evaluation of their progress in implementing the plan.

First, a progress report should completely summarize the findings from the progress analysis and the district self-evaluation. The report should focus on areas where progress has been noted and work is needed. That would include Metric Calculator results that show positive or negative movement across the matrix, even when all targets are not achieved, areas of the rubric addressed in the plan that have shown improvement, and interventions in the plan that have been achieved or not achieved. The conclusion to the report should state key findings. These key findings should focus on improved scores on the rubrics and Metric Calculator, scores that did not improve, and specification of which interventions in the plan were implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented. If there is disagreement between the district and the TA provider as to the degree to which an intervention was implemented, both arguments should be stated in the report.

The report writer should remember that this document may become public under certain circumstances and should be written with that in mind. Some of the rules for report writing include the following:

- Any statement of a deficiency must be supported by clear evidence and specific reference to the aspect of the rubric not attained.
- Comments are objective in tone and wording.
- Comments are stated in terms of what is evident and what needs to be improved.
- Any comments of team members included in the report need to be reviewed by the report writer for these conditions prior to inclusion in the report.

Suggestions for changes or improvements

The discussion of suggestions for changes or improvements in the plan may be incorporated in the report if there is agreement between the TA provider and the district. If there is significant disagreement, a face-to-face discussion may be required to resolve these disagreements before making these changes in the plan. If the State is not the TA provider, the State may be called upon to mediate any disagreements between the TA provider and the State in determining what changes may be needed. It is also important that change is recommended only when there is evidence to support the need for change, or when results suggest that the plan is not producing the desired results. In early stages of implementation, sufficient evidence of progress may exist to support sustaining the current effort, even if targets have not yet been achieved.

Where changes or improvements are needed, recommendations should be supported by evidence of what is needed from the analysis tools (Metric Calculator and District Audit Tool Rubrics). If a change of intervention is recommended, the implications need to be discussed at length. For example, a change in intervention strategies after only a year of implementation may not take into account adequate time for achieving results, the frustration for teachers who are only just now feeling comfortable with the intervention and the reality that in the first year of any new intervention, teachers are the learners likely to show the most progress.

The steps for **Stage 5c** include:

STEP 1: Evaluation and feedback on progress
STEP 2: Suggestions for changes or improvements

Stage 5d: Decision points

Continuation or Adjustment of Plan

A final decision about what changes in the plan are needed should be the result of collaboration between the TA provider and the district. The TA provider and the district together use the data report to review the plan, consider the suggested changes, and make adjustments for changes or improvements in the plan. The revised plan should then be reviewed by the State to ensure planning is based on an accurate use of the data, the proposed changes make sense in light of that data, and the district is committed to those changes.

Verifying predictions and identification of exemplars

Further investigations of those districts that produce contraindicated results could inform the future work of similar districts. First, the State should eliminate those districts that produced these unexpected results due to dramatic changes in demographics or other unanticipated conditions. Next, the State can use the Metric Calculator and the prediction procedure described below to produce and chart similar to the one below for this analysis:

Achievement Metric Value:
Comparisons Across Years

Achievement Metric 04 (Quintiles)	Achievement Metric 03 (Quintiles): Met All Achievement Targets	5	4	3	2	1
Met All Achievement Targets	**72%**	**47%**	**43%**	**32%**	**25%**	**19%**
5	**8%**	**13%**	**19%**	**8%**	**15%**	**2%**
4	**8%**	**9%**	**17%**	**9%**	**11%**	**9%**
3	**4%**	**17%**	**9%**	**26%**	**13%**	**9%**
2	**3%**	**9%**	**9%**	**17%**	**21%**	**26%**
1	**6%**	**4%**	**2%**	**8%**	**15%**	**35%**
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Other quantitative data may be used in conjunction with this analysis to triangulate the AYP data with other initiatives for improving student achievement. Research on teacher quality, school size, and class size has impacted the NCLB law and many State initiatives. The relevance of these factors for producing improved achievement may be relevant to the outcomes of interventions. Data from these other factors might be important in specific contexts such as:

1. The presence of highly-qualified staff in LEAs and their lowest achieving schools relative to higher achieving schools in the same LEAs
2. School size in relation to movement from one level of need to another over time
3. Class size in relation to movement from one level of need to another over time

The steps for **Stage 5d** include:

STEP 1: Continuation or adjustment of plan

STEP 2: Verifying predictions and identification of exemplars

Glossary

Achievement Levels - A measurement that distinguishes an adequate performance from a novice or expert performance. Achievement levels provide a determination of the extent to which a student has met the content standards. (See also Performance levels.)

Accountability - The use of assessment results and other data to ensure schools are moving in desired directions. Common elements include standards, indicators of progress toward meeting those standards, analysis of data, reporting procedures, and rewards or sanctions.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) - A provision of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB, 2001) legislation requiring schools, districts, and States to demonstrate on the basis of students' test scores that their students are making academic progress based on the percentage of students attaining proficiency on State standards.

Aggregates - A score that represents the total or combined performance for all groups on one test or subtest.

Alignment - Bringing into agreement the student content and performance (achievement) standards with assessment, curriculum, and instruction so that the content, instructional level, and performance expectations are the same in terms of breadth, depth, and range of content knowledge and skills expectations.

Body of Evidence - Information or data that establish that a student can perform a particular skill or has mastered a specific content standard and that was either produced by the student or collected by someone who is knowledgeable about the student.

Breadth - The comprehensiveness of the content and skills embodied in the standards, curriculum, or assessments.

Budget - Refers to the determination of fiscal resources available and the plan for expenditures. In a standards-based system, these resources are deployed in a manner to support the achievement of content standards by students.

Classroom tests - A formal, usually paper-and-pencil, sample of student performance often administered at the end of a unit of instruction in order to determine student learning of the content and skills taught in the unit. Results are used to improve and direct student learning, and to remedy learning errors.

Consequences/sanctions - In an accountability system, theseinclude such elements as additional/fewer resources, removal of accreditation, provision of professional development training, replacement or take-over of school system administration, or realignment of teaching staff.

Construct - The underlying theoretical concept or characteristic a test is designed to measure.

Content standards - Statements of the subject-specific knowledge and skills that schools are expected to teach and students are expected to learn. They indicate what students should know and be able to do.

Culture and climate - The expectations, norms, and beliefs of an organization that influence how individuals and groups are viewed and supported, and expectations of members of the organization for the achievement of goals.

Curriculum - The knowledge and skills taught to students to facilitate their mastery of the academic content standards.

Cut Score - A specified point on a score scale. Scores at or above that point are interpreted differently from scores below that point. Sometimes there is only one cut score, dividing the range of possible scores into *passing* and *failing* or *mastery* and *non-mastery* regions. Sometimes two or more cut scores may be used to define three or more score categories, as in establishing performance standards.

Demographics - Data related to the characteristics of human populations, such as population proportions by gender and ethnicity, and the conditions of life in a community or school, such as income levels or class size.

Depth of Knowledge - The level of cognitive processing (e.g., recognition, recall, problem solving, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) required for success relative to the performance standards.

Disaggregation - The collection and reporting of student achievement results by particular subgroups (e.g., students with disabilities, limited-English-proficient students) to ascertain the subgroup's academic progress. Disaggregation makes it possible to compare subgroups or cohorts.

Errors of Measurement - The differences between observed scores and the theoretical true score; the amount of uncertainty in reporting scores; the degree of inherent imprecision based on test content, administration, scoring, or examinee conditions within the measurement process that produce errors in the interpretation of student achievement.

Evidence - Documentation of a condition or event through analysis of data acquired by use of systematic, objective, and verifiable methods.

Exemplar **-** Scored work that evidences or exhibits the ideal for a particular rubric score point.

Highly-Qualified Staff - District and school personnel who meet certification and endorsement standards of their State to deliver instruction in the specific content and to the specific students for whom they are responsible. Requirements are generally based on education and training in the content and age range of the students.

High Stakes Testing - A test for which important consequences are attached to the results for students, teachers, schools, districts, and/or States. Consequences may include promotion, graduation, rewards, or sanctions.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) - An IEP is a written plan, developed by a team of regular and special educators, parents, related service personnel, and the student, as appropriate, describing the specially designed instruction needed for an eligible exceptional student to progress in the content standards and objectives and to meet other educational needs.

Large-Scale Assessments - Tests that are administered simultaneously to large groups of students within the district or State.

Leadership - Key decision-makers in a district or school who convey, sustain, and direct the implementation of the vision of the organization.

Multiple Measures - Measurement of student or school performance through more than one form or test.

- For students, these might include teacher observations, performance assessments, or portfolios.
- For schools, these might include dropout rates, absenteeism, college attendance or documented behavior problems.

Performance Levels - A measurement that distinguishes an adequate performance from a novice or expert performance. Performance levels provide a determination of the extent to which a student has met the content standards. (See also Achievement levels.)

Professional Development - Staff training and learning necessary to support full implementation. This includes:

- **Initiation.** Awareness and initial training provide basic knowledge of the instructional skills required to implement the strategy in the classroom.
- **Implementation.** Guided practice and follow-up support ensure full implementation of the new strategy. Guided practice is part of the ongoing training provided by expert trainers. Follow-up support takes place in the classroom with feedback and support from supervisors and colleagues who observe and offer peer coaching. During the school day, colleagues have time to meet and discuss implementation of the strategy and to support greater depth of knowledge and fluency in its use.
- **Institutionalization.** Job-embedded support for continued use of the new strategy communicates an expectation for its use. Further, as the strategy becomes integrated into the school culture as "the way we do business," the induction of newcomers necessitates new training opportunities. Each new staff member is trained in the intervention as part of the systematic institutionalization of the practice.
- **Impact.** Monitoring the impact of the strategy on student learning is continuous. The information is used to plan additional training and to provide follow-up support and job-embedded learning opportunities.

Quantitative data - Information about observed behavior that is reducible to a set of numbers and can be interpreted within a range of accuracy.

Qualitative data - Information about observed behavior that can be judged against a set of criteria somewhat subjective in nature, although it may be an agreed upon expectation for acceptable performance.

Resources - Material, staff, buildings, and other items that are available for use. In a standards-based system, materials and staff are deployed and building use assigned based on which is needed to ensure students achieve the academic content standards.

Rubric - A scoring tool based on a set of criteria used to evaluate a student's test performance. The criteria contain a description of the requirements for varying degrees of success in responding to the question or performing the task. Rubrics may be diagnostic or analytic (providing ratings of multiple criteria), or they may be holistic (describing a single, global trait).

Scientifically-Based Research (SBR) - Investigations of effectiveness conducted using the methods and designs employed by scientists to test hypotheses. As defined in the NCLB law Section 1208 (6), scientifically based research means research that:

(A) applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to reading development, reading instruction, and reading difficulties; and
(B) includes research that—
(i) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
(ii) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn;
(iii) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and
(iv) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review. (pp.1549-1550)

Stakeholders - A group of individuals perceived to be vested in a particular decision (e.g., a policy decision).

Standardized - An established procedure that assures that a test is administered with the same directions, and under the same conditions (e.g., time limits) and is scored in the same manner for all students to ensure the comparability of scores. Standardization allows reliable and valid comparison to be made among students taking the test. The two major types of standardized tests are norm-referenced and criterion-referenced.

Standards - There are two types of standards, content and achievement (performance).

- **Content standards.** Statements of the subject-specific knowledge and skills that schools are expected to teach students, indicating what students should know and be able to do.
- **Achievement standards.** Indices of qualities that specify how adept or competent a student demonstration must be and consist of the following four components:
  1. levels that provide descriptive labels or narratives for student performance (e.g., advanced, proficient);
  2. descriptions of what students at each particular level must demonstrate relative to the task;
  3. examples of student work at each level illustrating the range of performance within each level; and
  4. cut scores clearly separating each performance level.

Standards-based Assessments - Assessments constructed to measure how well students have mastered specific content standards or skills.

Subgroup - A well-defined group of students. For example, the NCLB Act identifies the following specific subgroups that must achieve adequate yearly progress: race/ethnicity groups, , students with disabilities, limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, and economically disadvantaged students.

Test - A measuring device or procedure. Educational tests are typically comprised of questions or tasks designed to elicit predetermined behavioral responses or to measure specific academic content standards.

Test Forms - Parallel or alternate versions of a test that are considered interchangeable in that they measure the same constructs, are intended for the same purposes, and are administered using the same directions.

Test Presentation - The method, manner, or structure in which test items or assessments are administered to the student.

Test Security - Established procedures to ensure current or future confidentiality, fidelity, and integrity of a test whereby public access is limited and strictly monitored, with clearly outlined consequences for breaches in test security.

Triangulation of Data - The examination of evidence regarding a student or group of students across multiple settings, data types, or conditions. The intent is to determine the consistency of results regardless of intervening variables such as large-scale versus classroom assessment, or selected-response versus open-ended or performance assessments.

Universal Design of Assessment - A method for developing an assessment to ensure accessibility by all students regardless of ability or disability. Universal design of assessment is based on principles used in the field of architecture in which user diversity is considered during the conceptual stage of development.

Validity - The extent to which a test measures what it was designed to measure. Multiple types of validity exist, with the common types including the following:

- **Construct Validity:** The extent to which the characteristic to be measured relates to test scores measuring the behavior in situations in which the construct is thought to be an important variable.
- **Content Validity:** The extent to which the stimulus materials or situations composing the test call for a range of responses that represent the entire domain of skills, understandings, or behaviors that the test is intended to measure.
- **Concurrent Validity:** The extent to which the assessment results positively correlate with the results of other measures designed to assess the same or similar constructs.
- **Criterion-related Validity:** The extent to which test scores of a group or subgroup are compared to other criterion measures (ratings, classifications, other tests) assigned to the examinees.
- **Consequential Validity:** The extent to which the assessment results in the intended positive outcomes for students (e.g., results in improved instruction and improved student achievement).

APPENDIX A

Review of the Literature

Kimberly Hambrick, Caitlin Howley, and Karen Bradley
Edvantia (formerly AEL)

Leadership

A preponderance of education research suggests that highly-effective schools are characterized by effective leadership, among other factors. Without such leadership, a school is little more than a set of independent classrooms, each pursuing individual goals without a shared understanding about what is important to be learned. Such a school lacks a coherent, widely shared set of beliefs about the school's mission (Mayer, Mullens, & Moore, 2000). On the other hand, sustained high levels of student achievement are more likely to occur in schools with effective leadership (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Fullan, 2001, 1998; Levine & Lezotte, 1990). As an Educational Research Service study on school leadership found that "researchers, policy makers and educational practitioners agree: good school principals are the keystone of good schools. Without the principal's leadership, efforts to raise student achievement cannot succeed" (ERS, 2000, p. 5).

Successful school leadership is a complicated matter, comprised of numerous roles and skills. For instance, in a study of several school restructuring efforts, Newmann and Wehlage (1995) identified significant characteristics of leaders in schools with high-achieving students. In their report, the term "school leaders" included both principals and teacher leaders who

- gave central attention to building a school-wide, collective focus on student learning of high intellectual quality
- placed issues of teaching and learning at the center of dialogue among the entire school community
- gave concrete expression to the norms and values that comprise the school's vision
- created time for reflective inquiry and opportunities for substantive staff development
- saw themselves at the center rather than at the top of their schools' organization
- shared power with staff and often with parents
- applied important political and entrepreneurial skills to relationships beyond the school.

Clear Vision and Mission. Schools in which a clear vision and mission for teaching and learning have been articulated are more likely to encourage student achievement and motivation. According to Fyans and Maehr (1990), in a survey of 16,310 students in 820 public schools, students in schools with clear goals were more likely to report high levels of motivation to learn. Thacker and McInerney (1992) investigated a school improvement project in which a school's mission was developed and implemented. The researchers found that the number of students failing the State mandated achievement test decreased by 10 percentage points as a result.

Ultimately, the articulation of a vision and mission serves to nurture school culture and focus collective energy upon shared goals. This phenomenon has been described in various ways. Sergiovanni (1994) sees vision as a means to specify a school's beliefs about teaching and learning, thereby generating a "community of mind" supporting clearly identified norms and goals. Conley (1996) has called vision an "internal compass," whereby school staff share an explicit understanding of their collectively defined values, aims, and norms. Fullan (1991) clarifies the point stating that vision and mission cannot be the purview of school leadership alone; rather, both are ideally the result of deliberate and shared attempts to articulate collective views of the future.

Fritz (1996) has argued that vision serves a vital function in organizations. The development of a vision serves to illuminate the disparities between the ideal and the real state of an organization. Those within such an organization are thereby encouraged to decrease the disparity made apparent by the development of a vision. Vision and mission may also serve to strengthen the relationships between schools and the communities they serve (Matthews, 1996).

Instructional Leadership. According to Weber (1989), instructional leadership consists of five essential functions: defining school mission, promoting a positive learning environment, observing and providing meaningful feedback to teachers, managing curriculum and instruction, and evaluating the instructional program. Hord (1988) notes that instructional leadership occurs when principals view themselves as educators themselves, and specifically, as educators of their staff. Moreover, Prager (1993) suggests such instructional leadership is collaborative and distributed amongst school staff; instructional leadership is thus also a type of shared leadership. One body of literature clearly indicates that principals must collaborate and distribute leadership functions as a corollary of effective instructional leadership (Berman & Chambliss, 2000; Elmore, 2000; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hoy & Miskell, 1991). For instance, King, Louis, Marks, and Peterson (1996) proposed a "power continuum" along which leadership in schools might be identified. At one extreme, power is consolidated with the principal, district personnel, or a small group of teachers. At the other extreme, decision-making is shared widely, and participants have equal access and voice.

In addition, King and colleagues collected data suggesting that schools were more likely to support high levels of learning when power was shared among the participants. The "broad participation, reciprocity, and collective focus on important issues characteristic of shared power" best facilitated reaching the goals of improved teaching and learning (1996, p. 255).

Louis and her colleagues (1996, p. 194) reached similar conclusions about shared leadership. These researchers found that leaders in schools with high student achievement "worked effectively to stimulate professional discussion and to create the networks of conversation that tied faculty together around common issues of instruction and teaching." In such a school, the principal "delegated authority, developed collaborative decision-making processes, and stepped back from being the central problem solver." Other researchers have come to similar conclusions (Leithwood, 1995; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1994; Louis, Kruse, & Marks, 1996; Murphy, 1994).

Policies and Procedures. Research suggests that school and district policies and procedures that are clearly focused upon nurturing students' intellectual development and that

are clearly aligned for that purpose, play an important role in school effectiveness. For instance, Newmann, King, and Youngs (2001) contend that program coherence, a measure of the extent to which a school is sufficiently programmatically integrated, can influence the success of professional development efforts, school culture, and student outcomes. This is because the continual and shifting presence of unrelated, unfocused, and multiple improvement programs weakens schools' organizational efficacy. Aligned initiatives, implemented and monitored carefully for sustained periods of time, on the other hand, at the very minimum do not detract from a school's efforts to educate students.

The alignment of curriculum and instruction within grade levels and between grade levels is another important aspect of the effective implementation of policies and procedures (Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001). Adequate alignment and sequencing assists in the maintenance of an appropriate academic pace and rigor, and focuses attention on the primary purpose of education. It also reduces redundancy and fosters communication and collaboration among teachers.

Leadership Decisions. Decision-making that is at once systematic and collaborative appears to hold the most promise for student achievement and school cultural development (Fullan, 1991; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Sarason & Lorentz, 1998; Schmoker, 1999; van der Bogert, 1998). Decisions are more likely to be met with acceptance and enthusiasm if stakeholders are included in the decision-making process, the criteria by which decisions are made are unambiguous to those involved, and the decisions align well with stakeholders' worldviews and goals (Education Commission of the States, 1996; Fullan, 1991; Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, & Hall, 1987). Individuals in schools better support change efforts and feel more involved when working collaboratively (Fullan, 1991; Whitford, 2000). The efforts of a single, strong leader may move a school forward, but shared leadership and collaboration are essential if change is to be effectively implemented and sustained (Corallo & McDonald, 2002; Rosenholtz, 1989). Moreover, the ultimate effectiveness of such decisions is further enhanced if they are focused upon student learning (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001; Newmann & Wehlage, 1996).

Data-based decision-making is held by contemporary education research to allow educators to make the most informed and specific judgments about how best to aim their efforts (Johnson, 1997). Keefe and Kelley (1990), for instance, suggest that school improvement efforts must be based in careful collection and analysis of relevant data, in addition to communication of findings, if they are to be effective. Harris and Carr (2001) recommend that analysis of student achievement trends be connected to State and local standards so that decisions about teaching and learning are aligned appropriately. In addition, even complicated data can be used effectively to make informed decisions (Yang & Goldstein, 1999).

The education literature also indicates that data-based decision-making may also successfully take place using data in addition to student achievement, such as via surveys and interviews about school culture and climate, policies and procedures, and overall school effectiveness (Keefe & Kelley, 1990). Other variables to be examined might include teacher quality, discipline issues, professional development opportunities and needs, and curriculum and instruction (Mayer, Mullens, & Moore, 2001).

Monitoring. Ongoing assessment of school improvement efforts continues to be a significant factor in their ultimate success (Cicchinelli & Barely, 1999; Herman & Winters, 1992). The National School Recognition Program (1988), for example, identified a number of practices employed by unusually effective schools, among which was ongoing program evaluation for school improvement.

Continuous monitoring is critical because it provides district and school staff with information about the progress of implementation, challenges to the school improvement efforts underway, and outcomes (Beswick, 1990). Hertling (2000) has argued that ongoing evaluation of whole school reform should not only be in response to mandates for monitoring, but should also be used to make any needed adjustments in implementation.

Most experts agree that multiple measures of student achievement and organizational performance are best (Bernhardt, 1998; Garcia, 2000; Ligon, 1996). That is, many sources and kinds of data will yield a more comprehensive picture of school performance. The National Education Goals Panel held a series of hearings around the nation to determine strategies used by schools to create success. One of the key strategies was the use of data to drive improvement efforts (Rothman, 2000). Other recent studies of successful school districts identified as a crucial attribute the use of data to make and monitor improvement decisions (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001; North Carolina State Board of Education/Department of Public Instruction, 2000; Ragland, Asera, & Johnson, 1999; Skrla, Scheurich, & Johnson, 2000; WestEd, 2000).

Parent/community council. Schools do not exist in social vacuums. They influence and are influenced by the communities in which they are situated. The political culture of a community "profoundly affects" patterns of participation in school decision making (Davies, 1991). One important study of shared decision-making was conducted in the Salt Lake City Schools by Malen and Ogawa (1988). This study reported on a critical test of the ability of site-based governance arrangements to alter decision-making relationships. It offered a unique opportunity to examine whether certain key factors—notably the creation of site-based councils with broad jurisdiction, formal policymaking authority, parity protections, and training provisions—actually enabled teachers and parents to wield substantial influence on school policy. Despite the presence of these highly favorable conditions, teachers and parents did not wield significant influence. Rather, principals continued to strongly influence decisions in the school councils. This study suggests that getting other people to accept responsibilities may be as difficult as getting principals to give up their accustomed authority. Malen and Ogawa point out that "the research . . . underscores the difficulty of establishing arrangements that will fundamentally alter principal, teacher, and parent influence relationships" (p. 266).

Despite these difficulties, the activity of a diverse and meaningfully involved parent/community council can result in more, and more accurate, communication between school staff and community members (Peterson-del-Mar, 1994). Effective site based councils, although not shown to directly impact student achievement, may produce several important intermediate outcomes, such as increased efficiency in the use of resources and personnel, enhanced teacher professionalism, curriculum reform, and strengthened community engagement (Drury & Levin, 1994).

Academic Content and Achievement Standards

A hallmark of contemporary accountability systems is standards, both academic content and achievement standards (Southern Regional Education Board, 1998). Efforts to establish national content standards and tests came out of several major developments. In response to the 1983 National Commission on Excellence in Education's report ***A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, National Attention Turned to Raising Standards for Students and Teachers***. This approach entailed establishing performance requirements for students and linking teacher accountability to student achievement on standardized tests. Other key developments included the adaptation of President Bush's and the nation's governors' six national education goals in 1989, establishment of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing in1991, and Congress's enactment of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (1994) (Wraga, 1999). The passage of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in 2001, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, solidified national and federal attention to achievement standards.

Although there is somewhat ambiguous evidence from the field that content and achievement standards alone improve student performance, research suggests there is promise in the full implementation of standards, when their application is adequately supported and when standards and tests are aligned (La Marca, Redfield, & Winter, 2000; Linn, 2001, 1996). Ultimately, as Darling-Hammond states, "Successful education can occur only if teachers are prepared to meet rigorous learning demands and the different needs of students" (1997, p. 334).

Academic Content Standards. Content standards are statements of what students should know at various points in their educational careers and are often considered to be vital elements in accountability systems. Briars and Resnick's (2000) study of the implementation of content standards in Pittsburgh schools revealed wide differences in the achievement of students in schools which had fully implemented the standards compared to students in schools who had only weakly implemented the standards program. The standards program in Texas has been widely cited for its success in developing strong and specific content standards, improving student achievement, and lessening the achievement gap between white and racial and ethnic minorities in the State (see U.S. Department of Education, 1998). Virginia's implementation of its State Standards of Learning has resulted in steady and consistent improvements in student achievement in nearly all content areas and at nearly all grade levels (Virginia Department of Education, 2004). An evaluation of the Illinois Learning Standards project assessed the extent to which districts were implementing content standards, identified factors that enhanced or inhibited implementation, and investigated the relationship between standards and student achievement (DeStefano & Prestine, 2002). Not until the fourth year of the study did significant correlations between learning-standards implementation and specific content areas emerge. But by the fourth year, students attending schools with higher standards implementation levels scored higher in grade 3 reading, grade 5 mathematics, and grade 8 mathematics than students in schools with weaker implementation records.

Achievement Standards. Not only are standards specifying the content students should master at various points in their educational tenures necessary in a full standards-based accountability system, so too are achievement, or performance, standards. Achievement

standards articulate the levels at which students are expected to perform on assessments, which are ideally aligned with the relevant academic content standards (Markham, 1993). Current legislation supports the development of achievement standards; NCLB, for example, mandates that States define achievement standards and standards for continuing growth for all their students.

Successful standards-based accountability systems should provide support for teachers as they implement content standards and strive to achieve performance standards (Lashway, 1999). Moreover, such systems should also provide a mechanism by which standards and the results of their application are communicated to students, teachers, parents, and the wider school community (Linn, 2001; Sizer & Rogers, 1993). The effective implementation of achievement standards also requires that their connection to teaching and learning be made apparent to those involved. Regular testing and the use of both formative and summative assessments are important for making school, instructional, and curricular decisions (Bernhardt, 1998; Herman & Gribbons, 2001; Rabinowitz & Ananda, 2001; Reeves, 2000). High-performing learning communities continually examine student achievement using a variety of indicators so all students can reach the specified high standards (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001).

The full support and involvement of school districts in standards implementation appears to be critical to their effectiveness. Mintrop and Papazian (2003) found that States in which districts were themselves held accountable for achieving standards were more likely to apply useful pressure and offer constructive assistance to their schools. Ultimately, the successful implementation of standards, both content and achievement, hinges on a number of policies, actions, and stakeholders (Lashway, 1999; Markham, 1993).

Curriculum/Instruction

Curriculum Alignment. Curriculum is the written clarification of what content students are expected to know at particular points in their educational careers. Ideally, curriculum should also specify how content is sequenced. Alignment of curriculum refers to the articulation and coordination of curriculum with a variety of other elements, such as State standards, standardized tests or State tests, curriculum-embedded tests, student assignments, lesson plans, textbooks, or instruction (Burns, 2001; English, 1980; Jacobs, 1997). Drake and Burns (2004) further delineate external alignment (aligning written curriculum with mandated standards and testing objectives) and internal alignment (ensuring that instructional strategies and classroom assessments reflect the language and intent of the standards).

Some research suggests that careful alignment of instruction with learning goals and assessments can produce improved student achievement on standardized tests (Mitchell, 1999, 1998; Schmoker & Marzano, 1999; Wishnick, 1989). One important analysis of international studies reveals that implementing and monitoring an aligned curriculum can result in a significant increase (on the order of approximately 31 percentile points) in student achievement (Marzano, 2000). Other studies indicate that curriculum alignment is capable of diminishing, if not entirely eliminating, conventional predictors of student achievement, such as socioeconomic status, gender, race, and teacher effect (Elmore & Rothman, 1999; Mitchell, 1999, 1998; Wishnick, 1989).

Curriculum alignment may also generate other benefits beyond improved student performance. For instance, curriculum alignment activities within schools may promote communication and collaboration among teachers. Moreover, such activities may enable school staff to reflect on the relationships between instructional decisions and students' overall learning, across grade levels and subject areas (Burns, 2001). Finally, when there is alignment of the curriculum as it is written, taught, and tested, school districts are better able to meet State accountability requirements (Burns, 2001) and are less likely to experience programmatic fragmentation (Newmann, 1993).

Access to Grade Level Standards Instruction. Once content and achievement standards have been articulated and once curriculum has been aligned within and across grades and with assessments, students must receive instruction in the standards-based content upon which the State and district have agreed. Standards, note Black and William (1998), only influence student learning to the extent that students receive meaningful instruction on their content.

Research suggests effective teachers continually seek ways to improve student learning. One way such teachers do this is by examining the usefulness of instructional materials and practices. Sizemore, Brossard, and Harrigan (1983), for example, found that teachers in the schools they studied were active in adapting basal readers to better meet the needs of their students. By contrast, Jackson found that teachers in less effective schools seemed to be "controlled by the mechanics in the management aspects of their instructional system" (1982, p. 151). Thus, standards instruction need not be limited to the given materials or to conservative or conventional teaching methods (Vars & Beane, 2000). Rather, the emphasis is upon the use or adaptation of instruction to effectively convey standards-based content.

Scientific, Research-Based Strategies. NCLB has placed a premium on what is termed scientifically based research for the selection and use of instructional strategies and school improvement programs. Scientifically-based research, according to the NCLB legislation (Title IX, Section 9101), is characterized by the following:

- involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs
- employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment;
- involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn
- relies on measurements or observational methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, across multiple measurements and observations, and across studies by the same or different investigators
- is evaluated using experimental or quasi-experimental designs in which individuals, entities, programs, or activities are assigned to different conditions and with appropriate controls to evaluate the effects of the condition of interest, with a preference for random-assignment experiments, or other designs to the extent that those designs contain within-condition or across-condition controls;
- ensures studies are presented in sufficient detail and clarity to allow for replication or, at a minimum, offer the opportunity to build systematically on their findings
- has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

Somewhat differently, the National Research Council (2002) defines scientifically-based research as research that

- poses significant questions that can be investigated empirically
- links research to relevant theory
- uses methods that permit direct investigation of the question
- provides a coherent and explicit chain of reasoning
- can be replicated and generalized across studies
- discloses research to encourage professional scrutiny and critique.

Ultimately, the implementation of research-based curricular and instructional strategies ensures there is some warrant for their effectiveness (National Research Council, 2002; What Works Clearinghouse, 2004). In other words, an instructional technique is more likely to prove effective across a wide array of contexts if there is already some rigorous evidence for its success (Slavin, 2003; Whitehurst, 2001). And, the employment of such strategies is more likely to occur if States and districts make serious commitments to collaborate with, monitor, and support educators in their use of the evidence-based strategies (Houston & Little, 2003).

Access to Instructional Materials. Just as the use of scientifically-based instructional strategies is good practice, so too is the provision to students of evidence-based instructional materials. Materials for which there is rigorous evidence of effectiveness are more likely to enhance student learning in diverse schools and districts than are those for which there is little evidence. For instance, student achievement grew in six impoverished and rural school districts in Ohio when teachers implemented research-based materials and strategies (O'Kelly, 2003). In addition, materials must be aligned with curriculum and instruction. It is not sufficient for districts to align and document curriculum; the alignment must then be enacted in classrooms, where students should receive instruction that reflects the appropriately sequenced and distributed curriculum (Burns, 2001). Alignment, in other words, should be mirrored in instructional materials that are congruent with curriculum and assessments (Crowell & Tissot, 1986). Thus, a fully aligned curriculum will provide for the compatibility of content, instruction, assessments, as well as materials and resources (English & Steffy, 2001).

Highly Qualified Staff

Most people would agree that if students do not learn, teaching has not been effective. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) has argued that "learning occurs as students actively assimilate new information and experiences and construct their own learning" (1991, p. 2). It seems commonsensical to observe that what a student is able to learn is affected by the teacher, for it is in the relationship between the teacher and the student that learning begins. Thus, teacher quality and effectiveness are paramount considerations for school success.

Reviewing recent research on teacher quality, Mayer and colleagues (2001) identify four characteristics of effective teachers. Such teachers

- have high academic skills,
- are required to teach in the field in which they receive their training,
- have more than a few years of experience, and

- participate in high-quality induction and professional development programs (p. 5).

In a 1992 study, Hanushek estimated that the difference in annual achievement growth between students who had a good teacher and those who had an ineffective teacher was more than one grade-level equivalent in test performance (p. 107). Later, Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain determined that the most significant variations in student achievement are related to teacher quality (1998, p. 23). These findings corroborate those of Sanders and Rivers, who tracked the impact of both effective and ineffective teachers on students (1996). Webster (1988), too, has demonstrated that student learning and performance are significantly influenced by teacher experience and qualifications.

Most recently, Darling-Hammond (2000) conducted a 50-State survey of policies, State case study analyses, and analysis of the 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The investigation sought to delineate the ways in which teacher qualifications and other school inputs are related to student achievement across States. The findings indicate that policy investments in teacher quality and qualification may be related to improvements in student performance. Most striking, quantitative analyses revealed that measures of teacher preparation and certification were by far the strongest predictors of student achievement in reading and mathematics, both before and after controlling for student socioeconomic and language status. Analysis of State policy surveys and case study data further suggested that policies adopted by States regarding teacher education, licensing, hiring, and professional development make significant differences in the qualifications and capacities that teachers bring to their work.

However, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) found that more than 50,000 people who lack sufficient and appropriate training enter the teaching profession annually on emergency or provisional licenses. The Commission also found that fewer than three-quarters of teachers could be considered fully qualified (that is, having studied pedagogy; holding degrees in their subject areas; and having passed State licensure requirements). Somewhat more than one quarter of teachers with main assignments in core academic subjects did not possess even a college minor in such fields. These findings suggest the depth and breadth of the shortage of highly qualified educators in the nation’s schools.

NCLB has sought to address this issue. According to the dictates of the legislation, highly-qualified teachers are those who have full State certification and/or pass the State’s licensing examination. Teachers at the elementary school level must provide evidence, such as successful completion of rigorous State tests, of subject knowledge in reading/language arts, writing, mathematics, and other areas of the basic elementary school curriculum. In addition, elementary teachers must have earned at least a bachelor's degree. Beginning middle and high school level teachers must also pass a rigorous State test in each academic subject in which they teach or hold a bachelor's degree in the particular subject (Trahan, 2002).

In 1998, the U.S. Department of Education specified a number of practices deemed to be significant in ensuring that districts and schools are staffed by highly-qualified educators in its publication ***Promising Practices: New Ways to Improve Teacher Quality***. Many of these

recommendations were aimed at the district or school level, and include detailed plans for recruiting and retaining well-qualified staff, induction and mentoring programs for new teachers, peer review mechanisms, and professional development programs that meet the Principles of Good Professional Development. The Department also suggested that districts provide meaningful incentives and rewards to competent teachers who elect to work with the most needy schools and students.

Plans to Meet Highly Qualified AMO's. NCLB mandates schools and districts develop and implement mechanisms such that they are able to meet federal standards for the percentage of highly-qualified staff in classrooms. Research corroborates the importance of planning for such mechanisms; numerous studies reveal that teacher quality is one of the most important factors in student achievement and is cumulative over time (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Collias, Pajak, & Rigden, 2000). Moreover, teachers who majored in the subject they teach have a greater impact on student achievement than teachers majoring in an out-of-field discipline, including those who major in education (Goldhaber & Brewer, 1999).

Because the stakes are high for schools in terms of meeting federal standards for highly qualified staff and because research confirms that out-of-field teaching and the presence of under-qualified teachers is often the result of inadequate planning and ambiguous policy, districts must craft plans to employ and retain only the most highly-qualified staff (Ingersoll, 1999b; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1997). And, of course, such plans must be enacted for the positive effects of effective teaching to be realized.

Teacher Assignments. Research suggests that out-of-field teaching is a relatively widespread phenomenon (Ingersoll, 1999a; Smerdon, 1999). Yet, the issue is further compounded by district policies, procedures, and norms that assign teachers to classes or schools based on criteria other than their qualifications and experience, such as convenience, resource mismanagement, or unwillingness to conduct formal position searches (Ingersoll, 1999b; Robinson, 1985). One means, then, to ensure highly-qualified staff is assigned to classes and courses based on their skills is to develop and implement systematic procedures for evaluating teacher skills and qualifications and matching those with appropriate assignments (Ingersoll, 1999b; National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1997).

Incentives for Teachers Assigned to High Need Schools. According to research, there are a number of incentives that effectively encourage the most qualified and experienced teachers to work in struggling schools. Such incentives need not be monetary or salary-based, as such rewards are not necessarily always successful (Bruno & Negrete, 1983). Rather, the effective use of resources, including teachers in important school decisions, reducing teacher isolation, keeping schools and class sizes small, and empowering master teachers to mentor new teachers are alternative means by which to encourage teachers to work in high need schools (Collins, 1999; Corcoran, Walker, & White, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Haberman, 1987; Lichtenstein, McLaughlin, & Knudsen, 1991; Word, 1990). According to Berry (2004), based upon recent research on staffing, "Teachers will teach and stay in the hardest-to-staff schools if they are recruited from a larger pool of traditional and nontraditional candidates and if they are paid well. Furthermore, they will stay if they are sufficiently prepared to teach in these schools and if their working conditions include a supportive principal, opportunities for teacher

leadership, influence in key decision making, more time to learn from colleagues, and the chance to work more closely with fewer numbers of students and their families" (p. 26).

Professional Development

As defined by the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) thesaurus, professional development refers to activities to enhance professional career growth. Professional development can also be defined as those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students (Guskey, 2000).

The U.S. Department of Education's Professional Development Team (2002) emphasized several elements in its principles for high-quality professional development programs. They state that successful programs

- focus on individual, collegial, and organizational improvement,
- promote continuous inquiry and improvement embedded in the daily life of schools,
- are planned collaboratively by those who will participate in and facilitate the school's development,
- require substantial time and other resources, and
- are driven by a coherent long-term plan.

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires that States employ only highly-qualified teachers by the end of the 2005-06 school year. Research has demonstrated that teacher quality is the most important educational factor in predicting student achievement (Killion, 1999; Killion, 2002a; Killion, 2002b; Killion, 2002c). Students with less exposure to qualified teachers seem far less likely of achieving academic success than those with more. Successful districts provide on-going, sustained professional development that includes scientifically-based instructional strategies and addresses teachers' knowledge, skills, and beliefs regarding data analysis. Successful districts also use assessment data to evaluate the impact of their professional development. The following table is a brief summary of 14 experimental and quasi-experimental studies that include criteria pertaining to professional development which successful districts should be addressing.

Table 2

Summary of Findings for 14 Studies

Cited Studies	Type of Study	Summary
Project CRISS: Reading, Writing, and Studying Strategies for Literature and Content	Experimental	Students of teachers who participated in Project CRISS training, which was sustained and job-embedded, outperformed the non-treatment group at significant levels even when accounting for naturally occurring gains of students at all three evaluation sites. At the middle school level, students in the treatment group recalled more than twice as much content-area knowledge as their comparison groups. For teachers of all the content areas this program was beneficial. When teacher interdisciplinary teams used similar learning strategies across content areas, students' application of the skills were reinforced and their learning increased (Santa, 2004).
Early Literacy and Learning Model Study	Experimental	Early Literacy and Learning Model (ELLM) provided the foundation for successful readers. Addressing the specific needs of high-poverty, low-achieving students, this program offered teachers intensive, on-going support to provide literacy instruction. The staff development model depended largely on literacy coaches who worked directly with teachers in their classrooms as they applied what they were learning and making adaptations to address the varied learning needs of their students Wehry, 2001).

Cited Studies	Type of Study	Summary
Science Education Enhancing the Development of Skills Project	Experimental	The combination of strong curriculum and intensive, sustained professional development as was evident in the Science Education Enhancing the Development of Skills Project improved students' performance and teachers' classroom practices. The opportunities for teachers to assume multiple roles as leaders, trainers, coaches, curriculum developers, and facilitators was a strength of the staff development design for this program. Teachers deepened their understanding of science, science pedagogy, and leadership through the project's professional development. Another strong feature of the project was the countrywide collaboration (Killion, 1999).
Student Team Literature Project	Experimental	Teachers involved in this staff development program received comprehensive, sustained professional development throughout the school year. Additionally, these same teachers worked in collaborative groups throughout the school year. Students in the Student Team Literature (STL) classrooms displayed significantly better reading comprehension after the first year of implementation (effect size .51) than did students in the comparison group. The increase in reading comprehension occurred across all levels of prior ability; students with the strongest prior reading skills benefited the most. Peer assistance was found to be more productive and frequent in STL classrooms than in the control classrooms (MacIver, Plank, & Balfanz, 1997).

Cited Studies	Type of Study	Summary
Project Legal	Experimental	The staff development component of this project immersed teachers in sustained professional development where they had ongoing support and consultation with project staff and other teachers who were implementing the program. Students in Project Legal classrooms in grades 5, 8, and 11 significantly improved their knowledge and comprehension of law-related curriculum and their problem-solving skills related to functioning in the U.S. legal/judicial system when compared to students in traditional U.S. history classrooms (Project Legal, 2004).
Algebra Initiative Project	Quasi-experimental	This sustained professional development program for Algebra I teachers changed teacher practices, impacted student achievement, increased collaboration among teachers, and increased alignment between curriculum and instruction (Schweingruber, Papakonstantiou, & Rohr, 1998 & 1999).
University of Illinois at Chicago All Learn Mathematics Project	Quasi-experimental	Not only did the University of Illinois at Chicago—All Learn Mathematics (ALM) program increase student achievement in mathematics at all participating schools, it increased teachers' understanding of mathematics and use of appropriate instructional strategies to create student-centered classrooms. As a result of ALM, significant changes in mathematics education were made, and a greater accountability for schools, students, teachers, and administrators has been initiated (University of Illinois at Chicago, 1997).

Cited Studies	Type of Study	Summary
Mathematics Reform in California	Quasi-experimental	The 1994 survey of California elementary school teachers tells researchers that professional development that is not grounded in academic content is less likely to have constructive effects. Professional development that is fragmented, that is not focused on curriculum for students, that does not afford teachers additional learning opportunities, and that does not involve collaborative activities has less of an impact on teachers (Cohen & Hill, 1998).
Hawaii Algebra Learning Project	Quasi-experimental	The Hawaii Algebra Learning Project was a combined curriculum and staff development effort. The use of teacher resources, student texts, and assessments, coupled with an intensive, sustained, professional development program, led to significant improvements in student achievement in mathematics with students of diverse backgrounds (Young, et al., 1998).
Iowa Chautauqua Program	Quasi-experimental	The Iowa Chautauqua Program increased teacher confidence in teaching science and increased teacher understanding and use of basic features of science. Lead teachers involved in the program had students who mastered more scientific concepts, better understood the basic processes of science, applied concepts and processes to new situations, developed more creativity skills, and had more positive attitudes about science, their science teachers, the usefulness of science, and science careers when compared to students in other classrooms. This program's replication throughout 11 States is evidence of the program's widespread success as a staff development program that increased student achievement (Dass & Yager, 1997).

Cited Studies	Type of Study	Summary
Does Professional Development Change Teaching Practice? Results from a Three-Year Study	Quasi-experimental	The researchers concluded that six key features of professional development are effective in improving teaching practice: three structural features (characteristics of the structure of the activity)—reform type, duration, and collective participation—and three core features (characteristics of the substance of the activity)—active learning, coherence, and content focus (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).
Peoria Urban Mathematics Plan (PUMP) for Algebra Project	Quasi-experimental	Peoria Urban Mathematics Plan for Algebra was a professional development program that focused on improving teacher performance: teachers' content knowledge, teachers' pedagogical and professional knowledge; and classroom-based support for the implementation of new knowledge into practice. This professional development program increased student achievement in algebra at the 8th grade, improved teacher practices, and increased minority-student participation and representation in high school algebra (Swafford & Thornton, 1998).
Middle Grade Mathematics Renaissance Project	Quasi-experimental	Teachers received intensive, sustained professional development in this project. They collaborated with one another and received in-class support. Mathematics Renaissance Project has positively impacted student achievement in mathematics and teacher instructional behaviors, and influenced district policy regarding curriculum and instructional materials (Acquarelli, & Mumme, 1996).

Cited Studies	Type of Study	Summary
Student Watershed Research Project	Quasi-experimental	The Student Watershed Research Project (SWRP) developed teachers' understandings of watershed research and provided an excellent model of authentic performance assessment for students. Intensive training for teachers was followed by a wide range of ongoing support to facilitate implementation of the learning in their classrooms. SWRP contributed to students' understanding, appreciation, and practice of science as a result of their teachers' participation in this professional development model, which employed hands-on, practical learning experiences (Student Watershed Research Project, 1997).

Of the 14 studies reviewed, five experimental and nine quasi-experimental addressed student-learning needs. The best available evidence generally indicates that effective professional development addresses student-learning needs. Professional development that is based on analysis of student learning helps teachers close the gap between actual student performance and goals for student learning (Cohen & Hill, 1998; Killion, 2002a; Killion, 2002b; Killion 2002c; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Great importance has been made of having professional development be student-centered focused.Of the 14 studies reviewed, five experimental and nine quasi-experimental addressed professional development being job-embedded. There is evidence that effective professional development should be embedded in the job (Cohen & Hill, 1998; Fine & Raack, 1994; Hirsh, 2001; Killion, 2002a; Killion, 2002b; Killion, 2002c; Killion & Hirsh, 2001; Paez, 2003). Job-embedded professional development appears to improve teacher practices by promoting practical learning. In addition, it takes less time away from the classroom, and cost less.

Five of the experimental and eight quasi-experimental studies addressed knowledge, skills, and beliefs. The best available evidence supports the idea that professional development should provide opportunities to engage in developing a theoretical understanding of the knowledge and skills to be learned (Fullan, 1991; Killion, 2002a; Killion, 2002b; Killion, 2002c; Killion & Hirsh, 2001; Sparks & Hirsh, 2002). Teacher thinking and classroom behavior are influenced by teachers' knowledge and beliefs; therefore, an important component of their professional development needs to be the expansion of their professional knowledge base. Improving teacher knowledge and skills can result in raising student performance and ensuring their success.

Of the 14 studies reviewed, two experimental and two quasi-experimental addressed professional development occurring over time. The best available evidence reveals that high-quality professional development occurs over time and should be seen as an on-going process (Cohen & Hill, 1998; Fine & Raack, 1994; Killion, 2002a; Killion, 2002b; Killion, 2002c; Sparks & Hirsh, 2002). By participating in on-going professional development, teachers are made aware of

changing expectations and new teaching methods. The duration of professional development is related to the improvement of teaching practices, therefore, the potential to impact student achievement exists.

One experimental and two quasi-experimental studies addressed professional development occurring with colleagues. The most effective professional development sessions allow teachers time to collaborate with one another and to discuss their professional development experience (Cohen & Hill, 1998; Fine & Raack, 1994; Paez, 2003). When teachers collaborate with colleagues, there is a direct impact on instructional improvement.
Of the 14 studies reviewed, five experimental studies and seven quasi-experimental studies addressed effective professional development incorporating evaluation. The pressure has intensified on schools to show that the professional development being provided to teachers is effective and showing positive results. This issue is not whether teachers are satisfied with a particular workshop but rather what effect professional development will have on student achievement (Guskey, 2000; Kelleher, 2003; Killion, 2002a; Killion, 2002b; Killion, 2002c; Killion & Hirsh, 2001).

Assessment and Accountability

Contemporary research indicates that assessment and accountability systems are most effective when internal and external measures are coordinated by schools and districts to improve student learning (Elmore & Abelmann, 1999; Fullan, 2001). This means that assessments are aligned to State and local standards, which in turn are aligned with curriculum. In addition, achievement and performance expectations are made clear to teachers and students alike. The data resulting from assessment and accountability measures are used both to evaluate the effectiveness of school practices and to plan for future instruction. Such data are also communicated widely to all members of the school community.

Quality Assessments Aligned to State Content and Achievement Standards.

Assessment alignment, as defined by Webb, is "the degree to which expectations and assessments are in agreement and serve in conjunction with one another to guide the system toward students learning what they are expected to know and do" (2002, p. 3). The contemporary standards movement and associated legislation has specified that standards be applied in content areas and that student acquisition of such content be assessed via rigorous tests which are aligned with the standards (Linn, 2000). Moreover, accountability decisions based on assessment data are only defensible if they are based upon well-designed and aligned tests (La Marca, 2001).

There are two major dimensions of alignment: content match and depth match (La Marca, Redfield, & Winter 2000). Broad content match, or categorical congruence (Webb, 1997), refers to alignment at the broad standard level. Content match also includes range of coverage and balance of coverage. Both content and depth match may be verified by item-level comparisons to standards. Depth alignment, on the other hand, refers to the coordination between the cognitive complexity of the standards-based knowledge or skill students are expected to master and the cognitive complexity required by the relevant assessment item or task (Webb 1997, 1999). Assessments themselves must also possess sufficient validity and reliability. In the context of accountability and standards, validity and reliability are not simply issues of the psychometric properties of tests. Rather, validity of an assessment depends as well on the meaningful

relationship of items to the standards-based content for which students are held responsible (Messick, 1989; Webb, 2002).

Curriculum Planning Based on Student Results. The amount of data available to schools since the 1970s has increased tremendously, as State departments of education during that decade became more active in requiring that schools report the results of instruction (Stiggins, 1999). Many departments of education selected or created tests that reflected the academic and curricular standards that all students were expected to meet. In addition, more, and more varied, data have become even more abundant with the adoption of State accountability systems, curriculum alignment efforts, and the passage of NCLB.

Research indicates that educators are able to use various types of data to make decisions about instruction and that assessment can be usefully employed to ascertain student learning or struggle (Shepard, 2000). For instance, teachers have been shown to use diagnostic assessments to guide grouping practices and to determine which students may need additional assistance (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001). Light, Wexler, and Heinze (2004) report the results of a study of how teachers use data from large-scale assessments. The researchers found that participating educators were able to make a great deal of use from such tests for the purposes of curricular and instructional planning.

Helping schools move from interpreting standardized test scores to developing ongoing school improvement and evaluation strategies can be a challenge (Massell, 2000). Nonetheless, achievement data can readily be used to identify students who need additional help if they are to master the objectives being studied. Group data can be helpful for identifying areas of the curriculum that prove more problematic for students (Yang & Goldstein, 1999). In addition, disaggregation of data can help uncover differences in learning rates of subpopulations (Bernhardt, 1998; Garcia 2000; Johnson, 1997). Typically, achievement data are disaggregated by gender, race, or socioeconomic status, often using eligibility for free and reduced-price meals as a proxy measure for economic status.

Information from standardized tests alone, however, is likely not sufficient; decisions may be more efficacious if they are based upon comprehensive or triangulated data. Such additional data might include teacher-made tests, students' work on projects, and teachers' observations of students' progress. Regular testing and the use of both formative and summative assessments are important for making school decisions (Bernhardt, 1998; Herman & Gribbons, 2001; Rabinowitz & Ananda, 2001; Reeves, 2000). Research suggests that high-performing learning communities examine student achievement continually using a variety of indicators so all students can reach high standards (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001).

Standards-Based Grading Policies and Procedures. Some research has suggested that higher grading standards improve student achievement (Betts & Grogger, 2003) and that consistent grading policies mediate high rates of variability in student grades across classes and schools (Wiggins, 1991). O'Conner's review (1995) indicates that definitive grading policies and procedures best support student learning and performance. Guskey (2001) argues criterion-referenced standards and tests ensure fairness and accuracy in student assessment. Moreover,

such assessments and grading policies are most effective when they are clearly and consistently communicated to students, parents, and community members.

Accommodations. Accommodations are modifications made to instructional and testing procedures to allow the full participation of English language learners and students with various disabilities (Rivera & Stansfield, 1998). Such modifications are particularly important with the NCLB mandate that 95% of all student subgroups participate in annual testing (Gronna, Jenkins, & Chin-Chance, 1998). Some researchers have found evidence that not only is it important to develop policies and procedures supporting accommodations for students, such plans must be articulated in students' IEPs, following a systematic decision making process, and then implemented and supported by properly trained educators (Almond, Harniss, Heath, Hollenbeck, & Tindal, 1998; Almond, Hollenbeck, & Tindal, 1998). Without such mechanisms, accommodations will likely not occur, or will only occur inconsistently, for those students requiring them.

Various studies have also confirmed that testing accommodations increase the percentages of disabled or English language learners who are able to participate in assessments without compromising the validity of the overall assessments. For instance, Rivera and Stansfield (2001) found that linguistic simplification strategies did not jeopardize the meaning of assessment scores. In another study (Abedi, Lord, & Hofstetter, 1998), both English speaking students and English language learners performed best on NAEP items that were presented in simplified English. Abedi (2001) suggests a number of accommodations strategies that appear not to detract from assessment validity.

Alternate Assessments. Students with significant cognitive impairments who may be unable to participate in State assessments may be able to complete alternate assessments, if they are provided. Recent research has shown that alternate assessments can be successfully developed that reflect State assessment constructs and standards (Almond, Crawford, Glasgow, Hollenbeck, McDonald, Tedesco, & Tindal, 2003). Only Kentucky and Maryland have alternate assessment programs several years old, but data from these suggest that such assessments can be effectively implemented statewide, particularly with sufficient teacher support time for administration (Haig, Kearns, Kennedy, & Kleinert, 2000; Kearns, Kennedy, & Kleinert, 1999). Alternate assessments, when properly implemented by trained personnel, provide schools with additional data by which to judge their effectiveness with all students and plan for needed improvements (Quenemoen & Thompson, 2001).

Assessment Reporting. Achievement data need to be shared with several audiences. First, the whole faculty needs to be aware of how students in all grades or classes are performing. In an effective school, sharing results can create a system of internal accountability in which all staff have a strong sense of responsibility and personal accountability for student learning (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Thus, all teachers have a stake in the attainments of all students. Results of student assessment should also be communicated to parents and community members, who need to know how well the school or district is performing. Detailed information will help parents understand how they can help their children do well. Such data may also convey to parents and community members that the school or district holds high expectations of students (Doyle, Tezloff, & Renze, 1993; Reeves, 2000). In addition, assessment data should ideally be presented to parents and community members in ways that are clear and show evidence of students' growth (Lashway, 2001).

Accountability Reporting. Parents and community members have a stake in how well their schools are educating students. The contemporary emphasis on accountability systems and communication of school effectiveness is one means by which educators and legislators have attempted to keep parents and communities informed of overall student achievement and the rewards or sanctions associated with meeting performance standards (Herdman, McMahon, Smith, Washington, & Wenning, 2003). Furthermore, effective reporting of accountability results should support and contribute to ongoing "accountability dialogues" with various stakeholders, and should provide meaningful information for school improvement efforts (Lashway, 2001).

Reporting of accountability results, according to research, is most useful to stakeholders if it is presented for specific audiences and purposes (Lashway, 2001). School report cards are one means by which both assessment and accountability information have been presented to parents and local community members.

Use of Reports. Once data are communicated to staff and community members, districts should institutionalize procedures for articulating the implications of such data for curricular and instructional planning. Studies of effective school districts have emphasized that the use of data to make and monitor improvement and curricular decisions is vital to such districts' success (Cawelti & Protheroe, 2001; North Carolina State Board of Education/Department of Public Instruction, 2000; Ragland, Asera, & Johnson, 1999; Skrla, Scheurich, & Johnson, 2000; WestEd, 2000). Such districts, furthermore, provide ongoing training and support for staff in the use of data (Lashway, 2001). The regular use of data reports to analyze school strengths and challenges, and to make curricular and instructional decisions, characterizes schools that are committed to what has been called "continuous improvement" (Hord, 1997; Walsh & Sattes, 2001; Weller & Weller, 1997).

School Culture / Climate

School culture has been defined in many ways. Deal and Peterson (1990) have suggested that culture includes the entrenched patterns of values, beliefs, and traditions that have developed throughout a school's history. Heckman (1993) contends that the commonly held beliefs of teachers, students, and principals are what constitute a school's culture. School culture can also be defined as the historically transmitted systems of meaning that include the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions, and myths that are shared, perhaps unevenly, by members of a school community (Stolp & Smith, 1994). While there are many definitions of culture in the research literature, two values that are central to high-performing learning communities are the beliefs all students can learn at high levels and that teachers' actions matter (Hord, 1997).

Research has provided some evidence a strong and healthy school culture enhances student learning and reinforces staff commitment. Fyans and Maehr (1990) found increased student motivation to learn in schools with strong and supportive cultures, while Thacker and McInerney (1992) also discovered evidence of improved student achievement in schools with such cultures. Teacher motivation is also influenced by school culture (Cheng, 1993).

Organizational culture is a reflection of how things are done in an organization, what is valued by its members, and what the organization strives to do. School culture is also changeable and

represents an important avenue for supporting change. Fullan suggests that what is needed is not restructuring of struggling schools, but reculturing. "Restructuring bears no direct relationship to improvements in teaching and learning. Reculturing, by contrast, involves changing the norms, values, incentives, skills, and relationships in the organization to foster a different way of working together. Reculturing makes a difference in teaching and learning" (Fullan, 1998, p. 9). Much prescriptive education literature and research suggests that the interplay between school cultural and structural conditions significantly affects how change at a particular school will be greeted (e.g., Newmann & Wehlage, 1996). They contend that if cultural characteristics, such as commitment to high expectations, support for inquiry, and caring relationships, intersect with structural factors, such as time for staff development and freedom from excessive organizational constraints, school reform will proceed more smoothly (Kruse, Louis, & Bryk, 1995; Newmann, King, & Youngs, 2001).

High Expectations for Students. A large literature on the influence of teacher expectations on student performance, a phenomenon dubbed the "Pygmalion effect," suggests student performance mirrors the expectations their teachers hold for them (e.g., Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). School staff's expectations for student academic performance play a powerful role in how students actually perform. Teachers' expectations for students inform how they treat students. For instance, teachers holding depressed expectations for certain students may then treat them differently than other students perceived to be more capable. Such differential treatment, very different than the differential instruction described above, results in fewer opportunities to learn challenging material, less time to answer questions or complete assignments, and less frequent encouragement and praise (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1999; Lumsden, 1997; McLeod, 1987; Willis, 1981). Over time, students' performance conforms to the expectations of teachers (Tauber, 1998), thereby confirming teachers' original expectations. In addition, teachers are in positions of power relative to students, making their expectations all the more influential.

Wilson and Martinussen (1999) show dramatically how teacher expectations based on students' socioeconomic status and prior achievement significantly shape the final grades study participants accorded their students. Others have reported similar findings (Oakes, 1990; Rist, 1970). Ogbu (1983) likewise illustrates how important teacher expectations are to students' academic involvement and, ultimately, to their achievement.

According to research, efficacious teachers believe all students can learn at high levels. The presence of high expectations for acceptable student performance and behaviors, along with requirements and other policies that help communicate and effectuate such expectations, have been cited as a crucial characteristic of virtually all unusually effective schools. For instance, Levine and Lezotte (1990) cite more than 20 research studies in which the effects of teachers' expectations for students have been examined. Newmann and Wehlage (1995) have found that in effective schools, students understand they are expected to work hard to master challenging academic material and educators report confidence that students can be successful if they work hard. Thus, if educators hold high expectations for their students' performance, students are more likely to achieve at high levels, whereas low expectations encourage depressed levels of achievement (Tauber, 1998).

High Expectations for Staff. Another important component of an effective school culture is the communication of high expectations for staff. Such expectations go beyond those articulated by content and achievement standards. Rather, high expectations for staff in terms of school culture are more akin to norms and local practices that support diligence, teacher efficacy, and collaboration (Goddard, 2002; Goddard, Hoy, & Hoy, 2000; Walsh & Sattes, 2000). Louis, Kruse, and Marks (1996) found that quality schools were characterized by a stable, professional community of experienced teachers with shared norms, values, and goals; a collective focus on student learning; a willingness to collaborate; and an openness to reflection and new ideas—all directed toward high student achievement. Moreover, staff expected these stances of one another. Many researchers have similarly observed that teachers and administrators in unusually effective schools exhibit an institutionalized problem-solving orientation and willingness to engage in ongoing formative evaluation, with the clear shared expectation that staff continually strive for ambitious goals (Doll, 1969; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Levine & Stark, 1981; Taylor, 1984). Boyd and Hord (1995) suggest that such expectations for staff may prove most effective when teachers first feel that they are honored and trusted by their administrators and by other staff.

Celebrate Successes. Displays of celebration, ceremonies, announcements, and other forms of public recognition and reward are important means by which to develop and sustain a supportive school culture (Harris, 1992; Walsh & Sattes, 2000). Deal and Peterson (1999) argue that administrators in schools with strong and healthy cultures serve as "symbolic leaders," offering meaningful praise and celebration, in addition to supportive leadership. Staff and students in highly effective schools reinvigorate their improvement efforts with regular acknowledgements of the work they have accomplished and the successes they have achieved (Hord, 1997).

Safe and Drug-Free Learning Environment. Safe and drug-free schools have been a national priority even before the tragic student shootings at Columbine High School. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS), for instance, is one manifestation of this concern. The OSFDS provides support and leadership for schools implementing programs of drug and violence prevention; character education; and physical, mental, and environmental health (2004). The Office is an outgrowth of the 1990 establishment of national goals, one of which stated that "by the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning" (Summerfield, 1991).

Haynes, Emmons, and Ben-Avie (1997) have suggested that aspects of a healthy, supportive school climate include high levels of caring, respect, and trust among all members of the school community, and a sense of order and discipline, among other characteristics. Research suggests that most schools are relatively free of drugs and serious crime, but some schools are seriously unsafe as well as not conducive to learning (Crosse, Burr, Cantor, Hagen, & Hantman, 2002). Moreover, although schools across the nation have implemented a wide variety of programs to nurture violence and drug-prevention, most are not of particularly high quality nor are they especially effective (Cantor, Crosse, Hagen, Mason, Siler, & von Glatz, 2002). Gaustad (1993) recommends that districts should focus their efforts on developing policies and programs that focus comprehensively on discipline, intervention, and prevention. Such undertakings are usefully guided by a philosophical statement of the district's position on substance abuse and

violence. Both this statement and the attendant policies should be crafted by educators and community members because, as Gaustad states, "Schools alone can't defeat a problem as complex and socially deep-rooted as substance abuse" (p. 1). Ascher (1994) has further suggested violence prevention policies and programs should provide means for "treating the aftermath of violence," both for offenders and victims.

Research suggests other ways in which school and districts might create learning environments that are safe, disciplined, orderly, and free of illicit drugs. For example, schools can develop environments of preventive discipline, in which school and classroom environments are structured for optimum learning. Schools may also consider policies and programs that emphasize community and responsibility among students (Grossnickle & Sesko, 1990; Moles, 1989). Discipline policies and consequences should be clearly defined and include positive reinforcements for good behavior (Gottfredson, 1989). In addition, districts should establish firm anti-drug policies supported by appropriate action. Schools, communities, businesses, and social services should work in concert to convey to students that drug use and violence are not acceptable on school grounds (Hawley, 1990).

Support for At-Risk Students. At-risk students are those whose life experiences and socially defined characteristics render them vulnerable to a number of outcomes schools aim to mitigate, such as dropping out of school, failing courses, or engaging in violence or substance abuse (Hill, Soriano, Chen, & LaFromBoise, 1996). Effective schools, therefore, are those that provide sufficient support to such students, successfully preventing negative outcomes. Research suggests a number of practices that serve to identify, intervene with, and support students at risk, including compelling school activities and organizations (Catalano, Loeber, & McKinney, 1999), mentorship programs (Van Acker & Wehby, 2000), and violence prevention education programs (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Other research indicates that at-risk students may be effectively supported when curriculum is designed to be culturally and socially relevant to such students, who also play a collaborative role in defining and implementing the course of study (Yamauchi, 2003).

Budget and Resources

Successful districts should (1) ensure that school funding is targeted towards program improvement, (2) demonstrate comparability of funding and teachers, (3) manage time resources around school improvement and professional development in ways that contribute to increasing student achievement, (4) monitor budget priorities, and (5) provide guidance to schools on budget issues.

According to Viadero (2002), schools that have greater control over their planning and budgeting do better academically than those that do not. To improve student achievement, schools must have the capacity to plan, budget, and respond with agility to students' needs. As was evidenced in the Performance-Driven Budgeting pilot in New York City Schools, student achievement does improve when schools have significant control over their resources and instructional planning (Siegel & Fruchter, 2002).

Solomon and Fox (1998) further commented that formulas for budgeting are considered "fatally flawed" unless they include several components: an equitable, student-centered cost-accounting

system; efficiency and performance incentives; facilities maintenance provisions; as well as a strong accountability provision.

According to Johnson (2003), information about education budgets ranges from staff and student information to extensive financial information, which may also encompass school facility and program-level information. The budget also provides an important tool for the control and evaluation of sources and the uses of resources. Budget data can be used for multiple reasons:

- **Using disaggregated data to examine wide-ranging goals.** Disaggregating data for analysis helps identify programmatic and fiscal inequities and determine what the baselines for improvement should be.
- **Using data in rapid program evaluation.** To have an impact, program evaluation must be timely as well as complete. When program and other data are compiled and linked in an accurate and well-designed retrieval system, the goals of schooling can be more effectively and efficiently met.
- **Using data for budgetary control.** Greater control and more informed decisionmaking are possible when all costs of school operations are available.
- **Using data to examine relationships between cost and effectiveness.** Information technologies allow graphic representations of these data.

In an educational environment, budgeting is an invaluable tool for both planning and evaluation. Budgeting provides a vehicle for translating educational goals and programs into financial resource plans (i.e., developing an instructional plan to meet student performance goals should be directly linked to determining budgetary allocations. The link between instructional goals and financial planning is critical to effective budgeting and enhances the evaluation of budgetary and educational accountability.

Johnson further stated that for appropriate, cost-effective, and timely decisions about students and schools and programs to be made, accurate and complete information must be widely available to the many users of education data, such as the research community, school administrators, school boards, policymakers, school improvement teams, creditors and potential creditors, and the general public. The advantage of a comprehensive education information system to school finance is that it allows a complete, accurate, and timely display of the distribution and use of resources, with direct educational program implications. At a time when significant questions are being raised about spending on schools, a more comprehensive data system has real value in its potential to uncover the answers to these questions.

As the public demands that schools be more productive and held accountable, a popular reform strategy is to give schools more authority over their budgets. Some believe that site-level budgeting has the potential to encourage innovation, enhance organizational effectiveness, and improve financial equity among schools. Wohlstetter and Van Kirk (1995) studied 18 schools in 9 districts in Chicago; Denver; Milwaukee; Bellevue; Washington; Edmonton, Alberta (Canada); Jefferson County, Kentucky; Prince William County, Virginia; and Victoria, Australia and found these schools had varying degrees of success implementing a school-based budget. Critics of the traditional, district-centered finance system have argued that budget allocations hamper efforts to design specialized programs, lack incentives for staff involvement, inhibit the search for innovative instructional approaches, and stifle educator and parent involvement (Wagoner,

1995). However, Goertz and Hess (1998) found that school-based budgeting in four, large urban school systems (Chicago, Fort Worth, New York, and Rochester) was only marginally successful because districts limited the schools' discretion to allocate funds and personnel.

The Committee on Economic Development (CED, 1994) concluded that money matters when schools are organized to use it effectively to promote achievement. School boards and superintendents must ensure sufficient funds are getting to the classroom to improve to learning. According to the CED,

- District policies should induce schools to reallocate expenditures for more effective use within current real spending levels.
- Individual schools must have greater control of resources.
- Increases in real resources should be tied to progress toward agreed-upon achievement goals in a school investment plan or performance contract with a district.

The CED recommends that those who govern schools should, among other things, do the following:

- Ensure adequate resources are provided to schools to meet such goals.
- Delegate responsibility and authority, as well as accountability, for making progress toward achievement goals.
- Set goals for and monitor student achievement, using State and national standards.

Newmann, King, and Youngs (2001) also found the presence of adequate technical and professional resources to be a useful indicator of school capacity. However, in many cases teachers find they are consistently lacking one very important resource—time. Teachers, researchers, and policymakers consistently indicate that the greatest challenge to implementing effective professional development is lack of time. Teachers need time to understand new concepts, learn new skills, develop new attitudes, research, discuss, reflect, assess, try new approaches and integrate them into their practice as well as time to plan their own professional development (Cambone, 1995; Corcoran, 1995).

Every year the United States spends over $400 billion on its public elementary and secondary schools, or on average of $8,048 per student (CED, 2004). K-12 education often represents the biggest item in State and local budgets; therefore, managing budgets and resources is critical to the success of any school.

Parents and Community

Schools do not exist in isolation. They influence and are influenced by the families who attend those schools and the communities in which they are situated. While most practitioners and researchers support the policy of increased parent and community involvement, few agree about what constitutes effective involvement. Confusion persists regarding the activities, goals, and desired outcomes of various parent and community involvement programs and policies. A major source of this confusion is the lack of scientific rigor in the research informing practice and policy. Methodological limitations are prevalent in the majority of parent and community involvement research. In general, flaws in existing research fall into four areas: (1) use of non-experimental design, (2) lack of isolation of parent and community involvement efforts, (3) inconsistent definitions of parent and community involvement, and (4) non-objective measures

of parent and community involvement. The following is a brief summary of best available evidence supporting parent and community involvement in schools.

Relationships with parents/families. Even more important than community for student achievement may be relationships between schools and families. Joyce Epstein and other researchers have confirmed both the importance and nature of family influence on children's academic success (Epstein, 1992; Henderson & Berla, 1994). Again, a high degree of congruence between the values and aspirations of the school and the family is important. The importance of beliefs was emphasized in Reginald Clark's study of poor African American families. He identified several differences between the families of high-achieving and low-achieving children. For example, the families of high-achieving students frequently initiated contact with the school and expected to play major roles in schooling. They established achievement-related norms and expected their children to be accountable for their achievement (Clark, 1983).

Parents' involvement in their children's school and education needs to be focused and purposeful. Generalized programs of "improved parent involvement" are less likely to be successful than are specific opportunities to work on problems important to families. Levine and Lezotte (1990, p. 11) reviewed studies of unusually effective schools and observed that many schools talk about parent involvement. However, they argue,

> . . . examining case studies of unusually effective schools with high parent involvement and/or visiting such schools in person suggests to us that they have identified and emphasized parent involvement activities that are somehow particularly salient in terms of the most serious problems that they face at a given point in time. . . . Stated differently, more seems to be happening than some general effort to increase parental communications or build more positive school and home relationships. (p. 24)

Parents and family members are the first educators of their children. Parent/family involvement should be meaningful involvement in that it has a positive influence on children's learning. Although scholars define parent/family involvement in various ways, at the core they feel meaningful involvement should include giving children guidance, providing motivation and discipline, and participating in school decision making as well as establishing a good communication link with school staff so that school activities can children's progress can be discussed (Hambrick, 2000). Researchers and educators have long agreed that when parents get involved in education, children try harder and achieve more at school (Epstein, 1995).

Various approaches have been developed to help schools gain greater parent involvement. These approaches have several features in common: programs that focus on parenting skills and the development of home conditions that support learning; school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and children's progress; the use of volunteers at school or in other locations to support the school and students; and participation by families in decision-making, governance, and advocacy (Bauch, 1994; Davies, 1991).

Children whose parents are involved in their formal education have many advantages. They have better grades, test scores, long-term academic achievement, attitudes, and behavior than those with disinterested mothers and fathers (Henderson, 1988). Hamilton-Lee (1988) suggests three

solutions to getting parents involved in their children's education: (1) get parents involved in special activities like P.T.A. and school outings, (2) enlist them in regular school affairs as assistant teachers or library aides, and (3) incorporate them into planning and management teams.

It is vital that teachers feel prepared to engage parents and the community in their schools. An assessment study by Katz and Bauch (1999) on graduates from teacher education programs at Peabody College, Vanderbilt University indicated these new teachers felt prepared and engaged in a diverse number of parent involvement practices because they had received parent involvement training in their courses. Teachers' efforts to involve families promote the following:

- better student attendance
- higher graduation rate from high school
- fewer retentions in the same grade
- increased levels of parent and student satisfaction with school
- more accurate diagnosis of failing students for educational placement in classes
- reduced number of negative behavior reports
- most notably, higher achievement scores on reading and math tests (Epstein, 2001).

Parents can provide important support for their children's learning without being involved in larger issues of school governance. Unfortunately, in many ways, schools have taught many parents to be disengaged. Proactive work by teachers and principals will be needed to communicate new expectations and responsibilities for parents. Among teacher practices that can facilitate home-school relations are selecting relevant tasks and literature, connecting through talk, and communicating with parents (McCarthey, 1999).

The more parents participate in schooling, in a sustained way, at every level—in advocacy, decision-making and oversight roles, as fundraisers and boosters, as volunteers and para-professionals, and as home teachers—the better for student achievement (Williams & Chavkin, 1989). Although most parents do not know how to help their children with their education, with guidance and support, they may become increasingly involved in home-learning activities and find themselves with opportunities to teach, to be models for, and to guide their children (Roberts, 1992).

In one experimental study, Balli, Demo, and Wedman (1998) looked at a mathematics homework intervention designed to increase family involvement in homework. The study was based in three mathematics classes taught by the same teacher, with students who were similar in achievement level. Families of students who were prompted to involve a family member in the homework (by directions on involvement and requests for parents' comments and signature) were significantly more involved in mathematics homework than families who did not receive prompts. There were no significant differences in posttest achievement.

Researchers investigated how differences in levels of family involvement in homework and in student achievement on a posttest were related to differential prompts for involvement in homework. The only variable manipulated in the study was prompting for family involvement.

Parents in Groups 2 and 3 reported significantly more family involvement in mathematics homework than Group 1. Evidence of differences in family involvement between Groups 2 and 3 was mixed. While parents reported no significant differences, students reported that family members were much more involved with homework for Group 3 than for Group 2. From the comments of parents, the study also found that families benefited from workshops and other homework help since many of them were not taught the concepts or were not taught in the same way as their children.

In one quasi-experimental study of a year-long literacy project, Early Access to Success in Education (EASE), conducted in four schools in one mostly middle-income school district, Jordan, Snow, and Porche (2000) found significantly greater gains in reading for children in the program than for children in a comparison group. Project EASE was designed to help parents develop their young children's literacy skills. It offers parent education sessions, parent-child activities at school, and book-centered activities at home. The goal was to get parents involved in their children's education.

Children whose families engaged in both at-school and at-home activities of Project EASE made significantly greater gains in language scores (vocabulary, story comprehension, and sequencing in storytelling) than comparison-group children. The researchers found that the more activities a family completed, the higher their students' gains. The group that gained the most was made up of low-achieving students who started out with low language skills and strong home literacy support.

In one correlational, three-year study of 1,200 urban New England children from kindergarten through third grade, Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, and Fendrich (1999) looked at the effects of parent involvement on students' performance in school over time. When teachers rated their interactions with parents as good, and said that parents participated at home and school, students tended to perform better.

Comparing forms of parent involvement, the researchers found that engaging in home activities was the strongest positive predictor for math and reading achievement. Taking part in activities at school was positively related to students' school engagement, and the quality of parent-teacher interactions was positively related to students' social and emotional adjustment.

Bridges to community. People who live and work in the community—whether or not they have children in the school—are important assets to school improvement efforts. Most communities include what researchers from the Annie E. Casey Foundation call natural helpers—professionals who live and work with community youth through parks and recreation departments, child care centers, or community health centers. They can act as bridges between schools and families in the community. These people are identified as part of the community, often have extensive social networks within the area, and are "personally respected and influential. Because they live in the community where they work, they naturally have a greater stake in its well-being and future than do professionals who work in the community but reside elsewhere" (Flaxman, 2001).

Engaging with the community has many advantages for the faculty and students of a school. The community can become an extension of the classroom as the life of the community becomes an important part of the curriculum. Kushman and Barnhardt (1999) studied seven communities in Alaska that worked with the schools to integrate the indigenous knowledge system with the formal education structure. Thomas Hatch (1998) studied a network of more than 100 Alliance schools dedicated to developing a constituency of parents, community leaders, and educators. He observed that educators who witnessed parents and community members working on behalf of students and schools were heartened and felt more accountable for the quality of their instruction.

More than ever, school districts realize they are dependent on community support to meet mandated performance standards, develop innovative programs, and secure financial resources. Involving parents, teachers, members of the business community, and others in the process of the identifying academic goals and standards and measures of progress can be a powerful vehicle for improving student achievement and influencing the direction and success of school programs.

Principals play a key role in promoting community partnerships. Facilitating ongoing involvement with families, with a clear focus on improving student achievement, is perhaps the most critical step schools can take to engage the community. Toward this end, principals should inform the staff that family involvement is a high priority by providing them time and resources and training on how to work with parents (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001).

Creating strong ties with families is accomplished by keeping parents informed about their children's progress and what they are learning, explaining how they can help children budget their time for homework assignments, and describing ways they can assist them with their school work.

To build lasting community support for schools that facilitates student engagement, school boards are developing communication strategies that routinely reach diverse community groups. The process of building such partnerships, called public engagement, is an ongoing, two-way communication between a school district and the community it serves (Resnick, 2000).

Involving parents, members of the business community, and service organizations to identify academic goals and standards and quantify measures of progress sends the message that what students learn and how well they learn it is not an issue just for teachers and administrators but is a real priority for the community as well (Wright & Saks, 2000). In one study of exemplary school improvement programs in rural schools, researchers at the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory found that one factor contributing to success was the integration of school and community (D'Amico, 2000).

At its best, the education of young people is a partnership between the school, the home, and the community. Educators who wish to strengthen the bonds among those individuals and organizations that contribute to the education and welfare of a community's youth must be knowledgeable about various ways in which families and community members can be involved meaningfully in the affairs of the school for the benefit of students. Teachers must be able to

communicate clearly and respectfully with family members and demonstrate a genuine interest in the welfare of the child and family. They must be skillful in conducting meetings with families and members of the community that create a sense of teamwork between the home and school as well as delineate appropriate and manageable ways for providing support for a student's learning at home.

APPENDIX B

Nevada Department of Education

Nevada's Implementation of the Priority Point system and Audit Tool

The State of Nevada has only 17 school districts, so it was not really practical to use the system the group developed to rank-order the districts. It is assumed by the leadership at the Department that we will work with all 17 districts to provide an appropriate level of service to them. However, the priority point system has been very useful as we determine how to allocate our resources for school improvement purposes. For instance, during the current school year (2005-06), there has been allocated approximately 92 million dollars for schools and districts to use in the implementation of their district and school improvement plans. Every school and district in the State can apply for this funding, and obviously, there may be different levels of need among the schools and districts. Using the rankings of schools as determined by the metric, the review panel in charge of distributing these competitive grant funds is able to gain a quick sense of the level of need at schools. This knowledge, in turn, will help determine the level of funding which applicants will receive.

The most exhaustive use of the metric in the State of Nevada has been with our potential Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) schools. Staff at the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) had never been truly satisfied with the manner in which we chose the CSR schools. In previous years, the process had been very traditional in nature, with only a paper review of each school's application. NDE had discovered over time that schools could make a very good case for their reform agendas in the application, yet have a difficult time carrying through on those plans. Therefore, during the last cycle of distribution of CSR funding, NDE decided to approach the application process in a different manner. First, staff identified all the Title I eligible, but non-served sites in the State which had been identified as in need of improvement. We focused on these schools specifically because there was often great need at these sites, yet very few extra resources. After this initial cut, we invited those with the highest scores on the metric tool (i.e., those from the eligible list showing the greatest need for improvement) to apply for the grant. When we had compiled a list of these schools that were interested in pursuing this funding opportunity, we then distributed the school success rubric which was developed in conjunction with this project. At this point, we asked each school to compile a portfolio of information about itself, divided into sections that addressed the various categories of the rubric. For instance, the schools were asked to include written documentation that would speak to their accomplishments in the eight areas of the rubric:

- Clear mission and vision/Leadership for school improvement/Instructional leadership
- Curriculum and instruction/curriculum alignment/access to standards based instruction/intervention strategies for students encountering difficulties
- Highly qualified staff
- Professional development
- Assessment and accountability
- School culture and climate
- Budget and resources
- Parent and community involvement

At this point, there were ten schools remaining in the process (of the approximately 20 which were originally determined to be eligible for the funding based on their poverty levels and their rankings on the metric tool) that decided to carry through and invite the review team on site for interviews. For the on-site review process, each school was visited by a pair of NDE staff members. The NDE staff first took an opportunity to look through the portfolio which the school had assembled prior to our visit. Then, NDE staff met with the school improvement planning teams at each site to ask further probing questions about the eight areas covered in the "School Success Rubric."

After the interviews with the school improvement team were complete, NDE staff rated each school on each of the eight areas in the rubric, with the intention of reducing the final pool of ten applicants to five schools which would actually receive the grant awards. Upon receipt of the initial grant award, each CSR recipient was required to hire an external facilitator who would assist the school in carrying out NDE's formal school improvement process known by the acronym of SAGE—Student Achievement Gap Elimination. Upon completion of the school improvement planning process with the assistance of the external facilitator, each school then received the bulk of its CSR funding.

Staff at NDE believes this process ultimately resulted in choosing schools to be awarded the CSR grants which were actually ready to begin the demanding process of whole scale school reform. The two tools developed by the CAS SCASS group—the metric and the school success rubric—played an important role in flowing this funding to the schools in the best position to make excellent use of the added resources.

ELEMENTS RELATED TO SCHOOL SUCCESS

Scale:
4 = Exemplary: This element contributes to the school's success and provides a model for other school to emulate.
3 = Meets Expectation: This element is fully functional and all indicators are evident.
2 = Area of Concern: This element is marginal. Some indicators for this element are evident. Performance in this area should be monitored for change and impact on Areas of Need.
1 = Area of Need: No evidence that this element is met or understood by the school. This element would be identified as a priority for technical assistance.

I. LEADERSHIP					
Criteria	4	3	2	1	*Points for Element*
1. Clear vision and mission Evidence: • Vision and mission statement posted in the school • Faculty meeting agendas and minutes • Committee meeting agendas and minutes • Newspaper articles • School newsletters and publications • School presentations • Interviews with the school leadership, faculty, parents, and community	• The school leadership and faculty know, understand, and effectively communicate a sustained vision and mission of the school to all stakeholders of the school.	• The school leadership and faculty have developed and communicated a clear vision and mission.	• School leadership knows and understands the vision and mission of the school.	• The school's vision and mission are not evident.	
2. Leadership for school improvement Evidence: • School improvement plans • Agendas and minutes	• A broad-based school improvement team that represents a cross-section of the school provides visible leadership to the school improvement process.	• A broad-based school improvement team that represents a cross-section of the school provides visible leadership to the school improvement process.	• A school improvement team provides leadership to the school improvement process.	• There is no clearly designated leadership for the school improvement process.	

of school improvement team meetings	• School improvement team provides sustained support to school improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring of progress in achieving goals. • School leadership makes time and resources available and actively participates in the entire school improvement process.	• School leadership makes resources available for the school improvement process.			
3. Instructional leadership Evidence: • Professional development plans and agendas for faculty meetings and school improvement activities • Observations and interviews with school leadership	• School leadership focuses on improving and supporting instruction. • School leadership demonstrates and communicates knowledge of the elements of effective instruction.	• School leadership focuses on improving and supporting instruction.	• School leadership provides minimal support to instruction. • Frequent priority is given to management and crisis issues.	• There is no evidence school leadership focuses on improving or supporting instruction.	
4. Policies and procedures Evidence: • Written school policies, procedures, and forms • School handbook	• School policies explicitly direct school activities to focus all activities on increased student achievement. • School procedures specify alignment of all activities to increase student achievement.	• School policies direct school activities to be focused on student achievement. • School procedures align activities to student achievement.	• School policies and procedures require some activities to be focused on student achievement.	• No mention is made of student achievement in school policies and procedures.	
5. School leadership decisions Evidence: • Board minutes • Process for data analysis • Administrative meeting	• The school leadership employs a systematic process for decisions that are data driven, collaborative decisions and focused on increased student achievement.	• School leadership decisions are data driven, collaborative and focused on increased student achievement.	• School leadership decisions are related to student achievement.	• School leadership decisions are unrelated to student achievement.	

minutes and participant lists • Observations and interviews					
6. Monitoring process Evidence: • Monitoring instrument • Monitoring schedule • Examples of plan revisions • Documentation of timely implementation of school improvement interventions	• School leadership has implemented a systematic and regular monitoring process to evaluate the effectiveness of school improvement plans to improve student achievement. • School leadership monitors the timely implementation of school improvement interventions and adjustments to plans when activities prove ineffective.	• School leadership has implemented a school monitoring process focused on improved student achievement.	• School leadership has implemented a school monitoring process which includes student achievement.	• School leadership has not implemented a monitoring process related to student achievement.	
				Section Total:	

II. CURRICULUM/INSTRUCTION					
Criteria	4	3	2	1	*Points for Element*
1. Curriculum alignment with State standards, (e.g., grade level standards, benchmarks, etc.) Evidence: • Written curriculum • Sample units and lessons • School Professional Development Plan • Observation and interviews	• The school faculty has implemented a curriculum aligned to content standards, vertically and horizontally. • The principal ensures all school personnel have participated in professional development on the content and achievement standards and aligned curriculum. • The faculty and staff have developed exemplars of standards aligned instructional units, lessons, and classroom assessments that reflect complete vertical and horizontal alignment.	• The school faculty has implemented a curriculum aligned to content standards, vertically and horizontally. • Professional development on the content and achievement standards and aligned curriculum has been completed and implemented by the school faculty and staff.	• The school has implemented a curriculum related to content standards. • Faculty has received copies of the content standards and curriculum.	• The school has not implemented a written curriculum related to content standards.	
2. Access to grade level standards instruction Evidence: • Course sequence • Course syllabus • Summary class schedules • Observation and interviews • Example units and lesson plans • Teacher qualifications, certification (Highly qualified and State	• The faculty and staff ensure all students have access to and are receiving grade level standards instruction designed to help them achieve at the proficient and advanced levels. • The faculty and staff utilize all available methods to provide every student access to standards aligned and advanced instruction. • The faculty instructs at a level that fully reflects the	• The faculty and staff ensure all students have access to and are receiving grade level standards instruction adequately designed to help them achieve at the proficient level. • The faculty and staff utilize a variety of methods to provide students access to standards instruction.	• The faculty and staff provide access to grade level standards instruction.	• The faculty and staff provide access to instruction.	

certification)	level of cognitive demand indicated in the standards.				
3. Scientifically research-based strategies Evidence: • Research used to develop aligned curriculum • List of school implemented instructional strategies • Professional Development Plan	• Curriculum content and district endorsed instructional strategies exclusively employ scientifically research-based strategies. • The school ensures all educators receive on-going, sustained professional development in scientifically research-based instructional strategies.	• Curriculum content and school implemented instructional strategies are supported by scientifically-based research. • The faculty and staff participate in professional development in scientifically research-based instructional strategies.	• Curriculum content and instructional strategies are supported by research.	• The school has no plans to implement instructional strategies supported by scientifically based research.	
4. Strategies for students who are at risk or do not master standards Evidence: • Teacher meetings schedules and minutes	• The school creates time for frequent and on-going collaboration and communication concerning the implementation of researched-based strategies for students who do not master standards.	• The school creates time for collaboration and communication concerning the implementation of strategies for students who do not master standards.	• The school creates time for communication concerning strategies for students who do not master standards.	• The school does not address the implementation of strategies for students who do not master standards.	
5. Access to instructional materials (e.g., textbooks, software, manipulatives) Evidence: • Research on instructional materials • List of school textbooks and curriculum materials • Observation and interview • School technology plan	• All students are provided with scientifically research–based instructional materials aligned with grade level standards.	• All students are provided with instructional materials aligned with grade level standards.	• All students are provided with instructional materials.	• Not all students are provided with instructional materials.	

Section Total:	

III. HIGHLY QUALIFIED STAFF					
Criteria	4	3	2	1	*Points for Element*
1. Assignments of students to classrooms based on teachers' qualifications Evidence: • Assign process • Observations and interviews	• The school delivers assistance in meeting academic achievement standards with a school-wide systematic process that matches highly qualified teachers with students by aligning teachers with specific training on interventions that match student needs. • This systematic process includes consultation between teachers, parents, pupil resources providers, and the student (if age applicable).	• The school delivers assistance in meeting academic achievement standards with a school-wide systematic process that matches highly-qualified teachers with students by aligning teachers with specific training on interventions match student needs.	• The school delivers assistance in meeting academic achievement standards by giving some consideration to the qualifications of the teachers and student needs.	• Classroom student assignments are based on teacher selection, schedules, and class-size policies.	
2. Teacher assignments to the most challenging classes and students Evidence: • Teacher assignment criteria	• The school assigns teachers to classes for which they are most qualified. • Master teachers are assigned to the most challenging classes and students.	• The school assigns teachers to classes for which they are most qualified.	• The school assigns teachers to classes which they are certified to teach.	• The school assigns teachers to classes based on schedules and teacher preference.	
				Section Total:	

IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
Criteria	4	3	2	1	*Points for Elements*
1. Identified needs Evidence: • School needs assessment • School strategic plan • School Professional Development Plan • School Improvement Plan timelines that provide evidence of on-going activities • Teacher qualifications • School Professional Development Needs Assessment • District curriculum development cycle • Consolidated Application Title II Section • Observation and interviews	• School professional development plan is identified through data analysis of trends in student achievement and other indicators relevant to student learning (graduation and attendance rates), school improvement goals, State standards and district school and curriculum, and instruction and assessment initiatives. • School professional development plan includes goals identified through the assessment of individual teacher professional development needs based on evaluations and trends in student achievement.	• School professional development plan is based on needs identified through school improvement goals as dictated by student achievement results, State standards and district and school curriculum, and instruction and assessment initiatives.	• Some school professional development activities are related to student achievement results.	• School professional development is unrelated to student achievement.	
2. Highly qualified and effective teachers Evidence: • Personal Development Plans • Highly Qualified State Definition • District Highly Qualified Teacher and	• Professional development is based on systematic personal development plans and increases the number of highly qualified teachers in the school.	• Professional development is provided to assist currently employed teachers and paraprofessionals in meeting highly-qualified requirements.	• Professional development includes certification courses.	• Professional development is provided upon teacher request.	

Paraprofessional Plan • Consolidated Application • Teacher assignment/certification information • Equity of the assignment of teachers across schools • Observation and interviews					
3. Scientifically researched-based methodologies and instructional strategies Evidence: • School Professional Development Plan • School and/or District Improvement Plan • Observation and interviews	• The principal ensures all school personnel receive professional development based on high quality scientifically researched-based instructional strategies. • Principal approval criteria for school professional development topics include research basis, identified need, and student achievement results with a clear relationship to State standards and district and school curriculum, and instruction and assessment initiatives.	• School professional development is based on high-quality scientifically researched-based instructional strategies. • The principal and school improvement team approval criteria for school professional development topics include research basis, identified need, and student achievement results.	• School professional development is based on instructional strategies.	• School professional development topics are unrelated to scientifically research-based methodologies and instructional strategies.	
4. School provides professional development through coaching, mentoring, and collaboration Evidence: • School Professional Development Plan	• The school requires planned follow-up administrative, budget, and resource support to on-going professional development through coaching, mentoring, and collaboration with	• The school provides planned follow-up administrative, budget, and resource support to on-going professional development through coaching, mentoring, and collaboration.	• The school provides planned follow-up support to professional development.	• No school support for follow-up to professional development is evident.	

• School and/or District Improvement Plan • Professional Development evaluation form and analysis • Observation and interviews	evaluation of implementation and effectiveness.				
5. Data analysis of the State, school, and classroom assessment Evidence: • Professional Development Plan • District Professional Development approval criteria • District Improvement Plan • Professional Development evaluation form and analysis • Observation and interviews	• The school provides professional development to increase knowledge and use of data analysis over time of State, district, school, and classroom assessment results to guide instruction and improved student achievement. • The school evaluates the effectiveness and implementation of professional development on data analysis.	• The school provides professional development to increase knowledge and use of data analysis of State, district, school, and classroom assessment results.	• The school provides professional development to increase understanding of data analysis of the State level assessment results.	• The school shares information on required assessments with teachers.	
6. Use of assessment data to evaluate the impact of professional development Evidence: • Professional Development Plan • Professional Development evaluation form and analysis • Student achievement	• Using assessment data, the school evaluates the impact and effectiveness of professional development on teacher practice and student achievement through data analysis and classroom observation.	• Using assessment data, the school evaluates the impact and effectiveness of professional development on teacher practice and student achievement.	• The school evaluates the impact of professional development on teacher practice through self-report.	• There is no evidence the school uses assessment data to evaluate the impact of professional development on teacher practice and student achievement.	

data analysis • Observation and interviews					
				Section Total:	

V. ASSESSMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY					
Criteria	4	3	2	1	*Points for Elements*
1. Quality assessments aligned to State content standards Evidence: • District guidelines for use of classroom assessments • Sample classroom assessments • Observation and interview	• Classroom assessments are aligned to State content standards and district curriculum and are used to monitor progress formatively toward achievement of the standards. • State, district, and classroom assessment results are used in a systematic combination to guide instruction in a manner appropriate to their purpose.	• Classroom assessments aligned to State content standards are used to monitor progress formatively toward achievement of the standards.	• Classroom assessments are used in the school.	• State required assessments are the only assessments administered in the school.	
2. Unit/lesson planning based on student results Evidence: • School's State, district, and classroom assessment results • School procedures for unit/lesson plan development and revision and schedule • Example of unit/lesson planning and revision	• A continuous unit/lesson plan development process that utilizes assessment results to determine needed revisions to improve learning is planned and carried out systematically.	• School unit/lesson plans are based on analysis of student assessment results.	• School unit/lesson plans are based on general observations of student strengths and weaknesses.	• School unit/lesson plans are unrelated to student assessment results or general observations of student strengths and weaknesses.	

activities • Observation and interview					
3. Standards-based grading policies and procedures Evidence: • State, district and classroom assessment results • District grading policies and procedures • Examples of school report cards • Observation and interview	• The school adheres to district standards-based grading policies and procedures that support student achievement of standards. • The school report cards are designed so that parents are continuously aware of how their children are progressing in achieving the standards throughout the school year.	• The school adheres to district standards-based grading policies and procedures that support student achievement of standards.	• The school adheres to district grading policies and procedures that report student progress.	• There is no evidence that the school adheres to district grading policies or procedures related to content standards or consistent evaluation of student progress across classrooms.	
4. Accommodations Evidence: • Rates of accommodation use • Reports on match between IEP and accommodation use • Records of accommodation training	• Assessment accommodations are provided on State assessments consistent with State policy. • Each student receives the assessment accommodations as specified in his/her IEP and those are used routinely in the student's classroom instruction and assessment. • Personnel trained in the proper use of assessment accommodations administer them in a manner consistent with State policies and procedures.	• Assessment accommodations are provided on State assessments consistent with State policy. • Each student receives the assessment accommodations as specified in his/her IEP and those are used routinely in the student's classroom instruction and assessment.	• Assessment accommodations are provided on State assessments consistent with State policy. • Each student receives the assessment accommodations as specified in his/her IEP.	• Assessment accommodations are provided on State assessments consistent with State policy.	
5. Alternate assessments Evidence:	• Alternate assessments are provided to students with significant cognitive	• Alternate assessments are provided to students with significant cognitive	• Alternate assessments are provided to students with significant cognitive	• Alternate assessments are provided to students based on teacher	

• Rates of alternate assessment use • Reports on district monitoring of match between IEP and alternate assessment use • Records of district participation in alternate assessment training	impairments as defined by State policy and specified by each student's IEP. • Alternate assessments are administered only to those students for whom participation in the general assessment even with accommodations would not be possible. • Personnel trained in the proper procedures administer the alternate assessment.	impairments as specified by each student's IEP. • Personnel trained in the proper procedures administer the alternate assessment.	impairments as specified by each student's IEP.	recommendation. • The school exceeds the district cap for participation in alternate assessments without documentation of mitigating circumstances (e.g., special center program).	
6. Assessment reporting Evidence: • State and district assessment results • District assessment plan • Sample reports • Observation and interview	• Individual student assessment results are reported to educators and parents. • District and school assessment results are reported to the educators, parents and the community. • All assessment results are reported in a manner that communicates meaningfully the achievement of standards to the intended audience in multiple formats and languages as appropriate. • School reporting is timely for planning and instructional uses. • School reporting makes the connection between assessment results and instructional priorities transparent.	• Individual student assessment results are reported to educators and parents. • District and school assessment results are reported to educators, parents and the community. • All assessment results are reported in a manner that communicates meaningfully the achievement of standards to the intended audience in an appropriate format and languages. • School reporting is timely for planning and instructional uses.	• District and school assessment results are reported to educators and the community.	• Individual student assessment results are reported to the educators and parents.	

7. Accountability reporting Evidence: • State and district accountability results • School AYP goals • School improvement profile • School improvement plan • Sample reports • Observation and interview	• School accountability results are reported to educators, parents, and the community. • All accountability results are reported in a manner that meaningfully communicates district, school, and subgroup progress toward the achievement of standards. • Reporting of school status is provided before the beginning of the school year for the application of sanctions. • School reporting makes the connection between accountability results and school improvement goals transparent.	• School accountability results are reported to educators, parents, and the community. • All accountability results are reported in a manner that meaningfully communicates district, school, and subgroup progress toward the achievement of standards. • Reporting of school status is provided before the beginning of the school year for the application of sanctions.	• School accountability results are reported to educators, parents and the community.	• Accountability results are reported to educators.	
				Section Total:	

VI. SCHOOL CULTURE/CLIMATE					
Criteria	4	3	2	1	*Points for Element*
1. High expectations related to State goals (student mastery of standards) Evidence: • School newsletters • School website • Extended and after school academic programs • Observation / interviews • Climate surveys	• The school articulates high expectations for student mastery of standards by all students. • Physical, cultural, behavioral, and intellectual needs are addressed. • Additional academic assistance is provided to all students identified in need.	• The school holds high expectations for student mastery of standards by all students. • Additional academic support is provided to meet student needs.	• The school promotes awareness of student mastery of standards.	• There is no evidence that the school promotes awareness of, or expectations for student mastery of standards.	•
2. High expectations (teacher and administrator performance) Evidence: • Process for employee evaluation • Teacher and administrator certification documentation • Sample employee evaluation forms and criteria • Media articles • School level professional development plan • School Highly Qualified Plan	• The school holds and consistently communicates high expectations for teacher, staff, and administrator performance. • All teachers are highly qualified and administrators hold appropriate credentials. • The school demonstrates support for collaboration among teachers across classrooms and grade levels in and out of the school.	• The school holds high expectations for teacher and administrator performance. • There is a school plan for all teachers to become highly qualified by the end of 2005-06 school year.	• There is a school plan for all teachers to become highly qualified by the end of 2005-06 school year.	• The school has data on qualifications of teachers.	

• Observation / interviews • Climate surveys					
3. Celebration of success Evidence: • Media reports • Vision and mission • Board minutes • Newsletters • Observation / interview • Climate survey • System of recognitions and rewards	• School values, acknowledges, and publicly celebrates academic success.	• School acknowledges and celebrates academic success.	• School exhibits some recognition of student success.	• School does not recognize or celebrate academic success.	
4. Safe and drug-free learning environments Evidence: • Policies and procedures • Minutes and participant lists from meetings • Documentation of safe and drug-free activities • Youth Risk Behavior Survey • Discipline and incident reports • Consolidated plan • Improvement plan/programs and strategies	• School facilitates and maintains safe, drug-free, and orderly environments conducive to learning through consistent implementation of all policies and procedures. • Environment is created through collaborative efforts with community, parents, educators, and students. • A plan is fully implemented.	• School facilitates safe and drug-free learning environments through consistent implementation of its policies and procedures. • Stakeholders are involved in the planning process. • A plan exists and is partially implemented.	• School inconsistently implements and enforces its policies and procedures for safe and drug-free learning environments. • School leadership develops policies and procedures, and they are shared with the stakeholders. • A plan exists, but is not implemented.	• There are no policies or procedures in place or enforced to provide a safe and drug-free environment. • No input from stakeholders is sought. • The school has not developed a plan.	•
5. Support for at-risk students Evidence:	• School promotes teaching and reinforcement of self-discipline and responsibility. • School policy and	• School promotes teaching and reinforcement of self-discipline and responsibility.	• School policy and procedure provide for referral of students with at-risk behaviors.	• There is no evidence of school policy and procedures regarding students with at-risk	

• Policies and procedures • Curriculum support for at-risk students • Youth Risk Behavior Survey • Prevention and after school programs • Discipline and incident reports • Consolidated plan • Climate survey	procedure provide for student assistance, counseling, and referral. • School has systemic policies and procedures for identification, prevention, and intervention of at-risk behaviors.	• School policy and procedure provide for student assistance, counseling, and referral.		behaviors.	
				Section Total:	

VII. BUDGET AND RESOURCES					
Criteria	4	3	2	1	*Points for Element*
1. School funding is targeted toward program improvement with emphasis on identified subgroups and grade levels Evidence: • Board budget policies • School budget documents • Observations and Interviews • School improvement plans	• The school examines student performance and achievement results in order to prioritize its use of resources. • The school has a long-term three to five year fiscal plan aligned with the district's fiscal plan that includes fiscal, facilities, technology, and human resources.	• The school examines student performance and achievement results in order to prioritize its use of resources.	• The school targets excess funds towards identified subgroups and grade levels according to student performance.	• School funds are randomly prioritized after fixed costs.	
2. Time Management Evidence: • School Professional Development Plan • School Improvement Plan • Calendars and scheduling procedures • School improvement meeting minutes	• School designs its time resources around school improvement, professional development, mentoring, common planning time, in ways that support teacher collaboration on increasing student academic achievement. • School makes timely expenditures of all federal, State, and local funds.	• School provides time for on-going, sustained work in school improvement, professional development, and, mentoring.	• School provides time for school improvement planning and professional development events.	• School allows school improvement planning and professional development events to occur only during teacher planning time or after school hours.	
3. School discretionary funding is focused on identified student achievement needs Evidence: • School Improvement plans	• School discretionary funding is embedded in the decision-making process in the three to five-year fiscal plan. • There is evidence of ongoing data analysis of student academic	• School discretionary funding is embedded in the decision-making process. • There is evidence of ongoing data analysis of student academic achievement as it relates to the school improvement	• School discretionary funding is embedded in the decision-making process.	• School discretionary funding is determined by the administration.	

• Expenditure history	achievement as it relates to the school improvement plan. • There is a systematic process to amend the fiscal plan as needed based on this analysis.	plan.			
4. Goals and objectives in the approved school improvement plan match budget priorities/expenditures Evidence: • School improvement plans • Expenditure history	• School discretionary funds are expended in a manner matched to the priorities set in the school's improvement plan.	• School discretionary funds are expended on materials and activities related to the school's improvement plan.	• School discretionary funds are expended based on teacher priorities.	• The school has no discretionary funds.	
				Section Total:	

VIII. PARENTS AND COMMUNITY					
Criteria	4	3	2	1	*Points for Element*
1. Parent / community council Evidence: • Council purpose and focus • Council membership list • Meeting agendas and participants • Observations / interviews	• The school has an active parent/community council that meets regularly, is involved in all aspects of school educational planning, and monitors the implementation of plans. • The school ensures the advisory council is comprised of individuals who represent or are knowledgeable of the various student subgroup characteristics and representatives of school	• The school has an active parent/community council involved in all aspects of school educational planning. • The school advisory council is comprised of individuals who represent or are knowledgeable of the various student subgroup characteristics and representatives of school community demographic groups. • The school advisory council	• The school has a functioning advisory council.	• There is no evidence that the school has an advisory council.	

	community demographic groups. • The school advisory council is involved in assessing student and budget priorities. • The school advisory council is involved in the implementation of the standards.	is involved in assessing student and budget priorities; • The school advisory council is involved in the implementation of the standards.			
2. Parent communication and involvement Evidence: • School parent involvement policy • Newsletters, notifications, and publications • Meeting agenda and participation documentation • School-wide and/or school improvement plans • Surveys • Observations / interviews	• The school has policies and procedures that maximize access to information and meaningful involvement for all parents relevant to student learning. • The school notifies, recruits, and involves all parents. • The school supports and encourages parent volunteerism in support of the learning process. • The school ensures frequent, continuous, and meaningful two-way communication with all parents in a language they most easily understand. • The school provides on-going training for all parents and uses a variety of means to actively engage parents in supporting student learning. • The school reports results of the evaluation of programs and plans to parents and seeks feedback from them.	• The school has policies and procedures that provide access to information and involvement opportunities for all parents. • The school notifies, recruits, and involves all parents. • The school supports parent volunteerism in schools and involvement in educational classroom activities. • The school ensures meaningful communication with parents. • The school provides training for parents to support student learning. • The school reports results of the evaluation of programs and plans to parents.	• The school notifies and involves parents. • The school allows parent involvement in schools. • The school communicates with parents.	• There is no evidence that the school encourages parent involvement or communicates with parents.	

3. Community communication and involvement Evidence: • School business partnerships • School community partnerships policy • Newsletters, notifications, and publications • Meeting agenda and participation documentation • School-wide and/or school improvement plans • Community volunteer logs • Observations / interviews	• The school has policies and procedures that maximize access to information and meaningful involvement for community members relevant to student learning. • The school notifies, recruits, and involves all community members in activities relevant to student learning. • The school supports and encourages community volunteerism in support of the learning process. • The school ensures frequent, continuous, and meaningful two-way communication with all community members in a language they most easily understand. • The school reports evaluation of programs and plans to the community and seeks feedback from them.	• The school has policies and procedures that provide access to information and involvement opportunities for local community members. • The school notifies, recruits, and involves community members. • The school supports community volunteerism. • The school ensures meaningful communication with the community.	• The school notifies community of opportunities for involvement. • The school allows community involvement in schools. • The school communicates with the local community.	• There is no evidence that the school encourages community involvement or communication.	
				Section Total:	
				Grand Total:	

APPENDIX C

South Dakota Department of Education

South Dakota's Implementation of the Priority Point system and Audit Tool

South Dakota is a State of 754,844 people. In the 2003-04 academic year, 172 public school districts served 123,058 students in grades K-12. Ethnic / racial diversity within the State is limited with K-12 enrollments showing approximately 85% White students, 10% Native American, and 1% each Hispanic, Black, and Asian students. Isolated districts and schools have a much more diverse student population than that reflected at the State level.

STAGE 1

Stage 1a: Data Analysis: using the AYP Achievement Metric

South Dakota will determine the priority points for both schools and districts (LEAs) but will use the information for different purposes. Districts are responsible for their own schools and will be encouraged to use the determined points to guide their technical assistance to schools in their district. Title I schools identified for school improvement are allocated school improvement funds. These allocations are dependent upon three factors: poverty, enrollment, and level of need. The last factor, level of need, will be based upon the priority point system. The district level priority points will be used by the SEA to guide technical assistance for identified districts.

Determination of Priority Points

Data used to calculate priority points were based upon results of the State test, Dakota STEP (State Test of Educational Progress) in reading and math for the 2003-04 school year. The 2003-04 school year was the second administration of the Dakota STEP test, an augmented SAT 10 test aligned with State academic standards and given to all students in grades 3 – 8 and 11. A total of 74,797 students were tested.

Step 1. Establish data table.

General information for each school and district such as name and identification numbers are needed for identification purposes. School improvement status for each school and district is also needed.

For Schools

- Alert (1 year no AYP)
- Level 1 (2 consecutive years no AYP or choice),
- Level 2 (supplemental services),
- Level 3 (corrective action),
- Level 4 (plan for restructuring), and
- Level 5 (implement restructuring plan).

For Districts

- Alert (1 year no AYP)

- Level 1 (2 consecutive years no AYP)
- Level 2, Level 3 (corrective action).

A school or district may be at different levels for each content area or other indicator. In this case, the higher level will be used in this calculation.

The following data table illustrates the information that is needed to run the calculations South Dakota used to determine its priority points for both districts and schools. The data listed must be gathered for each content area as well. A brief explanation of each data element follows:

- Reading or Math AMO – Annual Measurable Objective as defined in the accountability workbook for each subject and grade span (percent of students proficient and advanced).

AMO TARGET	K-8		9-12	
02-03, 03-04	Reading = 65%	Math = 45%	Reading = 50%	Math = 60%

- # FAY students – The number of students meeting the State's definition of Full Academic Year (FAY) was used to determine which student groups would be used in all of the calculations. Following the minimum *n* size as stated in the accountability workbook, student groups of less than ten were not included in some of the calculations.
- % Proficient & Advanced – Percent of FAY students meeting proficient or advanced performance levels. This Status Score is based on results of the State's reading and math test, Dakota STEP
- Made AYP for AMO (yes or no) – Did the student group make AYP by reaching the AMO target or by the use of the 99% confidence interval, safe harbor, or two-year averaging?
- Safe Harbor Target – The percent of students at the Basic and Below Basic performance levels needed to make the safe harbor goal of reducing the percent of students below proficiency for the prior year by 10%.
- Total # applicable cells – # cells where the number of students in the student group was equal or greater than the minimum *n* size of 10 (all, ethnic / racial, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, or LEP – Limited English Proficiency).

Complete for Each School / District Grade Span

Data Table				School Improvement Status =			
		Math AMO TARGET =			Reading AMO TARGET =		
	# FAY students	Math % Proficient & Advanced	Made AYP for MAMO	Math Safe Harbor Target	Reading % Proficient & Advanced	Made AYP for RAMO	Reading Safe Harbor Target
All							
White							
Black							

Hispanic							
NA							
Asian							
SWD							
EconD							
LEP							
Total # applicable cells =							

NA = Native American
EconD = Economically Disadvantaged
SWD = Students with Disabilities
LEP = Limited English Proficient

Step 1. Compute Distance from Goal (DFG).

The DFG (Distance from Goal) score was calculated by taking the actual status score (% proficient and advanced) minus the AMO target. This was computed for each student group (all, ethnic / racial, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged, or LEP – Limited English Proficiency) for both reading and math. There are nine DFG scores for reading (RDFG) and nine for math (MDFG). A negative number indicates that the status score is less than the AMO and poses a concern. A positive number indicates that the status score has exceeded the AMO. Two business rules were incorporated: (1) Student groups that make AYP cannot generate points, and (2) In cases where the AMO target is made but participation rate is not met, resulting in no AYP for that student group, the calculations reduce all positive DFG scores to zero. These business rules were developed so that the positive scores in one cell do not cancel out negative scores in another cell. Student groups that do not meet the minimum *n* size do not generate a DFG score.

Step 2. Calculate Status Index.

$$\frac{(\sum RDFG \div RAMO) + (\sum MDFG \div MAMO)}{\text{\# applicable cells}}$$

a. Add all Reading DFG (RDFG) scores and divide by the Reading AMO (RAMO).
b. Add all Math DFG (MDFG) scores and divide by the Math AMO (MAMO).
c. Add these two numbers together and divide by the number of applicable cells.
d. This will yield the Status Index.

Step 3. Compute Distance from Safe Harbor (DFSH).

The Distance from Safe Harbor (DFSH) score is derived by taking the status score (% students proficient and advanced) away from 100 to determine the percent of students below proficiency. This number is then subtracted from the Safe Harbor target (percent needed to make the safe harbor goal of reducing the percent of students below proficiency for the prior year by 10%). This must be computed for each student group (all ethnic / racial, students with disabilities,

economically disadvantaged, or LEP – Limited English Proficiency) for both reading and math. There are nine DFSH scores for reading (RDFSH) and nine for math (MDFSH). Student groups that make AYP cannot generate points. A negative number indicates that the current year's percent of student below proficiency has not been reduced sufficiently to meet the Safe Harbor target of a 10% reduction. A positive number indicates the current year's percent of student below proficiency is less than the Safe Harbor target and is a reflection of the positive growth in achievement of that student group. However, if a student group does not also make progress on the other academic indicator, credit for making AYP based on Safe Harbor cannot be granted. In cases where the Safe Harbor target is made but progress on the other academic indicator is not met, resulting in no AYP for that student group, the calculations reduce all positive DFSH scores to zero. Student groups that do not meet the minimum *n* size do not generate a DFSH score.

Step 4. Calculate the Safe Harbor Index.

$$\frac{(\sum RDFSH + \sum MDFSH) \div 10}{\text{\# applicable cells}}$$

a. Add all Reading DFSH (RDFSH) scores
b. Add all Math DFG (MDFSH) scores
c. Add these two sums together and divide by 10.
d. Divide by the number of applicable cells.
e. This will yield the Safe Harbor Index.

Step 5. Compute the Priority Point Score.

Add the Status Index and the Safe Harbor Index to determine the priority point score for each school and district.

Step 6. Rank order the schools or districts by the value of their Priority Point Score.

Schools and districts with the highest negative scores will be considered in greatest need.

Stage 1b: Preliminary Decision Point: Initial Determination of Level of Need

Step 1. Divide the list into quintiles and determine the school improvement status of each school.

The rank-order list for schools was divided into five semi-equal quintiles. The quintile of schools with the highest points were placed in Quintile 1 and those with the least points in Quintile 5. The number of schools in each quintile is dependent upon the total number of schools or districts under consideration. There are 59 Title I schools in improvement for 2004 so the quintiles contain 11 to 12 schools each. The school improvement status of each school in each quintile was noted. Title I feeder schools were given the same point totals of the schools they feed into and thus are placed in the same quintile. Schools that are in school improvement because of the

other indicator or missing participation rate only do not generate any points and therefore end up the bottom of the list and are placed in Quintile 5. The same is true for those schools in school improvement that make AYP. They do not generate points and are also in Quintile 5.

Step 2. Determine the number of schools in each cell of the matrix.

In order to place the school in the correct cell of the matrix, both the quintile and school improvement status must be considered. Once the quintile (column) and school improvement status (row) were determined for each school, the total number of schools was placed in the appropriate cells of the matrix.

Step 3. Develop Performance Descriptors for Levels of Need

Before assigning the levels of need, South Dakota developed the following performance descriptors to describe the general characteristics of the schools that would be placed in each level of need. The State also took into consideration the resources available to the Department of Education that could be tapped to provide assistance to schools and districts. Since limited resources are available, categories four and five were limited to a reasonable number of schools.

Levels of Need Performance Descriptors

Level 1 – includes schools with lowest priority point scores, which encompasses those schools who made AMO targets but missed participation rate or the other indicator only and schools that made AYP but are still in school improvement.
Level 2 – Includes schools in levels 1 and 2
Level 3 – Includes schools in levels 3 and 4 of school improvement
Level 4 – Includes schools in levels 1, 2, 3, and 4 generating the highest priority point scores.
Level 5 – Includes schools in level 4 of school improvement with the highest point totals.

Step 4. Set Cut Scores. Determine which cells will be included in each level of need.

At this point, the State must make a determination of which schools will be considered in greatest need of assistance and group them by level of need.

Beginning with the cell in the lower right hand corner of the matrix, determine which cells will be included in category five level of need. These cells include the schools with the highest point totals and the higher level of school improvement status. The matrix is color coded to denote the five levels of need established.

Priority Points for Title I Schools

In fall 2004, 59 Title I schools were identified for school improvement, ranging from Level 1 (choice) to Level 4 (planning for restructuring). Priority Points for these schools were determined, school rank ordered, and assigned to quintiles. The number of schools representing each cell in the matrix was determined and placed according to quintile (vertical) and SI status (horizontal) in the matrix.

DOE staff made the initial determination of level of need based upon the performance descriptors. The matrix was then presented to the Title I Committee of Practitioners for their consideration. The Committee requested one change in the matrix, asking that the school in quintile 4 but level 4 of school improvement be moved from the 3rd level of need to the 4th level of need, reflecting the seriousness of the restructuring sanction of school improvement. The change was made before presenting the information to DOE staff and administration for final approval. School improvement fund allocations under section 1003 of Title I Part A were calculated using the revised level of need.

Title I School Matrix 2004

Level of SI	5th Quintile	4th Quintile	3rd Quintile	2nd Quintile	1st Quintile
Total #	11	12	12	12	12
1	11	10	9	10	5
2		1	2	1	7
3			1		
4		1		1	
5					

**Color coding: Blue = Level 1, Green = Level 2, Yellow = Level 3, Orange = Level 4, and Red = Level 5*

SOUTH DAKOTA TITLE I SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ALLOCATION PROCESS

Title I schools identified for school improvement under Section 1116 Title I Part A are eligible to receive Title I School Improvement funds. The allocation formula takes three factors into consideration: poverty, enrollment, and level of need.

POVERTY

One half of the School Improvement funds are allocated to eligible schools based on the number of children eligible for the free and reduced price lunch program at each school. Each school is allocated funds based on its proportionate share of the total free and reduced price lunch count at eligible schools.

ENROLLMENT

One half of the School Improvement funds are allocated to eligible schools based on weighted school enrollment counts. Enrollment counts are weighted depending on each eligible school's "Level of Need." The "Level of Need" determination process is described below. The enrollments are weighted according to the factors in the following table:

LEVEL OF NEED	Weighting Factors
Level 1	1.00

Level 2	**1.25**
Level 3	**1.50**
Level 4	**1.75**
Level 5	**2.00**

The funds are allocated to eligible schools based on each school's proportionate share of the total weighted enrollment count for eligible schools.

GRANT MINIMUM AMOUNT
Minimum grant amounts have been set at $5000, and each eligible school will receive an allocation of at least $5000.

LEVEL OF NEED (Summarization of Stage 5b)
The level of need is computed using a formula developed by a study group within the Comprehensive Assessment Systems (CAS) SCASS project through CCSSO. This formula takes into account several factors including how far each student group's performance on the State test is from the AMO as well as the distance from each student group's target for making safe harbor provisions. The scores of these calculations are added together to derive the priority point score. Schools are then rank-ordered according to the priority point score. Schools that have generated the largest points, indicating that the student groups for which the school is accountable (groups that meet the minimum *n* size of 10), are performing the furthest from the goals.

The schools are then divided into quintiles with the highest point schools in quintile one. The school improvement status for each school is also noted. The number of schools in each quintile, separated by the level of school improvement, is placed on the matrix. A performance-standards setting process is then conducted, determining the level of need for each of the cells in the matrix. Schools in the fifth level of need are considered those with the highest need. Each school is then assigned a level of need that can be incorporated into the allocation formula for school improvement funds.

STAGE 2

Stage 2a: Data Analysis: Analysis of Other Considerations

Many of the factors have already been incorporated into the priority point calculations and consideration of the level of school improvement. However, there are additional factors that have not been accounted for up to this point and must be taken into consideration in determining level of need. Additional factors to consider in determining the level of need for schools or districts are as follows:

Schools

1. Performance on the other academic indicator (attendance for elementary and middle schools, graduation rate for high schools)
2. Trend data
3. Feeder school patterns

4. Participation Rate – 95% of students enrolled tested

Districts

1. The number of schools each district has in Alert or School Improvement status
2. The level of the schools in School Improvement (e.g., corrective action, restructuring)
3. Trend data
4. Participation Rate – 95% of students enrolled tested

Taking these factors into consideration, the State may choose to adjust the level of need determined by the priority points and cut score process. South Dakota did not adjust the level of need for its schools. School level audits are the responsibility of the district and the SEA is not going to be directly involved. The accountability workbook indicates in Element 1.6 that for all schools (Title I and non-Title I) in Level 4 of school improvement (restructuring) the "District will conduct a school audit, inform SEA of recommendations." Districts in this situation will use the audit contained in this tool with support from the SEA through the School Support Team.

District Priority

Because of a late change in the accountability workbook which allowed determining AYP for districts by grade span performance rather than one district score, the data needed to run the priority points for districts were not available in the fall. The five districts identified for district level improvement under the State's accountability system became the focus for the process for the year. hese districts are characterized as our larger districts with high Native American population, diversity, and poverty. Districts received their AYP and level improvement status until October 1st. The District Improvement Meeting was held on October 20th, at which time the audit tool was explained to the districts. One district (referenced as District A) volunteered for the audit as they had piloted the school level audit the prior spring for one of their schools that was in corrective action at the time. A second district (District B) agreed to the audit later in the year and a third district has agreed to an audit during the 2005-06 school year. As allowed under section 1116, a district may choose to decline the offer of technical assistance made by the SEA. One of the five districts sent a letter to the SEA stating that technical assistance from the State would not be needed at this time. The final district has not yet finalized the decision as to whether or not they will participate in the audit/technical assistance process.

The remainder of this State report will center on the desk audits and on-site reviews of Districts A and B.

Stage 2b: Desk Audit Conducted on Districts to Receive Intensive Assistance

The purpose of the desk audit conducted during Stage 2b is to learn as much as possible about the district from data available to the SEA. South Dakota piloted this audit in fall 2004. The following data sources were available within the Department of Education for South Dakota:

- Consolidated Application
- On-site monitoring report

- Assessment data
- NCLB Report Card
- Improvement Plans
- Personnel Record Form – teacher and staff data,
- Special Education data
- Safe and Drug Free data
- Child and Adult Nutrition (CANS) information
- Standards Implementation Survey
- Coordinated School Health Council
- Teacher Survey for training
- Reading First participation
- Curriculum Mapping participation
- Teacher Mentoring participation
- Anecdotal Data.

The SEA was responsible for gathering the documentation contained in these data sources for each of the two districts to receive an on-site review.

Rather than have SEA staff complete the desk audit, it was completed in conjunction with the training provided to the team members who would be conducting the on-site audit. (More information provided in stage 3a). This allowed the audit team members to become familiar with the audit rubric and to learn about the district. The facilitator assigned one element of the rubric to each team member. A tentative score and findings were recorded and the scored rubric with notes was turned in to the facilitator. Members documented the data source used to determine the score for each criterion.

Stage 2c: Data Analysis: Score and Identify Areas of Concern

The audit team who conducted the desk audit reported that the findings were inconclusive. There was not enough evidence available at the SEA level to draw a conclusion on any of the elements. Team members stated that the process may help the department learn more about its own data collection process. No district accreditation process is currently in place in South Dakota, information that would be critical in conducting a desk audit. The South Dakota Department of Education is looking at implementing an NCA (North Central Accreditation) model for all districts in the near future. This would alleviate the lack of information which ended the desk audit without being able to come to a conclusion about district performance in relation to each of the audit elements.

All involved in the district audit agreed it was a good course of action as it helped to orient reviewers to the district. Gaps in data were identified and the team requested additional documents from the district including curriculum guidelines, sample of report cards, NCA or other accreditation report (if available), policy for curriculum revision, and any survey results. These documents are available only from the district. Conducting the desk audit also helped to familiarize all team members with the data source documents. Depending upon current and past experience, some team members were very familiar with some of the documents while others had never seen a sample of some of the data elements. The more familiar the reviewers were with the documents, the quicker and easier the audit.

Stage 2d: Decision Point: Level of assistance

South Dakota skipped this stage during this pilot as desk audit data were not conclusive enough to provide the data to make this decision.

STAGE 3

District A

Stage 3a: Pre on-Site Visit Activities

Dr. Helen Jenkins, Institute for Educational Leadership & Evaluation, is a member of the School Support Team (SST) in South Dakota and was selected to facilitate the project through her SST contract. A team of six individuals were selected to serve on the audit team. The individuals had worked with the South Dakota Department of Education (SEA) previously or were assigned to the Education Service Area (ESA) that serves District A. The State Title I Director represented the SEA. The rest of the team consisted of two additional SST members and two persons from the ESA.

The team was trained on October 19, 2004 on the district audit tool. Participants in the audit training conducted by the facilitator included the five team members identified above as well as three additional persons, one from the SEA and two SST members. The agenda for the day started with an overview of the district audit tool and hands-on practice in using the rubric. Interview protocols were examined and roles of team members identified. Time for reflection on the day's events was provided. Participants were given the following materials for training: a binder with desk audit data sources compiled by the SEA; interview protocols designed by the facilitator (staff, school board, parent focus group, student focus group); and procedures for the on-site visit.

The facilitator presented the project overview and purpose. She explained each of the stages of the tool and then reviewed the rubric, noting each element and criteria. The scoring process was described and time was spent discussing scores of 2 and 3, specifically noting the difference. We found this to be a critical point; the score is a 2 unless all conditions of a 3 are met. Participants were then provided hands-on practice in using the rubric by conducting the desk audit. The facilitator assigned one element to each team member, based upon areas of expertise. Several hours were spent in completing this task. Tentative scores and initial findings were documented on the form, and scored rubrics with notes were then turned in to the facilitator for compilation.

Participants then engaged in a large group discussion as the facilitator presented information for each criterion. The scorer explained and justified their scores, indicating areas that could not be scored because of lack of evidence. Throughout the process, participants noted areas that needed to be looked at on-site and additional documentation to request of the district. Questionnaires were constructed to be used during staff interviews, the high school student focus group, the parent focus group, and board member interviews. Staff and board interview forms parallel the

rubric elements in format. Participants reviewed the draft protocols and gave input into the revision of the forms. Protocols will be revised again after the on-site visit pilot.

The training wrap-up included procedures for focus groups, the on-site itinerary, team member roles and assignments, rules for an on-site visit, logistics, and homework assignments. Team members were instructed to study the rubric and data sources. Additional data retrieved by the facilitator and the SEA would also have to be inspected.

The team and District A agreed to complete the on-site audit two weeks following the training and desk audit. The facilitator determined and notified the district of which schools in the district would be visited. Previous to arriving, two teachers from each building were randomly selected. The district was notified that one teacher from each building would be interviewed. The first name on the list would be the first choice. If a teacher chose not to be interviewed or was not available, team members would interview the second person. The interview protocols were not shared in advance with the district. In addition, the facilitator prepared an agenda for the 1½ days on-site. It was further requested of the school district to arrange a parent focus group in the afternoon of the first day, a student focus group with 12 high school students, and at least one board member interview.

Upon completion of the desk audit, the facilitator compiled the results and entered them into the District Audit Tool template. No scores were noted for the criteria or elements. The preliminary findings including comments and requests for additional data were sent to the superintendent and district personnel. The facilitator finalized the itinerary, prepared the field documents, and conducted ongoing communication with the LEA and on-site review team.

During this preparation time for the on-site review, the district was responsible for providing additional data to the audit facilitator and informing their schools of the upcoming visit. District personnel reviewed the audit tool with the preliminary findings which assisted them in assembling additional evidences and responses. The NCLB Coordinator for the SEA secured additional data from the department that was discovered after the desk audit.

Stage 3b: Conduct on-Site Visit

District A is situated on the Rosebud Sioux Indian Reservation in South Dakota and approximately 2000 students attend the nine elementary schools, middle school, and high school. The district audit was conducted November 3-4, 2004.

AGENDA for the On-site Visit

Day One

- Organizational meeting upon entering district
- School visits
- Community/Parent Focus Group
- Team meeting to enter data into the rubric

Day Two

- Board member interviews
- Additional data review
- Meeting with district leadership team

The organizational meeting began as the team met with the superintendent, the district school improvement coordinator, special education director, and the federal programs director in the morning of the first day (the district's curriculum and assessment director was not available due to prior commitments outside the district). This meeting allowed the facilitator and on-site review team to communicate the purpose of the visit as a process to help gather information for developing the technical assistance plan between the district and the SEA. This was to be a data gathering process with the ultimate goal of developing the plan. It was made clear that this was not a compliance visit or investigation. Once the purpose was clearly established, discussion turned to the schools that would be visited, all of which were in school improvement. District staff assisted in clarifying the location of each school and provided detailed directions. Since some of these schools are located in a very rural setting, the district made lunch arrangements for the reviewers at their perspective schools. Four schools in town were to be visited including the high school, middle school, and two elementary schools (K-3 and 4-5). Two outlying K-8 schools were to be reviewed. The teachers to be interviewed were discussed and the agenda and timelines were reviewed. At this point, the team was deployed and the actual review began.

The review team was divided during the site visit. Four elementary schools that are in school improvement were visited by three of the team members. One team member was assigned to the high school. Two team members were assigned to the middle school as it is in Level 4 of school improvement. Each team member met with the principals once on-site and the principal of each school conducted a general walk through of the building and participated in an interview. At that time, the teacher interview was held. Observations were then conducted in as many classrooms as possible. One team member returned to the district office following a school visit to interview district personnel.

Two focus group discussions were held, one with high school students and the other with parents. The principal selected the twelve students interviewed. Participants represented both genders and spanned the high school ages. The focus group protocol was used to conduct the one hour interview. A parent focus group discussion was held at the conclusion of the school day. Eight parents, all school employees (by choice, not selection) attended the meeting. It was noted that there was no district parent council established.

After the focus group with the parents, the team returned to another location to discuss the results of the first day's work. The team took time to debrief informally over dinner. A formal meeting was held in the evening, conferring on observations and data collection findings from the day. This process allowed one person to document the findings and add them to the desk audit findings. The facilitator led the discussion, criteria by criteria through the elements, collectively formulating audit results from observations and interviews. The team noted questions for further review the next morning when back on-site in the district.

The second day's time schedule allowed team members to interview board members and gather additional information. The district administrative team had a regular meeting scheduled and the

audit team was invited to attend. Attendees included all building principals, district office staff, and the superintendent. During this meeting, the facilitator verbally shared preliminary results of the on-site visit. Some feedback was provided by district staff and clarification given. At the close of the meeting, the audit team met briefly to talk about next steps and additional assignments.

Stage 3c: Decision Point

After the on-site was completed, team members conducted an additional teacher interview to outlying schools by phone call. This was completed within a one-week timeframe and results of the interview submitted to the facilitator. Team members scored the rubric individually and sent completed rubric to facilitator. This allowed more time to review the data and independent scoring. The team negotiated discrepancies in scores by email. One overall score for the district per element and criteria was computed.

Within two weeks of the on-site visit, a draft version of the findings were submitted to the district administration. Staff went through the completed rubric and identified technical assistance they would like. This gave the LEA time to process the findings and have internal discussion. The State NCLB Coordinator contacted the district school improvement coordinator to set the date and time of a meeting with district staff to discuss technical assistance required to meet the deficiencies identified through the on-site review. The district was asked to provide a summary of the results of the district data retreat held to analyze student achievement and other data at the district level.

Stage 3d: Evaluation of the Process

Several opportunities for informal feedback about the on-site review were provided to the district, one being the second day of on-site when the audit team met with the district leadership team. The second opportunity for feedback was during the discussion or audit results during the DOE visit to determine technical assistance needs. A formal survey to offer a time of reflection and capture feedback was not developed but is recommended. This survey protocol should be developed for completion by both the LEA and the audit team to provide information to the SEA in order to further refine the process.

Lessons Learned

Because of the infancy of the District Audit Tool in South Dakota, many lessons were learned of the process. Some of the strengths of the process used include the following:

- The team membership included individuals with a variety of educational experience ranging from preschool to administration. No individual on the team had a direct connection to the school district
- The District Audit Tool was comprehensive and looked at all facets of education from district policies to community involvement.

- The design of the audit tool includes not only a score but also data sources and findings. This suggests that there should be multiple data sources and justification of the scores.
- Other States provided samples of interview questions that assisted the team in developing protocols and questions for the interviews and focus groups.
- The District Audit Tool made it feasible to divide the responsibilities between team members.
- The team was communicating consistently with the district.
- Teachers were randomly selected for interviewing.
- The student focus group contained students who had attended school in the district for more than two years.

South Dakota school districts have some unique characteristics. Some of the areas identified in need of improvement may be unique to South Dakota districts. These areas include the following:

- Terminology in the audit tool needs to be defined so that all team members have the same understanding of the concepts.
- During the training, team members should practice interviewing so there is consistency across all interviews.
- Although the teachers were randomly selected, the administration should be provided with an opportunity to review the names and identify other teachers to interview.
- The rationale for the inclusion of each component of the rubric should be shared with the district prior to the audit.
- An interview protocol should be developed for district level administration.
- The time allotted for the desk audit should be a total of 8-16 hours. The time for the on-site audit should be a minimum of 16 hours to 40 hours, depending on the number of buildings and the square mileage of the district.

STAGE 4

Stage 4a: Set priorities for Technical Assistance Plan

Approximately one month after the on-site visit, the NCLB Coordinator again visited the district to meet with district staff. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the results of the audit and determine possible topics for the technical assistance plan. The State NCLB Coordinator, who is responsible for school improvement, facilitated the discussion. District staff who participated in the meeting included the school improvement coordinator, special education director, curriculum and assessment director, federal programs director, and the superintendent. One of the ESA persons working with the district was also in attendance. However, the audit facilitator was unavailable for the meeting.

Resources for discussion included:

- the completed audit tool
- a summary document based on the audit tool
- the rubric report
- the district's team notes from their audit results review
- a list of technical assistance needs identified by the district
- the results of the district Data Retreat (includes local assessments and other data sources)
- the district's NCLB Report Card

The NCLB Coordinator presented an agenda to guide the process of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was clarified with sites toward the overall goal of developing a technical assistance plan between SEA & LEA. Defining technical assistance was also important to the participants of the meeting. Discussion concluded that it is more than SST helping develop an improvement plan; it has to do with access to resources and calls for collaboration between the district and the SEA. The difference between technical assistance and professional development was also discussed. District staff also made it clear that efficiency was of utmost importance to them. Programs, strategies, and solutions offered through the technical assistance plan must not only be of high quality and research based but also must be efficient in serving the needs of the district.

Participants went through the rubric, criteria by criteria, reading through the rubrics and discussing the meaning of each rubric criteria. The findings were read and the relationship to the rubric and score discussed. Feedback on the rubric was provided throughout the process. The group developed a list of technical assistance needs (issues/concerns) as the rubric was discussed. By the end of the meeting, topics to research for the technical assistance plan had been identified, most related to the rubrics, some identified through the data retreat, and one based on background knowledge of the district.

Topics identified are listed below by relationship to rubric elements.

Leadership

- Support for Administrative professional development
- Exemplar policies and procedures
- Protocols for decision-making that are efficient
- Monitoring process that is efficient

Academic Standards

- Systemic strategy to communicate expectations and standards
- Support for implementation and understanding of the elementary report card (standards based)
- How do we assist teachers shift from traditional grading to standards based, especially MS and HS?

Curriculum & Instruction

- Process for leadership team to support implementation of the curriculum

- How to assure access to grade level instruction, use of performance descriptors, HS course descriptions needed

Professional Development

- Further discussion needed about SBR on long range PD plan
- Evaluation of PD, beyond link to State assessment results, exemplars
- Teacher issues—restructuring of schools, requiring PD, quality issues vs. HQT

Issues from Data Retreat

- Assistance with changing student data system to use State system, better access and use of data, and accuracy for accountability
- Student Groups
- Students with Disabilities
- LEP
- ESL specific to needs of Native American LEP students

Knowing the District

- Early Childhood Support

District B

Stages 3 and 4a were also completed for District B. The process described for District A was generally followed for District B. The following report completed by the audit facilitator provides brief information about the on-site audit.

On February 28 and March 1, 2005, an on-site audit was completed for the District B. The four schools were visited by one of five individuals conducting the audit. The team members interviewed two staff and the principal at each building. Due to the fact that it was parent-teacher conferences, the team members did not observe students in the classrooms. One team member interviewed personnel at the district level. Two student focus groups were conducted at two of the schools. Parents and caregivers were provided a questionnaire to complete at the conclusion of a two-day parent conference.

The findings posted in the audit tool are a sampling of the occurrences and nuances of the schools and the district. Further analysis of the areas would provide more in-depth information regarding the district's capacity to address students' needs. However, the findings from this audit can assist district administration in identifying areas to focus on for improvement.

Areas of Improvement (scores of 1 or 2) to be considered include the following:

Leadership

- Policies and procedures
- Monitoring

Professional Development

- Identified needs
- Professional development based on scientifically based research strategies

- District-wide Professional Development Plan using scientifically based research methodologies
- Use assessment data to evaluate impact of professional development

Assessment and Accountability

- Quality assessments aligned to State content and achievement standards (waiting for further documentation)
- Use of reports

School Culture and Climate

- High expectations of students
- High expectations of teachers
- Safe & Drug Free learning environments

Budget and Resources

- Monitoring Budget Priorities

Parents and Community

- Parent communication
- Community communication and involvement

Stage 4b: Formulating the District Technical Assistance Plan

The next step was for the SEA to organize a research team to investigate the possible solutions for the topics identified for inclusion in the technical assistance plan. Because of limited staff and time, it was determined that the SEA did not have the capacity to tackle such a challenge. The South Dakota DOE contracted with McREL (Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory) located in Denver, Colorado to conduct the necessary investigation of research based and exemplar practices for all criteria within all elements. This report has been submitted to the South Dakota DOE, and efforts will be made during early 2006 to develop the technical assistance plan with the district.

Conclusion

While the process is slow in initial implementation, great strides have been made in meeting the requirements for technical assistance for improving schools and districts in the State. This tool has been very useful and well received within the State as credible and as objective as possible. Capacity in States to do this work is limited by availability of staff, time, and funds. Focusing technical assistance is both necessary and recommended.

APPENDIX D

Wyoming Department of Education
Wyoming's Implementation of the Priority Point system and Audit Tool

BACKGROUND

Wyoming is a small populated, rural State with 48 districts containing 431 schools. The majority of the districts are rural with one or two schools per grade span. There are 7 districts located in the cities with larger student populations. Wyoming established a baseline for accountability purposes using its 2001-02 assessment results. Schools districts that do not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) are designated as High Priority for the purposes of providing technical assistance. One district and 29 schools were designated as High Priority for 2004. Of the 29 schools, 11 missed only the Other Indicator and did not miss AYP targets in content areas. Eighteen schools missed the targets in content areas and are included in the Priority Point application.

In the 2003-04 school year the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) implemented its Statewide Support Teams to assist the schools and districts that did not make AYP for the first year. Wyoming established five (5) demographic regions and assigned a school improvement consultant for each region. These consultants worked in coordination with the North Central Association (NCA) Regional Representatives. The technical assistance for schools and districts was organized into 5 phases. Phases 1 and 2 were regional meetings while Phases 3 and 4 were on-site reviews. Phase 5 involves the evaluation, feedback, and next steps.

Wyoming will use the district desk audit rubric with the one district that is in district improvement. WDE technical assistance team staff members will complete the desk audit. At the same time district will complete a needs assessment that correlates to the components in the district desk audit rubric. The district audit tool will also be available for districts that did not make AYP in a particular grade span but made overall AYP.

Results from the district desk audit will be analyzed alongside the results from the needs assessment. The purpose of using both tools together is to isolate common areas of concern as part of the on-site technical assistance visit. Other data that can be linked for common areas of concern include the evaluation of the district's NCA School Improvement Plan, the district technology plan, and the district staff development plan.

The school level desk audit tool will be made available to the districts to use with the 18 High Priority schools and will receive assistance from the State support teams (see Distribution Chart on Technical Assistance). This will identify with greater validity the priority areas of focus for school improvement planning, and help districts work with the State teams to support schools. Districts with schools that missed only the additional indicator will be included in Phases 1, 2, and 5 of the State support team technical assistance

ADDITIONAL USES OF THE TRIAGE TOOL

In addition to using the Priority Point system to determine technical assistance, the point ranking will be considered when determining the level of district funding for Title I School Improvement Funds awarded under NCLB Section 1003.

Wyoming Priority Points Tables

Wyoming Priority Point Table				
School	RDFG/ AMO	MDFG/ AMO	#Applicable Cells	Status Index
1. FWE0701	.574	.519	2	.546
2. WIHS0755	.562	.501	2	.531
3. AE0701	.598	.396	2	.497
4. WIE0701	3.15	2.638	16	.361
5. WIMS0750	3.013	2.234	14	.333
6. HE0403	.507	.349	2	.253
7. KWHS1355	1.339	1.573	16	.182
8. NCHS1357	.874	1.34	14	.158
9. THS1157		.840	6	.140
10. JJHS1151	1.085	1.062	20	.107
11. DMJH1351	.826	.847	16	.104
12. MVE0403		.161	2	.080
13. CJHS1150	.831	.619	20	.072
14. EHS1156	.534	.666	20	.060
15. RHS1358	.014	.425	8	.054
16. LJHS0150	.524		16	.032
17. GE1308	.065		2	.032
18. AE1102		.154	8	.019

Wyoming Priority Point Table					
School	RDFG/ AMO	MDFG/ AMO	#Applicable Cells	Status Index	Years Not Making AYP
5th Quintile					
1. FWE0701	.574	.519	2	.546	2
2. WIHS0755	.562	.501	2	.531	2
3. AE0701	.598	.396	2	.497	2
4th Quintile					
4. WIE0701	3.150	2.638	16	.361	2
5. WIMS0750	3.013	2.234	14	.333	2
3rd Quintile					
6. HE0403	.507	.349	2	.253	1
2nd Quintile					
7. KWHS1355	1.339	1.573	16	.182	2
8. NCHS1357	.874	1.34	14	.158	2
9. THS1157		.840	6	.140	2
10. JJHS1151	1.085	1.062	20	.107	2
11. DMJH1351	.826	.847	16	.104	2
1st Quintile					
12. MVE0403		.161	2	.080	1
13. CJHS1150	.831	.619	20	.072	2
14. EHS1156	.534	.666	20	.060	1
15. RHS1358	.014	.425	8	.054	1
16. LJHS0150	.524		16	.032	2
17. GE1308	.065		2	.032	1
18. AE1102		.154	8	.019	1

Distribution Chart for Technical Assistance					
Level of Need	1st Quintile Highest Index Range Score	2nd Quintile	3rd Quintile	4th Quintile	5th Quintile Lowest Index Range Score
1 Not Making AYP (1st year)	MVE0403 EHS1156 RHS1358 GE1308 AE1102		HE0403		
2 In School Improvement (2nd year not making AYP)	CJHS1150 LJHS0150	KWHS1355 NCHS1357 THS1157 JJHS1151 DMJH1351		WIE0701 WIMS0750	FWE0701 WIH0755 AE0701
3 In Corrective Action					
4 In Restructuring (1st year)					
5 In Restructuring (2nd year)					

Application of Color Ranges

The five schools in the green color range will receive the most intense on-site technical assistance from the statewide support team. That will include all five phases of State technical assistance (see Background Narrative). Those include schools in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th quintile but are in the second year of not making AYP. They have not made AYP in several subgroup and content areas.

The eight schools that are in the blue color range will have the opportunity to participate in phases 1, 2, and 5 of State technical assistance. Those schools have larger *n* sizes are accountable for more cells; yet, they need to focus on both content areas.

The five schools in the yellow color range will be supported through consultation and Phase 1 of State technical assistance and other State funded professional development opportunities. They have higher percent proficient scores and are closer to the targets or, have not made AYP only one subgroup.

Results from Initial Use of the District Audit Tool

Wyoming used the District Audit tool with the only district that was designated as In Need of Improvement status for 2003-04. The district was located in the fifth quintile and was scored in each of the sections of the Audit Tool.

Stage 2A: Data Analysis: Analysis of Other Considerations

The Other Indicator for Elementary and Middle Schools in Wyoming was a reduction in the percentage of Below Basic students in reading. The other Indicator in High Schools was an increase in the graduation rate or a graduation rate of 80% or higher. The State assessments were given in grades 4, 8, and 11.

The Desk Audit Tool was scored by the Regional State School Improvement Technical Assistance Team (SITAT) member and the State Assessment and Accountability Coordinator. Resources obtained at the State level and from previous on-site visits were considered.

The identified district was on a reservation with no dramatic changes in demographics. The district missed AYP in all three grade levels in both reading and mathematics in the All Student category and in the Native American, LEP, and Free and Reduced Lunch subgroups.

Stages 2B and C: Desk Audit Tool and Rubric

The primary sources of information for each criterion were as follows:

Leadership – NCA Plan, District Professional Development Plan, consolidated Grant Plan, District Monitoring Report

Standards – Curriculum alignment Matrix, District Assessment Plan

Curriculum and Instruction – Teacher Certification List, District Staff Development Plan, Technology Plan

Highly-Qualified Teachers – Consolidated Grant Title II Section, Teacher Certification List

Professional Development – NCA School Plans, District Professional Development Plan, Participation in State staff development initiatives

Assessment and Accountability – District Assessment Plans, Title III Reports, District Report Card

School Culture and Climate – Consolidated Grant Monitoring Instrument, NCA School Plans

Budget and Resources – Maintenance of Effort Reports, consolidated Grant application

Parent and Community – NCA Annual Reports, District Report Card

Stage 2D: Decision Point for Level of Assistance

While many criteria areas were scored as "meets," the only area where the district scored as an area of concern was Budget and Resources. It was determined that more on-site information was needed on how district resources were aligned to the school improvement goals.

The district submitted its District Improvement Plan to the State in November, 2004. The SITAT consultant continued to work with the district throughout 2004 in that and other identified areas, along with the Regional NCA Representative. The district also participated in all five phases of technical assistance.

In the 2004-05 school year, the district made AYP. The Elementary school did not make AYP in the mathematics content area.

The District Audit Tool will continue to be made available for districts to use with their schools. The Audit Tool is only one of several ways the State assistance teams may work with Wyoming districts. The SITAT member and the NCA Regional Representatives work together with schools and districts.

Wyoming is also working to help districts combine or bring together the different district and/or school plans, such as the NCA Action Plan, the District Technology Plan, the District Professional Development Plan, and the plans in various grant applications in order to better consolidate the efforts of the district and schools in determining their needs. The District Audit Tool can be helpful to districts in analyzing how to better bring together these different plans.

APPENDIX E

West Virginia Department of Education

West Virginia's Implementation of the Priority Point system and Audit Tool

In 2004, the West Virginia Title I Program used the Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS) audit tool to determine the level of assistance provided program schools. All 376 West Virginia Title I schools were ranked from highest to lowest using the priority points procedure. All Title I schools were used because the priority points procedure was to be used to determine high-performing schools as well as to determine level of technical assistance needed for low-performing schools. The schools were then divided into quintiles.

Quintile 5 is the highest performing quintile; quintile 1 is the lowest performing group of Title I schools.

	Quintile 5	Quintile 4	Quintile 3	Quintile 2	Quintile 1
Total number of schools	75	75	76	75	75
Schools not identified for improvement	74	70	62	51	39
Schools not making AYP for one year		2	6	9	24
Schools not making AYP for 2 years	1	3	7	12	11
Schools not making AYP for 3 years			1	3	
Schools not making AYP for 4 years					1

Green Level (low need) – The green level contained recognized distinguished Title I schools as well as schools that required only external supervision and arms-length

support because the capacity of the district to support improvement in their schools is evident.

Yellow Level (moderate need) – The yellow group required limited but specific assistance to improve the performance of specific subgroups in their district. Although capacity for support and improvement,

Orange Level (high need) – The orange group needed more direct assistance from the district in assisting schools as the barriers to increased student achievement needed to addressed to prevent further identification for improvement.

Red Level (intensive need) – Schools in the red level received direct assistance in reviewing school performance and developing plans of improvement. In addition, these schools received specific school improvement funding to address the identified needs.

State Performance Audits

The West Virginia Office of Education Performance Audits (OEPA) makes on-site visits to State schools and or districts identified for academic or performance need. The OEPA provides reports to the State Board of Education for each school or district reviewed. Identified needs must be addressed in improvement plans with specific benchmarks and timelines.

State Technical Assistance

Beginning in 2003, each West Virginia school district identified a district/school support team. Each district team received two years of intensive on-going training in high yield research-based strategies for school and district improvement. The West Virginia *Framework for High Performing School Systems* is available online at the West Virginia Department of Education website. Utilizing the latest research available, the State has further developed frameworks for high-performing schools and high-performing classrooms. In 2005, West Virginia required the completion of an on-line five-year strategic plan for all school districts and schools which includes the development of core beliefs, needs assessment, improvement goals, objectives, action steps including high-yield research-based strategies, sustained researched-based professional development, and aligned budgets. The State Department of Education provides technical assistance to districts and schools identified for improvement. In addition, Title I schools and districts identified for improvement receive direct technical assistance from the State Title I Office in the revision of school and district plans to target resources, programs and professional development to identifies areas of needed improvement.

APPENDIX F

Sample Interview Protocols for On-site Visits

BOARD INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Date of Interview:_____ Name of Interviewer:_____

Number of years on the school board:_____

1. Explain the following concerning budgeting.

   a. What process does the board use to prioritize budget decisions.

   b. What data do you use to help shape those decisions?

2. How does the board ensure all teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators receive training to assist all students in meeting high standards?

3. How do you know how well the students at each school are doing in meeting the school improvement goals?

4. How are teachers assigned to the various schools?

5. How does the district integrate the application of technology into teaching and learning?

6. Cite examples of actions the board has taken as a result of analyzing student achievement in the district.

7. Walk us through the process you used to make a decision regarding a major project in the last two years.

8. How does the board ensure content standards are taught to all students?

9. Describe how parents and community members are involved in education in the district.

PARENT/GUARDIAN AND COMMUNITY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Protocol for Focus Group Facilitator(s)

1. Prior to beginning the focus group, ensure the participants that there is a sign-in sheet that allows participants to identify which school they represent. No names are necessary, only the name of the school.

2. Explain the ground rules:
   - No names are used.
   - Respect the ideas of one another.
   - Information that is shared in the focus group will only be expressed in the report.
   - Allow everyone the opportunity to share.

3. Allow enough time for responses. Use the 10-second rule if necessary.

4. Document all responses on chart paper so participants know exactly what you are recording.

Questions

1. How were you selected to participate in this interview?

2. Respond to the following about school climate?
   a. Have you ever participated in a school climate survey?
   b. If so, when?
   c. Have you seen the results?

3. Provide examples of volunteerism in your schools.

4. Does the district and/or school provide trainings, workshops or courses to help you as parents better understand the school and/or your child's education?

5. How are parents involved in planning educational programs for their children?

6. How are the parents and/or community involved in aligning student performance standards?

7. Other than your student's report card, how are you notified about your student's progress in meeting the standards?

8. When your child does not understand the assignment, finishes work early, or is bored, what does the teacher or school do?

9. Do special education students participate in district-wide or State assessments?

10. Are you familiar with the goals of the school or district improvement plan? Can you name the goals?

11. Did parents and/or community have input in developing the school improvement plan or setting the goals?

12. How are you notified about school and district events or advisories/committees?

13. Do you feel appreciated for your efforts in the schools? How is appreciation/recognition demonstrated?

14. How do the schools provide for transitions (e.g., special education, Title I, preschool to elementary school; elementary to junior high; junior high to high school; or high school to post-secondary)?

15. Cite examples of any programs provided for students experiencing problems or trouble in school.

16. Identify any established groups/councils/committees at the school or district level on which parents/community participate. What is the focus of each group?

17. Are you or other parents in this school involved in determining priorities and needs, including budget priorities?

18. Do you believe that teachers and administrators demonstrate to the best of their ability the level of leadership you expect in a school and/or district?

19. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your school or district?

STAFF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

School/District:_____Interviewer:_____Date:_____

Position:_____

Years Experience:_____Type of Certificate:_____

Non-Instructional Duties:_____

Planning Period:_____

A. Leadership

1. Describe the district's vision and mission.

2. How are you informed of district decisions? Are you able to provide input?

B. Content and Achievement Standards

3. How does the district provide information and support about content and achievement standards?

C. Curriculum

4. How do you document that teaching the standards has taken place?

5. How are student achievement results reported (such as report cards) to parents/guardians?

6. What measures has the district taken to help teachers align instruction with the content and achievement standards?

7. Are all students taught to grade level expectations?

8. What types of scientifically-based research (SBR) materials or strategies do you use in your classroom?

D. Highly-Qualified Staff

9. Do you meet the State's requirements for High Qualified Teacher / Qualified Paraprofessional? If not, what is the district doing to help you attain this status?

10. How are teachers assigned to classes, classrooms, and schools?

11. Are administrators qualified for their positions and how are they assigned to schools?

E. Professional Development

12. What professional development activities have you participated in over the last two years related to the following?

    a. Leadership

    b. Standards

    c. Scientifically-Based Research (SBR)

    d. Professional development designed to meet your individual needs

13. What process exists for selecting or approving professional development for the district, school, and individual teachers?

14. What type of professional development does the district offer (e.g., coaching, mentoring, book talks)?

F. Assessment and Accountability

15. What district and/or classroom assessments do you use? How do you use the results?

16. Describe district and school curriculum planning.

17. Have you seen the State assessment results for your students?

    a. When do you receive them?

    b. How do you use that information?

    c. Describe how parents/guardians receive this same information (including developmental issues for Pre-K through Grade 2).

18. How and when does your district provide you with the accountability results (e.g., graduation rates, participation rates, AYP results found in the NCLB Report Card)?

19. What assistance has the district provided to help you use the assessment and accountability results to improve teaching and learning?

G. School Climate and Culture

20. What additional support is available for students most in need (e.g., as a result of academic and other risk factors)?

21. How does the district celebrate academic success?

H. Budget

22. How does the district provide the materials, time, and personnel to reach district and school goals?

I. <u>Parental and Community</u>

23. How are parents involved in district decisions and monitoring implementation of district plans?

24. How are parents/guardians of students in your classroom provided training and the opportunity to participate in their child's education?

J. <u>General</u>

25. What barriers, if any, are there to prevent you from moving forward with education reform?

APPENDIX G

Bibliography

Abedi, J. (2001). *Validity of accommodations for English language learners*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, WA.

Abedi, J., Lord, C., Hofstetter, C., & Baker, E. (2000). Impact of accommodation strategies on English language learners' test performance. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practices, 19*(3), 16-26.

Acquarelli, K., & Mumme, J. A. (1996). Renaissance in mathematics education reform. *Phi Delta Kappan, 77*, 478-484.

Almond, P., Crawford, L., Glasgow, A., Hollenbeck, K., McDonald, M., Tedesco, M., & Tindal, G. (2003). Alternate assessments in reading and math: Development and validation for students with significant disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 69*(4), 481-494.

Almond, P., Harniss, M., Heath, B., Hollenbeck, K., & Tindal, G. (1998). Accommodating students with disabilities on large-scale tests: An experimental study. *Exceptional Children, 64*(4), 439-450.

Almond, P., Hollenbeck, K, & Tindal, G. (1998). Teachers' knowledge of accommodations as a validity issue in high-stakes testing. *Journal of Special Education, 32*(3), 175-183.

Ascher, C. (1994). *Gaining control of violence in the schools: A view from the field* (ERIC Digest No. 100). New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education.

Balli, S. J., Demo, D. H., & Wedman, J. F. (1998). Family involvement with children's homework: An intervention in the middle grades. *Family Relations, 47*(2), 149–157.

Bass, K. M., & Glaser, R. (2004). *Developing assessments to inform teaching and learning*. (CSE Technical Report No. 628). Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles, Center for the Study of Evaluation. Retrieved May 10, 2004: http://cresst96.cse.ucla.edu/products/reports_set.htm

Bauch, J. P. (1994). Categories of parent involvement. *The School Community Journal, 4*(1), 53-61.

Berman, P., & Chambliss, D. (2000). *Readiness of low-performing schools for comprehensive reform.* Emeryville, CA: RPP International, High Performance Learning Community Project. Retrieved August 20, 2002: http://www.ed.gov/gearup/HPLCreadiness.pdf

Bernhardt, V. L. (1998). *Data analysis for comprehensive schoolwide improvement*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Berry, B. (2004). Recruiting and retaining "highly qualified teachers" for hard-to-staff schools. *NASSP Bulletin, 87*, 683. Retrieved May 13, 2004: http://www.nassp.org/publications/bulletin/bltn_0304_berry.cfm

Beswick, R. (1990). *Evaluating educational programs*. (ERIC Digest Series No. EA 54). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

Betts, J. R., & Grogger, J. (2003). The impact of grading standards on student achievement, educational attainment, and entry-level earnings. *Economics of Education Review, 22*(4), 323-352.

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (1998, October). Inside the black box: Raising standards through classroom assessment. *Phi Delta Kappan 80*(2), 139-148.

Boyd, V., & Hord, S.M. (1995). Professional development fuels a culture of continuous improvement. *Journal of Staff Development, 16*(1), 10-15.

Briars, D.J., & Resnick, L.B. (2000). *Standards, assessments—and what else? The essential elements of standards-based school improvement* (CSE Technical Report No. 528). Los Angeles: Center for the Study of Evaluation. Retrieved May 10, 2004: http://cresst96.cse.ucla.edu/CRESST/Reports/TECH528.pdf

Bruno, J. E., & Negrete, E. (1983). Analysis of wage incentive programs for promoting staff stability in a large urban school district. *The Urban Review, 15*(3), 139-149.

Burns, R. (2001). *Curriculum renewal: Curriculum mapping.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Cambone, J. (1995). Time for teachers in school restructuring. *Teachers College Record, 96*(3), 512-43.

Cantor, D., Crosse, S., Hagen, C. A., Mason, M. J., Siler, A. J., & von Glatz, A. (2002). *A closer look at drug and violence prevention efforts in American schools*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service.

Catalano, R. F., Loeber, R., & McKinney, K. C. (1999). School and community interventions to prevent serious and violent offending. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*, 1-12.

Cawelti, G., & Protheroe, N. (2001). *High student achievement: How six school districts changed into high performance systems.* Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Cheng, Y. C. (1993). Profiles of organizational culture and effective schools. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 4*(2), 85-110.

Cicchinelli, L. F., & Barley, Z. (1999). *Evaluating for success. Comprehensive school reform: An evaluation guide for districts and schools.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED436589)

Clark, R. (1983). *Family life and school achievement. Why poor black children succeed or fail.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cohen, D. K., & Hill, H. C. (1998). *Instructional policy and classroom performance: The mathematics reform in California.* Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education.

Collias, K., Pajak, E., & Rigden, D. (2000). *One cannot teach what one does not know: Training teachers in the United States who know their subjects and know how to teach their subjects*. Retrieved May 12, 2004: http://www.c-b-e.org/PDF/OneCannotTeach.pdf

Collins, T. (1999) *Attracting and retaining teachers in rural areas* (ERIC Digest). Charleston, WV: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Committee for Economic Development. (1994). *Putting learning first: Governing and managing the schools for high achievement.* (Position paper by the Research and Policy Committee of the CED). New York: Author.

Committee for Economic Development. (2004). *Investing in learning: School funding policies to foster high performance.* Washington, DC: Author.

Conley, D. T. (1996). *Are you ready to restructure? A guidebook for educators, parents, and community members*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Cororan, T. C. (1995). *Transforming professional development for teachers: A guide for state policymakers.* Washington, DC: National Governor's Association.

Corcoran, R., Walker, L. J., & White, J. L. (1988). *Working in urban schools*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.

Corallo, C., & McDonald, D. H. (2002). *What works with low performing schools: A review of research.* Charleston, WV: Appalachian Educational Authority (AEL).

Crosse, S., Burr, M., Cantor, D., Hagen, C.A., & Hantman, I. (2002). *Wide scope, questionable quality: Drug and violence prevention efforts in American schools*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service.

Crowell, R., & Tissot, P. (1986). *Curriculum alignment*. Elmhurst, IL: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

D'Amico, J. J. (2000). *How on earth did you hear about us? A study of exemplary rural school practice in the upper Midwest.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). Restructuring schools for student success. In A. H. Halsey, H. Lauder, P. Brown, & A. S. Wells (Eds.), *Education: Culture, economy, and society.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 8*, 1. Retrieved May 12, 2004: http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v8n1/

Dass, P., & Yager, R. (1997). *Iowa Chautauqua Program final performance report.* Iowa City: University of Iowa.

Davies, D. (1991). Schools reaching out: Family, school, and community partnerships for student success. *Phi Delta Kappan, 72*(5), 376-380.

Deal, T. E., & Peterson, K. D. (1990). *The principal's role in shaping school culture.* Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Deal, T. E., & Peterson, K. D. (1999). *Shaping school culture: The heart of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

deMarrais, K. B., & LeCompte, M. D. (1999). *The way schools work: A sociological analysis of education.* New York: Longman.

DeStefano, L., & Prestine, N. (2002). *Evaluation of the implementation of Illinois Learning Standards: Year four report.* Springfield, IL: Illinois State Board of Education. Retrieved April 24, 2003: http://www.isbe.net/board/meetings/ sept02meeting/ilssumrecom.pdf

Doll, R. C. (1969). *Variations among inner city elementary schools.* Kansas City: University of Missouri, Kansas City School of Education.

Doyle, R., Tetzloff, P., & Renze, P. (1993, April). *Praises and nudges: A case of district-wide change.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, GA.

Drake, S. M., & Burns, R. C. (2004). *Meeting standards through integrated curriculum.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Drury, D., & Levin, D. (1994). *School-based management: The changing locus of control in American public education.* Report prepared for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education

Education Commission of the States. (1996). *Lessons learned: How collaboration contributes to school improvement.* Denver: Author.

Educational Research Service. (2000). *The principal, keystone of a high achieving school: Attracting and keeping the leaders we need.* Washington, DC: National Association of Elementary School Principals and National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Elmore, R. (2000). *Building a structure for school leadership*. New York: The Albert Shanker Institute.

Elmore, R., & Abelmann, C. (1999). *When accountability knocks, will anyone answer?* Philadelphia: Center for Policy Research in Education.

Elmore, R. F., & Rothman, R. (1999). *Testing, teaching, and learning: A guide for states and school districts.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

English. F. (1980). Curriculum mapping. *Educational Leadership, 37*(7), 558-559.

English, F., & Steffy, B. E. (2001). *Deep curriculum alignment: Creating a level playing field for all children on high stakes tests of educational accountability*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Epstein, J. (1992). *School and family partnerships.* Baltimore: Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning.

Epstein, J. L. (1995). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(9), 701-712.

Epstein, J. L. (2001). *School, family, community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Fine, C., & Raack, L. (1994). *Professional development: Changing times.* Denver: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Retrieved February 26, 2004: http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/go/94-4over.htm

Flaxman, E. (2001). The promise of urban community schooling. *The ERIC Review, 8*(2), 15-24.

Fritz, R. (1996). *Corporate tides: The inescapable laws of organizational structure*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Fullan, M. G. (1991). *The new meaning of educational change.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Fullan, M. G. (1992). Visions that blind. *Educational Leadership, 49*(5), 19-22.

Fullan, M. G. (1998). Leadership for the 21st century: Breaking the bonds of dependency. *Educational Leadership, 55*(7), 6-10.

Fullan, M. G. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1992). *What's worth fighting for: Working together for your school*. Ontario, Canada: Ontario Public School Teacher's Federation.

Fyans, L. J., Jr., & Maehr, M. L. (1990). *School culture, student ethnicity, and motivation*. Urbana, IL: The National Center for School Leadership.

Garcia, P. A. (2000, April). *Increasing the rigor of evaluation studies of programs for English learner students.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Gaustad, J. (1993). *Substance abuse policy* (ERIC Digest No. 80). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

Goddard, R. (2002). A theoretical and empirical analysis of the measurement of collective efficacy: The development of a short form. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 62*(1), 97-110.

Goddard, R., Hoy, W. K., & Hoy, A. W. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy: Its meaning, measure, and impact on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 37*(2), 479-507.

Goertz, M. E. & Hess, Jr., G. A. (1998). Process and power in school budgeting across four large urban school districts. *Journal of Education Finance. 23*(4), 490-506.

Goldhaber, D. D., & Brewer, D. J. (1999). *Teacher licensing and student achievement: Better teachers, better schools*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Gottfredson, D. G. (1989). *Reducing disorderly behavior in middle schools*. (Report No. 37). Baltimore: Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools. (ED 320 654).

Gronna, S. S., Jenkins, A., & Chin-Chance, S. A. (1998). Who are we assessing? Determining participation rates for students with disabilities in a norm-referenced statewide testing program. *Exceptional Children, 64*(3), 407-418.

Grossnickle, D. R. & Sesko, F. P. (1990). *Preventive discipline for effective teaching and learning: A sourcebook for teachers and administrators*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Guskey, T. R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Guskey, T. (2001). Helping standards make the grade. *Educational Leadership, 59*(1), 20-27.

Haberman, M. (1987). *Recruiting and selecting teachers for urban schools*. (Urban Diversity Series No. 95). New York: Teachers College, ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education and Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Haig, J., Kearns, J. F., Kennedy, S., & Kleinert, H. L. (2000). Alternate assessments: Lessons learned and roads to be taken. *Exceptional Children, 67*(1), 51-66.

Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. H. (1996). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: A review of empirical research, 1980-1995. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 32*(1), 5-44.

Hambrick, K. (2000). *Perceptions of and barriers to parent/family involvement among various cultures: Strategies for educators to involve all parents.* Unpublished manuscript.

Hamilton-Lee, M. (1988). *Home-school partnerships: The school development program model.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Atlanta, GA.

Hanushek, E. A. (1992). The trade-off between child quantity and quality. *Journal of Political Economy, 100*(1), 84-117.

Harris, D. E., & Carr, J. F. (2001, June). Standards-based student assessment and action planning: Implications for leadership. *Inside Education Solutions for Success*.

Harris, E. L. (1992). A principal and the evolution of a school culture: A case study. *Planning and Change, 21*(1), 29-44.

Hatch, T. (1998). How community action contributes to achievement. *Educational Leadership, 55*(8), 16-19.

Hawley, R. A. (1990). The bumpy road to drug-free schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 72*, 310-314.

Haynes, N. M., Emmons, C., & Ben-Avie, M. (1997). School climate as a factor in student adjustment and achievement. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation, 8*, 321-329.

Heckman, P. E. (1993). School restructuring in practice: Reckoning with the culture of school. *International Journal of Educational Reform, 2*(3), 263-272.

Henderson, A. T. (1988). Parents are a school's best friend. *Phi Delta Kappan, 70*(2), 148-153.

Henderson, A. T., & Berla, N. E. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement.* Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education.

Herdman, P.A., McMahon, N., Smith, N., Washington, K., & Wenning, R. (2003). *No Child Left Behind: Testing, reporting, and accountability*. (ERIC Digest). New York: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education.

Herman, J., & Gribbons, B. (2001). *Lessons learned in using data to support school inquiry and continuous improvement: Final report to the Stuart Foundation.* (CSE Technical Report 535). Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

Herman, J. L., & Winters, L. (1992). *Tracking your school's success: A guide to sensible evaluation.* Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Hertling, E. (2000). *Evaluating the results of whole-school reform*. (ERIC Digest No. 140). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

Hill, H., Soriano, F., Chen, S., & LaFromboise, T. (1996). Sociocultural factors in the etiology and prevention of violence among ethnic minority youth. In L. L. Eron, J. N. Gentry, & P. Schlegel (Eds.), *A reason to hope: A psychological perspective*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Hirsh, S. (2001). We're growing and changing. *Journal of Staff Development, 22*(3), 10-17.

Hord, S. M., Rutherford, W. L., Huling-Austin, L., & Hall, G. E. (1987). *Taking charge of change.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Hord, S. M. (1988). The principal as teacher educator. *Journal of Teacher Education, 39*(3), 8-11.

Hord, S. M. (1997). *Professional learning communities: Communities of continuous inquiry and improvement*. Austin: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Houston, D., & Little, M. E. (2003). Research into practice through professional development. *Remedial and Special Education, 24*(2), 75-87.

Hoy, W. K., & Miskell, C. G. (1991). *Educational administration: Theory, research and practice* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Ingersoll, R. (1999a). The problem of under qualified teachers in American secondary schools. *Educational Researcher, 28*(2), 26-37.

Ingersoll, R. (1999b). *Teacher turnover, teacher shortages and the organization of schools*. Seattle: Center for Study of Teaching and Policy.

Izzo, C. V., Weissberg, R. P., Kasprow, W. J., & Fendrich, M. (1999). A longitudinal assessment of teacher perceptions of parent involvement in children's education and school performance. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 27*(6), 817–839.

Jackson, S. (1982). *Instructional leadership behaviors that characterize schools that are effective for low socioeconomic urban black students*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Catholic University of America, Washington, DC.

Jacobs, H. H. (1997). *Mapping the big picture: Integrating curriculum and assessment K-12*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Johnson, F. (2003). *Financial accounting for local and state school systems*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved May 14, 2004: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/2004318.pdf

Johnson, J. (1997). Data-driven school improvement. *Emergency Librarian, 24*(4), 30-31.

Jordan, G. E., Snow, C. E., & Porche, M. V. (2000). Project EASE: The effect of a family literacy project on kindergarten students' early literacy skills. *Reading Research Quarterly, 35*(4), 524–546.

Katz, L. & Bauch, J. P. (1999). The Peabody family involvement initiative: Preparing pre-service teachers for family/school collaboration. *School Community Journal, 9*, 49-69.

Kearns, J. F., Kennedy, S., & Kleinert, H. L. (1999). The impact of alternate assessments: A statewide teacher survey. *Journal of Special Education, 33*(2), 93-102.

Keefe, J. W., & Kelley, E. A. (1990). Comprehensive assessment and school improvement. *NASSP Bulletin, 74*(530), 54-63.

Kelleher, J. (2003). A model for assessment-driven professional development. *Phi Delta Kappan, 84*(10), 751-756.

Killion, J., & Hirsh, S. (2001). Continuous learning: Top-quality professional development is key to teacher effectiveness. *American School Board Journal, 188*(5), 36-38.

Killion, J. (1999). *What works in the middle school: Results-based staff development.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council. Retrieved March 22, 2003: http://www.nsdc.org/midbook/index.cfm

Killion, J. (2002a). *What works in the elementary school: Results-based staff development.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council. Retrieved March 22, 2003: http://www.nsdc.org/connect/projects/elwhatworks.pdf

Killion, J. (2002b). *What works in the high school: Results-based staff development.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council. Retrieved March 22, 2003: http://www.nsdc.org/connect/projects/hswhatworks.pdf

King, M. B., Louis, K. S., Marks, H. M., & Peterson, K. D. (1996). Participatory decision making. In F. M. Newmann & Associates (Eds.), *Restructuring for authentic student*

achievement: The impact of culture and structure in 24 schools. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 397492)

Kruse, S., Louis, K. S., & Bryk, A. (1995). Let's build teachers' professional community. *WCER Highlights, 7*, 1. Retrieved August 12, 2002: http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/publications/WCER_Highlights/Vol.7_No.1_Spring_1995/Teachers_prof_community.html

Kushman, J. W., & Barnhardt, R. (1999). *Study of Alaska rural systemic reform: Final report.* Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

La Marca, P. M. (2001). *Alignment of standards and assessments as an accountability criterion*. (ERIC Digest). College Park, MD: ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation.

La Marca, P. M., Redfield, D., & Winter, P. C. (2000). *State standards and state assessment systems: A guide to alignment*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Lashway, L. (1999). *Holding schools accountable for achievement*. (ERIC Digest No. 130). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

Lashway, L. (2001). *Educational indicators*. (ERIC Digest). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

Leithwood, K. A. (1995). *Effective school district leadership: Transforming politics into education*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Leithwood, K. A., & Steinbach, R. (1994). *Expert problem solving: Evidence from school and district leaders.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Levine, D. U., & Lezotte, L. W. (1990). *Unusually effective schools: A review and analysis of research and practice*. Madison, WI: National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development.

Levine, D. U., & Lezotte, L. W. (1995). Effective schools research. In J. A. Banks & C. A. M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Lichtenstein, G., McLaughlin, M., & Knudsen, J. (1991). *Teacher empowerment and professional knowledge.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Center for Educational Policy Research.

Light, D., Wexler, D., & Heinze, J. (2004). *How practitioners interpret and link data to instruction: Research findings on New York City's implementation of the Grow Network.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego. Retrieved May 11, 2004: http://www2.edc.org/cct/admin/publications/speeches/Grow_AERA04_fin.pdf

Ligon, G. D. (1996). *Data quality: Earning the confidence of decision makers*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York.

Linn, R. L. (1996). *Standards-based accountability: Ten suggestions* (CRESST policy brief). Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

Linn, R. L. (2000). Assessments and accountability. *Educational Researcher, 29*(2), 4-14.

Linn, R. L. (2001). *The design and evaluation of educational assessment and accountability systems.* (CSE technical report 539). Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

Louis, K. S., Kruse, S. D., & Marks, H. M. (1996). Schoolwide professional community. In Newmann, F.M., & Associates (Eds.), *Authentic achievement: Restructuring schools for intellectual quality.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Louis, K. S., Marks, H. M., & Kruse, S. (1996). Teachers' professional community in restructuring schools. *American Educational Research Journal, 33*(4), 757-798.

Lumsden, L. (1997). *Expectations for students*. (ERIC Digest). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. Retrieved August 1, 2002: http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/digests/digest116.html

MacIver, D. J., Plank, S. B, & Balfanz, R. (1997). *Working together to become proficient readers: Early impact of the talent development middle school's Student Team Literature Program.* (Report No. 15). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR).

Malen, B., & Ogawa, R. T. (1988). Professional-patron influence on site-based governance councils: A confounding case study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 10*(4), 251-270.

Markham, K. (1993). *Standards for student performance*. (ERIC Digest No. 81). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

Marzano, R.J. (2000). *A new era of school reform: Going where the research takes us*. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

Massell, D. (2000). *The district role in capacity building: Four strategies* (CPRE Policy Brief). Philadelphia: Consortium for Policy Research in Education. Retrieved August 21, 2002: http://www.cpre.org/Publications/rb32.pdf

Matthews, D. (1996). *Is there a public for public schools?* Dayton, OH: Kettering Foundation Press.

Mayer, D. P., Mullens, J.E., & Moore, M. T. (2001). Monitoring school quality: An indicators report. *Education Statistics Quarterly, 3*(1), 38-44.

McCarthey, S. (1999). Identifying teacher practices that connect home and school. *Education and Urban Society, 32*(1), 83-107.

McLeod, J. (1987). *Ain't no makin' it: Leveled aspirations in a low-income neighborhood*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Messick, S. (1989). Validity. In R. L. Linn (Ed.), *Educational measurement* (3rd ed.). New York: American Council on Education & Macmillan Publishing.

Mintrop, H., & Papazian, R. (2003). *Systemic strategies to improve low-performing schools: Lessons from first-generation accountability systems*. (CSE Technical Report No. 539). Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

Mitchell, F. M. (1999, April). *All students can learn: Effects of curriculum alignment on the mathematics achievement of third-grade students.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Moles, O. C. (1989). *Strategies to reduce student misbehavior*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Moss-Mitchell, F. (1998). *The effects of curriculum alignment on the mathematics achievement of third-grade students as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills: Implications for educational administrators.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation (Clark University, Atlanta, GA).

Murphy, J. (1994). Transformational change and the evolving role of the principal: Early empirical evidence. In J. Murphy & K. Louis (Eds.), *Reshaping the principalship: Insights from transformational reform efforts.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

National Association of Elementary School Principals. (2001). *Essentials for principals: Strengthening the connection between school and home*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform*. Washington, DC: Author.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (1996). *What matters most: Teaching for America's future*. New York: Author.

National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. (1997). *Doing what matters most: Investing in quality teaching*. New York: Author.

National Research Council. (2002). *Scientific research in education.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

National School Recognition Program. (1988). *Good ideas from National School Recognition Program: Programs for the improvement of practice*. (ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED296952).

Newmann, F. M. (1993). Beyond common sense in educational restructuring: The issues of content and linkage. *Educational Researcher, 22*(2), 4-13.

Newmann, F. M., King, M. B., & Youngs, P. (2001, April). *Professional development that addresses school capacity: Lessons from urban elementary schools*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Newmann, F. M., Smith, B., Allensworth, E., & Bryk, A. S. (2001). *School instructional coherence: Benefits and challenges*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Reform.

Newmann, F. M., & Wehlage, G. G. (1995). *Successful school restructuring: A report to the public and educators by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools.* Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Education, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools.

Newmann, F. M., & Wehlage, G. G. (1996). Conclusion: Restructuring for authentic achievement. In F. M. Newmann (Ed.), *Authentic achievement: Restructuring schools for intellectual quality* (pp. 286-301). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002). Retrieved April 24, 2003: http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/

North Carolina State Board of Education/Department of Public Instruction. (2000). Improving student performance: The role of district-level staff. *Evaluation Brief, 2,* 4.

Oakes, J. (1990). *Multiplying inequities: The effects of race, social class and tracking on opportunities to learn mathematics and science.* Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED329615)

O'Conner, K. (1995). Guidelines for learning that support learning and student success. *NASSP Bulletin, 79*(571), 91-101.

O'Kelly, M. K. (2003). Schools on the rise get REAL: Evidence-based change yields success in Ohio. *Learning Point, 5*, 1. Retrieved May 11, 2004: http://www.ncrel.org/info/nlp/lpsp03/index.html

Ogbu, J. (1983). Minority status and schooling in plural societies. *Comparative education Review, 27*(2), 168-90.

Paez, M., (2003). Gimme that school where everything's scripted! One teacher's journey toward effective literacy instruction. *Phi Delta Kappan, 84*(10), 757-763.

Peterson-del-Mar, D. (1994). *School-site councils*. (ERIC Digest No. 89). Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

Prager, K. (1993). Collegial process versus curricular reform: Dilemma for principal leadership? *Brief to Principals*, 5. Madison, WI: Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools.

Project Legal. (2004). *Law-related education: Goals for American leadership.* Retrieved from the World Wide Web on March 9, 2004: http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/plegal/about.html

Quenemoen, R. F., & Thompson, S. J. (2001). Eight steps to effective implementation of alternate assessments. *Assessment for Effective Instruction, 26*(2), 67-74.

Rabinowitz, S., & Ananda, S. (2001). *Balancing local assessment with statewide testing: Building a program that meets student needs.* (Knowledge Brief). San Francisco: WestEd.

Ragland, M. A., Asera, R., & Johnson, J. F. (1999). *Urgency, responsibility, efficacy: Preliminary findings of a study of high-performing Texas school districts.* Austin: University of Texas, Charles A. Dana Center.

Reeves, D. B. (2000). *Accountability in action.* Denver: Advanced Learning Centers.

Resnick, M. (2000). *Communities count: A school board guide to public engagement*. Alexandria, VA: National School Boards Association.

Rist, R. C. (1970). Student social class and teacher expectations: The self-fulfilling prophecy in ghetto education. *Harvard Educational Review, 40*, 411-51.

Rivera, C., & Stansfield, C. W. (2001). *The effects of linguistic simplification of science test items on performance of limited English proficient and monolingual English-speaking students*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, WA.

Rivera, C., & Stansfield, C. W. (1998). Leveling the playing field for English language learners: Increasing participation in state and local assessments through accommodations. In R. Brandt (Ed.), *Assessing Student learning: New rules, new realities*. Arlington, VA: Educational Research Service.

Rivkin, S. G., Hanushek, E. A., & Kain, J. F. (1998). *Teachers, schools, and academic achievement.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management, New York.

Roberts, J. L. (1989). Parents can be mentors, too! *Gifted Child Today, 15*(3), 36-38.

Robinson, V. (1985). *Making do in the classroom: A report on the miss-assignment of teachers*. Washington, DC: Council for Basic Education and American Federation of Teachers.

Rosenholtz, S. (1989). *Teachers' workplace: The social organization of schools*. New York: Longman.

Rosenthal, R., & Jacobson, L. (1968). *Pygmalion in the classroom*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Rothman, R. (2000). *Bring all students to high standards: Report on National Education Goals Panel field hearings.* Washington, DC: National Education Goals Panel.

Sanders, W. L., & Rivers, J. C. (1996). *Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future student academic achievement.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee.

Santa, C. M. (2004). *Project CRISS: Evidence of effectiveness*. Kalispell, MT. Retrieved March 9, 2004: http://www.projectcriss.com/projectcriss/pages/research/media/R-Evidence.pdf

Sarason, S. B., & Lorentz, E. M. (1998). *Crossing boundaries: Collaboration, coordination, and the redefinition of resources.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schmoker, M. (1999). *Results: The key to continuous school improvement* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Schmoker, M., & Marzano, R. J. (1999). Realizing the promise of standards-based education. *Educational Leadership, 56*(6), 17-21.

Schweingruber, H., Papakonstantiou, A., Herbert, E., & Rohr, M. (1998). *High school algebra initiative: Year one report*. Houston: Rice University School Mathematics Project.

Schweingruber, H., Papakonstantiou, A., Herbert, E., & Rohr, M. (1999). *High school algebra initiative: Year two report.* Houston: Rice University School Mathematics Project.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1994). *Building community in schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Shepard, L. (2000). The role of assessment in a learning culture. *Educational Researcher, 29*(7), 1-14.

Siegel, D., & Fruchter, N. (2002). *Final report: Evaluation of the performance driven budgeting initiative of the New York City Board of Education (1997-2000).* New York: NYU Institute for Education and Social Policy.

Sizemore, B. A., Brossard, C. A., and Harrigan, B. (1983). *An abashing anomaly: The high achieving predominantly black elementary school* (University of Pittsburgh Abstract NIE-G-80-006). Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh.

Sizer, T. R., & Rogers, B. (1993). Designing standards: Achieving the delicate balance. *Educational Leadership, 50*(5), 24-26.

Skiba, R. J., & Peterson, R. L. (2000). School discipline at a crossroads: From zero tolerance to early response. *Exceptional Children, 66*, 335-347.

Skrla, L., Scheurich, J., & Johnson, J. (2000). *Equity-driven, achievement- focused school districts: A report on systemic school success in four Texas school districts serving diverse student populations.* Austin: University of Texas, Charles A. Dana Center.

Slavin, R. E. (2003). A reader's guide to scientifically based research. *Educational Leadership, 60*(5), 12-16.

Smerdon, B. (1999). *Teacher quality: A report on the preparation and qualifications of public school teachers*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Solomon, L., & Fox, M. (1998). Fatally flawed funding formulas and seven guidelines to use in fixing them. *Education Week, 60,* 48-49.

Sparks, D., & Hirsh, S. (2002). *A national plan for improving professional development.* Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council. Retrieved March 9, 2004: http://www.nsdc.org/library/authors/NSDCPlan.cfm

Stolp, S., & Smith, S. C. (1994). School culture and climate: The role of the leader. *OSSC Bulletin*. Eugene, OR: Oregon School Study Council.

Student Watershed Research Project. (1997). *Fifth annual student watershed summit: Summary evaluation comments.* Portland, OR: Author.

Summerfield, L. M. (1991). *Drug and alcohol prevention education*. (ERIC Digest). Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education.

Swafford, J., & Thornton, C. (1998). *The PUMP algebra project.* Unpublished Paper. Retrieved March 9, 2004: http://www.nsdc.org/library/authors/NSDCPlan.cfm

Tauber, R. T. (1998). *Good or bad, what teachers expect from students they generally get!* (ERIC Digest). Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education. Retrieved August 6, 2002: http://www.ericsp.org/pages/digests/good_or_bad.html

Thacker, J. L., & McInerney, W. D. (1992). Changing academic culture to improve student achievement in the elementary schools. *ERS Spectrum 10*(4), 18-23.

Trahan, C. (2002). *Implications of the No Child Left Behind Act for teacher education*. (ERIC Digest). Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education.

U.S. Department of Education. (1998a). *Goals 2000: Reforming education to improve student achievement*. Retrieved May 10, 2004: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/G2KReforming/index.html

U.S. Department of Education. (1998b). *Promising practices: New ways to improve teacher quality*. Retrieved May 12, 2004: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/PromPractice/index.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2004). *The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved May 17, 2004: http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osdfs/programs.html

U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service. (2000). *Does professional development change teaching practice? Results from a three-year study.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary.

U.S. Department of Education, Professional Development Team. (2002). *Building bridges: The mission & principles of professional development.* Retrieved September 26, 2002: http://www.ed.gov/G2K/bridge.html

University of Illinois at Chicago. (1997). *All Learn Mathematics annual report 1996-97*. Chicago: Author.

Van Acker, R. W., & Wehby, J. H. (2000). Exploring the social contexts influencing student success or failure: Introduction. *Preventing School Failure*, *44*, 93-96.

van der Bogert, R. (Ed.) (1998). *Making learning communities work: The critical role of leader as learner.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Vars, G. F., & Beane, J. A. (2000). *Integrative curriculum in a standards-based world*. (ERIC Digest). Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

Virginia Department of Education. (2004*). Statewide Spring passing rates, 2002*. Retrieved May 10, 2004: http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/StatePassRates02.html

Wagoner, R. V. (1995). Site-based budgeting: A critical factor in the success of decentralized school management. *School Business Affairs 61*(5), 43-48.

Walsh, J. A., & Sattes, B. D. (2000). *Inside school improvement: Creating high-performing learning communities*. Charleston, WV: Appalachian Educational Laboratory (AEL).

Watts, J. A., Gaines, G. F., & Creech, J. D. (1998). *Getting results: A fresh look at school accountability*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED426510)

Webb, N. L. (1997). *Criteria for alignment of expectations and assessments in mathematics and science education*. (Research monograph No. 6). Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Webb, N. L. (1999). *Alignment of science and mathematics standards and assessments in four states*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Webb, N. L. (2002). *Alignment study in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies of state standards and assessments in four states*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Weber, J. (1989). Leading the instructional program. In S. C. Smith & P. K. Piele (Eds.), *School leadership: Handbook for excellence*. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.

Webster, W. J. (1988). Selecting effective teachers. *Journal of Educational Research, 81*(4), 245-53.

Wehry, S. (2001). *The early literacy and learning model (ELLM) initiative: Making a difference 1999/2000 & 2000/2001.* Jacksonville, FL: University of North Florida, Florida Institute of Education. Retrieved March 9, 2004: http://www.unf.edu/dept/fie/downloads/ELLMreport.pdf

Weller, L. D., & Weller, S. J. (1997). Quality learning organizations and continuous improvement: Implementing the concept. *NASSP Bulletin, 81*(591), 62-70.

WestEd. (2000). *Teachers who learn, kids who achieve*. San Francisco: Author.

What Works Clearinghouse. (2004). *About the WWC*. Retrieved May 11, 2004: http://www.w-w-c.org/about.html

Whitehurst, G. J. (2001). *Evidence-based education*. Retrieved May 11, 2004: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SASA/eb/slide001.html

Whitford, B. L. (2000). Commitment and compliance: High stakes consequences in Kentucky. *Journal of Educational Change, 1*(1), 105-110.

Wiggins, G. (1991). Standards, not standardization: Evoking quality student work. *Educational Leadership, 48*(5), 18-25.

Williams, D. L., & Chavkin, N. F. (1989). Essential elements of strong parent involvement programs. *Educational Leadership, 47,* 18-20.

Willis, P. (1981). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Wilson, R. J., & Martinussen, R. L. (1999). Factors affecting the assessment of student achievement. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 45*(3), 267-277.

Wishnick, K. T. (1989). *Relative effects on achievement scores of SES, gender, teacher effect and instructional alignment: A study of alignment's power in mastery learning.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of San Francisco, California.

Wohlstetter, P., & Van Kirk, A. (1995). *School-based budgeting: Organizing for high performance.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Word, E. (1990). *Student Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR). Tennessee's K-3 class size study. Final summary report, 1985-1990*. Nashville: Tennessee State Department of Education.

Wraga, W. G. (1999). The educational and political implications of curriculum alignment and standards-based reform. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision 15*(1), 4-25.

Wright, A., & Saks, J. B. (2000). *The community connection: Case studies in public engagement*. Alexandria, VA: National Schools Boards Association.

Yamauchi, L. (2003). Making school relevant for at-risk students: The Wai'anae High School Hawaiian studies program. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 8*(4), 379-390.

Yang, M., & Goldstein, H. (1999). The use of data for school improvement purposes. *Oxford Review of Education, 25*(4), 469-483.

Young, D. B., Dougherty, B., Lai, M. K., & Matsumoto, A. (1998). Addressing equity through curriculum development and program evaluation. *Journal of Women and Minorities in Science and Engineering, 4,* 269-281.