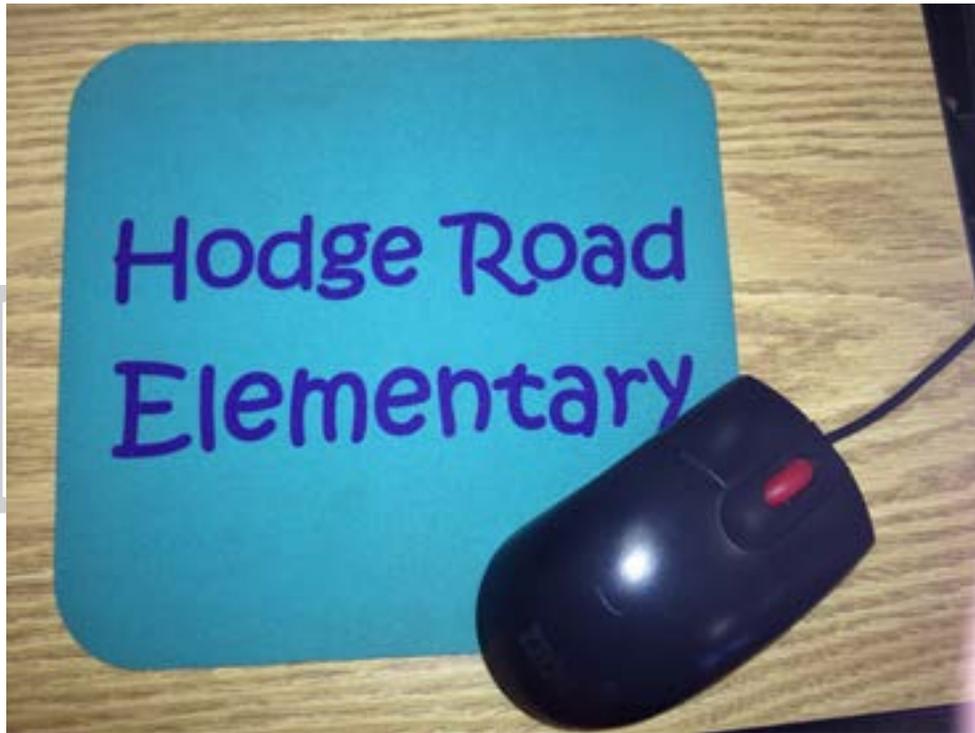


A Curriculum Audit™
of the
Delivery of the Curriculum in Hodge Road Elementary School
WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
Raleigh, North Carolina



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June 2013

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Raleigh, North Carolina

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Conducted Under the Auspices of
Curriculum Management Systems, Inc.
5415 NW 88th Street, Suite 300
Johnston, IA 50131

Date Audit Presented: June 2013

Members of the Hodge Road Elementary School Audit Team:

Lead Auditor
Kay Coleman

Auditor
Susan Townsend

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I. INTRODUCTION

This document constitutes the final report of a Curriculum Audit™ of the Delivery of Curriculum for Hodge Road Elementary School in the Wake County Public School System. The audit was commissioned by the associate superintendent within the scope of his administrative authority. It was conducted during the time period of March 4-8, 2013, with a return, one-day visit on March 28, 2013, to accommodate the year-round calendar. Document analysis was performed off site, as was the detailed analysis of findings and site visit data.

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

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

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

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

A two-person Curriculum Management Services, Inc. audit team interviewed school stakeholders and observed in and collected data from all Hodge Road classrooms that were available during March 4-8. On February 28, 2013, Ms. Coleman conducted phone interviews with all teachers who were going to be off track during the original visit and returned to Hodge Road Elementary on March 28, 2013, to observe in the off-track teachers' classrooms.

The CMSi-licensed curriculum auditors for the Hodge Road Elementary School audit were:

- Kay Coleman, M.Ed., Independent Consultant, Cave Creek, Arizona
- Susan Townsend, MA, Superintendent, Colorado.

Biographical information about the auditors can be found in [Appendix A](#).

System Purpose for Conducting the Audit

The Wake County Public School System has been focused on improving student achievement for all students since the first Curriculum Management Audit conducted for WCPSS in 2007. Since that time, the district has performed several individual school audits in an attempt to identify and address the specific, building-based issues that undermine student achievement. This individual school audit is a similar project; district leaders, out of concern for four schools located in Eastern Wake County, contracted with CMSi to conduct the audit and provide them with clear direction for actions that must be taken to turn the low-performing schools into high achieving schools. This report, one of four individual school audits, represents the culmination of that project.

Approach of the Audit

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

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

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II. METHODOLOGY

The Model for the Curriculum Audit™

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

A Schematic View of Curricular Quality Control



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

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

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

Standards for the Auditors

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

Technical Expertise

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

The Hodge Road Elementary School Curriculum Audit™ Team selected by the Curriculum Management Audit Center included auditors who have been school superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors,

coordinators, principals and assistant principals, as well as elementary and secondary classroom teachers in public educational systems in several locations.

The Principle of Independence

None of the Curriculum Audit™ Team members had any vested interest in the findings or recommendations of the Hodge Road Elementary School Curriculum Audit™. None of the auditors has or had any working relationship with the individuals who occupied top or middle management positions in the Hodge Road Elementary School, nor with any of the past or current members of the Hodge Road Elementary School Board of Education.

The Principle of Objectivity

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

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

The Principle of Consistency

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

The Principle of Materiality

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

The Principle of Full Disclosure

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

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

“Some school principals said that ... ”

“Many teachers expressed concern that ... ”

“There was widespread comment about ... ”

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

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

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

Data Sources of the Curriculum Audit™

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

Data sources for this audit of four schools consisted of the following:

- District and school documents collected prior to and during the on-site visit;
- Interview data from nearly all teachers during and before the school visit;
- Survey data collected prior to the on-site visit from every teacher. The survey consisted of 30 open-ended questions targeting the use of the WCPSS curriculum for planning and teaching, the extent of monitoring and coaching, professional development to support teaching and learning, and the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the school. Fifty-eight (58) members of the instructional staff completed the survey;
- Interview data from the school principal and other administrative and support staff at the school; and
- Classroom observations from nearly every classroom. The auditors’ schedules were arranged in such a way to allow classroom observations for every time segment during the day in order to get a precise picture of typical instruction at the school. In several cases, classrooms were revisited in order to capture instructional time rather than transitional time or time when students were waiting for passing periods and therefore not engaged in instruction.

Exhibit 0.1 displays the number of teachers and other school staff interviewed, the number of surveys submitted on Survey Monkey, and the number of classrooms observed during the on-site visits.

Exhibit 0.1

**Number of Staff Interviews, Surveys, and Classroom Observations Conducted
Hodge Road Elementary School
Wake County Public School System
March 2013**

School	Approximate No. Interviewed	No. of Surveys Returned	No. of Classroom Observations
Hodge Road	105	59	43

The next sections address the scope of work for the individual school audit project, the methodology used, and the auditors' findings and recommendations.

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III. SCOPE OF WORK

Standards for the Audit

The CMSi Curriculum Audit™ used five standards against which to compare, verify, and comment upon the Hodge Road Elementary School's existing curricular management practices. These standards have been extrapolated from an extensive review of management principles and practices and have been applied in all previous Curriculum Audits™.

The five standards that served as the foundation for the CMSi Curriculum Audit™ in Hodge Road Elementary School were:

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

This Curriculum Audit™ of the delivery of curriculum in Wake County Public Schools is an intensive review of the implementation and alignment of the taught curriculum with the written and assessed curriculum. Although the same standards are used as the foundation for all analyses, only portions of the five standards were used for this curriculum delivery audit.

Areas of Analysis

Results of these analyses are presented in the audit findings and have corresponding recommendations for correcting reported inadequacies.

1) Direction for Curriculum Delivery

Auditors examined policies, plans, or other pertinent documents related to the curriculum that direct efforts in implementing and monitoring the educational program in the selected schools to determine their adequacy.

2) Curriculum Delivery Effectiveness and Alignment (see also #5 below)

During classroom visits, auditors record key information regarding the instructional objective observed, student time on task, and dominant teacher and student activities observed. This information is compiled and presented to the Hodge Road Elementary School to verify whether expectations for curriculum delivery have been met.

3) District Stakeholder Interviews and Interview Data Analysis

During the site visit, auditors met with representatives from the following stakeholder groups, at their consent:

- Building administrators
- Teachers
- Academic administrators
- Parents
- Community members
- Business leaders
- Students

This information is compiled and presented to the Hodge Road Elementary School to support findings regarding school-based factors impacting effective curriculum implementation.

4) Student Achievement Trends

Auditors examined available achievement data to determine possible areas of weakness in the school and report salient findings.

5) SchoolView Data Collection

The SchoolView analysis tool focuses on collecting trend data concerning the curricular and instructional practices in use in classrooms. This tool focuses more specifically on the actual objective observed being taught, analyzes whether that objective is congruent with the learner objectives at that grade level, and provides school and district leaders with a picture of the nature and type of instructional practices taking place.

6) Staff Development Initiatives

An analysis of the implementation/effectiveness of staff development initiatives in the building/district related to curriculum.

7) Student Work Data Collection

Calibration of collected student work (from a sample of classrooms visited) with district and state standards and objectives to determine whether student work is on, above, or below the appropriate instructional level.

The above factors were determined to be of relevance for improving pupil achievement in underperforming schools.

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IV. FINDINGS

Delivery Audit Standard: The School District Demonstrates Internal Consistency, Rational Equity, and Alignment in Its Program Development and Implementation.

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

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

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

What the Auditors Expected to Find in the Hodge Road Elementary School:

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

- Documents/sources that reveal internal connections at different levels in the system;
- Predictable consistency through a coherent rationale for content delineation within the curriculum;
- Equity of curriculum/course access and opportunity;
- Allocation of resource flow to areas of greatest need;
- A curriculum that is clearly explained to members of the teaching staff and building-level administrators and other supervisory personnel;
- Specific professional development programs to enhance curricular design and delivery;
- A curriculum that is monitored by central office and site supervisory personnel;
- Teacher and administrator responsiveness to school board policies, currently and over time;
- Knowledge, local validation, and use of current best practices and emerging curriculum trends;
- Provision of explicit direction for the superintendent and professional staff;
- A framework that exists for systemic curricular change;
- A way to provide feedback to the teaching and administrative staffs regarding how classroom instruction may be evaluated and subsequently improved; and
- Organizational data gathered and used to continually improve system functions.

What the Auditors Found in the Hodge Road Elementary School:

Finding 1: Teachers are developing lesson plans using the written curriculum, C-MAPP. The written curriculum, although aligned to the Common Core in content, lacks sufficient specificity in context and cognitive levels to be considered deeply aligned with the Common Core and Smarter Balanced Assessments. Moreover, C-MAPP is not available to year-round schools in a timely manner and lacks aligned, differentiated resources for teachers.

A comprehensive curriculum designed to meet national and state standards should first have a solid framework based on the standards it intends to teach. This framework is comprised of specific, measurable descriptions of what mastery of the discrete skills, concepts, and knowledge looks like, in the form of learner objectives. The written curriculum then includes suggestions for instructional materials, strategies and approaches, and provides formative and benchmark assessments to diagnose progress and measure student mastery of the objectives, all of which align with the content framework, or objectives. This alignment is expected to occur across the three dimensions of content, context, and cognitive type, and is termed internal consistency.

Effective curriculum also suggests student activities and projects that engage students in a wide range of thinking skills, drawing upon many cognitive types and employing increasingly higher cognitive demand to provide a rigorous educational program for all students. Such curriculum design assures teachers that by using the curriculum guide as their primary resource in planning instruction, then their teaching will address the intended learning standards and objectives and provide a spectrum of learning contexts and cognitively engaging activities to prepare them for the high stakes tests in use. By following the curriculum, teachers can also trust that their students are prepared for the next grade level or course..

Many guides state the skills, knowledge, or concepts that will be assessed, providing a degree of topological alignment. However, such surface matching of the tests and curriculum provides few clues for teachers to create parallel structures or learning contexts in their classrooms. Deep alignment occurs when curriculum documents include suggestions for learning scenarios and assessment that meet and exceed, in context and cognitive type, how the test in use will approach, define, and assess the content. By ensuring that students are first challenged in the classroom, in a relatively risk-free environment, the teacher increases the likelihood that students will not be surprised by anything on the test--they have already encountered similar content, contexts, and cognitive engagement in the classroom. That is the doctrine of no surprises, an inherent tenet of deep curriculum alignment.

There is an audit expectation that all components of a guide will be internally aligned (congruence). Such a design makes it easier for teachers to then teach the learnings desired and use and/or select resources and strategies that can be trusted to be aligned to the state and Common Core content specifications. Additionally, the design of district curriculum must also define for teachers the cognitive level of performance expected and the various contexts in which students will be asked to demonstrate their proficiency in learning.

Teachers should be able to trust that the district curriculum documents that are provided to them have been backloaded in the content, cognition, and the contexts students are required to know on the test. Student performance is ultimately defined by the instruments that measure student performance, not by the curriculum that included it or the teacher who taught it. The test is the final judge of performance. It is common knowledge that tests are not perfect, which is why it is critical to know something about the dynamics of raising student test scores by starting with the test instead of ending with its administration.

Several types of analyses were conducted by auditors to determine the alignment of curriculum being used by teachers at Hodge Road Elementary School. The questions on which the analyses are based include:

- Were the student artifacts being provided to students each day aligned to C-MAPP?
- Were the student objectives teachers were teaching aligned to objectives from Common Core State Standards (CCSS)?
- Do the district's benchmark assessments, *CASE 21*, align to the Common Core, and the publicly released items for the *Smarter Balanced* assessments that students will be tested on in the coming year?

To determine district expectations for curriculum, auditors reviewed district documents including board policies, district and school plans, job descriptions, and evaluation instruments. Prior to the site visits, all certified staff members completed an online survey using Survey Monkey that provided open-ended questions to which teachers responded. Auditors also visited each classroom in which instruction was occurring at the time of the school visits and interviewed district and school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members.

Auditors found that student artifacts were aligned with C-MAPP and that teachers' planned objectives also aligned with CCSS grade level objectives. The analysis of *CASE 21* item alignment with the Common Core and to publicly released items from *Smarter Balanced* assessments showed a level of congruence in the content dimension but a lack of alignment in cognitive demand and contexts. Auditors also found that planning for new C-MAPP documents and assessments was inadequate and did not support providing the resources to year-round schools in a timely manner. The auditors also found that some materials referred to in C-MAPP are not available to all teachers, and are, in fact, sometimes out of print.

Board Policy and District Document Review

The following board policies address expectations for the written curriculum in WCPSS:

- *Board Policy 3219: Teacher Job Description* calls for teachers to align their instruction with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, develop and apply strategies to make the curriculum rigorous and relevant, respond to the cultural diversity and learning needs of students, use a wide variety of instructional methods as they strive to eliminate achievement gaps, integrate and utilize technology in their instruction, differentiate instruction as needed, and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- *Board Policy 5100: Curriculum Management* requires teachers to teach the written curriculum.
- *Board Policy 5101: Curriculum and Assessment Decisions* states that school-based staff is responsible for the delivery of the district's curriculum so that all students are taught and learn the intended curriculum.

Other written documents of WCPSS also address instructional expectations of the system:

- *WCPSS Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs* calls for challenging all students by providing academic rigor that is essential to student success.
- *WCPSS Elementary Programs at a Glance* requires that all students be engaged in acts of complex thinking and creation of products with connections being made across content areas.

District documents clearly expect that the written curriculum will be taught, with some expectation that it is to be rigorous, relevant, and integrated across content.



Character Education on display

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Curriculum Alignment: Content

The audit expects the written curriculum to be available to teachers to guide their teaching. It also expects the alignment of teaching to the written curriculum in addition to the alignment of assessment to the written curriculum. The greater the alignment or match between the written, taught, and tested curriculum, the higher the probability that what is taught is what students will be tested on.

Auditors considered the alignment of student work to the district curriculum. Samples of student work were collected from Hodge Road teachers the week prior to school visits. These samples or artifacts were then used to identify alignment with the written curriculum. This is not intended to be an in-depth, scientific analysis; rather, these artifacts provide a glimpse into the kind of work students are completing at a point in time during the school year. Auditors determined the C-MAPP objective the artifacts ostensibly address and if the artifact was at, above, or below the intended grade level. Such an analysis is considered a calibration: auditors calibrated the collected student work against the district curriculum. The results of the analysis are presented in [Exhibit 1.1](#) for mathematics.

Exhibit 1.1

Calibration of Student Artifacts for Mathematics in Grades 3 and 5 to C-MAPP Hodge Road Elementary School Wake County Public School System March 2013

School	Intended Grade Level	Calibrated – Above Grade Level	Calibrated – At Grade Level	Calibrated – Below Grade Level
Hodge Road	3	-	4	-
	5	-	4	-

As can be seen in [Exhibit 1.1](#):

- Student artifacts for mathematics at grades 3 and 5 were closely aligned with C-MAPP objectives at the intended grade level.

Additionally, it was noted that several of the artifacts presented to auditors for analysis were labeled “Wake County Public School System 2012,” indicating that they came directly from the County’s curriculum website. Hodge Road Elementary also provided additional, teacher-made materials/artifacts/worksheets.

[Exhibit 1.2](#) shows the calibration of student artifacts for English/language arts at grades 3 and 5.

Exhibit 1.2

Calibration of Student Artifacts for English/Language Arts to CMAPP for Grades Three and Five Hodge Road Elementary School Wake County Public School System March 2013

School	Intended Grade Level	Calibrated – Above Grade Level	Calibrated – At Grade Level	Calibrated – Below Grade Level
Hodge Road	3	-	3	2
	5	-	3	-

[Exhibit 1.2](#) shows:

- Three of the five English/language arts artifacts submitted for grade 3 were calibrated to be at grade level.
- Two of the five (or 40 percent) artifacts submitted for grade 3 were calibrated below grade level.
- All fifth grade artifacts that were submitted for review were calibrated at grade level.

From this analysis, it appears that teachers are trying to align their instruction with the C-MAPP expectations for their particular grade level. There were more teacher created/teacher found resources for mathematics than for English/language arts.

Interviews revealed some challenges with C-MAPP and expectations at the school:

- “We are not required to submit or write out lesson plans, glad because with C-MAPP, it’s a waste of time.”
- “I adhere to the core curriculum but it is not so hard core that I can’t pick and choose how I can teach a lesson. I am able to explore lots of resources.”
- “Resources for ELA are not so awesome. Lots of lessons are not practical...not all kids in the county are high achieving...some of the writing lesson not appropriate and reading lessons in books that are out of print and simply not available to us.” (This comment was repeated by teachers at several grade levels and across schools.)
- “C-MAPP guides what we do (supposed to be within 5 days of the lesson). I feel OK about it as a resource, but what if we’re needing something different.”
- “My biggest frustration is that C-MAPP works really well for math, reading and writing is very confusing and hard to follow, sometimes it doesn’t match – pull it up and sometimes it feels like it doesn’t fit. Have made our own calendar because the C-MAPP one was very confusing. “
- “C-MAPP is confusing – it’s because it’s a draft – it says that on it. In writing, the daily guide doesn’t line up with the weekly. Math is great, but not reading and writing. For example it’ll say fictional writing but it actually is not that.”

Interviews with parents expressed both praise and concerns:

- “I am happy with academics and expectations. They are age appropriate. I don’t worry if my kid will fall through the cracks. This school does a phenomenal job.”
- “I would like to see Spanish put in as a foreign language and I want cursive back in the curriculum. It is no longer in the system. I want my kids to be able to read cursive and write in cursive. My older children do not have a signature in cursive.”

Assessment Alignment: Content, Context, and Cognition

Understanding that teachers are selecting objectives and resources that are aligned to C-MAPP, the next analysis was to determine whether C-MAPP is aligned to the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS). It was reported that a great deal of work has been completed prior to and during the current academic year to do this alignment at the county level. To determine the alignment of C-MAPP to CCSS, auditors collected lesson plans from two randomly selected Hodge Road Elementary School classrooms for both third and fifth grades. Those plans, pulled from C-MAPP, were then analyzed and calibrated to the Common Core State Standards for the respective grade levels and content areas. The results of the calibration are noted in Exhibit 1.3.

Exhibit 1.3

**Alignment of Grade Level Objectives from Randomly Selected Lesson Plans
to Common Core State Standards Objectives
Hodge Road Elementary School
Wake County Public School System
March 2013**

Content Area/Grade Level	Alignment Exists	Alignment Partially Exists	Alignment Does Not Exist
Math/3 rd Grade	2		
Math/5 th Grade	2		
Language Arts/3 rd Grade	2		
Language Arts/5 th Grade	2		

Noteworthy in Exhibit 1.3 is the following point:

- Of the two randomly selected lesson plans for each of the above grade levels and content areas, objectives from all areas indicate alignment of objectives from these lesson plans to that of the Common Core State Standards for the same content area and grade level.

Also noteworthy is that the lesson plans analyzed were collected from the week prior to the school visits by the auditors. Of the lesson plans collected, approximately one-third of them were from the first standard, first objective of the Common Core Standards, indicating that this standard had not been taught at the beginning of the year; rather, it was being taught in late February, directly prior to the auditors' visit. There was word-for-word alignment noted between the lesson plan objectives and those from the Common Core State Standards. Whether or not the intent or expectation was to have all plans for instruction align with the CCSS in order to comply with the purpose of the auditors' visit, it is commendable that teachers were working to align teaching to the Common Core State Standards.

Given that there is fairly close alignment of lesson plans and objectives to C-MAPP and to Common Core State Standards, the next alignment analysis was to check on the alignment of select *CASE 21* assessment items and the sample assessments from *Smarter Balanced* in the areas of content, context, and levels of cognition. Auditors conducted a review of these expectations for third and fifth grade, choosing a randomly selected objective for each grade level in language arts and mathematics. Exhibit 1.4 presents the analysis of this review work:

Exhibit 1.4

Benchmark Assessment Analysis, Third and Fifth Grade Language Arts and Mathematics Wake County Public School System March 2013

Grade/Content Area	Common Core	<i>CASE 21</i> 1 st Assessment	<i>Smarter Balanced Public Released Assessment Item</i>
3 rd Grade/Language Arts – Content Alignment	<p>The Common Core expects the full integration of science and social studies content into the language arts content and skills.</p> <p>The Common Core also has the expectation that text type should be split 50-50 by fourth grade between literary and informational text. This balance shifts by eighth grade to 45-55 and to 30% literary and 70% informational text by twelfth grade.</p>	It is not noted which standard(s), exactly, are tested by each discrete item.	The standard is broken down into “claims,” with each “claim” broken down into identified “targets” or central ideas. Additionally, there is “evidence required” identified for each target.
3 rd Grade/Language Arts – Context Alignment	<p>The Common Core relies strongly on students' giving textual evidence in answering comprehension questions about a text.</p> <p>The Common Core does not typically specify how students will demonstrate the required concept, skill, or knowledge, although it is sometimes implied. The standards do expect students to cite textual evidence in support of their conclusions. HOW students are expected to do this is found in the Smarter Balanced Assessments.</p>	Mismatch: The test items within the <i>CASE 21</i> assessment are in traditional, multiple-choice format.	The sample assessment items provided by <i>Smarter Balanced</i> are selected response, where there could be more than one answer, or constructed/extended response, where students are writing using details from the text. There is a 2- or 3-point rubric provided as the scoring mechanism for the constructed response items. Technology proficiency is an expectation (keyboarding, click and drag, .

Exhibit 1.4 (continued)
Benchmark Assessment Analysis, 3rd and 5th Grade Language Arts and Mathematics
Wake County Public School System
March 2013

Grade/Content Area	Common Core	CASE 21 1 st Assessment	<i>Smarter Balanced Public Released Assessment Item</i>
3 rd Grade/Language Arts – Cognitive Type Alignment	The Common Core standards expect a high level of text analysis and interpretation. Critical thinking skills are emphasized.	Mismatch: The assessment items in <i>CASE 21</i> items ask students to reference information gleaned from the text provided with the assessment items. There is limited analysis; most often items are at the knowledge or comprehension levels (see Exhibit 2.5).	Sample items within the <i>Smarter Balanced</i> assessment are noted at a Depth of Knowledge 2 or 3, most often at the analysis or synthesis levels.
5 th Grade Language Arts			
5 th Grade/Language Arts – Content Alignment	Common Core standards focus on a multitude of skills and concepts. Emphasis is placed on analytical reading skills and familiarity with multiple genres, writing skills, and developing arguments and organizing thoughts and ideas in writing. Other skills include inference, conventions of language, and vocabulary acquisition and use. The Common Core emphasizes a familiarity with a multitude of genres, but greater attention should be given to informational text over literary text.	It is not noted which standard(s), exactly, are tested by each discrete item.	The standard is broken down into “claims,” with each “claim” broken down into identified “targets” or central ideas. Additionally, there is “evidence required” identified for each target.
5 th Grade/Language Arts – Context Alignment	The Common Core standards may suggest context, but there is little specific description of how students are expected to practice their learning or demonstrate mastery.	Mismatch: The test items within the <i>CASE 21</i> assessment are in traditional, multiple-choice format.	The sample assessments items utilized in <i>Smarter Balanced</i> are selected response, where there could be more than one answer, or constructed response, where students are writing a short paragraph or essay using details from the text. There is a 2- or 3-point rubric provided as the scoring mechanism for the constructed response items. Technology proficiency is an expectation (keyboarding, click and drag, etc.).

Exhibit 1.4 (continued)
Benchmark Assessment Analysis, 3rd and 5th Grade Language Arts and Mathematics
Wake County Public School System
March 2013

Grade/Content Area	Common Core	CASE 21 1 st Assessment	<i>Smarter Balanced Public Released Assessment Item</i>
5 th Grade/Language Arts – Cognitive Type Alignment	The Common Core standards expect a high level of text analysis and interpretation. Critical thinking skills are emphasized.	Mismatch: The assessment items in the <i>CASE 21</i> items are referencing knowledge gained with the text provided for the assessment items. There is some analysis, but most often items are at the knowledge or comprehension levels (see Exhibit 2.5).	Sample items within the <i>Smarter Balanced</i> assessment are noted at a Depth of Knowledge 2 or 3, most often at the analysis or synthesis levels.
3 rd Grade Math			
3 rd Grade/Math– Content Alignment	The Common Core Standards at third grade are organized into five strands: operations and algebraic thinking, numbers and operations in base ten, numbers and operations—fractions, measurement and data, and geometry.	It is not noted which standard(s), exactly, are tested by each discrete item.	The sample <i>Smarter Balanced</i> items address the following strands: Numbers and operations—fractions, operations and algebraic thinking, and measurement and data.
3 rd Grade/Math – Context Alignment	The Common Core Standards in mathematics provide a great deal of information regarding context. In at least half (or more) of the standards, a sample problem or scenario is described that details a sample context in which the student would demonstrate the learning. These contexts are reflected in the item types of the <i>Smarter Balanced</i> assessments. In addition, the standards for mathematical practice suggest context elements; these standards also play a role in the design of <i>Smarter Balanced</i> assessment items.	Mismatch: The test items within the <i>CASE 21</i> assessment are in traditional, multiple-choice format..	The sample assessments items utilized in <i>Smarter Balanced</i> are selected response, where there could be more than one answer, or extended response, where students are required to prove and justify their answers. There is a 2-point rubric provided to assist in the scoring of these items. Technology proficiency is an expectation.
3 rd Grade/Math– Cognitive Type Alignment		Mismatch: Most often, items are at the knowledge, comprehension, and application levels (see Exhibit 2.5).	Sample items within the <i>Smarter Balanced</i> assessment are noted at a Depth of Knowledge 2 or 3, most often at the analysis or synthesis levels.

Exhibit 1.4 (continued)
Benchmark Assessment Analysis, 3rd and 5th Grade Language Arts and Mathematics
Wake County Public School System
March 2013

Grade/Content Area	Common Core	CASE 21 1 st Assessment	<i>Smarter Balanced Public Released Assessment Item</i>
5th Grade Math			
5 th Grade/Math– Content Alignment	The Common Core Standards at fifth grade are organized into the following strands: geometry concepts, measurement and data, numbers and operations, and operations and algebraic thinking.	It is not noted which standard(s), exactly, are tested by each discrete item.	The sample <i>Smarter Balanced</i> items address the following strands: Geometry concepts - procedures and problem solving; measurement and data concepts and procedures; numbers and operations – fractions concepts and procedures; and operations and algebraic thinking.
5 th Grade/Math – Context Alignment	The Common Core Standards in mathematics provide a great deal of information regarding context. In at least half (or more) of the standards, a sample problem or scenario is described that details a sample context in which the student would demonstrate the learning. These contexts are reflected in the item types of the <i>Smarter Balanced</i> assessments. In addition, the standards for mathematical practice suggest context elements; these standards also play a role in the design of <i>Smarter Balanced</i> assessment items.	Mismatch: The test items within the <i>CASE 21</i> assessment are in traditional, multiple-choice format.	The sample assessments items utilized in <i>Smarter Balanced</i> are selected response, where there could be more than one answer, or extended response, where students are required to prove and justify their answers. There is a 2-point rubric provided to assist in the scoring of these items. Technology use is an expectation.
5 th Grade/Math– Cognitive Type Alignment		Mismatch: Most often, items are at the knowledge, comprehension, and application levels.	Sample items within the <i>Smarter Balanced</i> assessment are noted at a Depth of Knowledge 2 or 3, most often at the analysis or synthesis levels.

Important points from [Exhibit 1.4](#) include the following:

- There is evidence of alignment of the skill being tested by the *CASE 21* assessment items for both language arts and mathematics for grades 3 and 5 to those skills identified in the Common Core standards and also tested by the *Smarter Balanced* assessment items.
- The contexts used to assess skills in third and fifth grade language arts and mathematics on the *CASE 21* do not meet and exceed contexts found in the *Smarter Balanced* sample assessment items. This was due to the use of traditional, multiple-choice items for the *CASE 21* assessment, in contrast to the examples provided by *Smarter Balanced* that utilize constructed response, selected response, or extended response assessment items.
- The cognitive levels utilized in the *Smarter Balanced* sample assessment items were most often noted at a Depth of Knowledge level of 2 or 3, which is at a deeper rigor and critical thinking level than the

CASE 21 assessment items, which were most often at the knowledge, comprehension, and/or application levels of thinking using Bloom's Taxonomy. (See [Appendices C and D](#) for Depth of Knowledge and Bloom's information.)

The auditors will address issues specific to each respective content area below.

Language arts. The language arts *CASE 21* assessment items were mostly congruent in content with the Common Core and the *Smarter Balanced* sample assessment items in grades 3 and 5. However, there was a lack of context alignment for the following reason: The *Smarter Balanced* items use different types of items; these samples were all narrative constructed, selected, or extended response. Students also were given only authentic text of varying lengths and genres. The cognitive demand and the rigor of the *CASE 21* assessment items were not as demanding as the most demanding item from the third and fifth grade *Smarter Balanced* sample assessment items.

Another area that the auditors could not assess but that is an area of concern is the level of text used in the *CASE 21* assessment items versus the level of text in the *Smarter Balanced* sample release items. The vocabulary of the *Smarter Balanced* passages, which were entirely authentic, appeared far more demanding than the passages in the *CASE 21* assessment items. The auditors had no way to verify this, but a close analysis of text complexity and lexile range is warranted.

Mathematics. The *CASE 21* assessment items for mathematics correlate strongly with the Common Core and the sample *Smarter Balanced* items in content. However, in context, the *CASE 21* assessment items fail to match the heavy reliance on extended thinking and application found in the *Smarter Balanced* items. This reliance increases at subsequent grade levels, since the tests are intended to be interactive, with the use of technology as the levels progress. Additionally, the higher cognitive levels as indicated by the Depth of Knowledge on the sample *Smarter Balanced* assessment items do not correlate to those of the *CASE 21* items at the lower knowledge, comprehension and application levels.

This places a high demand on school districts if they are working proactively to prepare students for the coming Common Core assessments, since technology plays such a vital role in their administration. The contexts of these assessments surpass all traditional multiple-choice formats, as well, which calls in question whether an all-multiple-choice item bank as utilized on the *CASE 21* assessment items reviewed could ever be adequate in providing students with practice in the content and contexts that will be found on the *Smarter Balanced* assessments.

Interviews and responses to surveys provided additional insight into challenges of curriculum in WCPSS. The following comments report a mismatch between when C-MAPP was ready for teachers to use this year and the calendar on which year-round schools operate:

- “C-MAPP is not catering to the year-round schools. For the past two quarters they have not had their writing instructional guides posted on the website. So we are 15 days behind in writing because we did not have access to the instructional guides.”
- “C-MAPP has been a huge challenge this year. Central Office is running barely ahead of students because of the challenges with Common Core Standards and new assessments. We are getting there. This is a challenge for all schools, but seriously a problem for year-round schools because we are always ahead of schools on a traditional calendar.”
- “I think C-MAPP is a great tool that needs to be tweaked. It has never been up and ready for year-round schools. When you buy something in the store that says one size fits all--it doesn't. When central office does walk throughs and get [sic] upset that we are seven days off. They do not get it. The same menu does not work for every school.”
- “We have been slow in getting to Common Core Standards.”
- “We did not get things from central office until the end of August or September. We can't follow C-MAPP when school starts in July and we don't have the right materials. I wish communication were a bit stronger from central office on down to school. I feel like the central office does not care. We

need all our ducks in a row. I feel like the attitude is, ‘Oh well, we are on summer vacation, you will get it when we get back.’”

- “We did not have Social Studies until we had been teaching two months-only the topic. I am a new teacher so it was hard. There was nothing when we tracked in during the summer.”
- “There is a calendar mismatch for taking the district mandated assessments with the year-round calendar. Usually it is unfolded after we have been in school for a month.”
- “Track One started before the C-MAPP was on-line and we did our own thing but didn’t match.”
- “The Race to the Top trainings to get teachers ready for Common Core (four or five of them last year) were confusing and not helpful. Also we had a common core math training this year. Staff from here went to training and then came back and taught the rest of the team. Would have been helpful to have that for everyone before school started.”

During conversations with the feeder middle school, auditors heard several comments about the lack of articulation that the following statement summarizes:

- “The middle school has no articulation meetings with this or other schools that transition to us and we don’t have those meetings with high schools.”

Summary

In summary, teachers are using C-MAPP for planning and are aware of CCSS. There is alignment between the lesson objectives and those stated in C-MAPP, which reflect Common Core standards and objectives. There is also alignment between the C-MAPP standards, the *CASE 21* assessment items, and the objectives tested on the sample *Smarter Balanced* assessment items in the content of objectives and skills. However, alignment does not exist in the areas of context and cognitive level for *CASE 21* as compared to *Smarter Balanced* sample assessment items, causing a disconnect in the way the skills will be assessed and how deeply the skills will be assessed. Additionally, instructional resources referred to in C-MAPP for teachers’ use are frequently out-of-print or not available at the school site. And finally, C-MAPP and district assessments have not been ready in a timely manner for year-round schools in the system. Schools on the year-round calendar seem to have been forgotten along, with their children who come back to school a couple of months before the traditional calendar starts. These areas of concern impact teachers’ ability to plan and teach the intended curriculum of WCPSS.

Finding 2: Expectations for the WCPSS curriculum to be taught in classrooms are clear; however, effective curriculum delivery at Hodge Road Elementary School is hindered by a fragmented schedule, inadequate rigor in classroom activities, and limited use of district-preferred instructional strategies.

The effectiveness of curriculum delivery is dependent on two critical components: what is being taught (the curriculum) and how it is being taught (instruction). Quality in both areas is essential to a school’s capacity to positively influence student achievement. High yield, research-based teaching strategies that are stimulating and focused promote student learning in all segments of the student population regardless of gender, ethnicity, language background, or socioeconomic status. In an effective school district, district leadership will establish explicit expectations regarding the nature and quality of instruction and communicate those expectations to school leaders. School leaders, in turn, communicate those expectations to teachers, provide professional development on the use of those strategies, observe classroom practice to monitor the implementation of those strategies and expectations, collect and analyze data from those observations to provide feedback to teachers, and ultimately use the data from those observations to modify curriculum and instruction in the school.

To determine district expectations for classroom curriculum and instructional practices, auditors reviewed district documents including board policies, district and school plans, job descriptions, and evaluation instruments. Auditors also visited each classroom in which instruction was occurring at the time of the school visits and interviewed district and school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members regarding the delivery of curriculum.

Auditors found students commonly oriented to the work in classrooms. However, instructional practices in classrooms were limited by a low level of cognitive expectations, limited use of instructional technology by both teachers and students, fragmented scheduling that does not fully protect core instructional time for students, limited use of powerful instructional practices, and teachers who have been pulled out of the classroom for professional development frequently, leaving the instruction to substitute teachers for these high needs students.

Board Policy and District Document Review

The following board policies address expectations for instructional practices and delivery of the curriculum by teachers by WCPSS:

- *Board Policy 3219: Teacher Job Description* calls for teachers to align their instruction with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, develop and apply strategies to make the curriculum rigorous and relevant, respond to the cultural diversity and learning needs of students, use a wide variety of instructional methods as they strive to eliminate achievement gaps, integrate and utilize technology in their instruction, differentiate instruction as needed, and develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- *Board Policy 5100: Curriculum Management* states that teachers shall teach the written curriculum and modify instruction to ensure students' success.
- *Board Policy 5101: Curriculum and Assessment Decisions* states that school-based staff is responsible for the delivery of the district's curriculum so that all students are taught and learn the intended curriculum.

Written documents of WCPSS also address instructional expectations of the system:

- The *Strategic Plan for WCPSS: Vision 2017* calls for delivering high-quality instruction that is differentiated and engaging with students who need additional support to receive targeted interventions to ensure academic success.
- *WCPSS Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs* calls for challenging all students by providing academic rigor that is essential to student success.
- *WCPSS Elementary Programs at a Glance* requires instruction that is differentiated and scaffolded with opportunities for re-teaching and enrichment, all students are engaged in acts of complex thinking and creation of products, connections are made across content areas, and students involved in the practical application of what they are learning.”

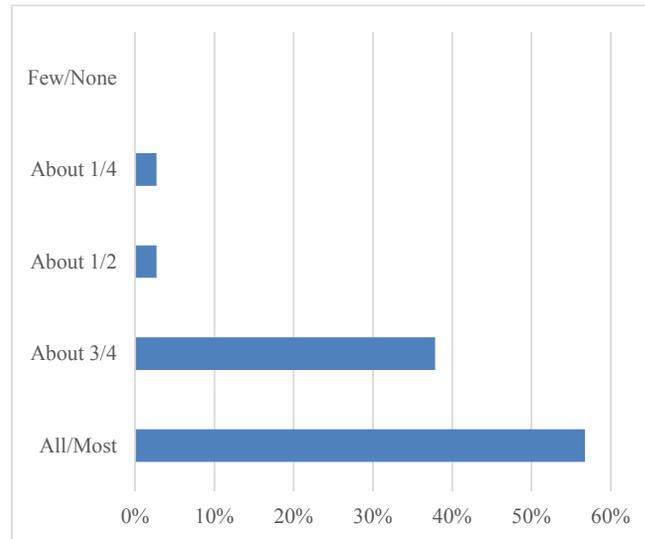
Classroom Observations

To determine how the district's general expectations for classroom instructional practices matched actual observed activities in classrooms, the auditors visited all classrooms in which instruction was occurring at the time of the school visit. To accommodate all tracks in the year-round school, one auditor did a follow-up one-day visit three weeks after the original site visits. During the on-site visits to 43 classrooms, the auditors used a standardized protocol to collect a variety of information about each classroom, including 1) student orientation to the work, 2) content, context, and cognitive type of the objective being taught; 3) written objective and congruence to the objective actually being taught; 4) dominant student activity; 5) dominant teacher activity; 6) use of powerful instructional practices; and 7) use of technology for both students and teachers. This section of the report addresses the data that were collected during these visits.

Student Orientation to the Work

Upon entering classrooms for which observational data were collected, auditors identified the number of students who were oriented to their work using the following rating scale: all/most, about three-quarters, about half, about one-fourth, or few/none. These data were collected from each classroom and are displayed in [Exhibit 2.1](#), showing the percentage of the total classroom orientation for each category.

Exhibit 2.1
Percentage of Students Oriented to Work in Classroom Observations
Hodge Road Elementary School
Wake County Public School System
March 2013



Based on Exhibit 2.1, the following points are noted:

- All or most students were oriented to their work in 57 percent of the classrooms.
- About three-quarters of the students were oriented to their work in 38 percent of Hodge Road classrooms.
- In less than six percent of Hodge Road classrooms, less than half of the students were oriented to their work.

Dominant Teacher Activity

During classroom visits, auditors used a standard observation protocol to classify teacher activities, which have been listed and defined in Exhibit 2.2.

Exhibit 2.2
Description of Categories of Teacher Activity

Activity	Description
Large Group Work	Teacher is presenting new information, concepts, or skills to students or going over an assignment with the entire class. Direct instruction.
Small Group Work	Teacher is working with a small group of students, while the rest of the class is engaged in seat work, centers, or other activities.
Individual Work	Teacher is assisting students individually or in small clusters, not simply providing praise or feedback.
Monitoring Student Work	Teacher is monitoring students while they complete an assignment independently (or while they take a test, watch a video, etc.) without providing additional instruction to students.
Other	Teacher is engaged in an activity other than the classifications listed (on the phone, at the desk, not engaged with a student or students).

Teacher activities observed by the audit team were categorized in accordance with the definitions above. It is important to note that the segments of classroom activities observed by auditors were quite brief in duration (normally 5-15 minutes), and types of activities varied depending on the time of the day classrooms were

visited. The brief observation has been documented as adequate to identify the type of teacher activity under way at the time of the school visitation. Exhibit 2.3 shows the types of teacher activities observed in the 43 classrooms and their frequency.

Exhibit 2.3
Frequency of Teacher Activity During Classroom Observations
Hodge Road Elementary School
Wake County Public School System
March 2013

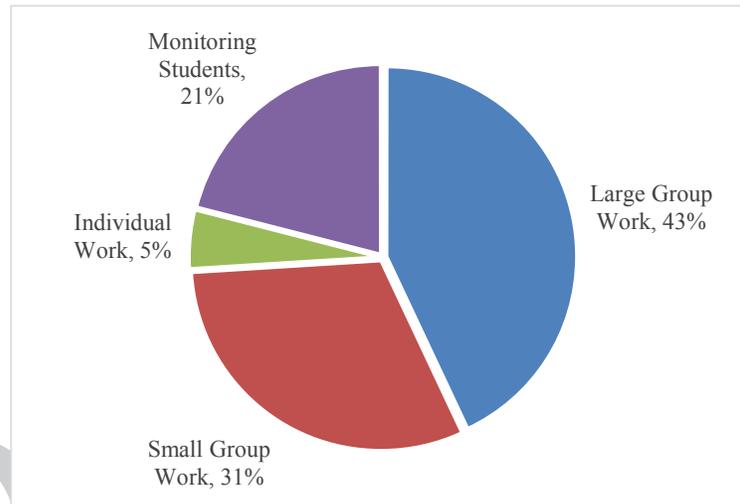


Exhibit 2.3 shows the following:

- All teachers were actively teaching in classrooms; there were no incidents of teachers sitting at their desk or engaged in other activities.
- The most common teacher activity observed was large group, direct instruction work (43 percent).
- Teachers involved in small group work with students were observed in 31 percent of Hodge Road classrooms.
- Teachers were monitoring student work in 21 percent of classrooms.
- Teachers at Hodge Road spent the least amount of their time working with individual students.



Hodge Road students working in teacher led group

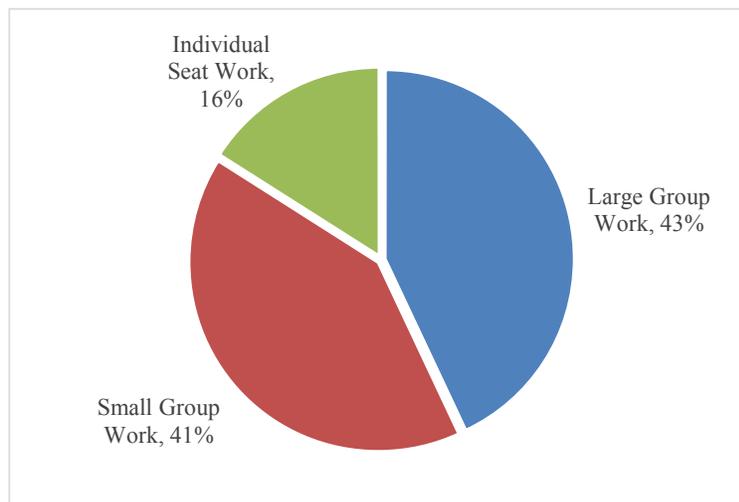
Dominant Student Activity

Auditors also looked at activities in which students were involved during the classroom observations. The data on student behaviors at Hodge Road were categorized as follows:

- *Large Group*-At least two-thirds of the students are listening without any active participation while the teacher or another student addresses the class. Students may be taking notes or simply listening and observing.
- *Small Group*-Students are working with a group that is less than approximately one-third of the total number of students in the classroom. Examples include reading groups and centers in which the teacher assists the students.
- *Individual Seat Work*-Students are working independently at their desks doing some type of paper and pencil exercise, writing assignment, or prepared worksheet.
- *Discussion*-Refers to students actively involved in a discussion regarding a text, concept, or other content, either directed by the teacher or another student. This may be a large group or small group activity and generally is centered on problem solving.
- *Reading*-Students engaged in reading either silently, in pairs, or in a shared reading scenario.
- *Watching Video*-Refers to a class as a whole engaged in watching a video presentation.
- *Taking Assessment*-Students completing an assessment.
- *Other*-Refers to any activity not included in the categories above.

Exhibit 2.4 presents information on the type of activities that students were involved in during classroom visits:

Exhibit 2.4
Frequency of Student Activity During Classroom Observations
Hodge Road Elementary School
Wake County Public School System
March 2013



As noted in Exhibit 2.4:

- In 59 percent of the 43 classrooms observed, students were involved in seat work (16 percent) or large group work (43 percent).
- Forty-one (41) percent of the classrooms offered instruction that required students to work in small groups.

DRAFT

Cognitive Level of Student Work

In several board policies and district documents, critical thinking was listed as one of the general expectations for students in Wake County Public School System. To determine the match of classroom practice with that expectation, auditors collected data on the cognitive level of instruction observed during classroom visits.

Exhibit 2.5 provides a definition of the cognitive types used in Bloom's Taxonomy.

Exhibit 2.5

Description of Cognitive Types in Bloom's Taxonomy

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

Source: Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Benjamin Bloom, Editor, Longman, 1956

Exhibit 2.6 provides a display of the cognitive levels of instruction observed in Hodge Road Elementary classrooms. It should be noted that data were collected only when auditors were able to identify a cognitive type in any given lesson.

Exhibit 2.6
Cognitive Function Types Observed
Hodge Road Elementary School
Wake County Public School System
March 2013

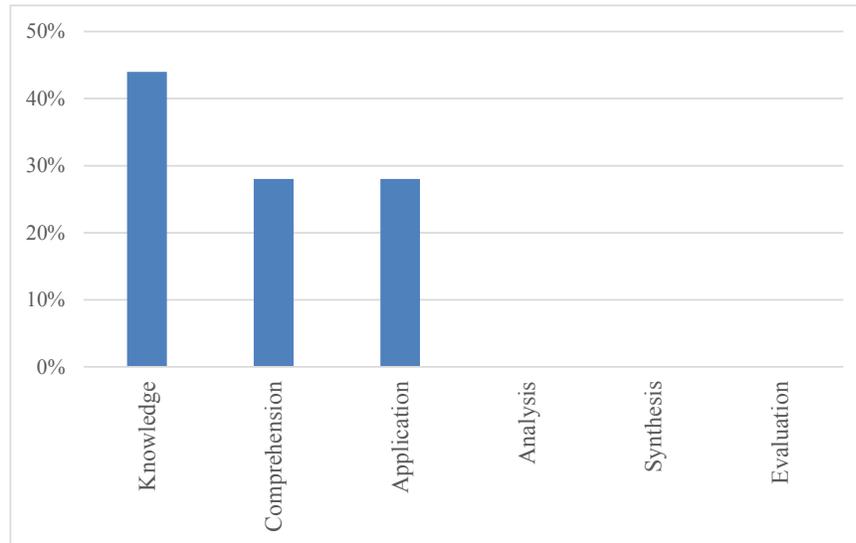


Exhibit 2.6 shows:

- The predominant cognitive levels (72 percent) observed in Hodge Road Elementary classrooms were knowledge (44 percent) and comprehension (28 percent).
- In 28 percent of all classrooms observed, students were functioning at an application of cognition.
- There were no students expected to be functioning at the higher levels of cognition: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Comments during interviews further expanded on the cognitive rigor in classrooms:

- “We are struggling with rigor and asking higher order questions.”
- “More differentiation is needed.”
- “The data shows [sic] we are not proficient. We see growth, but we are not proficient.”
- “We need stronger expectations of all staff members for all kids.”

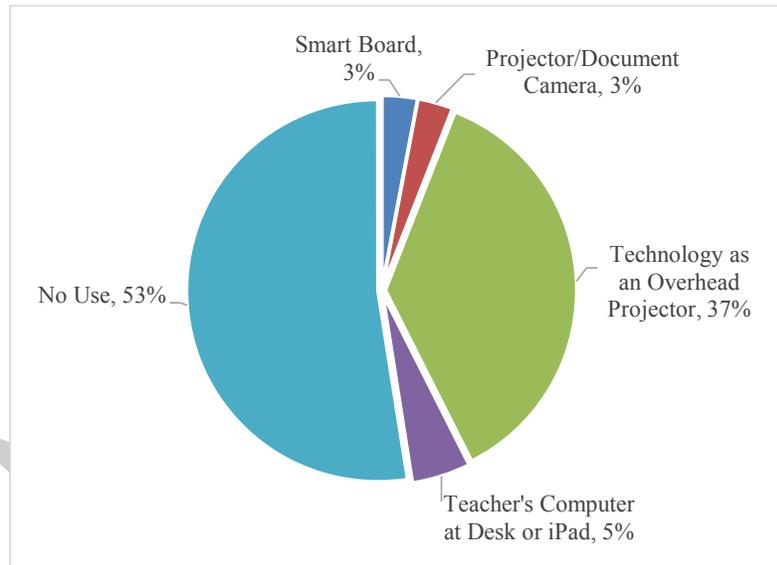
Use of Instructional Technology

Wake County Public School System has several guiding documents that identify expectations for the use of technology in district classrooms, including the following:

- *Board Policy 3219:Teacher Job Description* expects that teachers will integrate and utilize technology in their instruction to maximize students’ learning and to help student use technology to learn content, think critically, solve problems, discern reliability, use information, communicate, innovate, and collaborate.
- *Board Policy 5100:Curriculum Management* calls for teachers to integrate and utilize technology in their instruction.

To determine the use of technology to support instruction, auditors recorded the number of computers available for student use and the number of computers being used by students and by teachers during classroom visits. Computer usage by teachers is shown in [Exhibit 2.7](#):

Exhibit 2.7
Computer Usage by Teachers
Hodge Road Elementary School
Wake County Public School System
March 2013



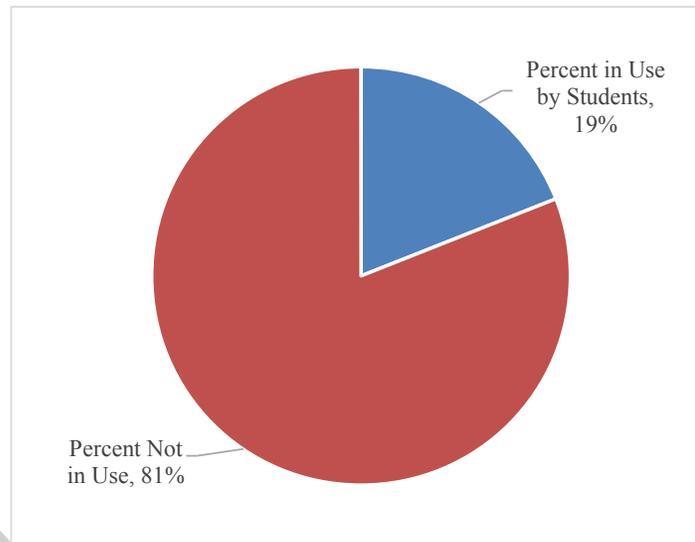
From the data in [Exhibit 2.7](#), the following points can be made:

- In the majority (53 percent) of classrooms at Hodge Road, teachers were not using technology to support instruction.
- Of the 47 percent of teachers who were using technology in some manner, 37 percent were using the technology as an overhead projector rather than as intended as an interactive tool.
- Six percent of teachers using technology to teach were using interactive technology including Smart Boards and projector/document cameras.

Exhibit 2.8 demonstrates student use of technology during classroom visits at Hodge Road:

Exhibit 2.8

Computer Usage by Students Hodge Road Elementary School Wake County Public School System March 2013



Noteworthy in Exhibit 2.8:

- The majority (81 percent) of computers intended for student use were not in use during classroom observations.
- Less than 20 percent of student computers were in use by students

Some interview and survey comments provide further information on the use of instructional technology and what is perceived as a lack of maintenance of the school's technology:

- "We have technology that needs to be repaired and we need to add more and to integrate it into the classroom."
- "We use M-Class for assessing but we can't use it if the technology is down. Then the technology is down, we need to go back to paper/pencil."
- "My kid's technology skills are not equivalent to other schools in the county because we may have five computers in a classroom but only three working."
- "We lack technology. We only have Smart boards in kindergarten and most are broken and there is no money for repairs. We have only six iPads for the whole school."
- "We are expected to utilize technology but only now are receiving the basic technology equipment that other schools have had for years. Additionally, the district assumes that our students have access to Internet and/or computers at home. They DO NOT."
- "I don't have consistent technology to help deliver instruction. We often have the Internet fail in the part of the building in which I teach. We also have limited access to technology, yet are evaluated as though we have all of these technologies available. If I had an iPad, a Smartboard, functioning classroom computers, a television that worked, etc. I would gladly use them. As a staff, we do not have this luxury."
- "Lack of technology of any sort yet being told to use technology daily."

The use of classroom technology is limited in Hodge Road classrooms. There are repeated reports that the instructional technology that is available in the school is often not working, so teachers are unable to use technology to support instruction. Auditors were unable to confirm the actual situation other than to say that the evidence presented was that technology was rarely used. As high stakes CCSS student testing comes in during the next years with *Smarter Balanced* assessments, technology proficiency is an expectation for all schools and all students.



Hodge Road PE teacher's word wall

Powerful Instructional Practices

WCPSS has communicated the expectation that the district written curriculum will be delivered in all classrooms, and there are some general expectations for the instructional strategies to be used. Lacking more specific direction on the instructional strategies expected, auditors compiled a list of possible strategies or practices that have been defined in the literature as high yield strategies. If these types of strategies are similar to those desired by the district and school leadership, then this analysis would be important for defining best practices in WCPSS.

During classroom observations, auditors recorded the most dominant strategies that were evident during that time. Descriptions of those instructional strategies can be found in [Appendix B](#). [Exhibit 2.9](#) provides information about the use of the powerful instructional strategies in Hodge Road classrooms.

Exhibit 2.9

Percentages of Instructional Strategies Observed Hodge Road Elementary School Wake County Public School System March 2013

Instructional Strategies	Percentage of Classrooms
Uses advanced organizers	19
Provides daily review-including homework concepts	16
Reviews prior learnings in relation to new learning	47
Provides relevant information and examples	35
Uses accountable talk	12

Uses quality questioning techniques	30%
Exhibit 2.9 (continued) Percentages of Instructional Strategies Observed Hodge Road Elementary School Wake County Public School System March 2013	
Instructional Strategies	Percentage of Classrooms
Uses metacognition and modeling	16%
Employs nonlinguistic representations	26%
Elicits active participation	58%
Provides opportunities for each student to respond each time	19%
Uses formal cooperative learning approaches	2%
Checks for understanding	63%
Uses cues, prompts, probes	47%
Provides guided practice with corrective feedback	42%
Provides independent practice	21%
Uses closure as another practice activity	2%
Uses assessments to diagnosis student needs	0%
Sets goals for students	7%
Uses vocabulary development strategies	26%
Reinforces effort and gives praise	58%
Uses feedback through the lesson	23%
Takes notes (student)	2%
Compares, contrasts, classifies (student)	9%
Generates hypotheses/tests them (student)	9%
Summarizes (student)	2%
Has talk which is positive (learning environment)	44%
Demonstrates rigor and high expectations talk	12%
Provides homework	0%
Provides for differentiated learning	0%

Based on Exhibit 2.9 the following observations can be made:

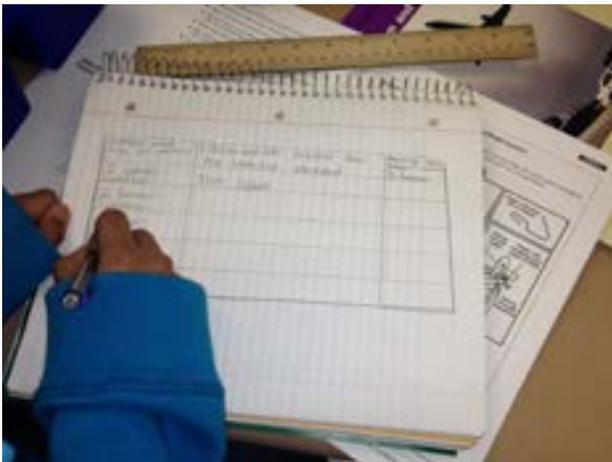
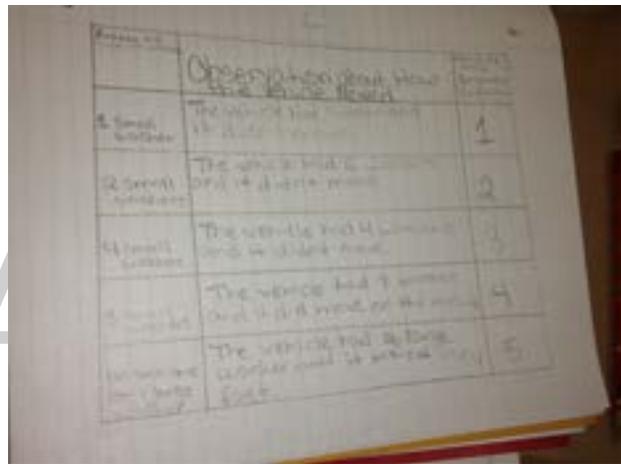
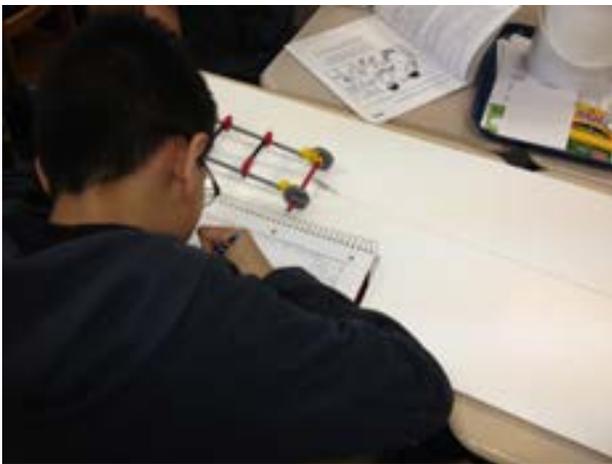
- In 42 percent to 63 percent of the classrooms there were seven powerful instructional strategies observed. Those strategies include checking for understanding; eliciting active participation; reinforcing effort and giving praise; reviewing prior learnings in relation to new learnings; using cues, prompts, and probes; using talk which is positive; and providing guided practice with corrective feedback.
- In about one third of classrooms there were two powerful instructional strategies observed.
- Between 20 percent and 26 percent of the classrooms there were another four powerful instructional strategies observed.
- There were seven powerful instructional strategies used in less than two percent of all classrooms observed.

Of additional note on classroom observations of the use of these strategies:

- In nine percent of classrooms there was an absence of any powerful instructional strategies observed.
- At the opposite end of the perspective, in 16 percent of classrooms there were more than ten powerful instructional strategies in use during the brief observation period.

Interviews provided additional insight into curriculum delivery:

- “There is a calendar mismatch for taking the district mandated assessments with the year-round calendar. Usually it is unfolded after we have been in school for a month.”
- “I feel I miss 50 percent of my reading groups because I have to assess. The point of progress monitoring is to use the information to guide teaching. But our time for teaching is limited due to continual assessment. I feel like I never have a chance to reflect on these assessments to guide my instruction. I am constantly testing students but I don’t get to use the results to inform my teaching. I understand the importance of collecting data, but it is a losing battle. I need the time to reflect and change my instruction. I would like to see a more balanced approach. Collecting the data and assessing students is very important. Either we need someone to be collecting that constant data or we need to not be required to collect the data as often so that we have the time to use the data to inform our practice. I take anecdotal notes daily...I have a spreadsheet for every student. I feel those notes should be considered a type of data to drive instruction. I feel those should be counted as progress monitoring. I use those to drive my instruction. I reflect on those and use them to plan my teaching.”



5th Grade Students engaged in a science experiment

Teacher Absences

During interviews it became apparent that teacher attendance was a concern in the quality of instruction offered to students at Hodge Road. When teachers are not present, students must depend on substitute teachers who may or may not be of the highest quality and who may or may not be familiar with district curriculum and expectations for curriculum delivery. The most pointed interview quotes follow:

- “The amount of time that teachers are pulled out for training seems very high. It seems we should do training after school and on Saturdays or even during intersessions. In a month it is not uncommon for a teacher to miss four days because of workshops. A sub is not the same as a teacher. I don’t want my child to have subs so often.”
- “Teachers are pulled out so much. So much training.”

To determine the nature of teacher absence, auditors analyzed attendance records of teachers. Exhibit 2.10 shows the incidence of teacher absence for professional development during the school day.

Exhibit 2.10

Teacher Absence by Purpose Hodge Road Elementary School Wake County Public School System March 2013

Days	# of Teachers Out for PD	Total Days
0	14	0
1	7	7
2	9	18
3	6	18
4	2	8
5	6	30
6	3	18
7	1	7
8	0	0
9	1	9
10	0	0
11	1	11
12	0	0
13	0	0
14	0	0
15	1	15
Total	51	141
Average Days Out		2.765

Based on Exhibit 2.10 the following observations are made:

- From the beginning of the school year 2012 through February 28, 2013, 51 teachers were absent from their classrooms for 406.5 days.
- Nearly one third of teacher absences were used for professional development.

Additional information gained for analyzing teacher absences include the following facts:

- The average days out of school for each teacher for professional development is 2.76
- The range of substitute days for professional development ranged from 0 days for 14 teachers to 14.5 days for one teacher.

Instructional Schedule

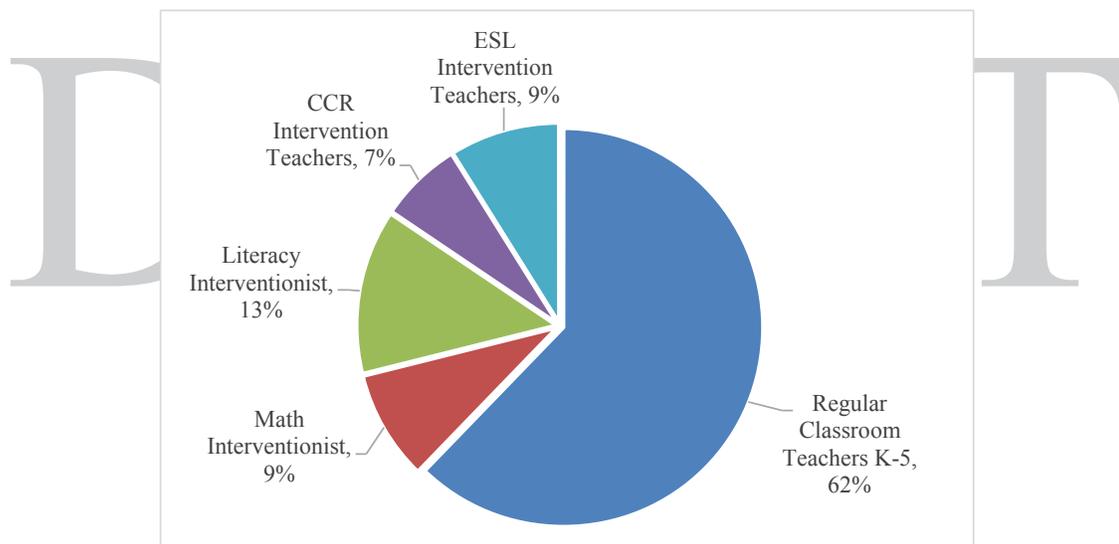
During classroom observations auditors noted that there was much movement of students in and out of classrooms and across the school. Students were frequently pulled out during core instruction or there was a push-in teacher or multiple teachers in the classroom. Children and teachers were frequently focused on the clock, reminding each other of the need to move to another classroom or change schedules. Interviews and responses to surveys expanded on the instructional schedule:

- “The day is very fragmented for our classroom teachers and kids: Could we reverse the model and pull out high kids or what other strategies could be used?”
- “Sometimes the schedule is very difficult. As a classroom teacher I don’t see the students enough to serve on grade level. It is a real challenge keeping up with where students are. Most of my students are going to Sped, ESL, and/or Title One. We have lots of support but the children are out of the classroom frequently during the day. It is a problem.”
- “Our students receive instruction in Daily Five direct instruction opportunities. Then they come to me during stations or rotations. All are being “double dipped” and some triple dipped.”
- “Sometimes I feel like my class is a train station. Kids coming and going to different places. Being pulled in different directions. Everyone is concerned about the kids...but I have students for reading that I don’t work with one on one. I want to be sure that I have the ability to work with kids. Regardless of who works with my kids, I am responsible. The parents meet with me. I have to answer for kids’ success. Every one has their hand in it. They are trying to help but I need to work with my children in reading.”
- “Classroom Teachers and Title One will talk and often are on the same page because of the focus on progress monitoring but not always.”
- “Have so much support (other schools say wow, you have this many reading specialists, and still the gains are not there).”
- “Scheduling is tricky. I have six reading groups; the aide pulls the higher group while I pull the low group. We use Daily Five for a structure. If students come a little late from ESL they miss out. We need to work on scheduling and communicating about when kids are in the classroom and when they are out. With the double and triple dip students are pulled out a lot. Teachers struggle with this to make sure students get the core instruction.”
- “We have a lot of resources. We have things, we have teachers but I need more time working with my students.”
- “Kids are being pulled a lot, it’s good, but when they come back into the classroom I need to tell them what we’re doing, etc. but they are behind already, especially in the morning. Those are the students who need so much structure and it’s the most challenging schedule for them.”
- “We have had to get very creative with the Daily Five scheduling. Mini lesson, rotation, mini lesson, rotation, (often Title teachers are sitting and waiting, and in many cases students don’t get the mini lesson.”
- “The students who need it the most are missing out on consistency and what’s expected because of the schedule.”

- “A frustration for me is the inability to provide consistent regular instruction because of changes in scheduling.”
- “...tight, rigid, inflexible, time limits on instruction.”
- “Should be having double dip with instruction, not having instruction occurring in the back while core instruction is occurring in the classroom. Shouldn’t be taking the place of instruction.”
- “My concern is that kids can’t perform because they were never taught it, very concerning with push in and pull out if instruction is missing in the first place.”

Decisions have been made at Hodge Road about the expenditure of funds to support the large number of intervention and supplemental teachers. The school staff frequently refers to double and triple dipping students for intervention. This perhaps is being done in lieu of good first teaching in the core content areas because of the complicated scheduling. [Exhibit 2.11](#) shows the breakdown of regular classroom teachers K-5 and intervention teachers who are serving the same students.

Exhibit 2.11
Interventionist Staffing
Hodge Road Elementary School
Wake County Public School System
March 2013



[Exhibit 2.11](#) demonstrates the following:

- Regular classroom teachers who are responsible for teaching the core curriculum in grades K-5 make up 62 percent of the staffing pie for teaching all of the schools’ students in grades K-5.
- Interventionists who are pulling students out and pushing into general education classrooms fill 38 percent of the staffing pie. The goal is these teachers to provide additional teaching to students who are in need of additional support.

In addition to the special intervention teachers noted in [Exhibit 2.11](#), Hodge Road also has an intersession teacher, a local literacy teacher and the typical school support teachers and support staff including speech and language, guidance counselor, academically gifted, computer tech, and technology assistant. All of these teachers either pull out students for special services or push into classrooms to provide services to students. The caste of support is wide. The concern is for all children having the opportunity to focus on first good teaching in a classroom in which time for core instruction is protected.

Summary

In summary, WCPSS expects that teachers align their instruction to the written curriculum using strategies that are rigorous, differentiated, and develop critical thinking and practical application of skills. Curriculum delivery at Hodge Road Elementary is limited by some basic tenets of classroom instruction. Overall, there is a low level of cognitive rigor and expectations by teachers for student work, the use of instructional technology by both students and teachers is minimal, the use of powerful instructional strategies is limited and totally missing in some classrooms, and instructional time is fragmented due to the many interventions and scheduling that has failed to protect time for high quality core instruction and first good teaching. Additionally, teachers are pulled out for professional development during the school days, leaving critical instructional time to substitute teachers.

Finding 3: WCPSS expectations for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum are inconsistent and inadequate to ensure higher levels of student learning.

Supervision of curriculum and instruction can be an effective tool for improving teaching and learning. Monitoring the delivery of the curriculum should be systemic and occur at all levels to ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively. Board policies need to provide direction for monitoring by district and building administrative staff of the written, taught, and tested curriculum. Through the monitoring of curriculum, effective principals and district staff diagnose teaching practices to be improved and provide teachers with feedback to improve their teaching of the approved curriculum.

Expectations for fidelity in delivery of the curriculum in any school system are established at the board and superintendent levels. These expectations are communicated in various ways including but not limited to board policy, administrative regulations and procedures, professional development provided, and evaluation procedures for school administrators and teachers.

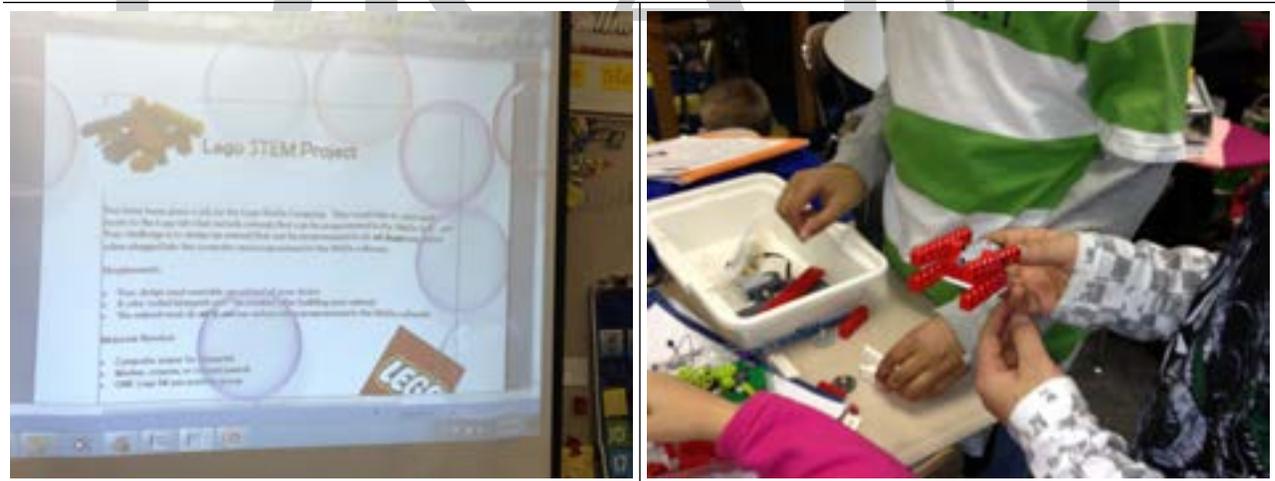
The auditors reviewed board policies, job descriptions, lesson plans, and other documents to identify expectations for curriculum delivery by teaching staff and monitoring by principals, assistant principals, and other instructional supervisors. The auditors also interviewed teachers and principals concerning expectations for delivering and monitoring of the curriculum to determine current practices in Wake County Public School System.

Board Policy and District Document Review

Auditors noted expectations for curriculum delivery and monitoring of the delivery of the curriculum in the following policies:

- *Board Policy 5100: Curriculum Management* identifies expectations for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum. Specifically it calls for principals to formally observe classes, monitor lessons, and conduct frequent walk-through observations to monitor the curriculum. This policy also notes that the chief academic officer is responsible for assisting principals in the monitoring of the implementation for the curriculum.
- *Board Policy 3230: Evaluation of Licensed Employees* states that the evaluation of licensed employees is a mandated duty and responsibility of the administration. Improvement of instruction is the primary function of evaluation. Additionally, it notes that the superintendent is authorized to establish procedures for evaluating licensed employees.
- *Regulations and Procedures 5100: Curriculum Management* notes that the district staff will provide support for and monitor the taught curriculum.

Auditors reviewed job descriptions for school-based staff to determine if the WCPSS had assigned job responsibilities for the monitoring of the WCPSS approved curriculum. These included the principal and assistant principal, which both lacked any requirements for communicating the expectation for the delivery of the WCPSS curriculum or for monitoring the effectiveness of its delivery in the classrooms of the school. Auditors requested job descriptions for IRT positions and were informed that formal job descriptions do not exist although the title of the position would indicate this would be a support position for monitoring and coaching teaching for learning.



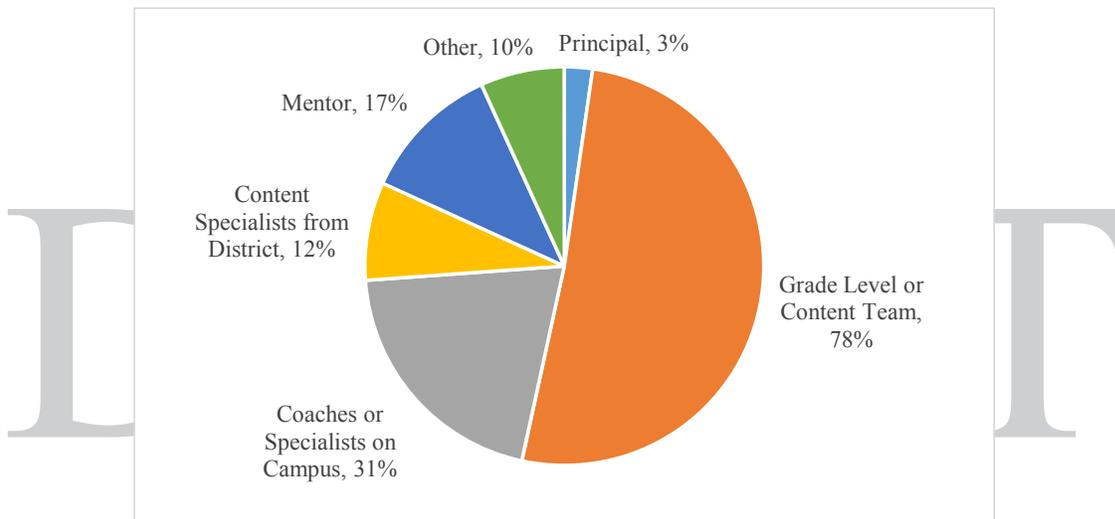
A Lego STEM project in action

Surveys and Interviews

Auditors provided a link to Survey Monkey, an online survey tool, for school instructional staff a week prior to the school site visit. The survey contained 30 open-ended questions. 58 instructional staff members completed these anonymous surveys. Question number 30 on the survey is pertinent to this finding since the concept of monitoring includes coaching in the delivery of the curriculum. Question 30 asked responders who provides assistance to them in the planning and delivery of instruction. Responders were given the following choices; principal, grade level or content team, coaches or specialists on their campus, content specialists from the district, their mentor, or the category of “other” where they could identify someone other than those listed. [Exhibit 3.1](#) displays the responses by category from the survey question.

Exhibit 3.1

**Survey Data Reflecting Categories of Assistance Identified by Staff
Hodge Road Elementary School
Wake County Public School System
March 2013**

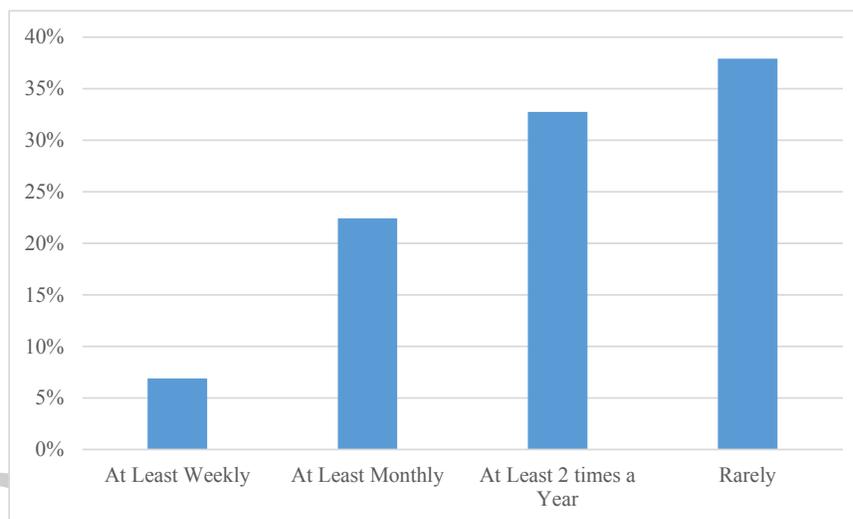


Noteworthy in [Exhibit 3.1](#) are the following points:

- Of the 58 surveys completed at Hodge Road Elementary School, 45 responders or 78 percent identified grade level or content team members as their source of assistance in curriculum delivery.
- 31 percent of the responders identified coaches or specialists on their campus as their source of assistance.
- 10 responders (17 percent) of the 58 staff members completing the survey indicated that their mentor was their source of assistance.
- Two responders identified the principal as a source of assistance in curriculum delivery.

Additional information noted from survey Question number 23 asking teachers about how often the principal visited their classroom, is shown in [Exhibit 3.2](#).

Exhibit 3.2
Survey Data Reflecting Classroom Visits by the Principal
Hodge Road Elementary School
Wake County Public School System
March 2013



Information shared in [Exhibit 3.2](#) indicates the following:

- 71 percent of the 58 responders noted that classroom visits by the principal occurred two times a year or rarely.

In analysis of the survey comments, the auditors found that the following comments were made from three responders to Question number 7 which asked about teacher's perception of the weaknesses of Hodge Road Elementary School:

- "Administration needs to be seen more."
- "Our administration is very rarely seen and does not give the support needed to help raise student achievement."
- "Administration is seen very little."

Additionally, comments on the survey from one responder to Question 15 asking teachers to indicate frustrations they deal with daily in delivering instruction noted the following:

- "When I ask for assistance from administration or from the district, it is rarely ever given. The district support is worse than administration."

During interviews with the auditors, teachers commented on the monitoring of the delivered curriculum. Representative comments follow:

- "We do not have conversations about teaching and learning and what we were doing and what we were going to do next."
- "We are not visited by the folks from Central Office. We ask for help and they don't come. They know the population that we have on paper. But they don't come and see."
- "When we have questions, who do we turn to?"
- "Our grade level teams hold each other accountable."

- “District visits are scheduled for three times a year. A district person supposedly came last year but I didn’t see them. Math did come this year.”
- “There is growth, but people just look at test scores, not growth.”
- “The principal has only been through my classroom once or twice. The assistant principal and IRT have been in once. My grade level teachers have been a great support.”
- “My advice to administrators is to be visible and in the classrooms.”
- “Principal is ‘hit or miss’ in classrooms.”
- “It would be nice if administration had more time in the classrooms to know what kids and teachers are doing.”

Summary

In summary, explicit expectations that the curriculum of WCPSS will be taught is evident in *Board Policy 3100: Curriculum Management* with the expectation under roles and responsibilities that it is the responsibility of the principal to monitor the delivery of the curriculum. However, current documents fail to clarify for principals and other school administrative staff (assistant principals and IRTs) the means by which this is to be accomplished. Current walk-through practices are infrequent, and feedback from these walk-throughs is inconsistent and varied. There is no formalized system to provide teachers with on-going and meaningful feedback on their delivery of the approved WCPSS curriculum. This results in teachers turning to others to provide assistance and support to them in the delivery of their curriculum rarely the principal. Additionally, principals are not provided with a model for coaching teachers in the effective delivery of the curriculum by central office leadership. With the lack of a model for school-based administrators, an inconsistency of approach in the monitoring of curriculum is evident and falls short of the audit standard.

Finding 4: Inequalities and inconsistencies exist that affect student access to comparable programs, services, and learning opportunities.

A well-managed school district reflects a strong commitment to both consistency and equity. All students are placed in programs and activities with equal access to the written curriculum and to services available in the district. Access should not be determined by gender, ethnicity, geographic attendance area, or socio economic status.

Equity is defined as the principle of treating people in accordance with differentiated needs. Equity is in contrast with the idea of equality in which all are treated exactly the same. Equity and fairness to all students are expected in all areas, including student placement, course access, program opportunities, and so on. Rather than distributing resources based on a per pupil allocation, equity requires that additional resources be directed to students with greater needs. Without equal access to programs and services, differentiated educational responses, and equitable distribution of resources, school systems perpetuate the disparities among students that a public school education is designed to improve.

To determine whether or not the standards of equity had been met at Hodge Road Elementary, the auditors reviewed district guiding documents, student and staff demographic information, and participant reports. They also interviewed teachers, support staff, community members, parents, administrators, and students as well as visiting all classrooms.

Auditors found that district guiding documents show the intent to provide students with equal access to educational programs and opportunities. But despite that intent auditors found inequities from district departments including student assignment, transportation, academic services, and financial services. At the school level inequities exist in staff demographics, student placement, instructional strategies used to support second language students, resource allocation, and communication that tends to be inconsistent and imprecise.

Board Policy and District Document Review

The following board policies and district documents address equal access to educational opportunities.

Board Policy 3219: Job Description Teacher lists as responsibilities: “establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students” and “responds to the learning needs of students.”

Board Policy 5532: Acceleration and Academic Advancement states that the staff shall see that “academic opportunities are provided that allow students to proceed more rapidly through the usual progression of required skills and objectives for a given grade level or course or course of study...” by providing appropriate instruction that is differentiated.

Board Policy 5530: Promotion and Intervention states that focused intervention strategies and accelerated activities will be provided to meet the needs of identified students.

Board Policy 6010: Protection Against Sex Discrimination Title IX states that the board will not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or activities or employment policies and practices.

Board Policy 6210: Assurance of Appropriate Services: Disabled Students Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans With Disabilities Act states that no child will be excluded from any educational program or be subject to discrimination because of a disability.

Board Policy 6220: Assurance of Appropriate Services: Exceptional Students provides for a free, appropriate publicly supported education in the least restrictive environment for every disabled child with special needs ages three through twenty. Each disabled child will have access to the variety of educational programs and services available to non-disabled children, including physical education, art, music, industrial arts, consumer and homemaking education, vocational education, and general interest electives.

The *WCPSS Mission, Vision & Core Beliefs* pledges to focus on improving the achievement of all students, challenging all students, eliminating academic achievement gaps ultimately calling for ensuring that “students come first, talent is nurtured, excellence is the norm, and opportunities are equitable.”

The *WCPSS Elementary Programs at a Glance* document states the goal is to provide support for schools as they ensure that each child receives an equitable, rigorous, and relevant education. “Grounded in the belief that all students deserve access to high quality instruction, this team provides guidelines, resources, and professional development which enable school staff to deploy curriculum and assessments with fidelity as well as make nuanced professional judgments in support of student learning and achievement.”

As evidenced by the board policy and district documents, WCPSS shows the intent to provide all students with equal access to programs and opportunities within the system.



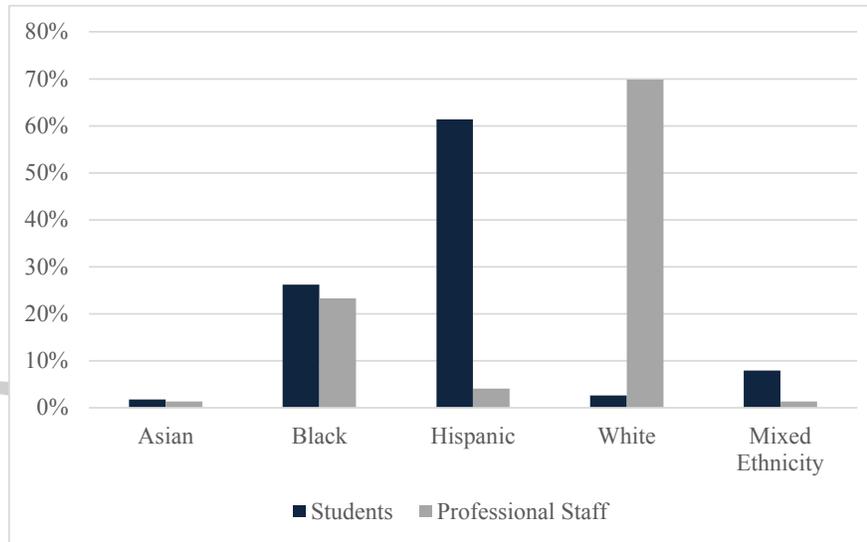
A book room without many books

Student and Professional Demographics

It is an audit expectation that the ethnicity of the staff reflects the ethnic composition of the students to be served. Such parallel representation provides role models and contributes to students' sense of belonging. Exhibit 4.1 displays data on student and staff enrollment by ethnicity at Hodge Road Elementary School.

Exhibit 4.1

Comparison of Student Enrollment and Professional Staff Including TAs by Ethnicity Hodge Road Elementary School Wake County Public School System March 2013



As illustrated in Exhibit 4.1:

- The percentage of White professional staff far exceeds (70 percent) the representation of white students in Hodge Road (2.6 per cent)
- Sixty-one percent of the student population is of Hispanic heritage as compared to four percent of the professional staff.
- Representation of African American/Black professional staff to students is similar.

Of even greater concern at Hodge Road Elementary is that only five of the total eighty-eight staff members or 5.6 percent speak Spanish while 56.6 percent of students are currently classified as either English as a Second Language (ESL) or Limited English Proficient (LEP) with a primary language of Spanish.

Interviews and survey responses further illuminated the challenges and inequities at Hodge Road:

- “We have 100 employees, one male at the school.”
- “I’m lucky, I’m bilingual.”
- “PTA/PTO feel left out, because of the language barrier.”
- “Could there be some bilingual teachers who could be there for them?”
- “There is a lack of parent involvement, often because of language and cultural issues.”
- “Support staff is often pulled away from students to help with secretarial duties such as answering phones translating/interpreting, etc. This takes away from helping students.”

Student Demographics and Program Opportunities

Exhibit 4.2 shows the distribution of students within various subpopulations, i.e., economically disadvantaged, limited English proficient, and at risk. Also included is the percentage of students assigned to special education and academically and intellectually gifted (AIG) programs.

Exhibit 4.2

Distribution of Students Within Special Categories Hodge Road Elementary School Wake County Public School System March 2013

Subpopulations	School %-Dist Avg	Subpopulations	School %-Dist Avg
LEP	41.4%-7.5%	AIG	6.5%-27.2%
ESL	15.2%-3.6%	Special Education	10.2%-12.56%
Free & Reduced Lunch	82.7%-33.7%		

The challenges for Hodge Road Elementary as compared to the district at large are clear. As noted in Exhibit 4.2:

- Nearly 57 percent of the students attending Hodge Road are second language learners as compared with just 11 percent in the district as a whole.
- Nearly 83 percent of all students on the campus qualify for free and reduced lunch, making poverty a significant challenge in their young lives.
- Students at Hodge Road qualify for the Academically and Intellectually Gifted (AIG) program at one-fourth the rate of the average for students across the district.

Additional information that is not noted on the exhibit helps to define the challenge within WCPSS for Hodge Road Elementary School. Of the 169 schools in the county:

- Hodge Road has the *highest level of poverty* (83 percent) for any school in the district as evidenced by free and reduced lunch levels. The lowest level of poverty is at 4.5 percent.
- Hodge Road has the *highest percentage of students in the district classified as ELL and LEP* with a combined total of 57 percent currently classified in those programs. The district school with the lowest percentage of ELL and LEP students is at 0 percent.
- Hodge Road has the *next to the lowest percentage of students being identified for the AIG program (6.5 percent)*. The range of AIG placement from the school with the lowest percentage is at 5.6 percent to the highest placement percentage at 50.5 percent. With 57 percent of the Hodge Road student population having a primary language other than English the students are at a disadvantage when testing procedures do not allow for alternatives for the second language students. *AIG information is based on numbers available for 2011-12 on WCPSS website. Information was not available for 2012-13.*

Interviews and survey comments added information to the challenges of equity at Hodge Road:

- “There are only ten students identified as AIG (Academically and Intellectually Gifted) kids at Hodge Road. We provide services for fourth and fifth grade students. They are pulled out for math and reading one time per week for each content area. There is no testing specifically for second language AIG students.”
- “There is not a lot of emphasis on high achieving students. A lot of time is spent on catching up students not at the proficiency levels.”
- “High expectations are held for below grade level students, but on grade level or above grade level students are only expected to maintain.”

- “A weakness at our school is that while struggling students are receiving so much support, hardly any support is given to students that are on grade level or above. Once students attain grade level status they are no longer being challenged.”

Many interviews and survey comments further delineated the challenges and celebrations with language barriers:

- “Our biggest challenge is with LEP students and their lack of language. I ask teachers to allow all our children to think on grade level. The challenge is experiencing the grade level and trying to catch the language up while trying to expose children to the grade level curriculum”
- “ESL students are such a new population to this state. We struggle with how to teach them.”
- “This is a Spanish speaking population, the needs are different.”
- “We are one of the highest free and reduced lunch populations. We have the highest ESL population and are very transient. It is a revolving door with students in and out frequently.”
- “Kids come in with zero English and within a month and a half are communicating in English.”
- “Nine of my 17 kindergarten students are second language kids. Six had no English when school started. All are speaking in complete sentences now. One of these little ones, who only had one word in July, read her first book last week. Such a huge celebration!”
- “Of our 100 incoming kindergarten students in 2012, 76 students were screened using the W-APT Kindergarten Test (to determine English language proficiency for children who have a first language other than English). Currently 79 of the incoming kindergarten students for next year (2013) are scheduled for taking the W-APT placement test.”

The issue is not the capacity for learning of the children who make up the student population at Hodge Road; it is the poverty and lack of life experiences from which these students come. Repeatedly during interviews and survey comments, the challenges were expressed clearly:

- “We are different than other schools. We don’t have the private donations. Our PTA is a one or two person show.”
- “Some of our trailer parks don’t have running water. Several years ago we studied Ruby Payne’s “Framework for Understanding Poverty, which was helpful in understanding our students. All these new teachers don’t have any idea about our families.”
- “We are not a textbook. It is hard for teachers to gain a big picture of the whole. We have to think differently and get that big picture of the children and where they come from. We have to really understand differentiation and multiple intelligences.”
- “Parent deportation is a real issue for some of our parents. We don’t have resources for supporting these families.”
- “We have significant numbers of families that do not have a car, or have only one functional vehicle that must be used to transport one parent to their job. They simply cannot GET to our school, and yet the district expects that they should be able to come and register, etc.”
- “I want people to be educated about schools outside the norm. There is a big difference between posting numbers and growth. There’s almost a negative thing that Central Office doesn’t care. They put us into a different category. The fact is there is no other school in the county like us.”
- “We don’t have parent financial support. They are unable to provide external funding.”

Student Assignment

Student assignment within WCPSS has created the neediest school in the county as evidenced by the data presented in Exhibit 4.2 and comments. It was repeatedly reported to the audit team that over the past decade the student assignment pattern was changed for Hodge Road, which over the years has changed the poverty level from approximately 65 percent to 83 percent with similar changes in the percentage of students coming to the school doors speaking little or no English. Certainly the economy can account for a portion of this but it is also clear that the changes in student assignment have compounded the challenge. These reassignments have resulted in students from the “neighborhood” being assigned to other schools within the county. There are few if any students walking to school with most of the students currently attending Hodge Road arriving via bus or parents transporting. Additionally, a county decision was made to put Hodge Road on a multi-track year-round calendar. At no point did the population of the school show a need for this decision and it resulted in further chaos being created at a school that has struggled to remain stable through repeated changes. That decision is being changed for the coming year to be a single track, a decision that is being celebrated at Hodge Road Elementary School.

Samplings of interview quotes that add further detail follow:

- “There are issues with school assignment that come down from the district. One day students come to our school and the next they have been assigned to another school. Lots of changes that seem to not make sense.”
- “We don’t look like Wake County. We have all the risk factors, which used to be reported out in the healthy school report. But nobody pays attention now.”
- “We have never had enough children to warrant a four-track year-round school.”
- “When we lost the neighborhood kids it caused our population of kids in poverty and second language population to increase greatly. It also wiped out our PTA.”
- “We are so happy we will be on one track next year. That is a gift to our school community.”

The staff of Hodge Road has accepted the challenge and cares deeply about the students and the community that they serve as evidenced by quotes from interviews and surveys:

- “Many of our parents can’t afford food, but will get a taxi. Principal will go out and send the taxi away and then take the families home herself. She goes above and beyond.”
- “Students are a priority. We do whatever is in our power to help them be successful.”
- “I want these students to stay in school. I want them to have a positive experience/ this may be the only safe place they have.”
- “The students, staff, and administration put everything they can into making sure our students succeed. This is my third school and this is by far the best school for teamwork and the love of kids that I have worked at. People in this building pay for students to go on field trips. We have a lot of poor families and school is their constant. We are the one thing they can count on.”
- “Teachers care about the students. I have never seen teachers who give more. They pull together to help each other out and to keep each other bolstered. They give 100 percent and more every day of the week. They are conscientious about preparing students for middle school.”

The challenge is to meet the needs of the student population with the same resources provided to every other school within the district in the name of equality. The fact is the needs are different and greater at Hodge Road.

Use of Instructional Strategies to Support English Language Learners

In Finding 2, Exhibit 2.9 auditors examined the use of powerful instructional strategies in Hodge Road classrooms and found limited use of those strategies across the school with some teachers not using any of the high yield strategies and others using many. Due to the high percentage of students at Hodge Road Elementary who are English language learners and repeated reports that this school was a “SIOP School” auditors used a structured protocol to collect data on the use of Strategies to Support English Language Learners across the school. Exhibit 4.3 describes the instructional strategies:

Exhibit 4.3

Description of Strategies to Support English Language Learners

1. Teachers are continually supporting comprehension of content with concrete referents: visuals, pictures, manipulatives, graphic organizers, hands-on experiences, etc. In other words, students are experiencing the content with multiple senses, not just hearing it in direct instruction.
2. Scaffolding instruction and maintaining a very student-centered approach: accessing students’ prior knowledge, language, and experiences to help connect the new learning to something that is familiar (meaningful!!) to the students.
3. Pre-teaching key concepts and vocabulary necessary to understanding a unit or lesson, in context—not translating.
4. Encouraging student input during lessons, even if student can only respond in their native language (teacher allows another student to translate, thereby affirming the ELL’s response and native language at the same time).
5. Encouraging students to work in small groups, and also allowing students to use their native language to process new concepts, vocabulary, and content. Small group work takes place with a specific goal or product in mind—in English, but with native language processing to get there, if needed.
6. Assisting students in making meaningful connections across languages. This is not TRANSLATING—this is helping students identify similarities at the syntactical and lexical levels (cognates, familiar phrases, etc.)
7. Focusing explicitly on language structures and vocabulary while teaching content. Academic language development is not considered a chance by-product; rather, teachers help students recognize and use new language structures and vocabulary that pertain to the lesson/content.
8. Focusing on student OUTPUT as well as input. Students are encouraged and required to use the language in the classroom context as much as possible, beyond the conversational level.

Exhibit 4.4 provides a look inside Hodge Road Elementary classrooms in their use of these instructional strategies to support English Language Learners during auditors’ classroom observations.

Exhibit 4.4
Teachers Use of Strategies to Support English Language Learners
Hodge Road Elementary School
Wake County Public School System
March 2013

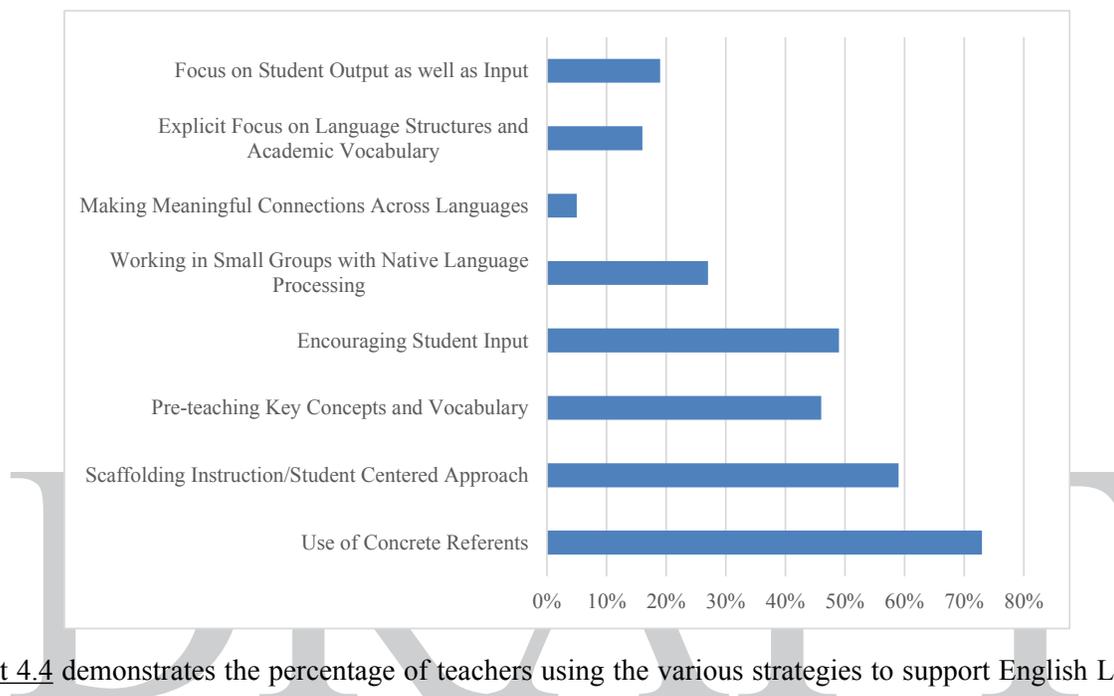


Exhibit 4.4 demonstrates the percentage of teachers using the various strategies to support English Language Learners:

- The most commonly used strategies to support ELL students in the general education classrooms were Use of Concrete Referents (73 percent), Scaffolding Instruction (59 percent), Encouraging Student Input (49 percent), and Pre-Teaching Key Concepts and Vocabulary (46 percent).
- The least used strategies were Making Meaningful Connections Across Languages (five percent), Explicit Focus on Language Structures and Academic Vocabulary (16 percent), Focus on Student Output as well as Input (19 percent), and Working in Small Groups (27 percent).

A critical point in this analysis is that 14 percent of all teachers in the school were observed not using even one of the strategies to support English Language Learners. In Finding 2 it was noted the nine percent of Hodge Road teachers made no use of Powerful Instructional Strategies. This shows the inconsistency between classroom practices at this school site and spoken expectations for practice.

Interviews provided additional information around instructional practices to support English Language Learners:

- “We are a SIOP school.”
- “We have been engulfed in SIOP. We have more support here than most places. We need to continue with consistency of follow-up with SIOP. We need to really apply the learning with rigor and fidelity.”
- “SIOP is more of a training model for general education teachers that grants access to the academic content for the second language learners.”
- “SIOP strategies are good. I use modified SIOP with lots of pictures, acting things out, modeling, and lots of oral communication. It builds their knowledge if used broadly. There are lots of charts displayed and vocabulary walls.”

- “I have taken SIOP. We need more support and more strategies. The use of SIOP does work wonders for our students.”
- “SIOP is great, it’s basically best teaching, would use it for the entire classroom.”
- “SIOP has been successful for us because the continual support and structure for implementation was there in the past.”
- “It seems that becoming a Bilingual school would be so helpful (we are more than 50%). That would help our kids so much.”

Although historically there has been a spoken commitment at Hodge Road to using SIOP strategies there is a lack of consistency in the use strategies to support English language learners in making content comprehensible and developing student readiness to deal with academic content.

Resources

Before being on site, the audit team began to hear through interviews and responses to surveys that East Wake County receives less than other parts of the district for resources (both student and teacher materials and human resources). Interview quotes stating the issue are represented below:

Materials for Students

- “Teachers are given some amount of money to use in their classrooms at other schools, but not at Hodge Road.”
- “Resources are a problem in this part of the district. We have students who can’t afford to buy pencils or practice books to use at home.”
- “I have 25 students and don’t have enough math books and alignment lessons for each child.”
- “Kids can’t finish work at home because they don’t have supplies.”
- “The printer cartridges are empty. We are told we have to do without.”
- “Our students need paper, pencils, and supplies.”

Also, to be noted, relative to materials for students is the information in [Finding 1](#), following [Exhibit 1.2](#) that resources referred to in C-MAPP are frequently out of print or not available to teachers across the district.

Experiences for Students

- “Common Core assumes a certain level of background knowledge that simply is not part of our students’ experiences. Most of our student do not travel, rarely eat at a restaurant, or even know what a brick house looks like. We have to spend a significant amount of time building background, in order to have a foundation from which we can even begin to address content. In a dream scenario we would have the ability to take our students places to experience things like an escalator, the inside of an airplane, the taste of unique foods, or geographical places (like a waterfall, mountain, farm, skyscraper, etc.)”
- “I wish we could have tutoring service for our students with transportation later in the day. We are unable to get transportation.”

Staff Support

- “We have no literacy coach here. Other schools have coaches and last year we had a math coach. This year we have neither a math coach, a literacy coach, or a SIOP coach.”
- Half of year we did not have a math intervention teacher this year. Funds did not allow for it so we only had a ½ year with an interventionist because of year-round.”
- “We have no literacy coach, we have no coach at all.”

Technology

- “Technology across the district is an issue. We need a plan”
- “We will be a STEM school next year. We don’t know what that means. Someone at the county level bestowed it on us. We hope it will bring some technology and some professional development.”
- “My kid’s technology skills are not equivalent to kids in other schools in the county because we may have five computers in a classroom but only three are working.”
- “Technology is a challenge. We write grants when we can. Some schools have PTAs that put a lot of money into technology and the extras. Our parents are unable to afford to do that.”
- “We are an m-Class school and we all do not have m-Class materials. We don’t all have enough netbooks or iPads.”
- “New schools that are coming on to m-Class will get iPads. We have the old tablets that don’t work well. All the schools that wrote the grants to pilot m-Class are in the same position. We piloted m-Class and the district decided to go district wide but we will not get a refresh on the updated technology until after four years. The iPads work much better than what we have.”
- “The resources are not there. There are no SmartBoards or technology for sped classrooms.” (Auditors observed that only kindergarten classrooms had SmartBoards.)
- “There are equipment issues with the lack of repair of technology we do have.”
- “The county will not serve or work on iPads – this will be an issue. We were the first school to develop a plan to set them up and put them in classrooms. So to service them, we bundle them up and take them to the Apple store at the mall.”
- “We hear that we will have 30 iPads per grade level with STEM school label. We will see.”
- “We don’t have the technology I have seen at other schools.”
- “I think we are lacking technology (clickers, iPads, SmartBoards, other tools). We don’t have a PTA that can provide this so we don’t get the extras that other schools have.”
- “I think while we do have a vast amount of resources I think our technology advances are not as much as other schools in the system.

Some reactions to the stated needs follow:

- “In regards to inequity of resources: The schools in East Wake County get the same thing that every one else gets. All budgets in Wake County are allocated by formula.”
- “Site based management has contributed to some of the inequities that are perceived. Principals are the budget managers.”
- “The majority of the Title One funds at Hodge Road are spent on people, because there was a gap in service for children.”
- “I don’t think this is a poor school. The school just spends money on other things.”
- “The board level does not understand why this school does not have the same things that Cary schools have. Instead of spending equally on all schools, spend where the need is. We don’t have the same support from PTA that other district schools have. Many of our parents live in poverty and work several jobs.”

Communication

Effective communication processes and procedures when implemented successfully within an educational system ensure that all stakeholders are informed regarding expectations of the written, taught and tested curriculum for students. This knowledge supports efforts from both the home and school that aid in the successful attainment of academic achievement goals for students as identified by the approved and adopted curriculum. Without effective communication procedures and processes, gaps of understanding and knowledge occur, resulting in the stakeholder's inability to support the school and district efforts to ensure all students successfully meet their learning goals.

It was the intent of the audit to obtain information from stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of communication processes and procedures within the WCPSS, and Hodge Road Elementary School. This information includes any documents provided to the auditors and perception data collected during interviews with stakeholders.

Auditors reviewed "*The Strategic Plan for WCPSS: Vision 2017*" which requires Parent Communication action and is stated as follows:

- Build a positive school connection with families and parents that overcomes cultural and language barriers.

There were no documents provided to the auditors that outlined individual district or school plans for the communication of internal information to teachers or other staff members from either the district or school.

Teachers were asked to complete an online survey prior to the arrival of the auditors for the on-site visit. Question 7 asked that responders contribute information regarding any weaknesses of the school. Fifty-eight responders participated. It is noteworthy to mention that 23 responses referenced concerns about communication. The following comments are reflective of their responses:

- "Lack of consistent and timely communication."
- "Information is not always communicated in a timely manner or to all involved. This can sometimes lead to issues of 'uncomfortability' or lack of trust."
- "At times, there is a lack of communication and we may not all as a staff be on the same page."
- "Our school needs improved communication from leadership. So often information seems to come with a very short deadline."
- "Parent involvement issues because of language barriers."
- "Communication is a problem from the top down."
- "Lack of communication. It seems we don't find out about things or if we do it's at the last minute."
- "Internal communication within the school could be improved. We need to work more efficiently on communicating expectations and ideas among ourselves. We also need more clear communication and expectations from administration...given to us in a timely manner."
- "Communicating expectations"
- "Communication and availability of administration."
- "I think our biggest weakness is communication. Often when we ask questions, we receive the answer, "I don't know" instead of "let me find out for you" and we have to discover the answer on our own."
- "Lack of communication from administration to staff."

Additionally, Question 15 asked responders to note frustrations they deal with in delivering instruction. The following response was noted in multiple responses:

- "Communication"

During interviews with staff members, the following statements were made regarding communication within the school and district:

- “The school has received a “bad rap” from the news. The people are just looking at testing and not growth.”
- “The principal and counselor go outside in the community to find resources to help our kids.”
- “We have had a lot of change. Three rounds of central office changes in the last six years.”
- “It is a struggle to make sure we collaborate.”
- “My only concern is communication. This may be for the IRT. For example when we have early release we don’t know until the morning of or maybe the evening before that we are supposed to do. I need more notice.”
- “We still need extra training in CCSS. I don’t know where to go for that support. Maybe from our IRT. But that hasn’t happened yet.”
- “Hope we can improve communication. It has been hard with four tracks.”
- “We have grade level PLTs weekly, but only have vertical PLTs once in a while. We haven’t done a K-5. That was the intent but it hasn’t happened, not sure why.”
- “Hope that with strong leadership at the building and district level we could communicate.”
- “Thank God, I have experience; otherwise, I would be floundering.”
- “Some teachers talking to students in a degrading way, especially during IEP meetings with Spanish speaking parents.”
- “We need more collaboration between teachers and specialists.”
- “We need more routines with regard to communication.”
- “We get lots of e-mails from the IRT but frankly I don’t know what she does all day. It seems she could support teachers more.”
- “We need more communication. Sometimes you will find out something, sometimes you won’t.”
- “Things are told to one grade level and interpreted differently by each grade level. People assume they get the whole picture. It is kind of like the old telephone story, by the end not what it started out to be.”
- “Does Central Office know we’re here?”
- “Right hand not talking to the left hand.”
- “We’re hearing things right now that I was never told.”
- “Don’t know who to go to for support.”
- “Sometimes I am not sure what to do with the information, not sure whether I am supposed to say anything or not.”
- “The administrative team needs to go to the next level and drive from data, have data conversations, model what they want others to do. They need to demonstrate the power of pulling together. We started the year with a small expectations meeting. It was a great start but it has not been consistent.”
- “This school has been snubbed around the district.”
- “We have lapses in communication – often received at the last minute.”
- “There is a lot of e-mail to read, as much as two to three a day from the IRT that is being passed on from central administration. We don’t know what to do with it....Does she?”
- “Meetings cancelled, schedules changed but we don’t find out about it until the last minute.”

- “Meetings occurring outside of school but not aware of them.”
- “AP sends out news or notes to staff every week or every other week.”
- “Administrative Assistant records and then gets the minutes out to others.”
- “Communication in general is a problem.”

Additionally, the following information was shared during a focus group meeting involving six community members:

- “Need to conduct meetings in Spanish and English.”
- “There was a survey sent out technologically, but a lot of families don’t have the technology, and they can’t come to school to access it.”

An additional focus group of Spanish speaking parents enabled the six members to share through the support of a Spanish-speaking interpreter, the following information:

- “Don’t know much about the principal.”
- When discussing school closure: “There was a three hour delay. Everyone got a call in English. Even the county put it out in English.”
- “The information was not even shared on the two channels of Hispanic news – it wasn’t even on the Spanish station in Spanish.”
- “Not enough meetings for Spanish speaking people. They would come if there were.”
- “Secretary in office speaks Spanish. She is like family.”
- “Feel left out of PTO/PTA because of the language.”
- “Principal is not connected to us. Has not reached out to introduce herself.”

Communication seems to be a challenge at all levels: between the district and the school, internal within the school, external to the parent community, and lack of clarity on the roles within the leadership team.

District Support

“*The Strategic Plan for WCPSS: Vision 2017*” calls for the “district office through its support efforts, while ensuring accountability for the performance of all schools, must be fully responsive to individual school needs..” This is not always perceived as the reality at Hodge Road. The following comments from interviews and surveys help to clarify the perception:

- “I believe that central office doesn’t have staff or people that know what to do out here, that’s why they have shunned us. They don’t know what to do with our population.”
- “I feel like East Wake gets forgotten – it’s a huge district.”
- “The County needs to trust us to do the right thing for our students and our families.”
- “We are not visited by the folks from Central Office. We ask for help and they don’t come. I can’t remember when ESL or Title One visited this school. We need resources. They know the population that we have on paper. But they don’t come and see. They need to try to understand that we are different. We need some other resources. We have good stories of growth.”
- “What I want to say is, come and walk in our shoes, come on out and see us, see what we are dealing with. Be a resource to us instead of the directors from afar.”
- “What I have seen is a lot of programs are shoved at us and we were supposed to implement yesterday. Often they don’t offer training so we have to do the best we can. I think the programs are good but before we can get a handle on one here comes another. It is overwhelming to everyone.”
- “Initiatives become “Wake Countyized” versions of the real research. Not as intended.”

- “It appears that people at the district level do not talk to each other.”
- “We will be a STEM school next year. (What does that mean?) Well someone at the county level bestowed it on us.”
- “I think the major weakness is the County keeps throwing band aids at us without time to implement. They give us six months to a year to work and then rip the band-aid off and tell us to try something different. Not enough time to work.”

Transportation

Transportation is a significant issue at Hodge Road that prevents children who have some of the most challenging circumstances in all of WCPSS from being at school on time daily and able to take benefit of the full instructional day. On one of the days that auditors were on site a bus driver simply forgot to pick up a group of children. Their parents had gone to work and the children were at the bus stop waiting. An hour and a half after school started a neighbor called to say she had taken the youngest children to her home. The principal called Transportation and then went to pick up students to bring them to school.

Each day that auditors were on site buses arrived late in the morning and as late as 45 minutes following dismissal time in the afternoon. This is not a new issue, similar to the whole district this started at the beginning of the academic year (for this school-July 2012). The audit team requested copies of memos and e-mails showing the line of communication regarding incidents that occur on a regular basis. This issue has still not been resolved. When one auditor returned to the school on March 28, over nine months since the beginning of the year, there were issues with transportation not being provided in a timely manner for students once again. One quote that perhaps asks the question best is:

- “We have transportation issues everyday with at least one particular bus. I wonder does this happen at every school, is it a funding issue, are there not enough people to cover the routes?”

The audit team echoes the question.

Summary

In summary, the auditors found that despite efforts by system-wide leaders and the school principal to confront some of the obvious inequities, they still exist. Hodge Road Elementary School has students with the greatest needs (poverty and language) of all 169 schools in Wake County Public School System. Student assignment patterns from the county level over the past several years have virtually assured that, by reassigning neighborhood students to other schools and assigning increasing numbers of children in poverty who come to school speaking a language other than English assigned to Hodge Road. Staff demographics do not reflect the shifting demographics of the student population and staff ability to communicate with the parent community and staff in Spanish is limited because of a small percentage of staff members in all areas who speak Spanish. There is disproportional student enrollment in the AIG program without adjustments made in testing to accommodate second language students. Budgeting processes at the county level do not address differences in student need. Budgeting decisions at the school level have put all the resources into interventionists ([Finding 2](#)). Students come to school with a lack of background experiences and school resources have not been made available to support teachers in providing field trips and other experiences to support students’ increased understanding of the world and of academics. District services from academic supports ([Finding 1](#)) to student transportation to student assignment continue the inequities. Within classrooms the use of instructional strategies to support second language learners is inconsistent with some teachers not using any effective strategies and with others using many. This is similar to the use of powerful instructional strategies in [Finding 2](#). Resources, including technology, are inconsistently available for teachers and students, along with an apparent lack of professional development to support the use of digital tools. Communication between all levels of the organization is reportedly inconsistent and imprecise. Inequities and inconsistencies for the students of Hodge Road Elementary are firmly in place.

DRAFT

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CMSI CURRICULUM AUDIT™ TEAM FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE HODGE ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Based on the three streams of data derived from interviews, documents, and site visits, the CMSi Curriculum Audit™ Team has developed a set of recommendations to address its findings shown under each of the standards of the audit.

In the case of the findings, they have been triangulated, i.e., corroborated with one another. In the case of the recommendations, those put forth in this section are representative of the auditors' best professional judgments regarding how to address the problems that surfaced in the audit.

The recommendations are presented in the order of their criticality for initiating system-wide improvements. The recommendations also recognize and differentiate between the policy and monitoring responsibilities of the board of education, and the operational and administrative duties of the superintendent of schools.

Recommendations are formulated in this specialized audit for the superintendent and the principals. The CMSi audit team directs recommendations to the superintendent when the problem is distinctly a system problem and can be addressed most effectively or efficiently at that level. When the problem focuses on the implementation of directives and expectations, recommendations are considered to be operational in nature and are therefore directed to the principals.

Recommendation 1: Continue refinement of C-MAPP to provide a deeply aligned curriculum document that provides teachers with student objectives that are aligned in content, context, and cognition to Common Core State Standards and the upcoming *Smarter Balanced* assessments.

Wake County Public School System has made amazing progress and a huge investment of time and resources in the development of a quality, user-friendly written curriculum that supports effective instruction and encourages alignment among the written, taught, and tested curriculum. This written curriculum (C-MAPP) is evidence of the district's priorities and shows the emphasis the district has put on each content area across the county. Teachers know and use C-MAPP as a tool for planning but it needs to be updated to align with Common Core State Standards and the increasingly complex student assessments that will soon provide the measure of student performance for WCPSS.

When schools fail to meet student achievement expectations, it is often caused by the misalignment between the written, taught, and tested curriculum. Auditors found this misalignment at Hodge Road Elementary School in the following ways:

- In a sampling of grade levels, auditors found 40 percent of grade three teachers who were teaching below level in English/Language Arts (Exhibit 1.2),
- Misalignment between CCSS, Case 21 Assessments, and *Smarter Balanced* assessments in the areas of cognition and context (Exhibit 1.3),
- Inability of teachers in the year round school to access C-MAPP in a timely manner (Finding 1), and a
- Lack of aligned materials available to teachers on a consistent basis (Finding 1).

The following actions are recommended to the Wake County Public School System Superintendent of Schools and to the Hodge Road Elementary leadership team in order to improve the alignment and delivery of curriculum of the WCPSS curriculum.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Wake County Superintendent of Schools:

A.1.1: Review C-MAPP objectives in all content areas and align to the new external high stakes assessment objectives (CCSS and *Smarter Balanced* assessments). Objectives need to be clearly written to minimally include the content to be learned, the type of cognition required, and the context in which the learning is to be demonstrated. Include details such as those listed below to inform teachers of how students will ultimately be assessed.

1. Review each test item from the external assessments and derive the content and context of the tested objective by deconstructing the test item. Then determine the cognitive type of the test item.
2. Note the common patterns in the context of how questions are stated, when reviewing a set of questions, such as “What is the best response?” or “Which graphic best depicts the reported situation?”
3. Note the number of questions in a particular content set; for example, language arts comprehension assessments may start with a short passage and then ask students to respond to 15-18 multiple-choice questions. This information is important to teachers as they plan how to provide students with practice not only with the content of the assessment but also with the context.
4. Note whether the assessments include different types of assessment contexts, such as short response, extended response, and multiple-choice.
5. If the assessment samples include a variety of types of questions, determine the weighting of the types in determining the final scores.
6. Determine the standard of performance for each objective.
7. Add other contexts as desired, for example, a textbook/instructional resource approach, application, or higher cognitive type in a real world context.

A.1.2: Deeply align objectives from external assessments. Recommendation A.1.1 is used to design the curriculum so that you teach what is tested (content) and teach it the way it is tested (context). The purpose of deep alignment is to support students’ transfer of learning to a wide variety of situations. Deeply aligned objectives are those that include a broad range of content and contexts. The purpose of this work is to have the students use the learning in life, not just perform well on tests.

1. Using deconstructed objectives from A.1.1 (content, context, and cognitive level) develop revised objectives by broadening the content, by writing various real word contexts, and by changing the cognitive level as desired.
2. Add more contexts to reflect the way WCPSS wants the learning tested within the district; include contexts that will allow for high cognitive levels and more authentic assessments.
3. For every objective, write a minimum of at least one district sample test item (for each of the contexts identified).

A.1.3: Re-evaluate the use of newly acquired Case 21 assessments in terms of alignment to *Smarter Balanced* assessments in cognition and context. Expect that any testing of students in WCPSS will align with the ultimate performance expectations for students.

A.1.4: Evaluate current instructional resources/textbooks/materials and create a matrix of objectives by resources. Determine the best resources for each objective, looking at content, context, and cognition. Be precise about each resource, indicating the degree of alignment for each resource in all three areas – content, context, and cognition. Eliminate resources in the current C-MAPP that are out of print. Resources must be easily available to every district teacher and not something they have to hunt down.

A.1.5: Establish an annual timeline for completion of work on C-MAPP to provide time annually for training and orientation for all schools, including those on year-round calendar as well as those on traditional calendar.

A.1.6: Establish a professional development program to provide teachers knowledge of curriculum alignment, deconstruction of test items, development of deeply aligned lesson plans and their delivery.

A.1.7: Have teachers deliver a deeply aligned curriculum by the selection of resources, activities, and practices used and by the assessments administered.

A.1.8: Create a comprehensive technology plan that immediately addresses the needs for students’ technology proficiency required in the coming *Smarter Balanced* assessments.

School Functions: The following functions are recommended to the principal and her leadership team:

S.1.1: Make the planning and alignment of teaching with the written curriculum of WCPSS and Common Core State Standards a priority:

- Support the instructional staff in understanding and applying the depth and complexity that *Smarter Balanced* assessments will demand of classroom instruction, particularly in the context and the cognitive level.
- Provide extensive professional development for all instructional staff on curriculum alignment and its value, deconstruction of public release test items and sample test items, and development of deeply aligned lesson plans and their delivery.
- With data from test-item deconstruction in hand, analyze curriculum standards, programs, instructional resources, and teaching contexts to determine the current alignment. Identify where gaps exist, preventing adequate alignment, and prepare an alignment plan that details how each area of the curriculum (written, taught, programs, and instructional resources) will be modified. Assign roles and responsibilities where necessary and establish due dates for expected tasks.
- Work with teachers on the selection of their activities and resources as part of their daily lesson planning to ensure alignment. To determine the match of textbooks and supplemental materials and activities with the learning targets, teachers must systematically check the materials against the desired learnings. Simply following textbook recommendations does not guarantee coherent programs. Where textbook or program materials do not match or have gaps, additional supplemental materials must be obtained or teachers must modify existing materials. Every dimension of alignment must be considered: content, context, and cognitive type.
- Use a system of gathering school-wide data on curriculum alignment with the district curriculum several times a year to be used as a check on progress of the school towards the expectation of teaching the aligned curriculum. Provide feedback from that data collection to faculty focused on alignment of content, context, and cognitive levels.

S.1.2: Create a process, timeline, and the expectation for regular articulation meetings between grade levels within the school and externally with the receiving middle school to support student transitions and consistency of expectations for students.

- Use student learning as the focus of these articulation conversations as well as the expectations outlined in C-MAPP, CCSS, and deep alignment work as defined in S.1.1.
- Include transitional plans for students as they move from one level to the next including movement to the middle school. Work to ease these transitions for students and their families.

Recommendation 2: Provide training for all teachers in all aspects of powerful teaching strategies: cognitively engaging instruction, differentiation, language proficiency, best practices, and integration of technology. Implement the concepts and information learned from training by modeling expectations, providing feedback, and coaching teachers to success. Develop a daily instructional schedule that protects time for good first teaching and is calm and focused for all students.

It is important that instructional staff be provided training in the most recent thinking about alignment of teaching to the curriculum, effective teaching practices, customizing instructional practices at the right level of difficulty for each student, and strategies for moving students along the continuum of learning objectives at an accelerated rate.

Auditors found that curriculum delivery was limited at Hodge Road because of the following:

- Instruction at low levels of cognition,
- Limited use of technology by students and by teachers.
- Limited and sometimes total absence of powerful instructional strategies in classroom observations,

- Fragmented scheduling that does not protect core instructional time for teachers and students; and
- Frequent absences of teachers to attend professional development leaving substitute teachers to teach students.

To ameliorate these findings the following actions are recommended.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Wake County Superintendent of Schools:

A.2.1: Identify the high yield instructional strategies that research has supported in making a difference for student achievement across all students represented in WCPSS. This is not intended to be a prescriptive, tightly help requirement. Rather, it is intended to provide a clear picture of what district leaders want and expect effective instruction to look like. Use the results of the review of research to identify those instructional practices and create a staff development plan.

- Provide focused staff development for all teachers on those strategies that WCPSS has identified for system-wide use.
- Allow for schools to use additional high yield instructional strategies in their delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of their students.
- As part of this work, require the expectation of differentiating instruction in the classroom to meet individual student needs.

A.2.2: Require occasional monitoring and analysis across each school of school-wide delivery of the curriculum including student orientation to the work, the objective actually being taught by the teacher (not what is on the board), calibration of the taught objective to the district curriculum expectation, the cognitive level observed during the brief observation, and the use of powerful instructional strategies.

A.2.3: Develop guidelines for cultural sensitivity, awareness, and proficiency. Define what is meant by those terms, and how these concepts affect teaching and learning. Adopt these guidelines as policy; assure they are well disseminated as part of the training outlines in A.2.1, above. Describe a classroom environment ideally suited to the needs, preferences, and background of the second language student: make that description the goal for every teacher in every classroom across the district.

School Functions: The following functions are recommended to the principal and her leadership team:

S.2.1: Make the delivery and alignment of instruction with the written curriculum of WCPSS a priority:

- Provide staff development, peer study, and/or observation groups on curriculum and its delivery. Examine the alignment of instructional activities and materials, questioning strategies, and informal students assessments to the curriculum objectives.
- Extend the training in SIOP that was provided in the past few years to all new staff. Put SIOP coaches back in place to support ongoing use of these powerful strategies for second language learners and in fact all students at this school. Expect that everyone in the school use SIOP strategies on a regular basis in all content areas. These strategies must not be seen as optional for any teacher.
- Provide staff development for the integrated and effective use of new technology in all classrooms. Each teacher that is provided new and technology tools to use with instruction (Smart Boards, iPads, etc.) needs training and follow-up coaching to ensure meaningful use of these tools to support learning for students rather than use as a glorified overhead.
- Inform teachers that an administrator will be in their room on a frequent basis to observe the delivery of the curriculum and to offer support. Use of a non-evaluative approach to walk throughs focused on developing reflective practice is recommended.
- Use a system of gathering school-wide data on curriculum alignment with the district curriculum several times a year to be used as a check on progress of the school towards the expectation of teaching

the aligned curriculum using high yield instructional strategies. Collect data on the use of technology and SIOP strategies in all classrooms. Provide feedback from that data collection to faculty focused on alignment of content, context, and cognitive levels as well as powerful instructional strategies.

- Encourage teachers to critically analyze their own teaching behaviors to determine areas for growth in pedagogy or delivery of the aligned curriculum.

S.2.2: Increase time on task and student focus by carefully analyzing the instructional schedule and implementing strategies to protect instructional time and reduce movement within the school of students in need of additional interventions.

- Examine the school day, transition periods, lunch and recess periods, etc. to see how more time can be devoted to classroom instruction; maximize the learning time. Completing a time study on your campus is a useful activity followed by an action plan for how to address the time wasters.
- Look for distractions in the day and eliminate or reduce them (e.g., announcements, students lining up in hallways, moving students in and out of the classroom). Be careful about “pull out” programs; for example study the possibility of scheduling interventions and special area classes so that the instructional flow is not interrupted and teachers and students can “take their eyes off the clock” to focus on teaching and learning.
- Set up “jump start” efforts and ways to extend the time to learn for students who need more time. Possible examples include, intersessions with instruction tied directly to specific learning objectives on which low-performing students are behind, providing prerequisite training for certain special population students that need that support, providing before and after-school tutoring programs and Saturday school, etc.
- Recognize that differentiation begins with the student assessment. Assessing prerequisite skills and current level of knowledge on the proposed teaching objectives is essential to determining the correct level of curriculum objectives to teach next, and to which students.
- Provide appropriate and timely interventions for students who need additional learning time based on the assessment of prerequisite skills but cautiously consider the impact of over-intervening, which can undermine first good teaching from the classroom teacher.

S.2.3: Provide staff development on increasing students’ abilities to apply knowledge and skills they develop during learning to new contexts and across content areas.

- Consider Bloom’s Taxonomy, Webb’s Depth of Knowledge, or a similar cognitive taxonomy in preparing aligned lessons (activities, questions, checking for understanding). Analyze lessons for the cognitive level required of students, linking that to the curriculum objectives.
- Explore, as a faculty, strategies for offering the full range of cognitive learning experience for all children including application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation opportunities that are embedded in learning experiences.
- Work with teachers to expand students’ opportunities for problem solving within the aligned curriculum. When students are actively engaged in learning their activities and assignments challenge them to think broadly and deeply, to solve problems, or to otherwise engage in nonroutine thinking. There is nothing mechanical about what students are asked to do; the cognitive challenge is appropriate.
- Periodically collect data on the cognitive level of learning activities (which are first aligned to the written curriculum). Compare the faculty’s intention to teach and expect students to learn at a full range of cognitive levels with the reality. Use this data as a feedback cycle for next steps.

S.2.4: Work in collaboration with the superintendent in identifying and increasing the use of a variety of effective instructional practices to be used across all classrooms.

- Research together, as a faculty, high yield instructional strategies (Hattie, 2009; Marzano 2001; Saphier, 2008). Identify those strategies that are powerful and make a difference for student learning. Consider your special student population as you do this research.
- Conduct staff development on the identified variety of high yield instructional strategies to be used in your school and those expected across the district.
- Work with teachers to make those strategies part of their teaching toolbox, providing students with a variety of learning experiences in delivering the written curriculum.

S.2.5: Develop a plan for professional development for the school that preserves teachers' time in classrooms with their students.

- Consider the alternatives for time to provide staff development: during intersessions, before and after school, pre-service days, etc. Make it a priority to keep teachers in classrooms doing what they do best, teaching students.

The steps outlined above are intended to provide Wake County Public School System and Hodge Road Elementary School with direction for tightening the current delivery of curriculum to assure improved student achievement. Attention to these steps will provide greater focus on school priorities and needs and establish greater constancy of purpose in teaching students the aligned curriculum of Wake County, to have the greatest impact on student learning.

Recommendation 3: Clearly establish expectations and procedures for principals and central office administrators to monitor the delivery of the curriculum.

Monitoring the teaching of the district curriculum is critical to organizational effectiveness. The goal of monitoring is to mentor, nurture, support, and coach. Several questions need to be asked in monitoring the curriculum including: Are we on track to meeting the goals of the district in our delivery of curriculum? From regular school wide and district wide observations, what professional development support do we need to add for teachers and administrators? What type of follow-up is needed to support each staff member in moving towards the goals of the district? This type of supportive monitoring needs to be practiced at all levels of the district including the supervisor of principals, central office administrators, and all school administrators.

Auditors found that board policies in the Wake County Public School System contain requirements for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum; job descriptions generally describe supervisory activities but do not describe a systematic approach to monitoring and were completely lacking for some key positions; and the lack of a system-wide process and training in strategies for monitoring the delivery of the curriculum was verified in interviews and school visits. In terms of walk-throughs, the emphasis in these observations was on student engagement more than on curriculum delivery and the use of a variety of instructional strategies aimed at increasing the probability of improved student achievement.

The following actions are recommended to the Wake County Public School System Superintendent of Schools and to Hodge Road Leadership team:

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Wake County Superintendent of Schools:

A.3.1: Develop common curriculum monitoring procedures for principals and other staff. Implement curriculum focused walk-throughs; formal and informal conferences with teachers at team and department meetings and at campus improvement team meetings; lesson plan review; and analysis of data related to congruence of the taught objectives with the written objectives in content, context, and cognition type.

A.3.2: Increase the reliability of walk-through data by periodically engaging the entire administrative team in joint walk-through observations, followed by group analysis and discussion using the walk-through observation structure as a guide. Continue joint walk-through practice until consistent reliability is achieved in recording classroom observations.

A.3.3: Provide extensive training for campus based administrators (including coaches and IRTs), central office supervisors, and those who supervise principals in the district adopted instructional model, the alignment between instruction and the written curriculum (content, context, and cognitive level), techniques for assessing the alignment between the taught and written curriculum, and effective methods for reflective mentoring and coaching.

- Hold administrative meetings in schools, and begin each meeting by engaging in brief classroom visits.
- Place monitoring on each administrative agenda and engage in reflective dialogue with administrators to identify trends and patterns across the district regarding the implementation of the district curriculum.
- Provide periodic training for all district administrators with current best practice relative to content areas and grade levels.

A.3.4: Revise job description of principals, assistant principals, and IRT's to require classroom visits. Revise job descriptions of central office supervisors to ensure that monitoring is a high priority. Ensure that the goal of monitoring is to mentor, nurture, support, and coach.

- Set expectations for the amount of time principals and assistant principals should be engaged in monitoring.
- Designate procedures and expectations for how central office administrators will engage in monitoring with building administrators.

A.3.5: Collaborate with principals and central office administrators to refine the administrative appraisal instrument to include specific requirements and measures for effective monitoring of the curriculum.

A.3.6: Require periodic reports from principals regarding the aggregated data collected using the observation tool. Include curriculum designers in the conversations with principals so that they have the delivery perspective and can revise curriculum when needed to meet the needs of teachers for examples of more rigor or for more powerful teaching strategies.

A.3.7: Be visible in district schools. Participate in meetings focused on teaching and learning. Listen to the concerns of the staff. Come from a servant leadership perspective and focus on problem solving around issues specific to each individual school and the needs of the student population.

School Functions: The following functions are recommended to the principal and her leadership team at Hodge Road Elementary School:

S.3.1: Learn what is in the approved and updated WCPSS curriculum. Do not be satisfied with knowing what is in the pacing charts. Dig deeply into all curriculum documents in order to become the school expert on the curriculum.

S.3.2: Participate in and implement the walk-through process offered in professional development sessions on the use of the observation protocol and other professional development that is provided to increase principals' skills. Discontinue the use of all other checklists for observing in classrooms since they do not provide a method for calibrating the observed taught objective to the approved curriculum.

S.3.3: Practice using the observation protocol with other school-based personnel such as assistant principal, IRT, and various content area and program coaches. Do not abdicate the role of instructional leader to the Instructional Resource Teacher and/or instructional coaches.

S.3.4: Be a visible instructional leader. Teachers need to see you daily in their classrooms and regularly having deep and meaningful conversations about teaching and learning with all staff.

S.3.5: Aggregate data collected using this observation tool and report results to the school staff, the superintendent, and the superintendent's staff. Be prepared to identify curriculum content or lessons that fail to provide good examples to teachers for precision teaching.

S.3.6: Include conversations about the delivery of the curriculum and the aggregated results from the use of the observation tool in all PLT and staff meeting agendas.

S.3.7: Coach teachers for reflection on their practice, which is more about good questions than it is about telling someone what to do. If this process is a new way of thinking about leadership, request central office supervisors to model the process.

The steps outlined above are intended to provide Wake County Public School System and Hodge Road Elementary School with direction for establishing an effective system for managing curriculum to ensure improved student achievement. Attention to these steps will provide greater focus on district priorities and needs and establish a greater constancy of purpose in those tasks that have the greatest impact on student learning.

Recommendation 4: Research, identify, and implement strategies to eliminate inequities and inequalities that impede opportunities for all students to succeed.

Equity and equality are the cornerstones of a school system where all students have equal access and opportunity to an educational program that responds to individual needs and reflects a strong commitment to success for all learners. Decisions are made that provide students with equal opportunities and equitable access and support to achieve intended outcomes. Districts with a commitment to overcome the problems of inequity devise strategies that promote high achievement expectations for all students.

Analysis of WCPSS guiding documents found the intent to provide students with equal access to educational programs and opportunities. But despite that intent, auditors found inequities from district departments including student assignment, transportation, academic services, and financial services. At the school level inequities exist in staff demographics, student placement, instructional strategies used to support second language students, and resource allocation.

In order to not perpetuate, but rather overcome, the relative disadvantages that some students bring to the educational system, the following recommendations are presented to the superintendent and the principal and their leadership teams.

Administrative Functions: The following actions are recommended to the Superintendent of ACPSS and his leadership team:

A.4.1: Develop and adopt expectations for equity across the district, and annually analyze all program enrollments for gender, ethnic, and primary language proportionality.

- Study and evaluate the use of additional placement tools for the AIG program, to attend to the needs of second language students who are unable access qualification for gifted services.

A.4.2: Monitor the distribution of resources to ensure that additional resources are diverted to areas of greater need.

A.4.3: Revisit the goals of the strategic plan that call for district office to be “fully responsive to individual school needs”.

- Changes in student assignment created many of the challenges at Hodge Road and it is necessary to fully respond to the needs that were magnified by this action.
- Create a plan to solve the transportation issues in East Wake County. Children need to be delivered to school with courtesy, in a safe manner, and on-time each day. Additionally, consider how schools with the greatest need, like Hodge Road can access transportation after school to allow for needed interventions.
- Create a comprehensive technology plan for the district. Taking into consideration in the planning the fact that some schools do not have parents who have the resources to access technology in their homes or to contribute to purchasing technology tools for the school.
- Revisit the budget process that allocates by formula. Determine the intent of the district policies and the implication for budgeting to support equal access and learning for all.

- Allow time and support for the implementation of district initiatives.
- Clearly establish a comprehensive communication plan that includes processes and procedures for communicating with all district stakeholders including those who do not speak or read English.

School Functions: The following actions are recommended to the principal of Hodge Road and her leadership team to ameliorate the equity findings at the school level:

S.4.1: Clearly communicate the expectation that all teachers are to consistently be using effective instructional strategies and specifically strategies to support second language learners.

- Provide staff development and coaching support for the use of SIOP strategies.
- Monitor the use of SIOP (Recommendations 2 and 3) on a regular basis during regular classroom walk-throughs, providing feedback and coaching support.
- Collect data on the use of SIOP strategies. Be transparent with teachers on what is found and use professional development time to extend the learning for all staff based on the data.
- Identify further areas of concern that can be targeted with professional development, guided practice, feedback, independent practice, and coaching. Continue to expect the very best strategies from every teacher.

S.4.2: Make an intentional effort, with the help of Human Resources of WCPSS to hire highly effective teachers and support staff who speak Spanish.

- For every position that is vacated or any new positions, make this a priority.

S.4.3: Reconsider the site based budgeting decisions for all school funds and how these funds are used.

- Keep in mind the poverty level of the students, the lack of resources currently in place, the scheduling concerns from Finding 2, and the annual goals of the school.
- Increase the number of people involved in this decision making to include the school leadership team with the guidance that all decisions must be made keeping the intent of equity and excellence in teaching and learning in mind.

S.4.4: Realign the responsibilities of the principal, assistant principal, and IRT to focus on quality teaching and learning and clear and timely communication. This needs to include:

- A high degree of visibility and support for teachers with a focus on teaching and learning.
- Providing monitoring and feedback on the use of the curriculum and SIOP strategies.
- Communication that is clear and consistent so that everyone is on the same team with the same focus.

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VI. SUMMARY

A CMSi Curriculum Audit™ is an “exception” report. The audit does not provide a normative view of the school system or its schools compared to others like it. Rather, it holds the system and its schools up to scrutiny against the predetermined standards of quality as defined in the scope of work, notes relevant findings derived from that comparison, and develops recommendations in order to improve system and school performance over time. These recommendations establish the *starting point* for a discussion of how to deal with the documented findings and improve the system and individual schools so that student achievement will improve. Expectations for improved system and school performance ultimately depend on the competency of responsible system and school officials in the implementation process and in their fidelity to the content of the recommendations.

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VII. APPENDICES

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Appendix A

Auditors' Biographical Data



Kay Coleman, M.Ed.

Kay Coleman is an independent consultant and retired school administrator having served in the roles of Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services in two urban districts in Phoenix, Arizona as well as Executive Director of a BOCES in rural Colorado. Over her 30 year career in public education she was a classroom teacher, reading specialist, elementary principal, and director of curriculum and instruction in urban and suburban areas and currently works as a director of an aspiring principal program at Arizona State University. She earned her M.Ed. from Arizona State University and was trained as an auditor in 1992 in San Antonio, Texas.

Mrs. Coleman's areas of expertise are in curriculum development, professional development, instructional leadership, program evaluation and early literacy. She conducts workshops and seminars in her areas of expertise nationally and within the state of Arizona. She has served as principal investigator and co-principal investigator of several systemic change projects in mathematics through the National Science Foundation and the U. S. Department of Education as well as a contributing author on a number of books on teaching mathematics and literacy.



Susan L. Townsend

Susan Townsend is currently Superintendent of Schools for Weld County School District Re-3J, just northeast of Denver, Colorado. Her professional background includes 34 years of working in public schools as a teacher and administrator. Mrs. Townsend's administrative experience also includes serving as assistant principal, principal, Coordinator for Instruction, Curriculum, and Assessment in a large district, Personnel Coordinator, and opening a new P/K-6 building. She has had broad experience in long-range planning, personnel management, curriculum design and development, and school facilities planning. She has also been a presenter and trainer at the state and national levels on topics dealing with classroom management, affective education, effective instruction, curriculum design and implementation, and Developing Capable People.

Susan received her B.A. in Elementary Education from the University of Northern Colorado, and her M.A. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from UNC in Greeley, Colorado. She is an adjunct professor at Aims College in Greeley, Colorado and has received such awards as Outstanding Educator for Northern Colorado – PDK and Peak Performer. She received her CMSi audit training in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1994. Susan has served on audits in Illinois, Kansas, New York, Texas, Washington, Vermont, Colorado, and Alaska.

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Appendix B

School View Descriptors

SCHOOL VIEW DESCRIPTORS

The following is a brief descriptions of the instructional practices used on the CMSi SchoolView.

USES ADVANCED ORGANIZERS:

- Sets the stage for learning to let students know what they are about to learn. David Ausubel (1960) first described advance organizers as a cognitive strategy to help students learn and retain information. Hunter called for an anticipatory set to provide a mental readiness to learn.
- Furnishes students with a clear vision of the learnings to come with a meaningful reason for mastering the student expectation(s)—include how it fits into the *big picture* of their education and the world around them. (e.g., a problem that needs solving, a current scenario, a recurring human theme, a unit of study, a link to something students want to know, etc.)
- Reveals the specific content student expectation(s) and the type of learning (e.g., skill, knowledge, concept and/or process) to be mastered
- Provides “structuring comments” to help students organize for learning—what, why, and how—what they are going to experience, the value of learning (how the student benefits), and the approaches to be used (Berliner)
- Provides the anticipatory set for learning, eliciting high interest from students
- Used any time a different activity or new concept is to be introduced

PROVIDES FOR DAILY REVIEW:

- Begins a lesson with a 5 to 8 minute review of previous material, correction of homework, and review practice of relevant prior knowledge (Good & Grouws, 1979)
- Focuses on the thought process, the concepts of the homework, rather than right answers
- Has each student responding
- Provides for reteaching as needed

REVIEWS PRIOR LEARNINGS IN RELATION TO NEW:

- Checks students’ possession of the prerequisite skills for the day’s lesson. Tests can be included
- Activates what students have already learned in life and school that relates to the new learning (i.e., scaffolds prior knowledge)
- Reminds the students of prior knowledge relevant to the current lesson (facts, rules, procedures, or skills) with a brief practice
- Shows how knowledge is connected, provide the student with a framework that helps learning and remembering
- Reviews the concepts and skills necessary to do the day’s work
- Provides reteaching where needed

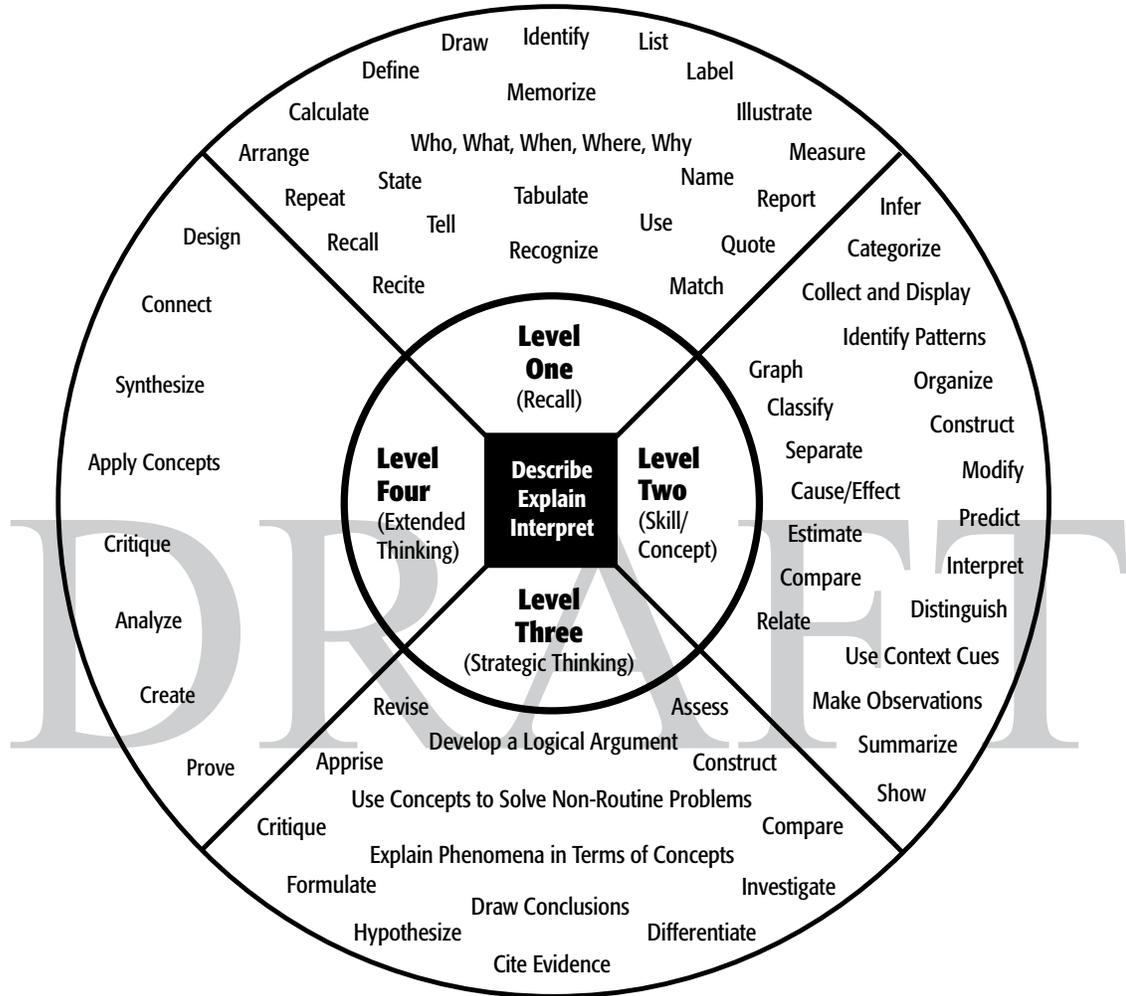
PROVIDES RELEVANT INFORMATION AND EXAMPLES:

- Teaches the critical attributes and key terms of the student expectation(s) using a variety of research-based instructional strategies
- Provides the information needed for students to gain the knowledge or skill through lecture, film, tape, video, pictures, text, graphics, simulations, figures, pictures, sound, etc.
- Uses high-interest, real-world examples and non-examples
- Provides explicit samples of how students will demonstrate mastery—the format(s) and standards of performance
- Uses essential questions to focus on critical attributes of the student expectation(s)
- Provides for language-development activities, as appropriate, to meet student needs
- Groups students in a variety of ways (e.g., individuals, pairs, small and large groups, cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, Socratic seminars, etc.)
- Chunks information (avoid memory overload, recall information)
- Informs students about similar problem situations
- Puts the learner in transfer situations
- Demonstrates the basic skills

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Appendix C
Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels



Level One Activities	Level Two Activities	Level Three Activities	Level Four Activities
<p>Recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot and setting.</p> <p>Conduct basic mathematical calculations.</p> <p>Label locations on a map.</p> <p>Represent in words or diagrams a scientific concept or relationship.</p> <p>Perform routine procedures like measuring length or using punctuation marks correctly.</p> <p>Describe the features of a place or people.</p>	<p>Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative.</p> <p>Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words.</p> <p>Solve routine multiple-step problems.</p> <p>Describe the cause/effect of a particular event.</p> <p>Identify patterns in events or behavior.</p> <p>Formulate a routine problem given data and conditions.</p> <p>Organize, represent and interpret data.</p>	<p>Support ideas with details and examples.</p> <p>Use voice appropriate to the purpose and audience.</p> <p>Identify research questions and design investigations for a scientific problem.</p> <p>Develop a scientific model for a complex situation.</p> <p>Determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection.</p> <p>Apply a concept in other contexts.</p>	<p>Conduct a project that requires specifying a problem, designing and conducting an experiment, analyzing its data, and reporting results/solutions.</p> <p>Apply mathematical model to illuminate a problem or situation.</p> <p>Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources.</p> <p>Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures.</p> <p>Design a mathematical model to inform and solve a practical or abstract situation.</p>

Webb, Norman L. and others. "Web Alignment Tool" 24 July 2005. Wisconsin Center of Educational Research. University of Wisconsin-Madison. 2 Feb. 2006. <<http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/WAT/index.aspx>>.

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